

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

jointly with the

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL
AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES &
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP
RELATIONS

and the

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

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Thursday, May 18, 2023
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HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Justin L. Brannan, Chairperson
Chi A. Ossé, Chairperson
Kamillah Hanks, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
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Keith Powers
Pierina Ana Sanchez
Althea V. Stevens
Sandra Ung
Marjorie Velázquez
Nantasha M. Williams
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Linda Johnson
President and CEO
Brooklyn Public Library

Anthony Marx
President and CEO
New York Public Library

Dennis Walcott
President and CEO
Queen's Public Library

Laurie Cumbo
Commissioner
Department of Cultural Affairs

Lance Polivy
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Department of Cultural Affairs

Keechant L. Sewell
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Jeffrey Maddrey
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New York Police Department

Oleg Chernyavsky
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Deputy Commissioner Management and Budget
New York Police Department

Raul Pintos
Assistent Chief
New York Police Department

Michael Gerber
Deputy Commissioner Legal Matters
New York Police Department

Edward Delatorre
Deputy Commissioner Labor Relations
New York Police Department

John Chell
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New York Police Department

Michael Kemper
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New York Police Department

Amy Litwin
Deputy Commissioner, Department Advocate
New York Police Department

Miguel Iglesias
Chief of Internal Affairs Bureau
New York Police Department

Matthew Pontillo
Chief of Professional Standards
New York Police Department

Maximo Tolentino
Deputy Chief, Community Affairs
New York Police Department

James Essig
Chief of Detectives
New York Police Department

Michael Lipetri
Chief of Crime Control Strategies
New York Police Department

Wilson Aramboles
Chief of Special Operations
New York Police Department

Olufunmilola Obe
Chief of Training
New York Police Department

Kim Royster
Chief of Transportation
New York Police Department

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6

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Quite please. Thank you.

Good morning and welcome to the New York City
Hybrid executive hearing on the Committee's on
Finance together with Cultural Affairs and
International Intergroup Relations. Please silence
all electronic devices. Chair, we are ready to
begin.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Sergeant.

[GAVEL]

Okay, good morning and welcome to day eight of FY
24 executive budget hearings. First on the agenda
today, we have the city's library systems. I'm
Justin Brannan, councilmember and Chair of the
Committee on Finance. I'm pleased to be joined today
by my colleague, Councilmember Chi Ossé, Chair of the
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and
International Intergroup Relations.

We've been joined this morning by Councilmembers
Louis, Hudson Brooks-Powers, Barron, Moya, Schulman,
Brewer, and Ung.

I want to welcome Linda Johnson, President and
CEO of the Brooklyn Public Library. Tony Marx,
President and CEO of the New York Public Library, and
Dennis Walcott, President and CEO of the Queen's

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Public Library. Thank you all, for joining us today
to answer our questions.

I just want to set the table: On April 26, 2023,
the Administration released the executive financial
plan for FY 23 to 27 with a proposed FY 24 budget of
\$106.7 billion. The library's proposed FY 24 budget
of \$431 million represents less than 1% of the
administration's proposed FY 24 budget in the
executive plan. This is an increase of \$19.8
million, or 5.1% from the \$411.2 million originally
allocated in the FY 24 preliminary plan. This net
increase is mostly due to an additional \$18.4 million
for the DC 37 collective bargaining agreement across
all three library systems.

My questions today will largely focus on the
council's response to the library's budget in the
preliminary plan, the PEGs, and their capital funding
and headcount. One of Brooklyn-- one of Brooklyn
Library's busiest branches is in my district in Bay
Ridge, and I see firsthand every day the value of our
libraries and what they bring to our community. I
remember being a kid and I signed up for the RIF
program, Reading is Fundamental. It's beyond books,
though. It's places where our seniors can get out of

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1 dangerous heat in the summer. Its internet access
2 for-- for homework or job applications, its financial
3 counseling and English language lessons.
4

5 Organizations like this aren't just niceties but
6 absolutely vital to our economy and to our city.
7 These institutions need proper support. I look
8 forward to speaking with the presidents today about
9 their respective library systems.

10 I now want to turn to my Co-Chair for this
11 hearing Councilmember, Chi Ossé, for his opening
12 statement.

13 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you chair and good
14 morning everyone. I'm New York City Councilmember
15 Chi Ossé, Chair of this Committee.

16 Today we will begin with a hearing on the city's
17 three library systems followed by a hearing on
18 cultural affairs. This morning we will be discussing
19 the fiscal 2020 for executive expense and capital
20 budget for the systems. For fiscal 2024, the
21 Administration is proposing a \$431 million subsidy
22 for the systems. The fiscal 2024 Executive Capital
23 Commitment Plan, which covers fiscal 2023 to 2027
24 includes \$897.6 million for the library systems. The
25 10-year strategy, which is released every two years,

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1 includes \$1.4 billion for the systems for fiscal 2024
2 to 2033. In the Council's fiscal 2024 preliminary
3 budget response, the Council called on the
4 Administration to allocate an additional \$36.2
5 million to the city's three library systems. This
6 funding would have would have both restored the
7 baseline cut of \$20.5 million to the libraries'
8 budgets from the November plan, and covered the \$15.7
9 million subsidy provided through City Council
10 discretionary funding in fiscal 2023.
11

12 In a more recent New York Times article where
13 they write about Mayor Adams' announcement to exempt
14 the New York City's public libraries from the recent
15 rounds of 4% budget cuts. Yes, the cuts did not take
16 place, and that is great news. However, as mentioned
17 above, it does not restore the cuts that currently
18 exists with the libraries and the Council subsidy.
19 It does not mean that our libraries will not
20 encounter branch closures, or the elimination of
21 weekend hours, and some of the exciting new programs
22 that have been implemented in the hopes of more to
23 come.

24 Even though I am happy that unlike most other
25 agencies, the libraries were not subject to PEGs in

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2 the executive plan. I'm disappointed that the
3 library-- that the November plan PEGs were not
4 restored. Libraries have an essential presence in
5 every single neighborhood of New York, providing
6 indispensable services and a safe and reliable space
7 to the youth, seniors, immigrants, and incarcerated
8 individuals, amongst many other New Yorkers. Along
9 with the increase in programming and circulation, the
10 systems have also seen a rise in the cost of
11 materials, staff, and operating expenses. Funds are
12 also needed to maintain physical spaces and cover
13 repairs and upkeep that are not capital eligible.
14 The cost of providing six-day services has increased,
15 and substantial funding is needed to sustain
16 operation and ensure the libraries continue to
17 provide vital programs to the patrons and the
18 communities. In the budget response, the Council
19 also called on the Administration to provide \$240
20 million in additional unrestricted capital dollars in
21 fiscal 2024 for the three library systems.
22 Investment and physical infrastructure is crucial to
23 bridge the current gap and capital funding for the
24 system's ongoing infrastructure needs. Additional
25 capital funding will be used for new buildings,

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2 expansions, renovations, and for maintaining or
3 replacing critical infrastructure such as boilers and
4 roofs, to keep buildings open, and ensure the safety
5 of customers and staff.

6 Public libraries are helping New Yorkers rebuild
7 their lives and reconnect to their communities as we
8 continue to come out of the pandemic, and need to
9 have fully functioning infrastructure to do so. I
10 want to ensure that the fiscal 2024 budget adequately
11 funds the city's library systems. The Council calls
12 on the administration to support the library systems
13 by increasing their expense and capital budgets to
14 meet all shortfalls the systems have.

15 Libraries are a beacon to our city and they
16 deserve a budget that works for them. It is
17 essential that the budget that we adopt this year as
18 transparent, accountable and reflective of the
19 priorities and interests of the Council and the
20 people we represent. I look forward to active
21 engagement with the Administration over the next few
22 months to ensure the fiscal 2024 adopted budget meets
23 the goals that the Council has set out.

24 I would like to thank my staff for organizing
25 today's hearing, including Finance Analyst, Sandra

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1
2 Gray, Committee's Counsel, Brenda McKinney, and
3 Legislative Policy Analyst Regina Paul. Back to you
4 Chair.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, we've also been
6 joined by Councilmembers Dinowitz and Carr. Before
7 we get started, I also want to extend my thanks to
8 Sandra Gray and Owen Kotowski from Council Finance
9 for preparing both of today's hearings, as well as
10 Committee Counsel Mike Twomey. I'll now turn it over
11 to Mike, our Committee Counsel, to swear in the
12 witnesses for their testimony.

13 COUNSEL: Good morning, could you raise your
14 right hands please?

15 Do you affirm that your testimony will be
16 truthful to the best of your knowledge, information
17 and belief and you will honestly and faithfully
18 answer councilmember questions? Anthony Marx?

19 MR. MARX: Yes.

20 COUNSEL: Linda Johnson?

21 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

22 COUNSEL: Dennis Walcott?

23 MR. WALCOTT: Yes.

24 COUNSEL: Thank you, you may begin.

25

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2 MS. JOHNSON: Good morning. I'm Linda Johnson,
3 President and CEO of Brooklyn Public Library. Thank
4 you, Speaker Adams, Chairs Brannan and Ossé,
5 committee members, our Brooklyn delegation, and the
6 entire City Council for prioritizing library service
7 in this challenging year, and for the opportunity to
8 testify today.

9 This morning, I come to you with a simple-- as
10 simple and as dire a budget request as I have ever
11 made: Save the library service we have all come to
12 rely upon. At stake is a staggering \$36.2 million
13 reduction in operational funding, \$10 million for
14 Brooklyn Public Library alone. We recognize that the
15 city faces economic hardships ahead, but that's
16 precisely why we must protect the services people
17 turn to in times of adversity.

18 The fiscal year 2024 executive budget proposal
19 will cause harm. It threatens to turn back the clock
20 on a decade of diligent progress. While I am
21 extremely grateful that Mayor Adams restored the
22 additional 4% cut proposed in early April, we must
23 work together to reject the current plan to cut \$20.5
24 million in expense funds. It is equally important to
25

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2 restore the Council's Library's Initiative funded
3 last year at \$15.7 million.

4 As we have been communicating to everyone since
5 we first received news of the PEG, a cut of this
6 magnitude will undoubtedly have service impacts. And
7 while my top priority is to preserve library
8 operating funding, Brooklyn Public Library's
9 infrastructure needs and shortfalls are extensive.
10 In the fiscal year 2024 executive budget, I also urge
11 the city to allocate \$80 million in capital funding
12 for each library system, \$240 million in total.

13 Brooklyn Public Library has been providing a
14 safe, dignified, and free public space to everyone in
15 every neighborhood for more than 125 years. I'm
16 grateful for our dedicated library workforce who,
17 despite the enormous challenges of the last few
18 years, continue to provide quality resources and
19 programming that make us the most trusted,
20 democratic, and far-reaching institution in our city.

21 Now, all the progress we have made together is at
22 risk. Without a restoration of funding, we will be
23 forced to make permanent reductions in staffing that
24 lead to reduced hours and days of service, less
25 programming, and decreased spending on collections.

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2 This cut may be the breaking point. We are facing
3 permanent elimination of positions. Libraries have
4 already been asked to absorb several mid-year
5 reductions to meet the city's PEG targets, and to do
6 the least harm we allow vacancies to go unfilled.
7 But this strategy is not sustainable. It has already
8 taken a toll at the branch level, where staffing
9 shortages result in frequent disruptions to service
10 and programming.

11 The devastating loss of \$10 million in operating
12 funds for Brooklyn Public Library will mean a
13 permanent elimination of 78 positions just when our
14 staffing needs have grown larger. There are five
15 libraries coming back online in the coming months,
16 requiring an additional 40 positions. We are facing
17 the loss of six-and-seven-day service. With our
18 staff already spread too thinly across the system, a
19 reduction of this magnitude means we will no longer
20 be able to guarantee universal six-day service,
21 reversing years of progress toward opening up to the
22 public on the weekends. If enacted, the cuts would
23 force us to eliminate Sunday service, now available
24 at 10 locations, as well as eliminating Saturday
25 service in 20% of our branches. Weekend hours are a

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2 cornerstone of our commitment to meeting the myriad
3 needs of our patrons. Closing the doors on Sundays
4 and Saturdays, a schedule people have come to rely
5 on, is not an action that I take lightly, but it will
6 be necessary if we must accommodate these deep cuts
7 to our current staff levels. Sunday's are the most
8 expensive and the most difficult days to operate. We
9 rely entirely on staff from all over the system to
10 volunteer for Sunday shifts with overtime pay, and we
11 are already struggling to keep the doors open on
12 Saturdays with skeleton crews and delayed openings
13 because of short staffing. We are facing reduced
14 collections and programming. Our collection budget
15 funded in part with a million dollars that we receive
16 from the Council's Library Initiative will be
17 reduced, while demand for books and ebooks is
18 soaring. We have had more than 183,000 new card
19 applications in the last year. Checkouts overall
20 including the more expensive digital items are the
21 highest they have been in the last six years at 5.38
22 million, and we are on track to hit 7.2 million
23 checkouts by the end of the fiscal year,
24 significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels.

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2 If we sustain a cut, our progress will be upended
3 with impacts to both our physical and digital
4 services. More than 1.5 million connections to our
5 Wi-Fi and well over half a million public computer
6 sessions occurred last year, but our computer
7 programs in the branches may have to scale back:
8 Tech help for older adults, creative aging programs,
9 community movies, knitting clubs, conversation
10 groups, outreach to senior centers, and many other
11 important programs could see reductions.

12 We provide assistance to all people without a
13 home and people seeking refuge. Our bookmobile and
14 outreach staff have been visiting shelters, hotels,
15 and humanitarian relief centers in Brooklyn, where
16 migrants and asylum seekers are temporarily housed.
17 We sign people up for library and IDNYC cards, and
18 connect people to services with our partner
19 organizations. These resources would diminish. Just
20 last year, the Administration invested \$15 million to
21 enhance teen services at all three library systems,
22 funding for which we are grateful. Brooklyn Public
23 Library opened a new Teen Tech Center in Crown
24 Heights and is scheduled to open three more centers
25 before the end of the fiscal year. With the

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2 allocation we added new young adult librarians
3 throughout the system and enhanced our teen
4 programming. Our monthly Teen Takeovers have been
5 incredibly popular, attracting over 50 teens at a
6 time. But this week alone, Brooklyn Teens are
7 hosting takeovers at five branches. Tonight in fact,
8 there will be a Retro Game Night Takeover at the
9 Macomb Library in your district, Chair Ossé.

10 It's heartbreaking to think about stalling this
11 progress, particularly during a growing youth mental
12 health crisis. We are building a comprehensive
13 program to better serve teens that is just beginning
14 to build momentum. How can we sustain these efforts
15 with fewer librarians, fewer programs, and reduced
16 hours? We are facing dire capital needs. The
17 proposed cuts to our expense budget are not the only
18 threat to our branches remaining open. In the last
19 year we lost over 2000 hours to unplanned closures or
20 infrastructure issues at three quarters of our
21 branches. Brooklyn Public Library is carrying \$340
22 million in unfunded capital needs, 30% of which are
23 considered emergency needs such as roofs, heating,
24 and cooling and fire safety systems and
25 accessibility. We desperately need an infusion of

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2 capital funding. We are also requesting \$80 million
3 in capital funds for fiscal year 24 To help us cover
4 shortfalls and move forward with our capital
5 infrastructure projects. Since there are no
6 additional capital funds allocated to Brooklyn Public
7 Library in the Executive Budget, we are left to
8 prioritize our emergencies, picking and choosing
9 which project projects make limited progress, and
10 which stall until the next budget cycle.

11 If there was ever a year not to dip into precious
12 operating dollars for emergency fixes, this is the
13 one, and with \$36 million worth of shortfalls on
14 projects scheduled for this year, upgrades that are
15 beginning that are waiting to begin construction or
16 are delayed in the planning stages will lose another
17 year of progress.

18 The Council has been instrumental in helping us
19 keep our infrastructure upgrades moving, allowing us
20 to repair and renovate branches that otherwise might
21 have continued to deteriorate. We are grateful to
22 the speaker and Councilmembers for district-level
23 capital support and strong delegation support, and
24 are hopeful that we can rely on your assistance again
25 this year.

2

3 There are two exciting projects that are nearly
4 finished. In a few weeks we will open East Flatbush
5 library, which underwent a comprehensive interior and
6 exterior upgrade. The community and staff are
7 eagerly awaiting its debut. Soon after we plan to
8 open the newly-constructed Brower Park Library at the
9 Brooklyn Children's Museum. Other branches will
10 launch this fall with more to follow at the year's
11 end. But as we open beautiful new libraries, it is
12 disheartening that a reduced operating budget could
13 limit access to these magnificent palaces of the
14 people, as we are known. Chair Brannan, Chair Ossé,
15 members of the committees: Millions of library
16 patrons across the city depend on your continued
17 leadership in defense of their community libraries.
18 It is not an overstatement to say our future depends
19 on you. The public should always be able to count on
20 libraries, from toddler storytime to career
21 counseling, from tech help to research guidance, from
22 English conversation groups to support for new
23 asylees. It's difficult to imagine our libraries
24 offering less, but it's not impossible to imagine
25 sustaining a \$10 million cut that does not starve

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1
2 these efforts. Without a restoration of the proposed
3 cuts, there will be fewer open hours for our growing
4 number of patrons, longer wait times for fewer books,
5 fewer Legal Services Staff will be available to
6 answer our hotline, working families will have fewer
7 storytimes if their local branch is closed on
8 weekends. A cut of this size means all our focus
9 will be on keeping our doors open. And we will not
10 be able to deliver the support our communities need
11 so badly amidst a convergence of an asylee crisis, an
12 economic crisis, and a mental health crisis that
13 impact so many of our patrons.

14 Libraries are meant to provide the community free
15 and open access, whether in prosperous or challenging
16 times. I know you understand the value of libraries,
17 a vital shared public resource, and I urge you to
18 protect our funding, especially in these challenging
19 times when our communities need us the most. Thank
20 you.

21 [APPLAUSE]

22 MR. MARX: Good morning. My name is Tony Marx.
23 I'm the President of the New York Public Library. I
24 also want to thank the City Council Speaker, Chairs

25

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2 Ossé and Brannan, the members of this committee for
3 this opportunity and for your support.

4 We are grateful to the Mayor for having been
5 spared most recent round of funding cuts, but
6 libraries are still facing a \$36.2 million cut, as
7 you've heard, in the FY 24 expense funding.

8 We are less than half a percent of the city
9 budget. And with that investment, we provide
10 unparalleled returns on that investment as the most
11 used and trusted civic institution in this town.
12 From after school and teen services and underserved
13 communities, career services for job seekers, and
14 reliable partnerships with the city in times of
15 crisis, as we did during the pandemic, and as we do
16 now with asylum seekers, we are here to serve what
17 New York needs. But this cut will simply make it
18 impossible for us to continue to do so.

19 So I just want to be clear that there will be
20 real impacts here. When we look at this at the New
21 York Public Library, for us a \$15.9 million reduction
22 means the elimination of vacancies and attrition. It
23 means that we-- that the staff we need to keep our
24 doors open, to run our after school programs and teen
25 centers, or visit our schools and shelters and senior

2 centers, and support our communities, we will not
3 have the funding to maintain those commitments.
4 Roughly 100 FTEs will have to be removed from our
5 budget. We estimate that about half of our locations
6 would either lose morning or evening and have to cut
7 back to five-day services. There are no good options
8 here, because the people of New York need their
9 libraries open. We're talking about eliminating our
10 Sunday services in eight locations. We've got six
11 incredibly, beautifully renovated, branches ready
12 getting ready to reopen. We will not have the staff
13 to reopen all of those, after the city and we have
14 made this tremendous investment in those buildings.

15 And when you don't open branches, you can't have
16 teen centers operating, you can't have the programs
17 operating. We'll have to reduce our collections
18 budget, we'll have to reduce our maintenance budgets
19 as Linda discussed, we'll have fewer pages in this
20 incredible program that is a work preparation
21 program, one of the biggest in the city. We will
22 have to cut that back, services for researchers.

23 You're going to see in the video, New Yorkers
24 talking about what a library-- what the libraries
25 mean to them. But just as one example that's already

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2 been raised the Teen 360 initiative that was so--
3 spurred by funding from the Mayor, a really inspiring
4 investment early on in his term. We-- we've seen
5 70,000 teens at our teen centers just in FY 23 so
6 far.

7 Starting with our flagship teen center at the
8 Stavros Niarchos Foundation Library, we are opening--
9 our plan is to open 19 additional teen centers. It's
10 a major investment, again with help from the city.
11 We thank Mayor Adams for that, as well as private
12 support, because we are a public-private partnership,
13 from Google, Best Buy, and the Joe Lee Family
14 Foundation. We're using technology to attract
15 students in, as you heard from one of them in the
16 rally just before the testimony. We help them get
17 ready for school or college or careers, gather
18 technology and skills. All of this will have to be
19 delayed or constrained, just at a moment when our
20 teens need this investment so urgently.

21 We have dropped in after school programs in 31
22 locations, which means that students who don't
23 benefit from after-school in their schools don't lose
24 out, and can get that assistance from us and know
25 that they can come to the library and find tutors who

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2 will help them with their homework so they can do
3 better and build their lives. If the branches are
4 closed, if we don't have the staffing, that can't
5 happen at the same scale.

6 We-- We know that we need to make sure that that
7 not only that books are available, but they are
8 available in the poorest neighborhoods that they are
9 responsive to the interests of those neighborhoods.
10 In fact, we're investing a million dollars over the
11 next three years to ensure that kind of equity and
12 access just in our collections efforts. We're
13 working with the city and the Chancellor on his New
14 York City Reads Program. We need to be part of
15 solving the literacy crisis. The numbers that the
16 Mayor and the Chancellor showed that day, were-- were
17 off the charts.

18 The Mayor calls us his Swiss Army Knife, because
19 we serve so many needs. A small piece of the budget.
20 So many needs met through this incredible set of
21 institutions. And that's certainly been true in the
22 pandemic, with our learning labs, with COVID testing
23 and vaccination, and we're stepping up again in the
24 latest crisis with asylum seekers, and we are proud
25 to do so. But we can only do so if we have the

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2 funding and the staffing to be open, to provide those
3 services.

4 We also, as you heard from Linda, you'll hear
5 from Dennis, we have a capital-- a set of capital
6 needs, because if we don't keep our buildings in good
7 shape, we end up spending more, and they end up being
8 closed, and that's a turns into a vicious cycle.

9 Each of us are asking for an \$80 million allocation.

10 We-- We still have unfunded capital needs just in the
11 New York Public Library Loan of over half a billion
12 dollars. As I mentioned, amongst projects underway,
13 we have five 100-year-old-plus Carnegie branches in
14 high-needs neighborhoods that with funding should be
15 ready to reopen shortly. Projects underway-- we have
16 full renovations in these locations to meet community
17 needs, ADA accessibility. We have major renovations
18 happening and six additional locations that we
19 expected to conclude in the coming year. Again, we
20 need the staffing to be able to open those.

21 Look. Simply put: For less than half of 1%, the
22 city gets a return on its investment second to none
23 through its libraries. And that's why we've been
24 working for years to invest more in libraries, why
25 the Council has invested more in libraries, because

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2 you hear from the citizens how essential the services
3 are.

4 With the cuts currently being considered, we will
5 not be open as long, for as many days when young
6 people, working parents, job seekers, asylum seekers,
7 and everyone else who needs the library. As you
8 negotiate the budget, we want you to understand what
9 these cuts mean. We know that you do, and we are so
10 grateful for your support in these-- in these hard
11 times. Thank you.

12 [APPLAUSE]

13 MR. WALCOTT: I want to say thank you to the
14 Chairs, Chairs Brannan, Ossé, to the Speaker and also
15 to all the great members of the City Council. I will
16 be extremely brief, but also I want to say it's nice
17 to be back on this side of the table and not the
18 other side of the table when we saw each other
19 before. So it's a pleasure to be here.

20 And with the Speaker in particular I want to
21 thank her for her leadership, and just to reinforce
22 the message: She is a child of the St. Albans
23 Library. Like the Mayor, he is a child of the South
24 Jamaica library on Guy R Brewer Boulevard.

25

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2 And so libraries have had a major impact on all
3 of us in a variety of ways. But especially I want to
4 say a thank you to the New York City Council for your
5 championing the New York City libraries. While
6 libraries are coming under attack across the nation,
7 you have reinforced the enduring importance of our
8 role in society. We are grateful that libraries were
9 exempted from the additional fiscal year 24 PEG and
10 thank the Mayor for that, but at the same time, as
11 you know, and you've heard, we have \$36.2 million in
12 cuts that still remain. Of this amount, I want to
13 specifically deal with Queens \$10.3 million
14 represents the cut to the Queens Public Library, \$5.9
15 million from the administration, and, if enacted,
16 \$4.38 million from the Council's Library Initiative,
17 which was truly, truly important to all of us.

18 As I testified at the March hearing cuts of this
19 magnitude would result in significant impacts on
20 hours, programs, and services. For Queens Public
21 Library, that means elimination of Sunday service
22 specifically at Central, Flushing, and Kew Gardens
23 Hills. Closure of Saturdays at up to half of our
24 locations across the borough, effectively ending
25 universal six-day service, less spending on books and

2 materials, reduced programs and services, and
3 deferred facilities and repairs. And to me, those
4 are critical pieces that will impact not just the
5 libraries but the residents of New York City. And we
6 need to make sure we convey that in a way where
7 people understand that we don't take this lightly.
8 We are here together because these cuts will have
9 significant impact on all of us, and we are here for
10 the public.

11 I want to pick up on a couple of points, and then
12 I want to defer to really showing the video because
13 Tony mentioned, and Linda mentioned, the New York
14 City Reads Program. And we were recently asked to do
15 the press announcement for New York City Reads, which
16 we truly appreciate. And each of us in our own ways
17 are mobilizing our libraries to work with the
18 Chancellor and the Chancellor staff to make sure that
19 our branch managers and our other service staff are
20 available to work with the school system. In Queens,
21 for example, we've already reached out to the
22 Chancellor, and we're setting up a meeting in the
23 next several weeks with all the superintendents of
24 Queens and our branch managers to talk about New York
25 City Reads and what it means. Tony and Linda also

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2 indicated the partnership around asylum seekers and
3 what we can do to be of assistance there, much less
4 with IDNYC and the other services we provide.

5 I talked outside about in Queens, the food pantry
6 services were are providing throughout the borough as
7 well.

8 We continue to expand our services to the public
9 to meet our needs. We have several members of Queens
10 who are here from the borough, who represent their
11 particular areas. We want to open up libraries in
12 their area that are currently under construction.
13 But unfortunately, we may have to delay that with
14 these proposed cuts. We have a number of facilities
15 that are on the drawing board that are getting
16 upgrades, whether HVAC, or other types of services to
17 make sure that facilities meets the needs of the
18 public, especially here in the 21st century. Those
19 types of upgrades will be delayed as well.

20 As you've heard, as you will hear, the cuts have
21 a continued impact on the services to the people and
22 the public. And again, as you heard earlier,
23 collections potentially will go down as well as the
24 general services provided by the great staff who are
25 here in the audience and those who are right now at

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2 their libraries providing the services. So city
3 council, I want to say thank you for your leadership
4 in this, but the importance of what we do is just
5 truly tremendous to the needs of the public. And I,
6 at this particular.in time, I would like to have the
7 video to show exactly what we're talking about.

8 [VIDEO STARTS]

9 PEYTON, AFTER SCHOOL SUPPORT: I remember getting
10 my first library card. It was exciting, and I was so
11 excited to use it. I go to the library almost every
12 single day,

13 BARBARA, ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES,
14 CITIZENSHIP, AND KIDS PROGRAMS: The library was my
15 first place to learn English. Then they helped me
16 with my citizenship program. And now that I'm a
17 mother of two, I started with my two kids doing the--
18 all the free programs that the library has.

19 KUMUD, RESOURCES FOR SENIORS, MULTILINGUAL
20 RESOURCES: I am here in this library once a week.
21 They provide so many good programs. They have books,
22 they have a my language, Gujarati, Hindi. I don't
23 think I can live without a library.

24

25

2 GYENN, TEEN SERVICE: There's not a lot of
3 resources in my community, and the library is just
4 like one big place where they have everything.

5 GERLY, ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES:
6 When you need help, or, I mean, like understanding a
7 book, and, like, you got a question, you know that
8 you have somebody there. Having somebody to speak in
9 Spanish is really awesome. And you feel more
10 comfortable, more when you're new to-- to the
11 country.

12 KEVIN, AFTER-SCHOOL SUPPORT: I really didn't
13 understand my homework, and they he helped me get it
14 right, and it started getting better.

15 DARRELL, AFTER-SCHOOL SUPPORT: My reading level
16 was very low. But now I can almost read any book.

17 SOL, TEEN SERVICES: For me, I have a difficult
18 home life. And so it was really important for me to
19 have a space where I can just, you know, go to after
20 school and like I have the space to do my homework
21 and talk to people. And my parents aren't usually
22 home all the time because they're working. So it's
23 nice to have like an adult to talk to.

24 MARC, TEEN SERVICES: This is like my second
25 home. So I feel like I'm walking into a safe space.

2 Some of the resources that I use at the Teen Center
3 in the library is the lab the most, the computer lab.
4 It helped me the most to learn how to use Premiere
5 Pro. I'm really doing good. Like, I actually feel
6 good about doing something, you know? It gives me
7 purpose, you know?

8 SALOME, KIDS PROGRAMS & MULTILINGUAL RESOURCES:

9 I'm always like constantly looking at the calendar to
10 see what's available for the kids. I'm teaching my
11 kids Spanish too. So I tried to borrow all of that
12 from the library.

13 I feel safe when I visit the library, because--
14 and my children too, because I've known these ladies
15 for like 10 years. So it's more like a-- like a
16 family kind of, because they-- these ladies, they see
17 my children since they were little, but now
18 teenagers.

19 YHAMIL, ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES:

20 Because I don't have friends here. I don't have
21 family. So I said I need to connect with people. So
22 I came and started in English class, and I'm very
23 grateful. Because I've learned a lot of things.

24 JOCELYN, ADULT LEARNING CENTER MANAGER: We've

25 just seen an increase in ESL need, English as a

2 second language. But unfortunately, we have
3 waitlists now because we don't have enough teachers
4 or services. So cutting budget would make that
5 worse.

6 For all recent arrivals, all immigrants, but
7 specifically asylum seekers, the library is one of
8 the few places where they can walk in, access free
9 information, access free Wi-Fi, free programming, and
10 we're here to help them.

11 MELISSA, LIBRARY ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR: A lot of
12 the asylum seekers, you know, they're coming with
13 literally what's on their back, and them camping out
14 in front of the library at almost six o'clock in the
15 morning, for the doors to open at nine o'clock, just
16 to see if they can be seen. If we had to closed even
17 for one day, it will be detrimental to the community.

18 VALERIE, CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN: I have about six
19 public schools that received asylum-seeker families,
20 and they brought them to the library to get library
21 cards. And when they came, they were so excited that
22 we have Spanish books. And I was so excited, they
23 were excited about the Spanish books that they were
24 bilingual books, that the books were in English and
25 Spanish.

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2 JOANNA, PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER: Every month, the
3 students look forward to visiting the library. They
4 know that we have an appointment, there's more books
5 here that are in Spanish than what we might have in
6 the classroom.

7 BONNIE, MAIL-A-BOOK: I don't think that there is
8 words to explain the positive impact that I've had
9 with Mail-A-Book. My quality of life as a home-bound
10 person has increased so dramatically.

11 ARTHUR, ADULT EDUCATION: Reading and writing has
12 always been a challenge for me with the dyslexia.
13 But-- but the library really gave me the opportunity
14 to help myself. I pay my own bills now because of
15 the library. I write out checks now because of the
16 library.

17 You have so many students coming from other
18 countries, learning English, and a student like
19 myself, who tried to pursue their dream to get their
20 GED. We don't want no hours cut. Staff members have
21 to stay employed, employed in order to-- to help us,
22 and to cut things like that would be a sin. We need
23 to keep the library open. Budget cuts is not an
24 option.

25

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2 [TEXT: "LIBRARIES ARE FOR EVERYONE, NO CUTS TO
3 LIBRARIES!]

4 [VIDEO ENDS]

5 MR. WALCOTT: No more needs to be said thank you.

6 [APPLAUSE]

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. We've also been
8 joined by Councilmembers Sanchez, Williams, and
9 Powers.

10 I have to say I'm feeling deja vu. As a staffer
11 who worked here back in 2009 and 2013, when there
12 were threatened library cuts. It's-- It's a very bad
13 case of deja vu that we need to fight back on.

14 I want to get right into it.

15 So as has been mentioned in the Council's FY 24
16 Preliminary Budget Response, we called on the
17 Administration to allocate an additional \$36.2
18 million to the city's three library systems. This
19 funding would have both restored the baseline cut of
20 \$20.5 million to libraries budgets from the November
21 plan, as well as cover the \$15.7 million subsidy
22 provided through City Council discretionary funding
23 in FY 23. Can you tell us, has the Administration
24 does discussed with the three systems, why this
25

2 funding was not restored? What the wisdom is behind
3 that?

4 MS. JOHNSON: Yeah. We certainly have had
5 conversations with the Administration. It's hard to
6 imagine how to-- how an argument could be made that
7 would justify the cuts. And I think the
8 conversations are more about how we can work to
9 restore the funding.

10 MR. MARX: We are certainly in conversations with
11 OMB, and we are hopeful for those conversations.
12 We've emphasized the need for this operating support.
13 In our case, we've talked about how essential this
14 funding is to be able to reopen our renovated
15 locations. So, to get the return on investment from
16 that renovation, to carry out new initiatives such as
17 Teens 360 Initiative that the Mayor himself has been
18 so supportive of, to meet growing patron needs, and
19 to withstand the high general inflation numbers on
20 even stable funding.

21 We've made that case. They've made a public case
22 about their situation more-- but not I think-- but at
23 this point, those cuts are still what is in the
24 Mayor's proposal. So, you know, the conversations
25 continue.

2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Was there anything that
3 they pointed to, the reason why they had to make
4 these cuts?

5 MR. WALCOTT: Uh, to pick up on the question,
6 nothing specific. And obviously, we can't speak for
7 the Administration on the why. But we haven't heard
8 that. But again, I do want to say that the
9 administration has been extremely helpful, both from
10 the Mayor's office, from the Deputy Mayor's office,
11 and from OMB as far as the conversations and trying
12 to manage the cuts. But beyond that, I haven't heard
13 anything specific at this.in time. But they also
14 know, as I indicated briefly in my testimony, that
15 the libraries play an important role in meeting the
16 needs of the city, and how we can expand our services
17 to the public. So there's always the continued
18 expectation of libraries being in there, but they
19 also know our feeling around the impact that these
20 cuts will have.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: In the budget response, the
22 Council also called on the Administration to provide
23 \$240 million in additional unrestricted capital
24 dollars in FY 24 for the three library systems.

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2 Could you talk about how these additional dollars
3 would assist the systems?

4 MS. JOHNSON: Yes. We, as mentioned, requested
5 \$80 million for each system in capital funds to help
6 cover shortfalls, and to move forward with critical
7 infrastructure projects. There's still time for you
8 all to push for these funds to be added before
9 adoption. But the-- for Brooklyn, the shortfalls are
10 \$36.1 million. An ERP system, the system that
11 actually allows our business to operate, is being
12 replaced. That's \$5 million. We have for HVAC
13 projects that total to \$14 million, and then five
14 what we call envelope projects, renovations that are
15 \$14 million, and then ADA upgrades, elevators,
16 bathrooms, and that's \$11 million. That totals \$80
17 million.

18 MR. MARX: Whoops. At the NYPL we have a current
19 \$22.3 million in immediate unfunded needs. That
20 includes \$7.3 million in DDC project shortfalls, a
21 recurring theme in these conversations, \$10 million
22 in project initiations, and \$5 million in mechanical
23 systems and energy conservation. In the system as a
24 whole, we-- as I said, we have \$536 million during
25 the next 10 years that we see as new needs that

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2 includes branch renovations, project shortfalls --
3 again, the recurring theme of having to make up for
4 the delays in DDC's delivery of projects -- and
5 technology and upgrades. I mean, it's, you know,
6 evolving.

7 MR. WALCOTT: Yeah. And I just want to put a
8 context to this also. I mean, we have basically
9 similar needs as far as the breakdown of the funds
10 and the purposes of the funds. But also as a
11 reminder, when I listened to you talk about deja vu,
12 Chair. A lot of our libraries are still the Lindsay
13 boxes that were built back during the Lindsay
14 administration, and the challenges that go along with
15 that, and some of them that predate even them, and
16 how we have to upgrade those systems because a lot of
17 our libraries, unfortunately have many challenges
18 based on the size and also the age of those
19 buildings. And so our needs are basically the same
20 thing that's then laid out by Brooklyn and New York.
21 But I think the context is also extremely important
22 that if we don't have an infrastructure that's being
23 upgraded, then that infrastructure collapses. And we
24 had a system in Flushing, our largest library and the
25 most complex library, that went through a very

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2 serious period where, as the Councilmember indicated
3 earlier, had to be shut down for a period of time
4 based on the collapse of our infrastructure. And the
5 types of investments that have been made by the
6 Council allowed us to do a lot of that capital work
7 that-- using both expense dollars and capital dollars
8 to make sure that we had Flushing, for example, up
9 and running, and a lot of our libraries face similar
10 types of problems and challenges.

11 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What's the current gap in
12 FY 24 in capital funding for each of the systems
13 ongoing needs? If you could each just give us a
14 number.

15 MS. JOHNSON: Our deferred maintenance is-- Our
16 deferred maintenance is \$340 million. Were asking--

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: 3-4-0?

18 MS. JOHNSON: Yeah.

19 MR. MARX: For us, it's a \$22.3 million number.

20 MR. WALCOTT: And for us, \$33.4 mil.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Say that again?

22 MS. JOHNSON: Can I correct mine? It's \$36
23 million.

24 MR. WALCOTT: And ours is \$33.4.
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What is your comprehensive
3 unfunded capital need just-- not just for FY 24?

4 MS. JOHNSON: That's the \$340.

5 MR. WALCOTT: And the same.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Sorry if-- I was confused.

7 MR. MARX: For us about [inaudible].

8 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: All right. Okay. I want
9 to talk about headcount, and then I'm going to pass
10 it to Chair Ossé. What is the growth and decline
11 that the systems have encountered in the number of
12 employees? If you have an idea of your current
13 agency vacancy, system vacancy.

14 MR. WALCOTT: I do. Give me a sec, and I will
15 break it down. Currently-- Let me give you a context
16 again. So back in 2021, we had 938 full time, 31
17 part time FTEs, and in 2022 was 155 part time, 897
18 for a total of 1052. We're projecting and adopted
19 for 2023 at 1225, and we're going to lose probably 73
20 on top of that, so down to-- 1165 from 1238.

21 MS. JOHNSON: Our actual headcount is 1263 with
22 994 full time and part time of 269. But there are
23 120 vacancies, and then 78 that we would have to
24 eliminate the positions.

25

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2 MR. MARX: And at New York Public, our total
3 headcount at the moment is 2819. That includes 2119,
4 full time salaried, 47 part time salaried, and 653
5 hourly staff. We have 137 vacancies currently.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And what's the-- do you
7 have the percentage for union jobs on each of the
8 systems?

9 MS. JOHNSON: Um, this is just rough, but about
10 90% of our of our employees are union.

11 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay.

12 MR. WALCOTT: And we would say roughly 92%, give
13 or take. So same ballpark, same range.

14 MR. MARX: I'm sorry. It is just over 50%.

15 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, I'm going to turn it
16 over to Chair Ossé. Thank you guys. Thank you.

17 MS. JOHNSON: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you, Chair Brannan. In
19 the Council's Budget Response, the Council urged the
20 Admin to baseline the \$15.7 million subsidy provided
21 through city council discretionary funding in fiscal
22 2023. It is disappointing to see that this funding
23 was not included in the Executive Budget. I wanted
24 to ask the three of you how will baselining this
25 budget enhance the services provided by the systems?

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MR. MARX: Say that again? I'm sorry, I was
thinking about the last question. Apologies, Mr.
Chair.

CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: No worries. So in the
Council's Budget Response, the Council called on
Administration to baseline the \$15.7 million subsidy
provided through City Council discretionary funding
in fiscal 2023. It was disappointing to see that
that was not included within the Executive Budget as
is. How will baselining this budget allocation
enhance the services provided by your three systems?

MR. MARX: Give me a second. Well, in the case--
FY 23, with the adoption of the Council, we used
that-- those funds, \$2-- roughly \$2 million for
library materials, \$3.6 million for facilities
maintenance and cleaning, \$1 million for pages,
\$225,000 for rent and utilities in the Inwood
temporary space while we were redoing that program.
All of those efforts would, if-- if they are not
baseline are in jeopardy as-- in addition to the
further cuts from the Executive Budget that we're
facing.

And if-- You know, it's impossible to keep
managing a system, if you can't be sure of the

2 funding. That's why baselining is so important.

3 It's why 10-year capital investments are so-- Then we
4 can be efficient in delivering. If we're not sure
5 what's sticking and what isn't, then it's hard to
6 invest in the way that that we need to.

7 MS. JOHNSON: Yeah, the about the importance of
8 baseline can't be overstated. It would, in fact,
9 alleviate some of the stress that we go through each
10 year in making sure that the fiscal year-- the future
11 fiscal year is properly funded. We would love to be
12 baselined.

13 We from that money that you are referencing,
14 spent \$1 million on collections, and that's critical,
15 especially as we're investing more and more in
16 digital collections, which tend to be more expensive.
17 And we also funded 14 positions.

18 MR. WALCOTT: So I wanted to go back to a
19 question that Chair Brannan raised, and I didn't give
20 a full answer: 112 vacancies, in response to your
21 question around vacancies. I didn't put in that
22 number there for you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

24 MR. WALCOTT: And then with us, for example, our
25 need is \$3.2 million baseline, \$1.3 million one-time

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2 funding, and it really allows us, as Linda indicated,
3 to plan appropriately and have the money there, so
4 we're not always dancing. And then it also allows
5 for stability of our staff. And so when we get the
6 money baselined, then we know what we're projecting
7 on.

8 And then that has a direct correlation also to us
9 having continuous library services, because I have to
10 give the people who put the schedules together a
11 tremendous amount of credit, because when the money
12 is not baseline, then we potentially have those
13 vacancies. And as a result of those vacancies, the
14 stress on the system itself, or the hours and the
15 number of buildings that stay open is undermined. So
16 the baselining allows us the appropriate amount of
17 time to plan properly and to make sure we have the
18 appropriate staff in place.

19 And as I'm being handed, there was a \$480,000
20 increase from fiscal year 22, \$3.9 million funds are
21 used to support library materials, additional
22 security at our branches, building maintenance, such
23 as AC installations, and our after school enrichment
24 programs.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you. And as I indicated
3 in my opening statement, libraries obviously need
4 additional capital funding for new buildings,
5 expansions, and renovations. Hence, I'm disappointed
6 to see that in the Administration's Executive Budget,
7 it does not include the additional capital funding
8 that the City Council pushed for in our budget
9 response. Can you tell us about some current capital
10 projects that are incomplete due to lack of
11 sufficient funding?

12 MR. WALCOTT: So I'll jump in first. So we have
13 a number of projects that are incomplete, that the
14 Council funding has allowed us to really deal with:
15 HVAC projects in Queens, for example. We have
16 Laurelton. We have a number of libraries that are
17 currently under construction, but that would be
18 delayed if we do not have those continued funds
19 itself. And so as a result of that, Rosedale and
20 other projects that we have in the planning stages
21 will be put to the back shelf. And again, we will
22 have to get into the position of using expense
23 dollars for deferred maintenance.

24 So that to me is the benefit of what you've been
25 able to provide and the City has been able to provide

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2 as far as capital funding. And if we don't have that
3 capital funding, then the system suffers overall.

4 MS. JOHNSON: I won't go into the whole litany of
5 branches that are currently stalled or struggling
6 because projects are experiencing shortfall
7 shortfalls, but I will tell you that there are--
8 there are 14 libraries right now that have projects
9 that are in jeopardy because of shortfalls on the
10 capital projects.

11 MR. MARX: So, I-- reiterating what my colleagues
12 have said we've done amazing work with capital
13 investment. And we have scheduled to come online
14 this year Inwood, Hunts Point, Port Richmond, 125th
15 Street, Melrose, Muhlenberg. And we have a long
16 litany of other projects that are that are in
17 process. But if we don't have the investment, we
18 will stop being able to-- that level of improvement,
19 not just improvement, but making sure that things
20 aren't falling apart, that they aren't-- aren't
21 leaking on people, they are respectful of people.
22 All that stops without the investments so that we can
23 schedule and plan and deliver, which we're very good
24 at when we have the resources.

25

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2 MR. WALCOTT: And Chair, if I could just add one
3 points, specifically mentioning again, one library
4 because it's really our most complex project, and
5 it's the Flushing library, for example. And so
6 Flushing has a number of upgrades going on. They
7 have an elevator addition upgrade. They have an
8 emergency generator system restoration. They have a
9 fire alarm system replacement. They have HVAC going
10 on. As well as we have a number of other type of
11 infrastructure projects that are all being done,
12 while keeping the library open at the same time
13 because we developed this creative initiative where
14 we're working in the evening at night after the
15 building closes. Things like that at other libraries
16 would be in jeopardy and therefore those libraries
17 may not be open at all.

18 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And in your testimonies you
19 all referred to permanent staff reductions, the
20 elimination of critical weakened services, a
21 reduction in the book collections as well as other
22 cuts. In an ideal world, how much will each system
23 need to fully operate the libraries as intended and
24 to meet the current demand? If you can provide a
25 dollar amount, that would be helpful too.

2 MR. MARX: A full restoration-- The full
3 restoration is what would enable us to deliver on all
4 those promises.

5 MS. JOHNSON: So for Brooklyn, that's a little
6 over \$10 million.

7 MR. WALCOTT: Same.

8 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: With the PEGs, I-- With the
9 PEGs, I know that you all have been working hard to
10 ensure normal operations. How do the libraries work
11 to ensure as many services and programs continue to
12 run as normally?

13 The problem is one that creates us to react to
14 being too thinly staffed. And so we experience
15 unplanned closings, where somebody is sick and can't
16 come in, and they're not enough people to staff the
17 library adequately. And we've reduced programs,
18 because they're not enough staff to deliver the
19 programs, because we're worried about keeping the
20 branches open. So it's a-- it's a slow degrade--
21 degradation of the quality and quantity of the
22 service that our communities have come to expect.

23 And we are in a position now, where we were just
24 beginning to rebound from what we call The Great
25 Resignation, where we'll be able to hire enough

2 people to manage those programs, and if we're forced
3 to stop that process, we won't be able to get
4 ourselves back to where we want and where our
5 communities expect and would like us to be.

6 MR. MARX: Linda said it best, we simply, without
7 staffing, we can't be open and we can't deliver on
8 the programs that everyone depends on us,
9 increasingly depends on us to deliver.

10 MR. WALCOTT: So I totally agree. But I want to
11 take a hot second to talk about the psychological
12 trauma as well. Because to me, that has a major
13 impact. And as a result of having outstanding folks
14 who are part of our respective systems, who are so
15 dedicated to the cause, the pressure on not just
16 them, but the pressure on others who say, "Do I
17 really want to work for the library, because they may
18 not have the funding?" And what that does, it
19 creates, I think, a psychological trauma to the
20 system. And we can't afford that. And the pressure
21 points for the people who are here, and people who
22 are part of the union, and those who are not part of
23 the Union, we have to be very conscious of. And the
24 more we have to reduce our staffing capacity, again,
25 it correlates directly into fewer hours, fewer

2 branches potentially not being open. And that has a
3 major impact on the psychological trauma for the
4 community itself, and how the community is not
5 getting those services. Because as you heard
6 outside, as you heard in the video, people rely on us
7 for a variety of services and those services can have
8 a major impact of being eroded on a regular basis,
9 which is unacceptable.

10 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And-- Thank you for that. At
11 the last hearing you all mentioned how critical these
12 services have been to asylum seekers and we also
13 acknowledged that in the video, with lines wrapped
14 around the block at some of the Queen's locations.
15 With the arrival of more asylum seekers in our city,
16 it is expected that we will have More people seeking
17 out these services. As we heard from you all today
18 at the rally, the libraries are often the first on
19 the chopping block for budget, but yet are the
20 institutions to step up when the city calls for help.
21 How have the PEGs affected the library's ability in
22 providing services to the asylum seekers and also to
23 ensure services as our city recovers from COVID?

24 MS. JOHNSON: I think the-- the answer to that
25 question is the asylum seekers are suffering at the

2 same levels that our, you know, long-term patrons
3 have been. It's just a matter of not having enough
4 staff to deliver at the rate that we would like to.
5 And we're doing our very best with the asylum
6 seekers, especially in the neighborhoods where some
7 of them are housed, and we're taking services to the
8 hotels where they're staying, as well as inviting
9 them into our branches. We're getting them signed up
10 for IDNYC cards, and making sure that they're getting
11 integrated into the communities as quickly as
12 possible. But it's, you know, the library's budget
13 largely goes toward two things. It's-- It's
14 salaries, which translate to the number of people
15 that are employed, and the number of hours that we
16 can use to deliver service, and then material and
17 books. And so if we want to keep abreast and keep
18 pace with the increase in the number of asylum
19 seekers that are-- that we're experiencing, and that
20 we are anticipating, we need to be fully staffed in
21 order to do that. And we just aren't there yet. And
22 we need the funds to do it.

23 MR. WALCOTT: And to really pick up an
24 important.that was just raised. It's not just in our
25 buildings. We're out in the community. Linda

2 outside talked about, and I think in the testimony,
3 the mobile libraries. And we have mobile libraries
4 that go out into the communities to provide the
5 services, not just during the weekday, but on the
6 weekend as well. And making sure that we're they're
7 providing the services to the asylum seekers, but
8 also just providing services to people overall.

9 And again, in the intersection of our lives, if
10 we have to cut the Saturday services, then that means
11 that the mobile library won't be going out on
12 Saturday into the communities. It's not just the
13 buildings will be closed. Those types of services
14 will not be available to the public at large. And
15 that impacts the asylum seekers. We go into where
16 they are located, not just having them come to us as
17 well. And those I think, are the pieces that are so
18 important for people to understand.

19 And it's not just the services of IDNYC, but it's
20 the services of libraries. Because once we have you,
21 we want you to get and take advantage of our full
22 services. And that, to me is the beauty of the
23 library. But we're not just one type of thing.
24 We're many things to many people. And having fewer
25 staff to provide those many things means the multiple

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2 of individuals won't receive those types of services.
3 And I think that's the complexity of our business and
4 making sure we're open for all.

5 MR. MARX: Look, I-- the public library of New
6 York, and sitting in this historic space, you have to
7 think about history. We-- New York has always been
8 a city of immigrants and waves of immigrants. We are
9 experiencing a particular one of those now. But
10 that's no different from where we've always been.
11 And the libraries have always been the first place
12 that the immigrants come to. You know, their-- their
13 colleagues, their family, tell them about this magic
14 space that provides everything they could need for
15 free, never asks for papers or proof of anything,
16 treats you with respect, which everyone deserves. It
17 is the way New York should be and has been. And
18 because we are the largest providers outside of the
19 school systems, the basic resources of learning
20 English, and learning computer skills, of getting
21 help finding jobs, getting skilled for those jobs,
22 being able to read books. The core services that the
23 immigrant community have always relied on us.

24 If we're not open, we can't be providing those.
25 We are currently stretching ourselves as you've heard

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2 to go out to the asylum seekers and invite them in
3 and work with them. Without the staff, we simply
4 cannot continue to do that.

5 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And if you could provide
6 numbers of attendees for-- for some of these programs
7 from each of these systems, would you be able to
8 share some of those stats?

9 MR. WALCOTT: Sure, we'd be glad to. Provide,
10 you mean, after the hearing? Or now?

11 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: If you have them now, that'd
12 be great. After the hearing is acceptable.

13 MR. MARX: For example. Sure. English
14 instruction, basic literacy, citizenship preparation
15 classes had an attendance of almost 47,000 just
16 between January and March of 23. Just as one
17 example.

18 MR. WALCOTT: So far this fiscal year, we've had
19 737,000 visits and dealing with programs. We've
20 hosted over 90,400 computer sessions, we've held over
21 4600 programs with an attendance of more than 91,000.
22 That's just this current fiscal year. Physical
23 materials: We circulated close to a million. I
24 mean, we are doing a lot of things with fewer staff
25 out. And again, based on the potential cuts, we'll

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1
2 have even fewer staff as a result of that. And we'll
3 try to maintain the services. But there isn't a
4 guarantee, especially with the loss of Saturday and
5 Sunday service.

6 MS. JOHNSON: And in Brooklyn, we've-- between
7 July 1st and March 31st, last March, we've had
8 404,780 attendees at over 30-- at almost 40,000
9 programs, just in the first quarter of 20-- fiscal
10 Year 2023.

11 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And-- Thank you for that
12 response. And with the proposed budget, will the
13 three library systems be equipped to handle the
14 amount of attendees and to continue programming at
15 the branches? A yes or no answers is fine.

16 MS. JOHNSON: No.

17 MR. MARX: No.

18 MR. WALCOTT: No. And the figures I gave you are
19 just for the weekend, by the way. That wasn't
20 overall.

21 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Okay.

22 MR. WALCOTT: The figures that I read into the
23 testimony, this was Saturday and Sunday currently,
24 just so you know that.

25

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CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And can the system tell us
about the partnerships it has with government
entities and nonprofit organizations to provide
immigration related information and programming?

MR. WALCOTT: So we have partnership with the
obviously with MOIA, and we offer the Action New York
City NYC, a program that allows New York's-- New
Yorkers to access safe immigration legal help in
fiscal year 2021. Despite the pandemic, we provided
over 110 immigration sessions, we collaborated with
MOIA in the US Citizenship and Immigration Services
for our New Americans Corners Program. We've done a
number of initiatives with the Bangla Community,
which is heavily concentrated in the central area,
central Queens Library area. We have our New
Americans Program, which is a program that's been in
place for a long period of time, where we have
community-based organizations that are part of that
that reaches a variety of different groups in the
immigrant communities. We have a women-focused
program in the South Asian community, with connect in
Bengali, Hindi, Urdu. Topics range from and creating
safe and healthy environment. So we have a variety

2 of programs in a variety of neighborhoods that
3 reflect the diversity of the Borough of Queens.

4 MS. JOHNSON: So in Brooklyn, we have
5 partnerships with 20 or so entities that we're
6 working on specifically for the asylum seekers:
7 Community ESL classes, bookmobile visits, welcome
8 packets, welcome cards, translation and
9 interpretation, resource fairs in community
10 libraries, training for staff to help asylum seekers
11 and refugees, and get information into their hands,
12 workforce training, resources, book donations, and
13 then very vocal, you know, hyperlocal resource
14 guides, so that people can get integrated into the
15 neighborhoods, navigation centers, IDNYC, walk-in
16 hours, Civic Commons in the central library, we do
17 Spanish speaking interpretation and library
18 navigation with staff volunteers, we have events for
19 unaccompanied minors.

20 And, and it goes on and on. I mean, the-- the
21 idea is to be responsive to needs, and I think the
22 needs vary depending on the community and-- and the
23 density and number of asylum seekers that they're
24 experiencing.

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2 MR. MARX: Similarly, there are pages in this
3 book of various partnerships with city agencies, with
4 nonprofits. We have, for instance, in terms of the
5 asylum seekers, we've hosted 15 immigration resource
6 fairs, and working together with the New York
7 Immigration Coalition, the Union Settlement Bowery
8 Residents Committee, Catholic Charities, as well as
9 branch-specific partnerships and programs.

10 We have staff that we have allocated, especially
11 to this effort to go visit the sites where asylum
12 seekers-- to go out to bring them news about the
13 library and encourage them to come in, whether that
14 be the English language classes, our adult learning
15 centers, our career serv-- coaching. All of the
16 programs that we have developed over these years,
17 working with the City Council, we're now targeting
18 towards this particularly needy population, and we're
19 proud to do it, as long as we have the resources to
20 be able to.

21 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And how much of each of your
22 budgets are dedicated towards these services,
23 specifically when it comes to immigration, asylum
24 seekers?

25

1
2 MR. JOHNSON: Yeah. In anticipation of your
3 question, we tried to calculate that and it's
4 difficult because there's not a huge distinction
5 between the services that we're offering to asylees
6 and those that we're offering the general-- our
7 general patrons. But we've sort of come up with a
8 number of \$500,000.

9 MR. WALCOTT: Yeah. I mean, exactly what Linda
10 said. I mean, for example, we have our language
11 line, which is an amazing initiative, which is not
12 just dedicated to asylum seekers, but to the
13 population overall. So it's really tough to, for us
14 at least, to give a specific number.

15 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: No. I mean, that totally
16 makes sense. I mean, I don't think your services
17 discriminate against the constituencies of our city
18 as well as New Yorkers that are coming here.

19 MR. MARX: Before we budgeted for immigration
20 services, anticipated at about \$240,000. That
21 includes City, private, and State funding, and also
22 includes just over \$56,000 from the City for Action
23 NYC specifically.

24 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Right. I want to move on to
25 some of the Council initiatives. Could you tell us

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2 about the role the libraries are playing in
3 implementing the City's first readers initiative?

4 MR. WALCOTT: Be with you in a sec.

5 MS. JOHNSON: In Brooklyn-- Sorry. We're
6 grateful for the Council's support of City's First
7 Readers. It's a great program, and allows us to try
8 to prioritize early literacy, and we've been doing
9 that since 2014. The program has attracted-- Well,
10 the total number of children that have participated
11 surpassed 300,000 last year. And this year, we're on
12 track to build back to pre-pandemic attendance of
13 over 600,000 children. So it's-- it's about \$440,000
14 of the initiative, and we offer in-person early
15 literacy programs in 10 languages, including Ready,
16 Set, Kindergarten!, School Readiness, Storytime, and
17 last year, we added Story Teen Internships for high
18 school students to learn about Storytime and early
19 learning careers.

20 MR. WALCOTT: I want to know how you have one
21 more language than I have. I have-- I have nine
22 languages. We've got to do an analysis to find out
23 what that other languages is.

24 MS. JOHNSON: I've always been prone to
25 exaggeration.

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2 MR. WALCOTT: [chuckles] And we've increased our
3 circulating collections in every one of our community
4 libraries. Excuse me. We gave away developmentally
5 appropriate books for families to increase their home
6 libraries. We also provided learning take-home kits
7 that expand on pre reading skills. We resumed
8 Kickoff To Kindergarten and TALA Learning Center
9 Programs in person, promoting early literacy and
10 parenting-- parenting skills. And as I indicated,
11 we've done this in person and virtually in nine
12 languages.

13 MR. MARX: Thanks for the funding provided for
14 the city's first readers, we've had at NYPL 9500
15 early literacy programs. That includes storytimes
16 caregiver programs, workshops, vendor programs,
17 outreach events, held in just the first three
18 quarters of FY 23 with over 170,000 attendees, two--
19 that incl-- within those programs 2000 early
20 childhood outreach visits with over 34,000 attendees.
21 We've produced and disseminated a brand new
22 trilingual early literacy outreach kit, 12,000 kits.
23 This work continues.

24 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And the last question I have
25 for you all. It's in the same vein of the City's

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2 First Readers Initiative. The Mayor has made it one
3 of his top priorities to provide services and
4 resources to New Yorkers living with dyslexia. Our
5 libraries play a critical role in helping New Yorkers
6 gain the skills and confidence to read and form a
7 love of reading. What services and resources do the
8 libraries provide to New Yorkers living with
9 dyslexia?

10 MR. MARX: All of our-- All of our programs, our
11 reading programs, our early storytime programs, our
12 librarians are trained to look for different patterns
13 of need, so that we can target our efforts and have
14 special programs when that's appropriate.

15 I mean, so much of what we do, Mr. Chairman, for
16 millions of New York-- of New Yorkers and kids in
17 particular, is, you know, in this vein. It's a
18 little hard to pull out exactly what percentage
19 specifically.

20 MR. WALCOTT: Yeah. Just as a reminder Chair,
21 when we ended the video. I mean, the gentleman who
22 was on the video talked about having dyslexia, and
23 what libraries were able to do for him in helping him
24 pay his bills. And I mean, that captures it all.

25

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2 And again, it's not solely around dyslexia, but
3 it's around a variety of special needs that are
4 various populations must navigate. And that's why
5 we're there for them with our expansiveness, and
6 being able to capture that. On June 1, for example,
7 we were talking about this in one of our meetings
8 yesterday at Queens Public Library, we're having this
9 very unique program by one of our children's
10 librarian at the Hollis Library for autism, and
11 children who are on the spectrum. And so again,
12 we're there to provide a variety of different types
13 of services, including for dyslexia, to make sure
14 that people have the opportunity of equity in our
15 society.

16 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Great. And I'll turn it over
17 to chair Brannan to move on to questions from our
18 colleagues. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Chair Ossé.
20 Okay, we're going to start with questions from
21 Councilmembers Brooks-Powers, followed by Hudson.

22 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And I do have a question from
23 Brooks-Powers here. She's not here. But her
24 question is: The Far Rockaway branch still has yet
25 to be completed, despite the initial projection of

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1 completion in mid-2021, when you all broke ground in
2 2018. Can you provide an update on the progress
3 toward completion of the library at the Far Rockaway
4 branch?
5

6 MR. WALCOTT: So DDC is currently in the final
7 stages of doing the work there and our hope-- and
8 again, we internally have not really pinpointed an
9 exact time to have the library given to us-- in the
10 next several months, to receive the TCO. And then as
11 we've always indicated, once we have a building
12 turned over to us, then for us to make sure it's set
13 as a library takes a number of months.

14 So my folks are very hesitant at this
15 particular in time putting a specific timeline on it.
16 But once we get it from DDC and have the TCL, then
17 we'll be able to put it in place within a five-month
18 period of time as far as a functioning library for
19 the community. And hopefully that means by the end
20 of the calendar year.

21 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And Councilmember Brooks-
22 Powers also asks, "Why has it taken so long?" DDC?

23 MR. WALCOTT: DDC. Talk to DDC. I'm not blaming
24 them, because-- Yeah, I mean, the reality is, I
25 mean, Linda and Tony do this as well. I mean, we

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2 manage our own projects. And we also have projects
3 that are in conjunction with DDC. And they have a
4 variety of challenges as far as putting a building
5 together. And so once we get it, then we can move on
6 a dime and operationalize it as a library. And
7 that's our goal.

8 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thanks. Back to you chair.

9 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. We have questions
10 from Hudson, followed by Brewer and Barron. We've
11 also been joined by Councilmembers Joseph and Hanif.

12 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Thank you so much. I
13 just-- I'm curious to know if-- if any of you can
14 just provide details on the programs and services
15 that you provide specifically for older adults?

16 MR. WALCOTT: So we provide a variety of programs
17 for older adults. And as matter of fact, you saw one
18 on the video who is getting Mail-A-Book services from
19 the Queens Public Library, and making sure it's not
20 solely for older adults, but people who are
21 homebound. They have the ability of getting
22 information in books and materials to enhance them,
23 their services. Through our programs, we provide a
24 variety of Senior Outreach Services as well as in-
25 building services to the older adults. We had a

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2 very, really creative program where we had a
3 intergenerational program with older adults and
4 teenagers out of the Cambria Heights Library. So
5 we're doing a variety of initiatives with people who
6 are in my category as seniors and in Councilman
7 Barron's category as seniors and making sure people
8 like us who are grandparents and others are able to
9 get those types of services. Thank you.

10 MS. JOHNSON: In Brooklyn, as I hope you know, is
11 on your schedule. Tomorrow, we have an older adults
12 fair at the--

13 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: I will be stopping by.

14 MS. JOHNSON: Excellent. We have tech help for
15 older adults. We have creative aging programs,
16 community movies, knitting clubs, conversation
17 groups, outreach to Senior Centers. And then one in
18 particular program that we're very proud of is the
19 senior debate league, which is a program for older
20 adults, which also which now not only teaches them
21 the skill of debate, but also gets them more
22 civically engaged because of the topics that they're
23 debating.

24 We do staff outreach, as I said, to Senior
25 Centers to bring programs out of the libraries and

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2 into the senior centers. And we host creative aging
3 programs in partnership with outreach-- with our
4 outreach services department. And then we also have
5 the challenge that fewer hours and days of service
6 will bring to all of those programs, because space is
7 limited, and the more we can do, I'm sure the more we
8 can deliver. So we have volunteer-- branch staff
9 that supervise volunteers, to run programs like
10 English conversation groups, but this is a this is a
11 cohort that-- that it-- makes great use of the
12 libraries and that we do a lot to, to help including,
13 I think, as you saw on the video, you know, older
14 adults who are shut in and who-- to whom we deliver
15 books on a very personalized level.

16 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Thank you.

17 MR. MARX: As my colleague said, we have specific
18 senior programs, whether it be crafting classes,
19 conversations, film screenings, performances,
20 technology assistance, etc. But it is also
21 absolutely wonderful that we see seniors in huge
22 proportions using our regular programs, whether it be
23 Tech Connect to learn the computer skills. I know
24 that my mom learned how to do email at the library,
25 which is a mixed blessing. [LAUGHTER] But I'd say

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2 that the-- the-- but adult litera-- we have adult
3 literacy programs. We, as-- as Linda and the film
4 noted, we-- especially through high school, the
5 Library For The Blind, we send material out to folks
6 who are seniors who are stuck at home, and that's a
7 life-changing experience for them.

8 In addition to providing all those programs, we
9 also have a robust volunteer program that has
10 significant senior proportion, with the volunteers
11 are seniors, and they are an essential part of our of
12 our community as well.

13 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Absolutely. Thank you all
14 for sharing that. I just want to state for the
15 record. And my colleagues have heard me say this a
16 million times before: But our older adult population
17 is going to increase over the next 15 years by 40%
18 here in the city. And so I just want to impress upon
19 those that may be listening, that, you know, the--
20 the urgency to ensure that we keep all of these
21 programs going, as we'll need even more of them, you
22 know, over the next many, many years.

23 Thank you to you all and thank you to the Chairs
24 for your time.

25

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CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: We've also been joined by
PS 9 from Brooklyn, New York, from Crystal's district
actually. [APPLAUSE] Thank you for joining us.

Okay, now we have questions from Councilmembers
Brewer followed by Barron.

COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Thank you. Barron and
Brewer are already here on older adults. I just
wanted to let you know. [LAUGHTER]

I have three quick questions: Technology.
Obviously. You may have mentioned this because I was
on a call. But the issue is, what's your current
technology budget? What would you like to have it
at. That would be on the capital side. I know like
every five years or so you have to redo it. It's not
like something that lasts forever. And then you know
how much staff is there? And, you know, what else do
you need? Number one.

I also want to know we've always had this
conversation about e-rate, whether it could be bled
into the neighborhood. In the past, it's not been
allowed by the FCC.

Number two on your vacancies. I know you said
something like 120, 137, 112. Are you having the

2 same problems everybody else? Is it just recruiting?
3 Because I think that's pretty common unfortunately.

4 And then finally, I say to DDC, we don't want
5 you. The libraries don't want to. I say it into the
6 record. I risk and handle the whole thing. So how
7 much more does the DDC cost than if you did it
8 yourself? Thank you.

9 MR. MARX: I'm happy to dive in, Gale. The--
10 NYPL's new technology needs is currently \$52.6
11 million, as submitted to OMB. That includes systems
12 expansions and replacement, discrete projects for
13 \$2.9 million, IT equipment refreshed, communications
14 based IT.

15 And just to give you a sense of scale here we
16 currently have 5600 desktop computers almost-- almost
17 4700 laptop computers, you know, and people rely as
18 you know on us.

19 Going to your next question in terms of the
20 digital divide. Obviously we-- we are an essential
21 resource simply by coming in, and we are the largest
22 skills provider in terms of how to use this-- the
23 computers, for seniors, for junior-- for youngsters,
24 whoever. But we are concerned. Concerned is an
25 understatement. It's outrageous that there are

2 something like 2 million New Yorkers who don't have
3 dependable, you know, broadband at home, and in New
4 York City.

5 We've each been trying various things. What
6 we've been experimenting with. We've-- we raised a
7 million dollars privately to experiment with citizens
8 band radio spectrum, to see whether that can be-- by
9 sort of beaming that out, if you will, from
10 libraries, whether we can we can find a public
11 solution to what the private sector has not been able
12 to solve, which is how to get these-- this access to
13 folks who can't afford the monthly costs.

14 As for recruiting, yes, we face exactly the same
15 problems that everyone else does. Terry Neal, our
16 amazing vice president for HR and his team are doing
17 great work. But if we don't have the funding, we
18 can't hire, we can't recruit.

19 And as Dennis said, it hurts our momentum and
20 morale. People will say, Gosh, can I be sure, you
21 know, we are committed to our to our employees. But
22 it's undermining to be going through this kind of
23 process, and that doesn't help on the recruiting
24 front.

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1
2 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: DDC? Didn't want to
3 mention?

4 MR. MARX: DDC. I think we've said in every time
5 I've testified, when we do a project ourselves--

6 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: And you can do it
7 yourself?

8 MR. MARX: We do them ourselves. The-- it takes
9 half as long, and takes-- costs half as much. The
10 problem is, we have to front that money. It's a cash
11 flow problem. There has to be-- and I know the
12 administration was working on this. There was a
13 work-- a working group that made some structural
14 changes. But our experience continues to be taking
15 twice as long, costing twice as much. There has to
16 be a better way to do this. There just does.

17 MS. JOHNSON: I-- I'll just jump in. And I'll
18 start with DDC. I think Tony is being kind. There
19 cases where it's at least three or four times longer
20 that it takes. And of course, time is not a friend
21 to any of these projects, the longer it takes, the
22 more it costs.

23 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: And you could do it
24 yourself.

25

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2 MS. JOHNSON: And, well, here's the thing: We
3 can do-- we can do the major renovations ourselves.
4 We're not, you know, real estate developers. We
5 don't want to fix 62 roofs or--

6 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Because they say that you
7 can do it yourself when I bring it up.

8 MS. JOHNSON: Yeah. No, but we've done-- we've
9 proven how well we can do it when we're given, you
10 know, whole projects, when we've renovated libraries
11 where there's an aesthetic quality to the thing.

12 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay.

13 MS. JOHNSON: But for us to be taking care of,
14 you know, every single capital project and every-- I
15 think we have over 100 different capital projects
16 going at any given time.

17 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay.

18 MS. JOHNSON: On the recruiting front, you know,
19 it's a shame the way this has all sort of played out,
20 because for a while we were losing-- you know, during
21 the pandemic in particular and shortly after we were
22 losing employees at a greater rate than we were able
23 to rehire. And that-- that sort of dynamic switched,
24 i would say about six months ago, where we were
25 actually making progress, we were hiring at a faster

2 clip. And now, we put a short hiring freeze in
3 place, and we thought we were going to experience
4 deeper cuts. And it now appears we will. And so now
5 we're ramping back up again on that front. But yes,
6 it's the same experience that nonprofits and for-
7 profit businesses have-- have had across the city,
8 and across the country actually.

9 In terms of technology, we have a we have about
10 \$15 million dollars in requests that we've made. As
11 I mentioned for our ERP system, the system that runs
12 the library, we're in the process of-- of replacing
13 one that's long overdue. And then just regular
14 networks and public access computers and-- and all of
15 the infrastructure that goes along with needed
16 technology.

17 And then in terms of the programs that we're
18 offering to our patrons, I think the one that we're
19 most proud of right now in this area, are the digital
20 navigators who are going out into the communities to
21 help people to get access. There are programs out
22 there that people can take advantage of. They are
23 actually quite affordable and offered by the Internet
24 service providers, but you need a PhD in order to
25 figure out how to qualify for them. And you actually

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2 need to have a computer and access to the internet in
3 order to sign up for these programs, which is
4 confounding, since the very people who-- who need
5 these programs don't have that access. So we're
6 going out into the neighborhoods, and on a very
7 granular level, one by one helping people sign up.

8 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Thank you.

9 MR. WALCOTT: So to respond to several parts of
10 the question: One, our e-rate analysis is \$643,000.

11 And then to deal with the DDC part of the
12 question -- and I say this in all seriousness,
13 because we have a great relationship with DDC -- but
14 I have a parking lot that's across the street from
15 the central library. Maybe a year and a half ago was
16 just a parking lot. Now, it is a huge building that
17 is rapidly heading towards completion. And it'll be
18 done-- you'll have to take a look at it when you come
19 to Central. And it's frustrating, because it's not
20 knocking the staff at DDC. I think separate and
21 apart of this budget discussion and the future of the
22 budget, we really need to have a comprehensive
23 meeting, because it's not just DDC. It's OMB. It's,
24 I mean, all the peeling away the onion or the
25 artichoke, as far as the inhibitors that are

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conducive to completing a building in a timely way is
just tremendous. And it's not just one entity.

And yes, we can do it better. But Linda always
says it so well, in that we're not a real estate
developer.

And so-- And then the complexity of having the
capital money, and then with capital money in the
relationship with DDC. And, you know, Queens is not
rich, the Queens Public Library. And so having the
front money that Tony talked about to do the private
requirements that are required for us to take the
project on ourselves, we don't necessarily have.

And so you get into that type of complexity as
far as the building of libraries. And I know it's
frustrating for you, the Councilmembers, and the
Administration, as far as you talk about a project.
And I know we get beat up all the time, because you
talk about it, but then you don't see that library
for eight years. And if you're still in office, then
it's a great thing. But if not, most times, it's the
transition to the next person who's the Councilmember
from that district, seeing that library open at that
particular.in time.

2 And then part of the challenge is with the
3 libraries, as I indicated earlier. You know, you're
4 moving from a Lindsay Box. So again, here, as you
5 get into the intersecting parts of our world, you're
6 looking at a library that was roughly 7500 square
7 feet. And so when we want to expand our libraries,
8 we're going to move them to roughly 15,000 or 18,000
9 square feet. And then with that, you're going to
10 have to have more staff, and then we're going through
11 the staff training on top of that, so then you have
12 to deal with the staffing. And then if you go from
13 ground floor, one-floor Lindsay box to a two-floor,
14 you have to make sure you do that staffing patterns
15 properly.

16 Now dealing with-- Are we suffering the same
17 things? They both talked about it. But to me, I can
18 only speak for Queens. We have outstanding people
19 who have been with the library for a long period of
20 time. So both through the pandemic drain, but also
21 through the seniority drain, where people are
22 retiring. They've been with us-- I mean, we just had
23 our staff recognition gala-- breakfast two weeks ago,
24 and the number of people have been there 35 years, 30
25 years, 25 years is significant. We have one person

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2 who's been with us, and still with us, for 50 years.

3 But these individuals are now retiring, and retiring
4 at the numbers when they came in, as far as 30 years
5 ago, 35 years ago.

6 Finding the individuals who can replace them as
7 part of our respective challenges. Plus, I mean, we
8 love each other. We've been with each other for a
9 number of years. But we're also in competition with
10 each other. And we're not just in competition with
11 the three systems. We're in competition with Nassau.
12 We're in competition with Suffolk and Westchester,
13 and what it means. And so that's the challenge, I
14 think that we all face. And then again, just to
15 reinforce the point, when we have these conversations
16 about budget cuts, budget cuts, budget cuts, it's a
17 disincentive for people to look at us and say, "Okay,
18 maybe we need to go to x system." And so we
19 collectively face that, but also individually we face
20 that as well.

21 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay. All right. Thank
22 you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Councilmember Barron,
24 followed by Schulman.

25

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2 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: Thank you very much. You
3 know, I find it very frustrating to be involved in
4 these kinds of budget hearings, these fake fights,
5 because the money is actually there. There is no
6 budget deficit. \$36 million? Are you serious Mayor?
7 \$36 million out of \$106.2 billion budget. Really?
8 The capital budget is a 10-year \$164 billion capital
9 budget, and we don't have a couple of hundred for our
10 libraries?

11 The Mayor needs to connect libraries with public
12 safety, because in many of our communities, they're
13 off the streets and into the libraries, because the
14 libraries are offering so much.

15 So what I would propose to the Mayor, since the
16 police are listed at (and we'll see them this
17 afternoon) a \$6.1 billion budget, and when you put in
18 fringe benefits and all of that, it's \$11 billion,
19 \$90-some-odd billion for overtime. We'll take \$36
20 from there.

21 When y'all hear people say "defund the police".
22 And they try to make that seem like it's a negative
23 thing. Nobody's talking about getting rid of the
24 police. They talking about transferring \$36 million
25

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2 to the libraries, instead of \$90 million dollars for
3 overtime work. And that would not hurt anybody.

4 So the money's there. We have a \$4-point --

5 Since my colleagues just did a great job on asking

6 you the micro questions, I just want to give you all

7 a macro picture that you probably already know -- But

8 we have a \$4-point billion dollar increase in revenue

9 that was unexpected. \$2-some-odd-billion this year,

10 \$2-point-some-odd billion next year, and \$8.3 billion

11 in a reserve budget. We only expected to have \$6.4

12 billion there, but we get \$8.3 billion there \$4.4

13 unexpected.

14 And when he says that, "Yeah, but what about the

15 money for the asylum seekers?" He has a bloated

16 costs for them at \$4.3 billion. The State's going to

17 give a billion. That knocks it down to \$3.3 billion.

18 But the IBO, Independent Budget Office, said it's

19 only \$3.1 billion, so that would knock it down to \$2.

20 And then something's coming from the Feds, maybe \$800

21 million. There's about a \$1.2 billion asylum seeker

22 budget. But he pits the asylum seekers against the

23 agencies. And then when that doesn't work, and we

24 show him that he's off there. Then he says, "Well,

25

2 I've got to settle the \$4-point billion with the
3 unions. That's bloated.

4 I just wanted to give you a macro picture. As we
5 asked for this lunch money. Peanuts. From President
6 Walcott's-- He said the Mayor was a child of one of
7 his libraries. Well, your child has gone astray!
8 And you need to discipline your child. [LAUGHTER]
9 Since he was a child of one of-- you said it, Mr.
10 President. You said he was a child of the-- Oh,
11 proudly, "He's a child of my library." Your child
12 has gone astray, man. Man, work on him.

13 So on a serious side, the fortunate-- The good
14 thing about this, and I'm hoping my colleagues could
15 stand strong: The Mayor doesn't pass the budget. We
16 do. The Mayor doesn't have the power to pass his own
17 budget. So as we talk to you, I just hope my
18 colleagues, when we get at the table, who we say no.

19 And you know the other thing about-- the reason
20 why called it a fake fight. Because we might get
21 that back. We need enhancements. See, when you
22 talking about restorations, you're not talking about
23 enhancements. There'll be shaking hands and saying,
24 "We did it, we did it, we restored the \$36 million."
25 That's not enough. That's not enough. There's

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2 enough money to have enhancements. But we don't have
3 enhancements discussion, because we'd be so happy to
4 restore the cut.

5 So I just wanted to add my little two cents to
6 the formula here.

7 And I do want to say this is very personal for
8 me, because my wife Inez Barron, who was a former
9 Councilmember here, and the former Assemblymember,
10 takes my grandson Jaraya[PH], who will be two on June
11 11th, to the library. And he cries when he has to
12 leave. So if you shut down hours on my grandson,
13 we're going to have some problems up in here.

14 [LAUGHTER] We're going to have some big problems up
15 in here.

16 So I want to say that-- oh, and I'm sure all of
17 you have children that appreciate the library-- and
18 to my President and Brooklyn: We appreciate you.
19 The work that you're doing at the New Lots Library is
20 incredible, and we are working to get a new library.
21 So all of the programs that has come out of the New
22 Lots Library, and some of our other libraries, we
23 really appreciate the work that you have done. We
24 call it the People's Republic of Brooklyn, which is
25 greater than the other two -- since you're having

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2 competition, is the greater than other two -- the
3 People's Republic of Brooklyn has a great library,
4 the President has been doing great work. And it's
5 appreciated. You know, I'd be the first one to beat
6 you up if it wasn't. So I have to give credit where
7 credit is due. You're doing a great job.

8 MS. JOHNSON: Well, thank you very much for those
9 kind and very flattering remarks. I will make sure
10 that everyone knows that all that work that's
11 happening in New Lots would not be possible without
12 the commitment of both you and Inez, and I will do my
13 best to keep your grandson happily ensconced in the
14 library. [LAUGHTER]

15 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Let the record reflect,
17 Grandpa Charles has never taken me to the library.

18 [LAUGHTER]

19 We now have questions from Councilmember Schulman
20 followed by Hanif.

21 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: Oh, I'm sorry. Just-- I'm
22 sorry. Just one last thing. I'm so sorry. I just
23 wanted to know how the Schomburg Library is doing,
24 and how the Langston Hughes library is doing?
25 Because those are very important libraries of black

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2 culture. And how are we getting more black books in
3 our libraries, so we have greater section for the
4 black section.

5 MR. MARX: The Board of Trustees of the library
6 met at the Schomburg yesterday and had a tour of an
7 exhibit of artists that had been incarcerated, that I
8 just say, as an advertisement, blew me away. Not
9 easy to see, but super powerful.

10 The Schomburg is two years away from turning 100.
11 And the institution is turning its attention to
12 making sure that we celebrate that, that all New
13 Yorkers know that we have these amazing collections
14 that are available to everyone, and see if we can
15 find more resources to expand what-- what the
16 Schomburg can offer. We-- We love it as much as you
17 do, Charles.

18 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And Councilmember Barron, on
19 June 7th, at 10 am, we will be having a hearing in
20 this Committee on the Schomburg Center and the role
21 of libraries and cultural organizations in preserving
22 New York City's history. So hope to see you there.

23 MR. WALCOTT: And Langston Hughes is doing
24 outstandingly well. We've been blessed at Langston
25 Hughes to only have two executive directors, and

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2 Andrew Jackson, who was the former exec is now on our
3 board of trustees, and doing extremely well. And
4 Shakira Smalls is our current Executive Director who
5 has done outstanding program. We've expanded both
6 services and programs, but also, we've gotten like,
7 our colleagues here, very creative with the use of
8 our external space as well, and opening it up to the
9 community with benching. So we're doing very well at
10 Langston Hughes.

11 MR. MARX: Can I just add? I left out one piece,
12 which is at the Schomburg, with thanks in particular
13 to our my colleagues and their success in Albany, we
14 are doing a full renovation of the facade and window
15 replacement, of solving some problems that needed to
16 be solved. I think that's a \$12 million additional
17 infrastructure project that-- just at the Schomburg.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Councilmember Schulman
19 followed by Hanif.

20 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: Thank you. It's hard to
21 follow my esteemed colleague. I'm going to try here.

22 Growing up libraries were a lifeline for me to
23 read, to conduct research, to study to explore the
24 world around me. The library, I-- First of all I
25 used-- I'm an Elmhurst library baby in Queens. It

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2 was also a source of comfort and solitude for me when
3 there were issues going on at home. Now libraries
4 are more-- are much more for kids, for older adults,
5 for everyone. We must not cut funding for this vital
6 resource. And with that, I actually want to ask a
7 question of what programs and services you have for
8 LGBTQIA plus individuals.

9 MR. MARX: I don't know that I have numbers here.
10 But on the research side, the New York Public Library
11 has the largest collection of the history of LGBTQ
12 because of the New York centrality to so much that,
13 celebrated the 50th anniversary of Stonewall not so
14 long ago.

15 But we also have-- whether it's Drag Story Time,
16 whether it's making sure that we have materials
17 available, books available to help folks through
18 these issues, understand these issues. Even when
19 there's pressure from elsewhere in the country to not
20 have those books, we are committed to exactly those
21 kinds of-- of efforts. That's what we're here for.

22 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: Thank you.

23 MS. JOHNSON: We too participate at many
24 different levels on these issues. We, I think, all
25 are doing Drag Queen Story Hour, but we're a big

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2 participant in Brooklyn Celebration of Pride and--
3 and in the work that we're doing with books unbanned,
4 which is a program that puts books that are being
5 challenged across the country into the hands of
6 teenagers who can't find the books on the shelves of
7 their libraries, that they might want and are making
8 their way to our collections. A good majority of the
9 books that are being requested are in fact about
10 issues that relate to sexual orientation and sexual--
11 and gender identity, and-- and we're doing quite a
12 lot with that, including the development of a Teen
13 Intellectual Freedom Council, which is talking to
14 teenagers across the country, about how you can
15 advocate for yourself, how you can get the materials
16 that you want about LGBTQ+ issues. And so this
17 program is not only helping teenagers around the
18 country, but also teenagers in Brooklyn, to develop
19 book clubs about these issues, and-- and to do
20 advocacy work on behalf of themselves and on their
21 counterparts in other states and cities.

22 MR. WALCOTT: So we have an internal committee
23 that really informs us around programming and
24 activities and outreach. You're definitely invited
25 as a Queen's member to join us at the Pride Parade.

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2 We have taken great pride in the expansion of our--
3 both representation and the way we've engaged the
4 community. We opened up the Jackson Heights Library
5 during the Pride Parade. That way we have a
6 breakfast in the morning. And it hosts as a central
7 base for operation.

8 It's interesting that you mentioned Elmhurst was
9 your library, because Elmhurst has been one of the
10 pivotal libraries for our Drag Story Hour, and we've
11 hosted it there a number of times, as well as at
12 Jackson Heights and other libraries as well. And so
13 we try to make sure that we represent the community
14 in a variety-- variety of ways, both internally and
15 externally, and making sure that the LGBTQ+ community
16 is represented properly.

17 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: Thank you. By the way,
18 I'm a grandma show-- one of the grandma shows in
19 Queens Pride this year, so--

20 MR. SALCOTT: But you can come back to Queens.

21 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: Which I'm very happy
22 about. But thank you all, because it just shows how
23 important and how diverse the library system is and
24 how-- how much it's needed. So I appreciate it.
25 Thank you.

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MR. WALCOTT: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Councilmember Hanif,
followed by Joseph.

COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: Thank you so much. First,
just thank you, Linda, Dennis, and Tony, for all that
you do. And I want to send my thanks and deep
gratitude to everybody involved with our libraries
across the entire city, and for working so diligently
and with so much discipline and love and care to
ensure that they are and will forever be the diverse
places of learning and community.

I'm of course adamantly opposed to the severe
cuts to the library system, in the Admin's Executive
Budget. And to me cutting libraries is a direct
attack on our democracy. That's what's happening
here. And libraries have always been urgent
defenders of our local democracy and continue to
fight against misinformation and promote the truth
always and forever.

My parents who migrated to New York City in the
80s trusted sending us to the library. We're three
sisters, and we were super-sheltered, not allowed to
go to a lot of places in the community. But if we
said we were going to the Borough Park Library, the

2 Windsor Terrace Library, they were they were cool
3 with it. They were fine with it. And so these
4 spaces have always been trusted community spaces and
5 have offered so much to me and my sisters. We are
6 proud first-generation Bangladeshi-Muslim
7 Brooklynites.

8 So I have a couple of questions about the cuts.
9 If you could jot down the three questions I have
10 related to the cuts and then more specifically to
11 Linda about some of the Brooklyn libraries.

12 How do you anticipate the proposed cuts will
13 impact services in FY 24 and future years? Staffing
14 needs will increase in FY 24 with the opening and
15 reopening of five facilities. Does the Executive
16 Budget equip the Brooklyn Public Library with enough
17 resources to meet these additional needs? And then
18 can you describe attrition trends over the last five
19 years, and what steps are being taken to retain
20 staff?

21 And then finally, I'm excited that the capital
22 plan includes three projects in and around my
23 district. Could you provide an overview of the
24 Central Library Branch Master Plan Project? And can
25 you provide an overview of the Pacific Branch

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2 overhaul and an overview of the Borough Park Library
3 renovation? Thank you.

4 MS. JOHNSON: I'm out of breath just listening.

5 So I'll start with the impact of services in 2024
6 and future years. The problem is, of course, if we
7 sustain these cuts that we're talking about
8 eliminating 78 positions and-- and in terms of hours,
9 we think that that translates to about a 20% cut in
10 the hours of service that we'll be able to deliver.

11 That then cascades down into the number of
12 programs that we'll be able to offer--

13 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: How many hours did you say
14 that was?

15 MS. JOHNSON: 20% of the hours.

16 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: 20%.

17 MS. JOHNSON: Yeah. And then that affects the
18 amount of-- the number of programs that we're able to
19 offer. And it just-- it just mushrooms. And so this
20 is why we're here today and arguing so vociferously
21 that we, at least, I should put on my-- my
22 Councilperson Barron hat. We should be at least
23 restoring if not increasing the size of the budget of
24 the library.

25

2 And of course, if we aren't baselined, then we
3 have this same issue of not being able to plan for
4 future years. And we get back into the cycle of
5 instability and not-- not being able to fully account
6 for how we're going to maintain some of the programs
7 that we develop from one year to the next. And all
8 of that, I don't need to explain to you, is
9 devastating.

10 The attrition issue and staff retention has been
11 major over the past few years. I feel like we are
12 making some progress in terms of hiring. We've hired
13 I think over 150 people over the last six months. So
14 we're making progress on that. But we're-- we're
15 slowing it down. Because if we're in a situation
16 where we're eliminating positions, we can't be hiring
17 people now, just to, you know, make cuts in-- in
18 July.

19 So there are all sorts of challenges there. I
20 think it is not just a library challenge. I think it
21 is something that's happening all over the country,
22 that people are retiring early or retiring because
23 it's time to retire. And that it's-- it's been a
24 challenge to keep up with that. But we are
25 definitely making progress.

2 The Central Library Master Plan is one of my
3 favorite projects to talk about. The first-- It's a
4 four-phased project, the first phase is complete. I
5 think you've been in to see how beautiful it looks.
6 It's an attempt to restore an architectural gem, but
7 then also to make sure that the space is flexible and
8 respectful of-- of the original design, but also
9 hospitable to the use of technology and the way
10 people are using libraries today.

11 And one of the real sort of organizing principles
12 of this project is to flip the ratio of back-of-house
13 space and public facing space. It was built at a
14 time when there was a lot of labor intensive work
15 that was being done at the branch, we now have a
16 marvelous partnership with NYPL, where we process our
17 books together, and we've moved that function out of
18 the central library. And so we're working to convert
19 what was back-of-house space to public-facing space
20 because we receive over a million visitors at that
21 library every year. And we will take advantage of
22 every square inch. As they say if you build it, they
23 will come.

24 The Pacific Library is our oldest Carnegie
25 Library. It's in bad need of renovation. It's the

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2 one that keeps me up at night. And we have cobbled
3 together through various different funding sources, a
4 pot of funds that we think is sufficient to start
5 working in earnest on that library. We are in the
6 process of, you know, selecting architects and
7 getting going on that project. So lots of work to be
8 done there. But lots of hard work, lots of rewards,
9 I expect.

10 Borough Park is another library that will be
11 completely overhauled. And we're in the process of
12 working through some strategies in that neighborhood
13 to try and figure out what the right solutions are.

14 [TO OTHERS:] Do we have dates on that? Borough Park?

15 [TO COUNCIL:] Sorry. I'm being coached here. We're
16 going to start in 2025 on Borough Park. So that's a
17 little bit out and it will take a while to get that
18 finished. And I think-- I think that's all of your
19 questions.

20 MR. MARX: I can just add for New York Public
21 Library, the scale of these cuts we estimate requires
22 us removing 100 full-time equivalent staff. That
23 would reduce to seven hours or five days at about
24 half of our branch locations, removing Sunday
25 services anywhere in our system, delaying-- This

2 goes to your point. We spent \$100 million on five
3 Carnegie's. We are eager to have the you know the--
4 the folks in those neighborhoods have their libraries
5 back. We won't be able to open all of those. We
6 might only open half of those, which is just a
7 tragedy if you think about the investment that's
8 already been made.

9 With-- That also means delaying opening some teen
10 centers, reducing library materials budgets, research
11 services, reducing the Page Program as I mentioned,
12 as well as repairs. I mean, these impacts are huge.

13 On the turnover question: The good news is that
14 we've seen that our turnover rate, our annual
15 turnover rate is currently trending at about 14%,
16 which is 2% less than it was last year. So we take
17 that as encouraging. But again, as we've all said,
18 those kinds-- we've been working hard to build up
19 towards all these things, but things get dislocated,
20 and they don't turn around so quickly. You can't
21 repair that damage in terms of retention or
22 recruitment, or in terms of building program. Once
23 you cut, it takes us time to rebuild. These are not
24 on-off switches.

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2 MR. WALCOTT: So I want to pick up on, excuse me,
3 on the attrition rates. And I want to be very clear,
4 these are not the actual people, it's just the
5 positions and losing the lines itself.

6 With the people themselves, we are at a rate
7 right now of-- as Linda has indicated before, of
8 slowing down that rate. And so for the calendar year
9 23, we're only at 28 full time. Last year, 2022, and
10 2021, we had a total of 98 individuals, both through
11 separations and retirement. So we were starting to
12 see the flipping of the hires, now really surpassing
13 those who retire. But now we're also going to see,
14 with all this talk, the potential loss of new hires
15 coming into the system because those lines won't be
16 there. And so we have to be very conscious of that,
17 as well. In addition to that, our challenge is also,
18 as Tony and Linda have indicated, it is the same for
19 us at a different scale, that the projects that are
20 on the planning board or for completion will
21 definitely be held up specifically the various
22 projects that are throughout the borough of Queens.
23 And so we're very concerned about that. And that
24 includes HVAC, boiler repairs, things along that
25 line.

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2 So again, it's impacting us in a variety of ways.
3 And as Linda and Tony also indicated, I think the
4 correlation again, without the bodies there, that has
5 an impact on the services and the programs.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. We have
7 Councilmember Joseph followed by Sanchez.

8 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you, Chairs. Thank
9 you to libraries. I have to shout out my library.
10 Cortelyou Road is where I grew up, and that's one of
11 my favorite places to be.

12 My question is how many teen centers do you have--
13 - currently have? And what are the impacts of the
14 budget on that? And what are the hours you operate
15 for the teens? And when we talk about public safety,
16 that is one of the safe havens for our young people
17 to hang out.

18 MR. MARX: So we are New York Public Library we
19 currently have three including the flagship one at
20 the Stavros Niarchos, which used to be the mid
21 Manhattan library, for those of us who use it in high
22 school and remember it fondly. We-- Our plan, with
23 an investment from the Mayor, as well as private
24 investments, Google, Best Buy, the Jolie Foundation,
25 is to go to 20, because we see this as such a

2 powerful way-- I mean, the students-- there was a
3 student before the-- in the-- out on Broadway. He
4 was talking about how, you know, you get drawn in by
5 the music studio, by the maker space, by the
6 technology and by the community of your friends. And
7 these teen centers are packed. And then we can say
8 okay, "Now we got you let's talk about other skills
9 that you need. Computer skills that we can help you
10 with, college guidance, career guidance, civic
11 engagement projects," we hope, increasingly. But if
12 we suffer these cuts, we won't-- we will fall off of
13 this ambitious and exciting agenda. We won't get to
14 20. We won't get to having them open at the times
15 that they need to be, because we simply won't have
16 the staffing to do it. That's a tragedy at this
17 particular moment. Especially after the pandemic,
18 the teens need these initiatives so-- I think we all
19 know that. The Mayor certainly knows that. He's
20 backed up fully.

21 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: So that's why we need them
22 to be prioritized and keeping the funding in place to
23 make sure these programs are young-- run for young
24 people. I see the programs. I come around and I see
25 the impact of young people being together, being in a

2 safe space. It's a safe space. And when we talk
3 about public safety, these are the types of
4 investments we need to be making, in these types of
5 institutions in order to keep our young people safe.

6 MR. JOHNSON: I echo what Tony said about the
7 need for sure. In Brooklyn, we currently are
8 operating two teen tech centers, and we're going to
9 five. And these programs are obviously in jeopardy--
10 in jeopardy, just like everything else will be. We
11 haven't decided how we will meet the cuts, in
12 particular, but we know sort of the depth.

13 MR. WALCOTT: And we just finished upgrading our
14 central library. We've always had a separate teen
15 center, but with the funding from the Mayor, we've
16 been able to upgrade it, and getting furniture and
17 dealing with some of the wiring for different types
18 of computer equipment.

19 In Flushing, we have our teen center. We have
20 one that's our teen library, which is in Far
21 Rockaway, which is a great initiative and supported
22 now with this funding as well. And we're about to
23 open up a new Teen Center at our Long Island City
24 Library. And again, a variety of different programs,
25 services, and all of it is potentially at risk.

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2 And with the Far Rockaway teen library, it's
3 solely for teenagers. And the only adults they are
4 the adults who are providing the services, and there
5 are a variety of creative programs, including youth
6 courts that are managed by the teenagers and outreach
7 services and services that are beyond my
8 understanding as far as using computers and
9 everything else.

10 And those are the types of programs will be
11 replicating and at a variety of our libraries as a
12 result of this initiative, as well as some of our own
13 monies that we've put in through the general budget
14 to support our teens.

15 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: Well, thank you for also
16 including a restorative justice component in the
17 Youth Court. That's very important. Thank you so
18 much. Thank you Chairs.

19 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: We've also been joined by
20 councilmember Stevens. Now we'll have questions from
21 Councilmembers Sanchez, followed by Williams.

22 COUNCILMEMBER SANCHEZ: Good afternoon. Thank
23 you Chairs, and good to see everyone. So my-- my
24 question is about the Capital Commitment Plan. But
25 you know, I'll do what my colleagues do and just

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2 state for the record, and for everyone, like, the
3 importance of our libraries in the city of New York.
4 I grew up going to the Bronx Library Center when it
5 was on Bainbridge Avenue and Fordham Road. And now
6 we have a nice new-- new space on Kingsbridge. And
7 it's just-- it's just so important. And I'm you
8 know, reiterating my commitment to fight against
9 these cuts and make sure that our libraries are
10 available for all.

11 So my question is about the Capital Commitment
12 Plan. So the budget includes in fiscal 2024 \$897
13 million, which is \$252.9 million above the planned--
14 planned in the preliminary commitment plan. A
15 positive. One of the few positives. So my question
16 is: How much of this is for the New York Public
17 Library? How do branch renovations and projects get
18 prioritized on the list? And specifically, of
19 course, you won't be surprised to hear me ask about
20 the Francis Martin library, which we have been
21 talking about for a very long time, and is
22 approaching functional-- you know, being functionally
23 obsolete. And we really need the space on-- on
24 University Avenue. My-- my district is one of the
25 lowest income districts in the city of New York, but

2 in particular, that neighborhood is, you know, one of
3 one of the neighborhoods that drives-- drives this
4 fact. So we need investments there. We need a new
5 branch. And can you share when we could expect a
6 renovation?

7 MR. MARX: So we agree, Councilwoman. The
8 Francis Martin needs help we have submitted it as a
9 priority to the City. This-- We have not gotten the
10 response or the funding we would like. We're eager
11 to do that. We look at-- We look throughout the
12 system and evaluate sort of what the most pressing
13 needs, you know, leave aside the sort of the leaky
14 roofs and you know, the sort of the repairs that are,
15 you know, sort of continue if you don't do the
16 serious job. We try to prioritize neighborhoods of
17 need, especially, which have not always been
18 prioritized. And I think it's fair to say that the
19 New York Public Library (I think we're all doing
20 this) has been able to do a level of capital
21 improvement despite difficulties, overages with DDC,
22 et cetera, on a scale, unlike anything, any of the
23 systems, I think have seen in the past in terms of
24 square footage and renovations. All of that, of
25 course, is at risk if we don't have 10-year capital

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2 funding plans, obligations, or commitments, and then
3 we can't plan for it, in addition to the DDC issues
4 that we continually raise.

5 COUNCILMEMBER SANCHEZ: So what's-- what's the
6 timeline? Do you have an expectation from when the
7 administration would be responding to you about this
8 priority?

9 MR. MARX: We are-- We will continue to press and
10 we hope that they will deliver. We'll certainly be
11 working with you on this.

12 COUNCILMEMBER SANCHEZ: And what's the overall
13 portion of the capital budget that is NYPL?

14 MR. MARX: I'll get that for you. Sorry.
15 Apologies.

16 COUNCILMEMBER SANCHEZ: No problem. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Councilmember Williams.

18 COUNCILMEMBER WILLIAMS: Hello. I'm just here to
19 talk about the Queen's public libraries, because
20 there was a lot of talk about other library systems.
21 So I just wanted to talk about how much I appreciate
22 the Queen's public library systems. And I have a
23 very specific question: Maybe unique to Queens is we
24 have a lot of persist-- Southeast Queens, rather, we
25 have a lot of persistent flooding issues, groundwater

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2 flooding issues, and I know some of the capital
3 repairs have to do with sustainability metrics. And
4 so if you could talk a little bit about that.
5 Because for me, I feel this is a very unique problem
6 that the city has not addressed. And I think that
7 the city, by way of DEP, should be doing more to
8 address some of the infrastructure issues that
9 plagued many of our institutions in Southeast Queens.
10 So if you could just talk a little bit about some of
11 those capital repairs, the cost of those capital
12 repairs, and how the library is trying to address
13 those concerns.

14 COUNCILMEMBER WALCOTT: Thank you for the
15 question. And thank you for your always-ongoing
16 support to our Queens public libraries. And one of
17 the-- going back to a prior question around our Teen
18 Centers, the Cambria Heights Library has a fantastic
19 team program a dedicated teen space and attracts
20 teens on a regular basis and says a direct result of
21 your support. So I want to say thank you for that.

22 When dealing with resiliency, we targeted another
23 library in Southeast Queens, specifically the
24 Rosedale Library. As a matter of fact, I got a
25 report last week. I was asking about the status of

2 the flooding that is existed at the Rosedale, and
3 Rosedale, to my knowledge, has not had any further
4 problems of water entry. We've had problems at other
5 libraries in Queens that-- not necessarily Southeast
6 Queens. Elmhurst we had problems from one of the
7 storms, and we were able to correct that. In
8 addition to that, LeFrak continues to flood. We have
9 not been able to open-- to open up LeFrak city. And
10 that's been a persistent problem that we're trying to
11 address. And we've been working with the owners of
12 LeFrak City. And the City is very helpful as far as
13 making sure DDC gets on top of it, and in the long
14 work with our staff to address the-- to the issue of
15 resiliency and addressing flooding. But it has been
16 an ongoing problem.

17 But our internal team have really worked very
18 hard through our facilities department to focus on
19 the Southeast Queens community and some of the
20 challenges. So that's always been a high priority
21 for us. And we develop a tier system, somewhat
22 similar to what I heard Tony talk about, in response
23 to the Councilmember's question around the
24 prioritization of capital monies. And with our tier
25 system, we take a look at where there's significant

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2 flooding, either roof leaks or penetration of water
3 from the ground itself, and put them in our tier one
4 system and then allocate some of the capital monies
5 that have been available for those purposes, as well.
6 So we take the resiliency issues and climate issues
7 very seriously as far as Southeast Queens but even
8 beyond to make sure we address that in a
9 comprehensive way.

10 COUNCILMEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. And it's
11 also a pleasure to be your Councilmember.

12 MR. WALCOTT: It's a pleasure.

13 MR. MARX: Can I-- May I just jump in Chair, to
14 answer two things that we didn't-- So in answer to
15 the capital question, we have currently at New York
16 Public \$326 million of capital construction currently
17 happening, and the \$536 million is the number of our--
18 - our estimated capital needs. And I also want to
19 correct-- I'm delighted to be corrected that we moved
20 from three teen centers to eight being open in the
21 system at this point. Again, on the road, on the
22 plan towards 20, with the support of the Mayor and
23 private. All of that is potentially under threat,
24 with this kind of budget cuts and not being able to
25 open these facilities.

2 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Well, thank you, to you three
3 for-- for being here today and for doing the work
4 that you do for one of our greatest democratic
5 institutions in the city.

6 As we hear from today's testimonies, the Mayor in
7 the city cannot cut the library's budget. Our
8 libraries have always been essential institutions and
9 during the pandemic proved to be among our most
10 versatile and critical. To cut them would be a grave
11 insult to their heroic work and a deep injury to our
12 city.

13 We must restore the cuts and pass a budget that
14 will ensure the continuation of critical services and
15 the maintenance of staff to carry out this work.

16 I've said it before and I will say it again
17 libraries are a cornerstone of our communities, and a
18 rare truly democratic institution in welcoming anyone
19 through their doors. The budget we passed in the
20 Council is a statement and testament of our values.
21 We need to take a stance we can be proud of. Thank
22 you.

23 [APPLAUSE]

24 MR. WALCOTT: Thank you Chairs, and thank you
25 Councilmembers.

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2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you all so much.
3 We'll take a pause now, and we'll hear from DCLA.
4 Thank you all.

5 [20 MINUTES SILENCE.]

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon folks. Good
7 afternoon. Can you please have order in the chambers
8 so we can move on once again group please have order
9 in the chambers so we can move on.

10 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Everybody, please take your
11 seats we are about to begin. We're about to begin
12 now. Please take your seats. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, good afternoon.
14 We're ready to begin the second hearing of the day,
15 day eight of Executive Budget hearings that will be
16 focused on the Department of Cultural Affairs. I'm
17 still joined by my Co-Chair, Councilmember Chi Ossé,
18 Chair of the Committee on Cultural Affairs,
19 Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations.
20 We've also been joined by Councilmember Farías.
21 Welcome to-- No stranger to this body Commissioner
22 Laurie Cumbo and your team. Thank you for joining us
23 today to answer our questions.

24 Just to set the table once again, on April 26
25 2023, the Administration released the Executive

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2 Financial Plan for FY 23 to 27, with a proposed FY 24
3 budget of \$106.7 billion. DCLA's proposed FY 24
4 budget of \$157.6 million represents less than 1% of
5 the administration's proposed FY 24 budget in the
6 executive plan. This is an increase of \$7.8 million,
7 or 5.2%, from the \$149.8 million originally allocated
8 in the FY 24 preliminary plan. This net increase is
9 mostly due to an additional \$5.1 million for the DC
10 37 collective bargaining agreement.

11 My questions today will largely focus on the
12 Council's response to the DCLA's budget in the
13 preliminary plan, along with other funding changes,
14 capital equity, and DCLA's headcount, among other
15 topics. Our arts and cultural organizations are
16 truly the heart and soul of New York City. The arts
17 literally afforded me a decade of traveling around
18 the world, and they draw people into our city by the
19 millions, in turn supporting jobs, and otherwise
20 bringing revenue into our city.

21 We need to do right by our cultural sector. I
22 look forward to hearing more about this from the
23 Commissioner. I'm now going to turn to my Co-Chair
24 for this hearing, Chair Chi Ossé, for his opening
25 statement.

2 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chair and good
3 afternoon, Commissioner, and folks from DCLA. I'm
4 New York City Councilmember, Chi Ossé, Chair of this
5 Committee. This afternoon, we will be discussing the
6 fiscal 2024 Executive Expense Budget for DCLA, which
7 stands at \$157.6 million, the fiscal 2024 Executive
8 Capital Commitment Plan, which includes \$1.1 billion
9 in fiscal 2023 to 2027 for the department, and the
10 10-year strategy for fiscal 2024 to 2033 at \$1.6
11 billion. The fiscal 2024 Executive Budget is \$80.5
12 million less than the fiscal 2023 adopted budget.
13 Well, I understand that the fiscal 2024 Executive
14 Budget does not reflect Council initiatives yet, I
15 strongly believe that the budget does not adequately
16 fund the city's cultural organizations as they
17 continue to recover from the economic impacts of the
18 COVID 19 pandemic.

19 The culture community is not only an economic
20 driver, but it is also the foundation for much of
21 what makes New York city vibrant, healthy, and alive.
22 When the world thinks of New York the first thing
23 that comes to mind is our arts and culture cultural
24 sector, from our famous museums and other cultural
25 institutions, to Broadway and our theater, and

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2 performing arts scene to the contributions that New
3 York City and its people have contributed to global
4 culture, like hip hop and rap. Arts and culture are
5 what make New York City the city it is. Hence the
6 Council called on the Administration in the budget
7 response to support cultural organizations by adding
8 an additional \$50 million in the fiscal 2024
9 executive expense budget for the Department of
10 Cultural Affairs to support cultural institution
11 groups, provide across-the-board grant increases for
12 all cultural development fund recipients to support
13 the city's artists and further bring equity to arts
14 and culture in the city.

15 I'm very disappointed to see that this funding
16 has not been included in the Executive Budget. As
17 discussed at the roundtables, the cultural community
18 needs an influx of support as the sector continues to
19 build back. However, I'm happy to see that unlike
20 most other city agencies, the Department of Cultural
21 Affairs was not subject to PEGs in this plan.

22 It is the Council's responsibility to ensure that
23 the city's budget is fair, transparent and
24 accountable to New Yorkers. Hence as the Chair of
25 the Committee on Cultural Affairs Libraries and

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1
2 International Intergroup Relations, I have continued
3 to push for accountability and accuracy and ensure
4 that the budget reflects the needs and interests of
5 the city.

6 It is it is essential that the budget that we
7 adopt this year is reflective of the priorities and
8 interests of the Council and the people we represent.
9 This hearing is a vital part of this process and I
10 expect that DCLA will be responsive to the questions
11 and concerns of Councilmembers. I look forward to an
12 active engagement with the Admin over the next few
13 months to ensure the fiscal 2024 adopted budget meets
14 the goals the Council has set out.

15 I would also like to thank my staff for
16 organizing today's hearing including Committee
17 Counsel Brenda McKinney, Legislative Policy Analyst
18 Regina Paul, and Finance Analyst Sandra Day, as well
19 as my Policy and Budget Director May [inaudible].
20 Chair?

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Chair Ossé. I'm
22 now going to turn it over to Mike Toomey to swear in
23 our witnesses.

24 COUNSEL: Good afternoon. Good afternoon. If
25 you could raise your right hands please?

1
2 Do you affirm that your testimony will be
3 truthful to the best of your knowledge, information
4 and belief and you will honestly and faithfully
5 answer Councilmember questions?

6 Commissioner Cumbo?

7 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: I do.

8 COUNSEL: Lance Polivy?

9 MR. POLIVY: I do.

10 COUNSEL: Thank you may begin.

11 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Good morning Chairs Ossé and
12 and Brannan, and members of the Committees. I am
13 Laurie Cumbo, Commissioner of the New York City
14 Department of Cultural Affairs, here to testify in
15 regards to the agency's proposed fiscal year 2024
16 Executive Budget. I am joined today by a number of
17 my colleagues from DCLA. And before I begin my
18 testimony, I want to just pause for a moment to
19 recognize that we are certainly missing a critical
20 member of our cultural community today. These
21 hearings are just not the same without John Wright,
22 founder of the John Wright group, an advocate,
23 someone if he were here, would be texting me would be
24 texting you councilmembers would be texting the
25

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2 advocates, and working all across the lines to make
3 sure that we pass the greatest cultural budget ever.

4 And so for the Wright team, who are here, all the
5 members who have benefited from his leadership and
6 service, we certainly just want to recognize John,
7 and just say how much we miss you, and how the budget
8 hearings are not the same. But we are empowered with
9 all of the lessons that you taught each and every one
10 of us in this room.

11 I'll begin my testimony with a review of the
12 numbers in the latest budget proposal. The Mayor's
13 proposed preliminary budget allocates a total of
14 \$157.3 million for the Department of Cultural
15 Affairs. This reflects an increase over the
16 preliminary fiscal year 24 budget proposal, which
17 included \$149.5 million for DCLA. The increase
18 primarily reflects adjustments due to collective
19 bargaining agreements and changes to heat, light, and
20 power costs covered by the agency. The \$157.3
21 million includes \$28.5 million for the cultural
22 development fund baseline \$72.3 million for operating
23 expenses for the cultural institution groups, \$47.6
24 million for energy subsidies at cultural groups on
25 DCLA property \$7.1 million for agency staff and

2 operating costs, and \$1.8 million for other agency
3 initiatives such as the Public Artists and Residents,
4 and CUNY Cultural Corps Program.

5 I'd like to note that at this same.in fiscal year
6 23 budget process DCLA's budget was \$154.7 million.
7 At this stage, these figures do not include any of
8 the one-time funding such as City Council
9 initiatives, which are typically added at budget
10 adoption.

11 I'd also like to highlight that DCLA's Executive
12 Budget figure does not reflect a PEG reduction.
13 Mayor Adams exempted DCLA and the libraries from
14 these budget reductions, showing just how much this
15 mayor and his administration understand the
16 irreplaceable value and importance of culture to our
17 communities.

18 It also reflects the strong advocacy and case
19 that our sector helps to make for the importance of
20 culture. The arts attract tourists, they uplift
21 students, and they make our city the vibrant place
22 that it is. We are proud to be a part of an
23 Administration that understands this and invest
24 accordingly.

2 Turning for a moment to capital budget, we
3 received applications for 106 projects at 90
4 organizations this year. As you know, capital
5 funding for capital infrastructure is part of a close
6 partnership between DCLA, the Mayor's office, City
7 Council and the Borough Presidents. No other city in
8 America invest in its capital community to this
9 degree, and it's a public private partnership that
10 continues to produce extraordinary cultural
11 facilities all over New York.

12 Just this month I was thrilled to join Chair Ossé
13 and Mayor Adams to help cut the ribbon on the
14 spectacular new Gilder Center at the American Museum
15 of Natural History. This remarkable space will not
16 only engage and educate New Yorkers of all ages for
17 generations to come, it makes it unmistakable that
18 our city is moving forward and ready to welcome
19 visitors from across the globe. The City was proud
20 to provide more than \$90 million in investment over
21 multiple years, and from multiple city leaders for
22 this incredible space. And that's just the most
23 recent example. We're excited to have a full slate
24 of ribbon cuttings and groundbreakings coming up from
25 Greenwood Cemetery and Brooklyn, to the Louis

2 Armstrong house in Queens, to the Afro Latin Jazz
3 Alliance in East Harlem, to the Universal Hip Hop
4 Museum in the Bronx, and Snug Harbor on Staten
5 Island.

6 City investments continue to deliver world class
7 cultural spaces in every corner of New York. And we
8 look forward to working with the Council to continue
9 to be a good member of this crucial public private
10 partnership.

11 Turning for a moment to the cultural development
12 fund: The deadline for the fiscal year 24 CDF was
13 last week, we received over 600 applications for
14 support. Note that because of the newer forms, many
15 CDF grantees, 653 in all, are in the middle of a
16 multi year cycle. For these groups, the renewal
17 application is scheduled to launch by the end of May.
18 We are still looking for panelists to help review CDF
19 applications and make recommendations on which
20 organizations will receive awards. The application
21 to serve as a panelist is available on our website at
22 nyc.gov/culture. Please share this among people in
23 your district, those in the arts community that you
24 might be thinking would be interested in serving.
25 This is a critical program. And we certainly want

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2 all of the city councilmembers to recommend people
3 that they think would be great panelists that know
4 their communities and know the arts. So
5 Councilmember Brannan, maybe some of your former band
6 leaders might want to serve as panelists in this
7 process.

8 This year marks the 40th anniversary of New
9 York's Percent for Art Program. Public art makes our
10 civic buildings and open spaces more vibrant, more
11 engaging and more reflective of the dynamic city they
12 serve. Percent for Art has had a transformative
13 impact on the city's public realm and the last 40
14 years, from mosaics in our city schools to innovative
15 architectural interventions in our libraries, to
16 iconic sculptures that define how people relate to
17 open spaces, we're proud of the deep investment in
18 artists and artwork that the program represents. A
19 new installation just outside City Hall. So when you
20 were walking past City Hall to go through the back
21 door now you have a wonderful display of incredible
22 art of over the past 40 years of some of the most
23 remarkable public art programs that the city has ever
24 seen. I encourage you all to check it out. There
25 are dozens of public art commissions underway across

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2 the city. Among them is the monument honoring our
3 great Shirley Chisholm plan for the southwest corner
4 of Prospect Park Brooklyn, adjacent to the
5 communities that are incredible Congresswoman served
6 after being stalled by the pandemic. This important
7 monument is moving full steam ahead, and updated
8 designs will be presented to the local community
9 boards in the weeks ahead.

10 Materials for the art is alive with activity as
11 usual. Earlier this month, I joined the Executive
12 Director of the Office of arts and special projects
13 at DOE Paul Thompson and MFTA Executive Director Tara
14 Sansone to flip the ceremonial switch on the first
15 ever MFTA after hours. This new initiative offers
16 evening shopping hours for DOE educators. This
17 expands access to this amazing group of people who
18 are dedicated to bringing the arts into our schools
19 by keeping the warehouse open until 7 p.m., past the
20 end of the school day, first Thursday of the month,
21 first-- first Thursday of the month. So if you have
22 incredible schools and teachers who are in need of
23 art supplies, have a school play coming up, a science
24 project, come to Materials For The Arts, make sure
25 that they know about this incredible opportunity.

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2 This is something our educators have asked for, so
3 we're happy that we can deliver it to them.

4 MFTA has also been a crucial hub for providing
5 supplies to the asylum seekers who continue to come
6 to New York looking for shelter and safety. Just
7 last week, the team at MFTA delivered desperately
8 needed clothing and supplies to a shelter housing
9 asylum seekers in Manhattan. The cultural community
10 more broadly is also stepping up to help address this
11 humanitarian crisis. Members of the Latinx Arts
12 Consortium of New York, for instance, have provided a
13 wide range of amazing programs and services for the
14 newest arrivals to our city. During the holiday
15 season, the Latinx Network conducted a Clothing Food
16 Drive, and Teatro SEA provided free performances for
17 asylum seekers. El Puente has been actively
18 supporting families arrived from Venezuela and
19 Colombia with academic support, counseling and
20 Artspace enrichment programs for young people.
21 Repertorio Español has been providing free programs
22 for residents of the Skyline Hotel in Chelsea,
23 sponsored by Councilmember Eric Bottcher through a
24 cultural immigrant initiative allocation.

25

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2 These performances featured a bilingual puppet
3 show called Hansel and Gretel and The Tooth Fairy.
4 The list really goes on, but I'm deeply moved and
5 gratified to know that our arts sector is stepping up
6 in a major and big way to restore the humanity and
7 dignity to the people who come to our country looking
8 for a better life.

9 Spring is in the air in New York City. The
10 outdoor performance season is upon us. Free
11 Shakespeare in the Park, River To River, BRIC
12 Celebrate Brooklyn!, Summer Stage, and Hip Hop 50,
13 and many more will soon be filling our parts with
14 music, performances, and crowds of joyful New
15 Yorkers.

16 Another important summer ritual I want to remind
17 people of is the City Summer Youth Employment Program
18 made so much greater by this City Council. With
19 Mayor Adams's visionary support for this program in
20 partnership, we are looking to place 100,000 New York
21 City Youth and pay positions this summer. Last year
22 more than 90 cultural organizations hosted SYEP
23 participants. We want to see even more cultural
24 groups sign on this year. There is no better way to
25 establish new connections with the unparalleled pool

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2 of talent that our city's young people represent. I
3 was at snug Harbor on Staten Island earlier this
4 year, where an amazing young woman named Yolanda is
5 now a full-time employee of their education
6 department after having served as an SYEP
7 participant. This program changes lives. And if
8 there are cultural institutions that are in your
9 district, we want them to participate and to be a
10 host site this year. So cultural groups, please
11 consider signing up, visit www.nyc.gov/hireNYCyouth
12 for details. Thank you for the opportunity to
13 testify today. I'm happy to answer any questions
14 that you all might have. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Commissioner. I
16 appreciate your testimony. Okay, let's get right
17 into it.

18 In our-- In the Council's FY 24 budget response.
19 We called on the Administration to support cultural
20 organizations by adding an additional \$50 million to
21 the executive expense budget to support CIGs,
22 Cultural Institution Groups, provide across-the-board
23 grant increases for all cultural development fund
24 recipients, and support the city's artists.

25

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2 Why do we think the funding was not reflected in
3 the Executive Budget?

4 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Well, as stated in the
5 testimony, the Executive Budget proposal does not
6 include any one-time funding that is typically added
7 at budget adoption. We look forward to working
8 toward adopting a budget that continues to provide
9 robust support for our cultural community. We are at
10 this time very proud to have been exempted from the
11 PEG that allows the agency to continue with the
12 existing programming that we are doing. And I just
13 want to add: Last year was a record in terms of the
14 level of investment that the Adams administration has
15 supported the arts with, and we're continuing to work
16 in partnership with the administration and the city
17 council to continue to support the sector.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, at the urging of the
19 Council, the Administration added about \$40 million
20 at adoption, FY 23. Can you tell us why the \$40
21 million added at adoption was not included in the FY
22 24 budget?

23 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Certainly. As stated in
24 testimony the Executive Budget proposal does not

25

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2 include any one-time funding that is typically added
3 at budget adoption.

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: How many CDF recipients
5 received additional funding and can you tell me how
6 they were chosen?

7 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: We are really proud of the
8 CDF reforms and the new opportunities that that open
9 for so many new cultural organizations. A portion of
10 the additional funding was used to supplement
11 baseline funding, or to receive CDF panel
12 recommendations across the board. Additional funding
13 was also used to fund the CreateNYC Language Access
14 Fund (that's 55 organizations), as well as the
15 Disability Forward Fund (that's 49 organizations).
16 I'm also very proud that 608 orgs in low-income
17 areas, plus organizations in zip codes identified as
18 priority neighborhoods by the City's taskforce on
19 racial equity and inclusion also got boosts. So this
20 was really an opportunity to see equity at the
21 highest level that this agency has ever seen.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What was the average
23 increase received by each of the CIG members?

24 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: So for the larger
25 institutions, with budgets, over \$20 million, they

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2 received a 23% increase to their city operating
3 subsidy, which is an average increase of
4 approximately \$764,000. For the smaller institutions
5 with total organizational budgets under \$20 million,
6 they received a 50% increase to their city operating
7 subsidy, an average of \$421k. So the organizations
8 with smaller budgets under \$20 million, they actually
9 received a 50% increase, which is really
10 unprecedented.

11 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So what was the threshold
12 to determine those amounts? The operating budget?

13 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: The operating budget is how
14 we determined which organizations would receive. So
15 those organizations, the larger institutions, they
16 received an increase of 23%. And it was based off
17 their operating budgets.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Let's talk about capital
19 equity. How is DCLA working to ensure its capital
20 spending across the city is done in an equitable way?
21 And could you give us a breakdown of DCLA capital
22 projects by borough?

23 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Our capital project, or
24 capital program, rather, is really one of the
25 greatest in the country. We actually, as an agency,

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2 we are the largest cultural funding agency in the
3 United States, including the National Endowment for
4 the Arts that serves the entire country. So this is
5 a really very robust program. It is a merit-based
6 program. My capital team does an amazing job of
7 engaging eligible groups with some of the best
8 webinars in town. If you are interested in
9 participating in our capital program, we strongly
10 encourage you to participate in our webinars. They
11 are very gift-filled, which I'm sure you would
12 appreciate.

13 We received applications from 90 groups this
14 year, and are carefully reviewing them now. We're
15 proud of the investments that we have made around the
16 city, such as in Greenwood Cemetery, Noguchi,
17 Universal Hip Hop Museum, the Lesley Lohman Museum,
18 Snug Harbor and many more. Council and BP money are
19 also critical investing in cultural groups equitably.

20 So this is a real partnership in terms of the
21 Council, the Borough Presidents and our agency in
22 order to be able to develop full scale projects that
23 we're able to bring to fruition. So our partnership
24 is critical, particularly for us to identify shared
25 goals in ways that we want to see funding move

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2 forward. So we look forward to the continued
3 partnership.

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: How much community input
5 and public input factors into capital planning and
6 decision making for DCLA?

7 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: This program is very, very,
8 very open to the public. It's an opportunity for
9 people all throughout the city to put forward their
10 capital projects. We have an opportunity to meet
11 with stakeholders. We have an opportunity to talk
12 with the cultural institutions and to really
13 understand what their needs are. And so this
14 particular process is one that is open to our
15 cultural sector to be able to identify what are the
16 capital needs? So much of it is based off of the
17 needs of the audiences and expansions and growing
18 audiences. So really, we're responding to the outcry
19 from communities to say they want more of something,
20 or they're participating in a festival, and they need
21 more space, or for an organization to be able to say
22 we've outgrown our space. And our numbers are
23 dictating that. And so the ability for organizations
24 to understand how their audiences are growing, what
25 the demands are, how people have utilized and

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2 integrated their space, but also recognizing it, and
3 bringing to our attention where there are gaps, such
4 as: We just cut the ribbon on the new Bronx
5 Children's Museum. So that was really a community
6 process where the Bronx Children's Museum was filling
7 a need that the community was calling for, saying the
8 Bronx does not have a brick-and-mortar cultural
9 space. We need a cultural space for our community.

10 The same with an organization such as The Hip Hop
11 Museum. The Hip Hop Museum really grew out of a
12 growing outcry from the community to say, we need an
13 institution reflective of hip hop culture. Because
14 it's so ingrained in the identity of New York City,
15 this needs to reflect the broader community.

16 So our goal is really to always listen to the
17 community to understand where there are gaps. We're
18 really proud of the fact that we were able to
19 allocate funding, because the community from the
20 LGBTQIA community stress, "We do not have a cultural
21 space that is indicative of our community, of our
22 culture, of our history. We need a much larger
23 institution to tell our story to tell our history."

24 And we're proud to partner with the New York
25 Historical Society to do that work as well. So it's

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2 really a response to the city, our growing
3 population, the growing cultural communities that are
4 coming here from all over the world that want to see
5 their culture reflected in the city of New York.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Tourism was obviously
7 greatly impacted by the pandemic, have cultural
8 institutions seen a comeback to post pandemic levels
9 yet?

10 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: I would say from
11 conversations with the field, calls, and Culture@3.
12 It's exciting to say we're back, but we're not
13 thoroughly back. Our performing arts venues are
14 reporting less success in the way of saying that they
15 are totally back. The absence of our international
16 visitors, particularly from our Asian communities,
17 have really impacted the bottom line of so many of
18 our cultural communities. Globally, not everyone
19 feels comfortable traveling to the city and
20 otherwise. So I would say for our performing art
21 venues, our theaters, independent theaters, black box
22 theatres, our opera houses, they are not reporting
23 full "we're back". But many of our visual arts
24 organizations are reporting better numbers. But at
25 the same time, it's not a it's not, we're not in a

2 space where we can just say we're back. And to move
3 as business as usual. Our organizations still need
4 recovery, they still need support, they still need
5 subsidy in order to continue to get through this
6 process.

7 So we're not ever at any point going to just take
8 our eyes off of this and say, "We made it. We've
9 recovered. Let's get back to normal." It's really
10 an opportunity in a space to say like, "We need to
11 continue to support and uplift all sectors within the
12 arts community," because they haven't come back
13 thoroughly. And for so many arts organizations take
14 on so many different elements of the need of the
15 city, which is very different than any other place in
16 the world. Our cultural communities are-- throughout
17 the pandemic were COVID vaccination sites. They are
18 now opening their doors to asylum seekers. They do
19 food pantries, like the one I just visited at the
20 Queens Museum. They take on so much of the great
21 work of New York City, that we can never take our
22 eyes off of the incredible work that they're doing,
23 and the need that they have to do that much more.

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. A couple more
25 questions, and then I'm going to turn over to Chair

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2 Ossé. The Department's fiscal 24 budget provides for
3 55 full time positions across all divisions. Could
4 you could you talk to us about-- What is-- What's
5 your full staffing level? And what's your vacancy
6 rate right now?

7 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Yes, the agency is
8 sufficiently staffed to operate our programs and
9 initiatives. We are doing extremely well in terms of
10 filling our vacancy rates. Our agency is actually
11 overwhelmed with resumes for the positions that we do
12 have available. And so I'm really proud of that,
13 because our agency has done an incredible job at
14 promoting and interviewing. And I'm very confident
15 in the upcoming months that we are going to fill our
16 vacancies and we are going to be fully staffed before
17 the end of the year. And so this is really a huge
18 credit to our HR team, everybody within our agency.
19 We are really operating on all cylinders and moving
20 full speed ahead.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Quickly on Council
22 initiatives. For CASA and SU-CASA: Could you tell
23 us what percentage of the designations have initial
24 payments been processed?

25

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2 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Give me one moment. For
3 CASA, SU-CASA, and Cultural Immigrant Initiatives,
4 which I'm very super proud of, because I helped to
5 expand these programs when I was in the Council. The
6 percentage of the designations that have received
7 initial payments is 64% for the Immigrant Initiative,
8 67% for CASA, and 89% for SU-CASA has been paid out.
9 So I'll read that number to you again: 64% for
10 Immigrant Initiative, 67% for CASA, and 89% for SU-
11 CASA has been paid out.

12 But I will also take this opportunity: We can
13 process these payments so much quicker if, by the end
14 of the fiscal year budget cycle of this year, let's
15 say even June 30, all 51 Councilmembers put in their
16 designations for all of these initiatives, it will
17 allow us to get the money out the door quicker
18 process and into the cultural institutions and the
19 schools where that funding belongs. If those
20 designations come in November, January, February, it
21 makes it very difficult for us to process very late
22 into the year. So I hope that we can continue to
23 work in full partnership to make sure that this is
24 the year that we get the initiatives out the door as
25 quickly as possible and really into the hands of the

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2 cultural organizations and the schools that
3 desperately need the funding, including our senior
4 centers.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, final question about
6 IDNYC: Can you tell us how many cultural
7 institutions are currently participating in the
8 program?

9 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: We have that number, but I
10 will have to get back to you on that. But during the
11 hearing. So if there's another question that you
12 would like to ask at this time, I could ask that and
13 get back to you on that one.

14 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: It's okay. I'll send a
15 followup. I have a couple of questions around IDNYC.
16 That's okay.

17 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Okay. We'll have those
18 answers following Councilmember Chi Ossé-- Chair Chi
19 Ossé's questions.

20 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Commissioner.
21 Chair?

22 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you, Co-Chair, and hello
23 again Commissioner.

24 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: How are you?

25 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: I'm doing well. How are you?

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2 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Very well. I'm glad to hear
3 it.

4 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: The department's projected
5 fiscal 2024 budget \$157.6 million represents less
6 than 1% of the city's proposed fiscal 2024 budget in
7 the executive plan. The Council advocated in the
8 budget for additional \$50 million for the cultural
9 organizations, which is not reflected in the
10 Executive Budget. And I know Co-- Co-Chair Brannan
11 asked you about that, and you said that it would be
12 potentially included in the adopted budget, and we'll
13 have to wait further until seeing that.

14 Does the agency believe that a budget that is
15 less than 1% of the city's total budget is sufficient
16 to meet the needs of the cultural community?

17 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: I want to just restate the
18 fact that New York City's cultural budget is the
19 largest cultural budget in the United States,
20 including that of the National Endowment for the Arts
21 that serves the entire United States of America. And
22 I also want to add that Mayor Eric Adams, in the last
23 budget cycle, despite the fiscal crisis that we were
24 facing, doubled down on his support for the arts, did
25 not subject us to a cut for the last two budget

2 cycles, and actually passed the largest cultural
3 budget in the city's history during one of the
4 toughest fiscal crises that we've ever seen. And so
5 because of that, I believe that this Administration
6 is demonstrating that they understand the power of
7 the arts, they understand how important the arts are
8 to the recovery of the city, and while many agencies
9 across this city have taken significant reductions to
10 their budgets, our mayor recognizes that the arts are
11 going to be key to the success, the survival, and the
12 growth of New York City during this very challenging
13 time.

14 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: So I hear you on the Mayor
15 recognizing the importance of culture, but as an
16 advocate for our cultural institutions and
17 organizations, do you believe that this budget, this
18 proposed budget is sufficient in terms of the-- the
19 cultural allocation for our cultural organizations or
20 groups or community as a whole?

21 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Very fair question. And I
22 remember asking it when I was on that side of the
23 aisle. What I would say is that during this very
24 challenging fiscal time that we're living in right
25 now, given the situation that we are facing in terms

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2 of still existing within a very real COVID pandemic,
3 and also at the same time recognizing our
4 responsibility in welcoming asylum seekers to this
5 country and more specifically to this city. We are
6 in a very precarious financial time right now. And I
7 believe that the Mayor's investment through the
8 negotiation process has exemplified that he is
9 supporting the arts at the highest level that is
10 possible given the precarious nature of our fiscal
11 crises right now.

12 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: I appreciate Get the answer
13 and definitely want to acknowledge that: Yes, New
14 York City is the largest cultural funders when it
15 comes to cities in the United States of America. But
16 when you compare New York City's cultural budget to,
17 you know, Paris, or even a Florence, right?, we see a
18 deep investment within the cultural institutions and
19 organizations within those cities, not just because
20 of, you know, the historic preservation of culture
21 that exists there, but because of the investment in
22 output that culture has when public funds are
23 invested within those systems.

24 So I hope that he or in our city, we can
25 replicate some of those models, you know, amidst the-

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2 - the financial hardships, because of how central
3 culture is in our economic growth.

4 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: I just want to add to that.

5 I-- I share what you're talking about, because I too
6 have studied abroad in Italy, studied abroad in
7 France, studying those countries very specifically.
8 And so much of it is what gave me the inspiration to
9 create the Museum of Contemporary African Diaspora
10 and Arts, right? Studying how those cities utilized
11 art and culture to, at times, revitalize their
12 communities like in Bilbao, Spain, where they're
13 created the Guggenheim Museum and based an entire
14 economy around that, but also recognizing and cities
15 like Italy, where they have the opportunity to
16 attract tourists from all over the world, because of
17 their investment in art and culture.

18 But here's the difference: 22 years old, I have
19 a graduate thesis, and I want to create a Museum of
20 the African Diaspora in Brooklyn, New York. And I
21 just want the ability to see my dream come alive.
22 That desire and ability that a 22-year-old can have
23 in New York City does not exist anywhere in the
24 world. The entry to be able to create a Hip Hop
25 Museum, an El Puente, a Pregones, a Caribbean

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2 Cultural Center, an Asian American Arts Alliance, the
3 ability to be able to create a Louis Armstrong House,
4 the ability to have an idea and say I want to create
5 a Brooklyn Ballet or a creative outlet dance company.

6 That entry point, and a space where 1300
7 organizations can be funded by government, and that
8 you have the ability to enter into that cultural
9 world through a panel review process that happens
10 every year, that determines that almost 1300
11 organizations can receive funding through a
12 competitive panel review process. That it's not the
13 same organizations that have been funded for the last
14 50 to 100 years, that always are the tried and true
15 that governments have said, these are the
16 organizations that we're going to fund. But that we
17 have an opportunity to have entry points for many
18 different cultural organizations, different
19 communities, BIPOC led organizations, cultural
20 communities, you will not find the level of BIPOC led
21 cultural institutions being supported at the level
22 they are being supported that anywhere in the world,
23 but New York City. And that's essentially what makes
24 this country a great place.

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2 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And I totally agree with you
3 there. And I, you know, I think we are in agreeance
4 in terms of the fact that, you know, we have the best
5 culture in the world.

6 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Yes, we do. But at the same
7 time, you know, many of our organizations, especially
8 these BIPOC organizations, are still struggling to
9 get by, right?

10 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: That's right.

11 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Even with our historic
12 investment last year. That was, you know, the tip of
13 the iceberg in terms of the amount of support that
14 these organizations, you know, need.

15 So I appreciate a lot of the work that this
16 agency is doing, and also what you know, my
17 colleagues are advocating for in terms of a deeper
18 investment into culture, because they-- our cultural
19 community needs a lot more help and assistance, in
20 terms of-- in terms of staying afloat,

21 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: And I'm right there with
22 you. And I don't want to be perceived here as
23 suggesting that I am the protector of "no more
24 funding for arts and culture", right? I certainly
25 believe in that.

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2 But at the same time, because I have fought for
3 that, on that side of the dais for so many years, we
4 also have to understand that in the midst of the
5 financial crises that we are facing right now, this
6 administration is funding and supporting the arts at
7 the absolute highest level. And the benefit from
8 being on the agency side is your ability to really
9 see how different agencies are grappling with making
10 significant cuts that way.

11 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Totally.

12 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: And so I-- I want that to be
13 noted in that way. And also to understand that many
14 agencies throughout the city of New York also have
15 art and cultural programming embedded within their
16 agency, such as the Department of Probations NeON
17 Program that takes place all throughout New York City
18 and is headquartered in Carnegie Hall. Those are
19 programs that are operating and functioning. The
20 Brooklyn Museum is also in partnership with the
21 Brooklyn DA's office to make sure that they have a
22 probation deferment program to make sure that young
23 people, instead of going on probation can fulfill
24 that obligation at the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

25

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2 So many other organizations, or, excuse me,
3 agencies are doing cultural work as well, that's not
4 credited in our budget. But also the Department of
5 Education, which we are in partnership with, have a
6 very robust art program, and have a significant arts
7 and education budget within their portfolio, that is
8 also lifting up organizations in that way.

9 So there are many organizations and agencies that
10 are doing the work in this way. And of course, we
11 would all like additional funding to do more with but
12 at the same time, we have to be very cognizant of
13 making sure that we are moving forward in a way
14 that's fiscally responsible, that's recognizing that
15 we are in a challenging fiscal time, and moving
16 forward collectively and together. And so much of
17 what we're successfully able to do is when the
18 Council and the agencies move in partnership
19 together.

20 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And I appreciate having you as
21 a, you know, ally in this-- in this, you know, fight
22 for more funding for culture--

23 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Definitely.
24
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And your insight in terms of
3 being, you know, within the administration now,
4 while, you know, being on the Council side prior.

5 I hope that, you know, there's some advocacy or
6 work being done in terms of maybe looking at some
7 other agencies, you know, where there are larger
8 allocations for overtime pay, that could be
9 reallocated into something like baselining our
10 culture budget, or increase in cultural funding,
11 because of how the investment in culture provides,
12 you know, an output that outweighs the investment
13 when it comes to our economy. So, I'm glad to have
14 you on this-- this fight with us.

15 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Another question that I have
17 is: How was the one-time allocation of the \$40
18 million to the fiscal 2023 adopted budget split
19 between the CIGs and CDF organizations?

20 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Mm-hmm. So for those
21 organizations that are-- have budgets over \$20
22 million, those organizations got an increase of 23%.

23 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Okay.

24 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: So organizations with
25 budgets over \$20 million got an increase of 23%.

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2 Those organizations with budgets, under \$20 million
3 got a 50% increase.

4 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Under was 50%. Okay. So it
5 is the same-- is the same rubric. That was the
6 rubric used for both CIGs as well as CDF?

7 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Oh, I'm sorry. Let me
8 answer that question again. What was your question?
9 In regards to CIGs or the CDF?

10 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Yeah. So how was the one time
11 allocation of the \$40 million to the fiscal 2023
12 adopted budget split between the CIGs and the CDF
13 organizations?

14 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Same answer.

15 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Okay. And within the CIG,
16 DCLA tiered the restorations. So as you said before,
17 the institutions with total organizational budgets
18 under \$20 million received a 50% increase to their
19 subsidy. How many CIGs fell in this category? And
20 what was the average increase in the subsidy amount?

21 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Give me one moment.

22 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Yeah.

23 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: We will get back to you on
24 the exact number because I don't want to give you-- I

25

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1
2 have a roundabout number, but I don't want to give
3 that to you right now.

4 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: That's fine. And last year,
5 CIGs in outer boroughs have said that they received a
6 decrease in funding even with the one time
7 administrative addition. How much more funding will
8 DCLA need to achieve borough parity.

9 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: So we don't actually fund on
10 the CDF or capital side by borough. So it's a merit-
11 based program. And it's a merit based program, where
12 we receive applications from all five boroughs, and
13 we review those applications in a merit based panel
14 review way, as far as it pertains to our CDF process.

15 So through that process, organizations-- if three
16 organizations from one borough submit an application,
17 but 100 organizations from another borough submit
18 applications, we have to review them equitably and
19 equally. We can't say that we're going to give so
20 much more to the three organizations than the 100
21 because there are parameters in which we fund such as
22 budget size, such as the quality of the program. All
23 of these different factors play into how an
24 organization is funded.

25

2 But what I would suggest on some many levels is
3 for all of the city councilmembers to suggest
4 panelists from their borough to be a part of the
5 panel review process. Becoming a part of the panel
6 review process is one of the most powerful ways to
7 add your voice to lived, shared, an experienced
8 knowledge of the cultural sector. I had an
9 opportunity to meet with Councilmember Carr, who also
10 served as a panelist in the DCLA's panel review
11 process. I was also a panelist before I became a
12 City Councilmember. So the ability to sit at the
13 table, to read the panels, to speak of your borough's
14 knowledge, in terms of experiences of what you know
15 on the ground is happening within a cultural
16 organization is-- it cannot be described, it cannot
17 be measured. It's one of the most powerful ways for
18 a organization to be well-represented in the panel
19 review process. So it's really up to all of us to
20 make sure that the panel review process is as
21 reflective of the City of New York as possible. And
22 that in many ways, helps to create borough parity.

23 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And is there a breakdown of
24 demographics for the CDF and grant panelists for this
25 year, or in prior years?

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2 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: There is not a breakdown in
3 the way that you're asking that question. But what
4 we do know is that 82% of BIPOC-led organizations
5 received an increase to their baseline funding as a
6 result of the new CDF reforms that we just launched.
7 So again, I'll say: 82% BIPOC led received an
8 increase to their baseline funding. And that is a
9 critical number.

10 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Would the agency be open to
11 publicizing or reporting on demographical breakdowns
12 of what those panelists-- of who those panelists are
13 on a yearly basis?

14 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: We'll have to check that
15 through legal to see if that's actually permissible,
16 if we're able to disclose the racial demographics of
17 those that are reviewing the panels and making those
18 determinations. So we are open to it. But we will
19 look within our legal counsel to see if that's
20 actually legal and permissible.

21 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And whether it's racial,
22 sexual orientation, gender, location of where those
23 folks are coming from.

24 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Can you say that again?
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Yeah, it doesn't just have to
3 be, you know, racial demographics. But you know,
4 sexual orientation, gender, region of the city that
5 they're coming from, as well would certainly be
6 helpful.

7 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: I think that's an incredible
8 question. We will certainly take all of those
9 different aspects that you're looking at, and to see
10 if we can actually report out on that.

11 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Awesome, thank you. How has
12 this funding, the \$40 million additional allocation
13 last year, been used to expand equity within the
14 cultural community?

15 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Something that I'm really
16 proud of that I actually didn't create, and I
17 inherited, which is pretty phenomenal, is our
18 Language Access Program. So as a result of the
19 cultural plan, and many different programs and the
20 voices of the advocates, we now have a Language
21 Access Program, we have a language-- we have a
22 disability program, language access, and a cultural
23 equity program within our agency. And those are
24 result of funding and support that was allocated to
25 the Department of Cultural Affairs. And it's through

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2 those programs that were able to increase
3 accessibility to our cultural organizations. It also
4 informs many of the applicants that disability
5 access, language access, cultural equity are the
6 pillars of what this agency represents, and that we
7 want to see more of that in all of our cultural
8 spaces, just by having the funds to do so. So when
9 applicants fill out their application, they can see
10 that there are questions asking about language
11 access, disability, so if they hadn't thought about
12 it before, the actual application promotes that these
13 are pillars to the Department of Cultural Affairs
14 funding.

15 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you and what is the CDF
16 budget for fiscal 2023?

17 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: The-- I want to give you the
18 exact number. And you want to know for fiscal year
19 2023?

20 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Yes.

21 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: So for fiscal year 23, the
22 CDF budget is exactly \$58.5 million for fiscal year
23 24 the CDF budget currently is \$28.5 million.

24

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And that number is lower
3 because we're hoping to see an additional amount of
4 funds once adopted, correct?

5 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: At adoption, as well as an
6 incredible and amazing and deep partnership with the
7 City Council.

8 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: [CHUCKLES] And hopefully some
9 more advocacy within the admin too, right?

10 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: That's right.

11 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Terrific. And how many multi-
12 year recipients got renewed funding in fiscal 2023?

13 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Give me one moment, and in
14 the meantime...

15 Of all 1300, CDF applicants were reviewed by
16 panels for funding in fiscal year 23; 653
17 organizations that received a two-or-three-year award
18 in fiscal year 23, just over 400, received one-year
19 awards.

20 So essentially, what that means is 400 applicants
21 received one-year awards. So during the pandemic,
22 what the Department of Cultural Affairs did: We just
23 continue to renew everyone's multiyear grant, no
24 matter where they were in the process. Last year was
25 the first year that ever we brought all of the

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2 applicants back all at the same time. But in order
3 to have a tiered multi-year program, not everyone can
4 get a three-year multi-year grant at the same time,
5 or else, we wouldn't have a cycle. So 400
6 organizations, were given an opportunity to have a
7 one year grant. And so this year, we've had, I
8 believe it's 653? 653 organizations received a two-
9 or three-year award in fiscal year 23, so that we
10 would have a cycle of approximately 400. At a
11 certain point, the goal would be for approximately
12 400 to be coming back every year. Because last year
13 was a challenging year for the agency to have-- to
14 review almost 1300 grants at one time, proposals at
15 one time. But this time, less are coming back. And
16 then hopefully the next year or less will come back
17 because they will be in the multi-year cycle.

18 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Can you produce a breakdown of
19 which groups received funding and the difference in
20 award mount for these groups between fiscal year 2022
21 before the reforms and fiscal year 2023, after the
22 reforms?

23 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Ask me that once more.

24 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Can you produce a breakdown of
25 which groups received funding, and the difference in

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2 award amount for these groups between fiscal year
3 2022, which were before your reforms, and after the
4 reforms in fiscal year 2023?

5 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Okay.

6 MR. POLIVY: Chair Ossé, the answer to your
7 question is that that data is already available on
8 Open Data now for FY 22. And it'll be available for
9 FY 23 shortly.

10 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Mm-hmm. And just generally
11 speaking, since we're, you know, was there like an
12 overall theme that was implemented through these
13 reforms where you saw a dynamic shift between, you
14 know, those who were awarded in 2022 to those who
15 were awarded in 2023?

16 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Every year that you come
17 back to the agency for review, there's no guarantee
18 that because you received funding from a panel review
19 process, that you will receive funding from a
20 different panel review process the following year.
21 There's also-- There's also no guarantee to say that
22 because you were awarded funding at this level the
23 previous year, that you would get funding again the
24 next year.

25

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2 So every year that an organization presents, they
3 are in a competitive field with new organizations
4 that may have never applied to the Department of
5 Cultural Affairs before. And so a new organization
6 that's applying to the Department of Cultural Affairs
7 for the first time will be reviewed with the same
8 applications that might have been awarded funding
9 from the Department of Cultural Affairs for the last
10 50 years. And they stand equal before the panel.

11 And so that is really one of the ideologies of
12 the reforms is that everyone that is coming has an
13 equal opportunity at the table to be reviewed, and
14 awarded a grant by a panel of their peers. And so
15 that's the huge shift within this process. And as a
16 result of that change we have 125 new organizations
17 that have been funded as part of the Department of
18 Cultural Affairs grant review process that had not
19 been funded previously.

20 So that's a huge number, that's probably one of
21 the largest numbers of new organizations to be
22 received-- to receive an allocation.

23 In addition, as we stated before, it's 125 new
24 organizations, and of the organizations and total 82%

25

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2 that are BIPOC led, received an increase to their
3 baseline funding, which is really extraordinary.

4 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Mm-hmm. And do you have an
5 expected date of when the fiscal year 2023 data will
6 be available on Open Data?

7 MR. POLIVY: It'll be available shortly. The
8 other trend that we wanted to highlight for the
9 Committee is, is that the floor for awards was
10 increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000. So if you were a
11 smaller group, and you had been receiving a CDF award
12 of \$5,000, the minimum in FY 23 was \$10,000. And
13 that's why equity was really at the heart of these
14 reforms. Because if you're a smaller group, and you
15 need that money to get by, that increase of doubling
16 from \$5,000 to \$10,000, made a significant impact on
17 your organization.

18 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Absolutely. As you know,
19 Commissioner, the cultural community is calling for a
20 \$50 million baseline funding for DCLA, \$40 million to
21 be baselined, and \$10 million to address disparities
22 and close gaps faced by BIPOC organizations and small
23 organizations. Will it be feasible for DCLA to use
24 this \$10 million for capping enhancement, and
25 building and operational support to ensure more BIPOC

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2 and small organizations are financially set and
3 uplifted to properly run their organizations and
4 serve their communities?

5 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: We can always do more with
6 more. We are proud of our record funding this year,
7 and exempted from the PEG. In this year's CDF we
8 provide a boost for groups and low income communities
9 and for groups doing work in Language Access and
10 Disability Forward Fund. I am looking forward to
11 working toward adopting a budget that continues to
12 provide robust support and ensuring that this support
13 is invested equitably in our communities.

14 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: With the arrival of asylum
15 seekers, it may seem like the city needs to invest
16 their funds and resources into housing, social
17 services, education, and health care, as well as
18 culture. But culture can be seen as an afterthought.
19 In your words, how can the cultural community be a
20 resource in aiding the city with the arrival of
21 asylum seekers?

22 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: As mentioned-- As mentioned
23 in the testimony, the cultural community has risen to
24 the occasion in unprecedented and very remarkable
25 ways to welcome our asylum seekers here in New York

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2 City. As I stated, organizations such as the Queens
3 Museum are still providing food through their food
4 pantry. Many organizations are providing cultural
5 programming that's happening on site in their spaces,
6 or they are actually going to hotels, as well as
7 other spaces where asylum seekers have found shelter.

8 The other thing that I'm really proud of is
9 Materials For The Arts, which is an arm of the
10 Department of Cultural Affairs. Materials For The
11 Arts is actually partnering with MOHM. And what we
12 are doing is-- and this is really extraordinary.
13 There are so many films that take place here in New
14 York City. And after those films are completed,
15 there are warehouses of wardrobe and clothes that
16 traditionally had just been discarded. As a result
17 of this partnership. We are now able to take those
18 wardrobes that are often discarded or not utilized
19 again, and we're able to take those clothing items
20 and we're able to distribute a warehouse worth of
21 clothes to many of the asylum seekers in different
22 spaces. We have a partnership right now with Kate
23 Spade who has just donated a series of clothes and
24 all kinds of different items that we are now
25 distributing to asylum seekers.

2 So there are many between the film's between the
3 breakdown of those as well as partnerships with many
4 different clothing designers, we are now able to on a
5 regular basis distribute clothing to many of the
6 asylum seekers in shelter in many of the spaces where
7 they have found shelter throughout the city of New
8 York.

9 So the cultural community has stepped up in many
10 ways, from distributing clothing, to food
11 distribution, to cultural programming, and welcoming
12 many of the asylum seekers here.

13 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: And despite the end of COVID,
14 our culturals are still feeling the impact of the
15 pandemic, with visiting levels below pre COVID, as
16 you indicated in part of your testimony, and many
17 organizations are not receiving as many donations as
18 before. Even larger organizations are receiving less
19 funding than before.

20 Because of this, our culturals, as I said before,
21 are in a dire financial situation, with some
22 organizations being forced to lay off staff and cut
23 down on programming or operating hours. In your
24 words will \$50 million be enough to sustain the
25

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2 cultural community and to help them recover from the
3 impacts of COVID, or is more needed?

4 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: I certainly hear you. I see
5 it every day, cultural groups are still struggling
6 with the aftereffects of the pandemic. As so are
7 many sectors. We are proud of this all-time City
8 Investment of nearly \$250 million currently. Mayor
9 Adams exempted us from the PEG, another meaningful
10 investment and signal of support.

11 The city can't address these needs alone. We
12 need all levels of government, private sector, as
13 well as more grassroots supporters to show up for our
14 cultural community. And we're seeing great things
15 happen on this front. But of course more is needed.

16 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: So yes?

17 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Of course. I mean, I would
18 say that we want to see more investment. I'm saying
19 yes to my answer. I want to say that I'm saying yes
20 to my answer. But I certainly hear you. I believe
21 that Mayor Eric Adams has not just talked about the
22 importance of art and culture. But again, he has
23 shown and demonstrated by investing in art and
24 culture at unprecedented levels. And I believe that
25 that level of support is the greatest show and

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2 demonstration of not only an interest but a strong
3 belief that art and culture is at the center of New
4 York City's recovery from the pandemic, as well as
5 addressing the asylum-seeker crisis that's happening
6 in our city right now. He has recognized that the
7 arts are a key partner in making that a reality.

8 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you for that answer,
9 Commissioner. You know, to break the fourth wall a
10 little bit, even though you know, we're not on TV, we
11 can make this happen. We could really make this this
12 \$50 million, you know, increase-- this baselining
13 happen. I know with your-- you know, I know you
14 believe in it. We need the Mayor to believe in it
15 too. And I know he-- he supports culture. And I
16 know that the fiscal future of New York City, you
17 know, is looking blight. But this is a small, you
18 know, investment into something bigger, you know? I
19 know we understand that. I know you and I do, and
20 many members of the Council do. To really help make
21 this happen. We would really appreciate that.

22 There's no doubt that New York is one, if not,
23 the cultural capital-- cultural capitals of the
24 world. Yet according to the cultural community, many
25

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2 artists and cultural workers are leaving New York due
3 to lack of work or affordable housing.

4 With artists leaving we are risking not only a
5 loss of culture but also a loss of economic
6 opportunity in our city. How can DCLA support
7 artists and cultural workers to ensure that they do
8 not leave New York?

9 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Certainly. The
10 affordability crisis is one of the greatest crises to
11 happen and impact our arts and cultural communities.
12 In recent years DCLA has dramatically increased
13 funding for our borough arts councils, putting money
14 directly into the hands of the artists. Just today,
15 I was in Brooklyn at the Made In Brooklyn opening in
16 Industry City where so many artists are now able to
17 sell their work at Industry City in the Made In
18 Brooklyn art space. It was really a phenomenal
19 opening.

20 But I would say that programs like the City
21 Artists Corps funded with federal dollars was another
22 lifeline to artists, and we need to address the long-
23 term systemic issues facing our communities. This
24 administration has demonstrated and shown and has
25 touted that we are the get-stuff-built Administration

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2 and it's a bold three-pronged strategy to tackle
3 affordable housing crisis. It sets a moonshot goal
4 of 500,000 new homes to be built or sustained in New
5 York City. Many of the issues facing artists in New
6 York City are facing everyone in New York City. So
7 the affordability crisis isn't just impacting
8 artists. However, we know many artists are double-
9 rent burdened, having to pay for both home and studio
10 workspace.

11 So we support many of our constituents' artists
12 in residency programs, and affordable workspace
13 projects. And we want to continue to build on these
14 efforts. But we are in partnership with this and
15 recognizing that the affordable housing crisis is one
16 that certainly impacts the arts and cultural
17 community, and certainly one that we want to continue
18 to work with. As a city councilmember, one of the
19 programs that I was really interested in was to
20 partner with our local arts councils, so that they
21 can be promoters of affordable housing opportunities
22 within the boroughs that we exist in so that the arts
23 community is prepared, that their applications are
24 worked on collaboratively and collectively, so that
25 when these affordable housing opportunities become

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2 available, that we have partners on the ground, ready
3 to train, assist, and help our arts community fill
4 out those applications that might be very
5 intimidating for many to actually participate in.

6 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you. And I have a
7 couple more questions before turning it over to my
8 colleagues. In your testimony, you mentioned a
9 former SYEP participant, Yolanda, who was able to get
10 full-time employment with Snug Harbor. Describe how
11 culturals play a role-- or huge role in workforce
12 development, especially for our youth.

13 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Well, I as a former SYEP
14 participant, when I was 15 and 16, participated in
15 summer youth employment. And it was an incredible
16 opportunity. We have done a lot of advertising and
17 promoting, trying to get as many cultural
18 institutions as possible to participate in this
19 incredible program. And we certainly need your help
20 and support. You all know better than anyone, the
21 cultural organizations within your community. It
22 would be great if you all were to send emails to your
23 cultural partners and say, "We really need you to
24 sign up for the summer youth employment," because
25 that is really the greatest opportunity to train the

2 next generation of cultural leaders. As you may or
3 may not know different from the Summer Youth
4 Employment Program, but prior to running for office,
5 I interned at the Brooklyn Children's Museum, the
6 Brooklyn Museum, The Met, the Gray Art Gallery. Like
7 I just was so involved in that, it certainly led at a
8 certain point for the opportunity for me to start my
9 own museum, but also to understand the inner workings
10 of government, once I became a City Councilmember as
11 it pertains to the arts.

12 So arts organizations, if you are watching
13 today's hearing, and I know you are, please make sure
14 that you do not just see this as a passing ask. This
15 is a real ask: That we want you to sign up to become
16 a whole site for the summer youth employment.

17 There's no better way in order to realize the goals
18 of diversity, equity, and inclusion, to train up the
19 next generation, and to make sure that we have the
20 next line of arts administrators, artists, and
21 creatives working within the cultural sector, trained
22 with hands-on experience, right within our cultural
23 institutions.

24 We're the cultural capital of the world. And if
25 we don't train up the next generation of young

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2 people, we are not going to continue to hold that
3 cycle and that title. So it's important that we make
4 sure that we have as many of our cultural
5 institutions participating in Summer Youth
6 Employment, because 100,000 young people is a very
7 large number. And we do need as many cultural
8 partners as possible to meet that goal.

9 When I first entered the council in 2014, there
10 were only 28,000 slots available for summer youth
11 employment. So we have gone from 28,000 to 100,000,
12 in less than 10 years. And we need to make sure that
13 we have the cultural institutions in place to train
14 that next generation.

15 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Great. And the last question
16 I have is: According to a UPenn study from a couple
17 of years ago, culture has a huge role in improving
18 public safety. In your words, How does culture work
19 to increase public safety in our communities,
20 especially for our youth?

21 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: I know councilmember Hanks
22 has a lot to say on this particular subject as Chair
23 of Public Safety.

24 The presence of cultural assets correlates with
25 improved public safety, health, and educational

2 outcomes. It's really to me one of the great public
3 safety strategies in the city of New York is
4 providing opportunities for cultural programming in
5 every school, in every cultural institution, in every
6 community, in every neighborhood. Open streets is
7 also an incredible opportunity for that as well.

8 When young people have an opportunity to have
9 cultural programming within their school within their
10 cultural institution, it's shown and demonstrated
11 that we have safer cities. And so I really just want
12 to continue to raise up organizations and
13 partnerships like the NeON Program, the partnerships
14 that the Brooklyn DA's office is doing with the
15 Brooklyn Museum. These are really very powerful
16 programs. But it's also important to remember that
17 there are so many programs that are happening in our,
18 in our boroughs, but particularly in black and brown
19 communities, that are culturally specific, that
20 really feed right into the heart and souls of young
21 people in terms of their ideas, their energies, and
22 we need to make sure that all of us collaboratively
23 and collectively recognize that when we provide a
24 young person with a paintbrush, or an instrument, or
25 we provide them with an opportunity to participate in

2 a play, or theatrical production, or evening
3 programming on the weekends, we are actually
4 literally taking guns, knives, drugs, and all of
5 those things out of their hands and placing them with
6 opportunities.

7 As I always say, we can't continue to tell our
8 young people to say no to everything, without giving
9 them the opportunity of what to say yes to.

10 And I'll just close and say one of the things
11 that I was very proud of with the Bedford Union
12 Armory Project, now known as the Major Owens
13 Community and Recreation Center, is that we infused
14 it with athletic, as well as artistic, but as well as
15 cultural competency programming. And in that
16 community, within one year, the last reported
17 attendance rate was 40,000 young people in one month
18 visiting that space for programming for athletic
19 training. And when you provide young people with a
20 space to go to, they will go.

21 So it's important that we recognize that we have
22 to provide those types of partnerships and spaces for
23 our young people so that they can have those types of
24 opportunities.

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2 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: I have one more question
3 before I turn it over to my colleagues. If you were
4 to-- No relation to what we're talking about here.
5 But if you were to hear the number \$50 million,
6 what's the first thing that comes to mind?

7 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: When I hear the number \$50
8 million? When I hear the number \$50 million, I think
9 about when I was on that side of the aisle demanding,
10 asking, and fighting for that level of funding for it
11 to be an increase to our budget. And now as I sit on
12 this side of the table, and I think of the number of
13 \$50 million, it's not a number that I just think of,
14 it's a number that I look at, and try to see how can
15 it fit within the existing budget, not only of the
16 Department of Cultural Affairs, but of all of the
17 agencies throughout New York City? And when we all
18 have to sit at the table and look at our perspective
19 budgets, and how we're going to be able to shore up
20 the City. And in those meetings, it's determined
21 that DCLA will not be-- will not-- will be exempted
22 from the budget cut. And when I understand that
23 we're going to be exempted from the budget cut, and
24 I'm sitting with my other colleagues who will not be
25 exempted from the budget cut, and we have to make

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2 tough decisions in a very tough budget cycle and
3 crises, I understand things at a different level than
4 I did previously. I understand that every agency is
5 making really tough decisions about what they will be
6 able to execute, and what they might have to put on
7 hold, or how it's going to impact their budget to
8 have that level of cost savings. So it's really
9 important on our end, and it's an eye-opening
10 experience to see the full table in terms of what it
11 takes to actually operate and run the City in a way
12 that is fiscally sound, responsible, and
13 understanding that we all have a role to play in
14 shoring up the City during this very precarious time.

15 CHAIRPERSON OSSÉ: Thank you, Commissioner. Co-
16 Chair?

17 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you Chair. We now
19 have questions from Brewer followed by Carr.

20 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much. I
21 was glad you came to the American Museum. I was
22 there also, in addition to everybody else.

23 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: It was wonderful to see you.

24 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay. Number two is
25 schools. So under the Bloomberg administration, when

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2 I was here, there was a blue book, and it listed all
3 the programs, the cost, and so on and so forth. So
4 my question to you is: What way do you keep track of
5 the work that DOE is doing or should be doing? Are
6 there any benchmarks, et cetera? In other words, we
7 want all want arts education, but I do worry,
8 understandably, if we have, understandably, literacy,
9 math, and so on as a priority, and the arts get lost.

10 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Mm-hmm.

11 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: So are you allocating any
12 funding? Is there any funding that is allocated to
13 make that assessment?

14 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: So our agency doesn't have
15 the funding or the authority, if you will, in that
16 way to review the Department of Education's budget,
17 and how much that they are actually spending on arts
18 education within the Department of Education. So
19 that would be more of a top-level assessment and
20 budget ask. DOE releases their annual arts and
21 schools report, and that is essentially what you're
22 discussing in terms of that level of funding and
23 understanding the level of programming. But we don't
24 have the ability to review, advocate, or assess the
25 Department of Education's budget.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: No. I understand that.
3 mean, Kate Levin used to do that. She used to
4 advocate I do think that's something that you should
5 look at.

6 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Mm-hmm.

7 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: But it is not the first
8 priority, understandably, of DOE.

9 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Right.

10 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: To many schools don't have
11 music.

12 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: That's right.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: On and on. You can't-- I
14 don't see how you can go to school if you don't have
15 music. So I would suggest that in addition to all
16 your other activities, that you made that a priority.
17 What is the arts activity and budget in the schools,
18 and who does it? We can do it too. But it does come
19 from-- it should come from Department of Cultural
20 Affairs. So I would love to see you do that.

21 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: We will certainly love--

22 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: It has been done in the
23 past. It would not be a first.

24 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: I would love to sit with
25 you. I would love to sit with the Committee to

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2 discuss that further, and also to talk about it with
3 DOE, definitely to bring it back to the
4 administration and say that this is a request of the
5 city council that we'd like to work with.

6 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Number two: Vacant
7 stores. There are a lot of them. And if we get rid
8 of the smoke shops, who knows? There'll be another
9 1500. I hope so. So I put Chashama in a vacant
10 storefront. It makes a huge difference. So my
11 question to you is: What are you doing in terms of
12 thinking about the vacant storefronts, the
13 streetscape? Obviously, Chashama, and other
14 organizations, Art for the Ave, are examples of what
15 should be hopefully helping us with our streetscape.
16 Do you have any budget for that? Any thought about
17 that, et cetera?

18 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Well as it pertains to the
19 streetscape, and we'll start with the latter part,
20 we've been having a lot of conversations and
21 communication with DOT in terms of their Open Streets
22 Program, and they're revitalizing the city of New
23 York through the DOT's Open Streets Program. I
24 believe the deadline for the next round of
25 applications, I believe, is June 2nd.

2 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: That's for Open Streets.
3 That's not for a vacant store.

4 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Right. When you were saying
5 like the streetscape, that's what I was talking
6 about. But in terms of the vacant lots-- excuse me,
7 the vacant storefronts, we are actually in
8 communication with HPD in terms of talking about
9 larger plans with EDC, HPD in terms of discussing
10 what will be the strategy and the plan.

11 But as a granting organization, we don't actually
12 have control, obviously, as you know, over the
13 storefronts. What we do have control over as an
14 agency, and what we can find is if an organization
15 submits a grant through the CDF process, and says
16 that this is a storefront space that we are
17 interested in looking at, that we would like to
18 provide programming for, we are absolutely in a
19 position to have a panel review process of that
20 application to determine if they can utilize that
21 storefront for funding from the Department of
22 Cultural Affairs. It's certainly permissible. But
23 there would have to be another agency, in order to
24 say that, "These storefronts are going to now be
25 utilized for a different purpose," we are going to

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2 ensure that these spaces are either made for cultural
3 use spaces, or that somehow there's some sort of
4 program that would make those spaces below market
5 rate. And to make those spaces below market rate
6 would be the only way that many of those arts
7 organizations would even be able to afford to
8 actually take over those spaces to utilize them.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: I'm not telling them to be
10 free. I'm just saying this could be done. The one I
11 found, it's free. I got it free. And they need
12 space. You know, they want to do it between new,
13 vacant-- new storefront renters. So there are ways
14 of doing it. I'm letting you know, this
15 administration says, "We are not in silos."

16 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Mm-hmm.

17 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Well, a little bit people
18 are in silos. So what I'm just saying is a
19 conversation with SBS and others to say we have, I
20 don't know, 1000s of vacancies in the city of New
21 York. Drugs, scaffolding, garbage, et cetera. So
22 the question would be What can we do to enhance them?
23 And that will be a cultural opportunity. So I'm just
24 throwing it out there.

25

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2 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: I want to let you know as
3 well. As you mentioned, scaffolding when I was on
4 that side, we passed the scaffolding bill, which is
5 going to ensure that scaffolding going up in the city
6 of New York is now going to have art placed on that
7 scaffolding to bring about a more attractive
8 construction site.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay.

10 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: But that's only one step in
11 many. But I do think that the idea that you spoke
12 about in terms of bringing together all of the
13 different agencies--

14 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Owners of buildings are
15 asking me about this now, because there are so many
16 vacancies. So think about it. I'll think about it.
17 I'm just throwing it out.

18 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Now let me just ask you:
19 The space that you said that you got for free.

20 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Mm-hmm.

21 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Did you get that through?
22 Gale Brewer Magic? Or did you get it--

23 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Gale Brewer Magic.

24 [LAUGHTER]

25

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2 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Got it. I wanted to see if
3 there was a program, or was it the Gale Brewer Magic.
4 I got you.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Alright. The other thing
6 is: The CDF process. It used to be that the
7 Council, the Borough President. How-- Who's on that
8 panel now? Is it peers primarily? Peer dance, peer
9 theater, peer so on? So there's no-- I've been on it
10 many times.

11 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Right.

12 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: So it is-- that was all
13 peers. Is that what I would call peers?

14 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: It is peers, but emails have
15 been sent. And I have stressed and double down on
16 it. Emails have been sent, and phone calls have been
17 made to each of your offices to ask for you to
18 participate and to suggest individuals that can sit
19 on the panels to make sure that it is a fair and
20 equitable process.

21 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay.

22 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: So I remember when I was--
23 before I became a Councilmember I too sat on a panel.
24 I think it's an incredible experience.

25

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2 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: I read those goddamn
3 proposals many times.

4 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: That's right. That's right.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: I know them very well.

6 Okay. Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. So my

7 understanding is, as you mentioned earlier, the

8 Councils are getting opportunities to get money and

9 give it out. I will just warn you that I think

10 because of maybe time constraints, they're not

11 necessarily checking sufficiently with the people to

12 whom they're giving the money. Now maybe that is

13 just in Manhattan. So people are-- You know, like a

14 group just complained to me that they got a cultural

15 group, it might be a good group, but it doesn't fit

16 that cultural.

17 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Give me an example.

18 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: I will give it offline,

19 because I don't want to mention, but I'm letting you

20 know, they need to spend more time doing the match.

21 Something to think about.

22 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Okay.

23 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Thank you. I could go on.

24 But thank you very much.

25

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2 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Thank you, Gale, I apprec--
3 Councilmember Brewer, thank you.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Gale is fine.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Carr followed by Hanks.

6 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: Thank you Chairs.
7 Commissioner, always a pleasure to see you.

8 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Always.

9 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: Thank you for your continued
10 partnership with us in the Council, and in particular
11 our borough delegation in Staten Island.

12 I know the FY 23 CDF breakdown won't be on Open
13 Data until the near future, but do you have a borough
14 breakdown as compared to FY 23 and FY 22, that you
15 could share with us at this time?

16 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: We don't have a borough
17 breakdown in terms of organizations that applied to
18 the process. And I'll explain to you why. The
19 challenge that we face within the agency is that many
20 organizations that are based in one borough, may be
21 based in one borough, but are doing significant work
22 in another borough. So you could have office space
23 in Queens, because that might be quite affordable.
24 But you're doing the bulk of your work in Manhattan.
25 Or you could be a performing arts venue, and you

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2 could have a dance studio, but you find it better to
3 have rehearsal space, perhaps in Brooklyn, and then
4 you perform someplace in Manhattan, where it's more
5 expensive, and rehearsal space is less expensive in
6 the what's known as the outer boroughs, right?

7 So it's really very difficult for us to be able
8 to say, an organization that may serve communities in
9 all five boroughs, where do we credit that
10 organization in terms of a borough breakdown? If
11 you're located in Staten Island, but you're genuinely
12 doing the work in all five boroughs? Where would we
13 credit that in that way. Or if you're doing
14 rehearsal space in Staten Island, but you're
15 performing in Queens. So it's very difficult for us
16 to be able to say, which borough is receiving how
17 much in terms of cultural CDF funding as a result of
18 that.

19 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: I think it would be helpful
20 for us to know where groups are headquartered for a
21 better phrase. But I want to move on to the process.

22 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Yup.

23 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: And Councilmember Brewer
24 raised it already. As you said earlier, I was a
25 panelist and when I participated as a panelist, I

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2 participated in a particular borough panel, I didn't
3 participate in any citywide panel.

4 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Right.

5 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: So for the process that
6 we're going to have for the coming fiscal year, will
7 there be borough-specific panels? Or will it be
8 citywide panels based on the sizes of budgets or the
9 sizes of organizations?

10 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: The panels right now, as we
11 are reviewing them-- so there is a change and a
12 shift. So the panels are reviewed based off of size
13 of the organization. Because we wouldn't want that
14 The Met competing with the Bronx Opera Company. Two
15 very different scaled organizations, very different
16 in size and scale, very different budgets and very
17 different develop-- development departments, right?

18 So we are now doing panels based off of size, but
19 we are also doing it in terms of medium. So the
20 dance panels are with the dance panel. The
21 performing arts is what the performing are arts. The
22 visual arts museums are in the museums and visual
23 arts. So the thought from the reforms in terms of
24 what came out of the reviews was that panels would be
25 stronger if they were divided by size, but that we

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2 actually had experts in the dance field reviewing
3 dance proposals, that we have experts in the field
4 reviewing museum proposals.

5 So you could be in a borough panel, and you could
6 be on that panel, and maybe your medium is dance.

7 But now somebody's coming to you or proposals coming
8 to you that's an expertise in visual arts, and maybe
9 you're a chamber music guy, right? So now you're the
10 chamber music guy having to review a visual arts
11 proposal.

12 So the thought was from the field, that visual
13 arts panels should be reviewed by peers that are from
14 the visual arts community. And so that's the major
15 shift in terms of how this was done.

16 But what I will say: We're in process right now,
17 that was a-- what's the word? That was a pilot. And
18 so this year, we're taking the lessons learned, your
19 feedback right now, and we're cultivating a process
20 in terms of hearing what you're saying about the need
21 for borough expertise. But also understanding the
22 medium expertise, as well as also understanding the
23 size. So it's-- it's been done many different ways,
24 but I think we're learning the lessons from all the
25 different ways that it can be configured, and coming

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2 up with a stronger process. The applications just
3 closed Friday, we are actually looking for-- excuse
4 me actually closed last Tuesday. We are looking for
5 panelists at this very moment as we're reviewing, but
6 also shifting and changing how we're going to review
7 proposals.

8 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: Okay. Well just-- a brief
9 latitude, Chairs. I think that in order for there to
10 be borough equity in these decision-making processes,
11 you have to have borough based panels. Because my
12 experience is that when that is not the case, it is
13 usually at the expense of outer boroughs and
14 representing an outer borough, and outer boroughs
15 moving forward. I just have concerns about a day
16 when Commissioner Cumbo is not at the agency, and I'm
17 not where I am, that the process is going to tilt
18 away from Staten-Island-based, and even Southern-
19 Brooklyn-based institutions.

20 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Mm-hmm.

21 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: And I'm concerned about
22 that. And the only way to ensure that those folks
23 are getting a fair share of the citywide pie is if we
24 know upfront that they're going to be getting a
25 certain amount for each borough, and that they're

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2 going to be competing with peer institutions in the
3 borough for their share of the pie in their
4 particular home areas.

5 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Let me just say from the
6 opportunities that we've had to sit and talk about
7 this issue to your words here today, they are not
8 lost on myself nor this agency. We are hearing you
9 loud and clear, and we receive it. And I think that
10 your perspective is very important, because these
11 hearings ultimately should be opportunities for us to
12 speak about issues, challenges, ways to improve and
13 ways that we can better partner.

14 So for everyone on the panels, I certainly
15 receive and hear that, and really take it as a
16 constructive way of making the agency stronger, as
17 you said, not just for now, but for future
18 generations as they're coming up, that there will be
19 that level of equity embedded into the process
20 because of the work that we're doing right now.

21 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: Thank you, Commissioner.
22 Thank you Chairs.

23 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Councilmember Hanks,
24 followed by Stevens.

25

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2 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: Thank you, Chair. Well, I
3 am so happy to have you here today.

4 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Thank you.

5 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: I remember as a an
6 executive director, doing Uniqlo, you were at the
7 Brooklyn--

8 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Yes.

9 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: --and Prospect Park and I'm
10 like, wow. And so to be sitting here and being here.
11 It's truly a privilege and an honor to have you here.
12 The Department of Cultural Affairs is-- should be--
13 is very lucky to have you as a Commissioner and
14 advocate. And on behalf of the Staten Island
15 delegation, we are happy to have you as a neighbor
16 and a resident of the Forgotten Borough.

17 So my question is, is a little bit similar to
18 Councilmember Carr's question when it comes to
19 equity, but it's from a different perspective.

20 Our district 49th district in particular, has the
21 bulk of the cultural institutions and the 49th
22 District is the most diverse district in Staten
23 Island. But unfortunately, we have issues with board
24 makeups and inclusion and leadership to where the
25 board, or the leadership does not really reflect the

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2 diversity that we have within the within the
3 district.

4 And so why does that matter? The diversity and
5 equity and inclusion on board levels, on, you know,
6 employment levels, really speak to how they're going
7 outside of the box.

8 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Mm-hmm.

9 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: And actually making sure
10 that if this organization offers great services and
11 great programs, that they're capturing that piece of
12 the pie.

13 When it's very insular, you have this, you know,
14 kind of rotating of the same programs, the same folks
15 and not really coming out and seeing what the city
16 has to offer to Staten Island.

17 So my question is: How do we improve that? How
18 do Is there a mechanism of not so much grading
19 organizations but encouraging organizations or having
20 some sort of capacity building? You spoke a little
21 bit about it when we talked about SYEP? SYEP is the
22 beginning. It's the capacity as a graduate of
23 LaGuardia Music and Art. You know, the arts is
24 everything. I started my whole artistic career in
25 Snug Harbor at eight years old. But how are we

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2 getting the word out to the community at large? How
3 are we taking those young people, giving them work
4 experiences at the Heritage Farm, or at Richmond
5 Town, or the Staten Island Museum and encouraging
6 them to one day take jobs or be-- are they-- Is the
7 leadership looking for diversity to kind of mix up
8 and shake up their existing makeup so that they can
9 have a diverse group of programs that they may not
10 know about? Because they contain-- they continue to
11 be insular in Staten Island.

12 So I know that you've gotten-- I just wanted to
13 say that on the record. That's one of the sticking
14 points for me, and how could we help make that
15 difference? And thank you.

16 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: No. I thank you so much for
17 that. And it is-- it is great to be a neighbor to
18 you. We actually live across the street from each
19 other.

20 So I-- I just want to say that when I was in the
21 City Council, myself, Councilmember Steve Levin,
22 Councilmember Brad lander, led by the Chair,
23 Councilmember Jimmy van Bramer worked very hard in
24 terms of passing the Cultural Plan. And the Cultural
25 Plan essentially, was a document that was called for

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2 to answer the very question that you are raising here
3 today.

4 And so out of the Cultural Plan, particularly as
5 it pertains to where we do have actual authority and
6 leadership, it pertains to the DEI goals. So
7 organizations (and I need to get you the written
8 documentation, in terms of what the DEI goals were
9 for the cultural institution groups, as well as
10 organizations beyond) is we really wanted to have a
11 level of diversity and to incentivize the
12 opportunities for there to be greater board
13 leadership reflective of the communities in which
14 they serve, as well as greater opportunity for
15 staffing, and to create a pipeline of programming for
16 that.

17 So the CUNY Cultural Corps was established prior
18 to that, but also with the idea and the goal of
19 creating a pipeline of cultural leaders through the
20 CUNY Cultural Corps Program. That's critical. The
21 cultural institution groups, many of which do reside
22 in Staten Island, do have to provide written
23 documentation in terms of documenting where they are
24 in their DEI goals, as far as board membership, as
25 well as staffing, and that is required as a result of

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2 the cultural plan. But I have found in my
3 experience, both as a cultural leader, but also as a
4 City Councilmember, that essentially, a lot of that
5 happens with the ability to be able to have sit-downs
6 with the institutions that you're most focused with,
7 but also you participating in the process of
8 identifying great cultural leaders, people that you
9 know, can contribute on so many levels to these
10 institutions. And sitting down and having those
11 conversations and making those recommendations or
12 making those introductions, rather, to say these are
13 some really incredible people in the community that
14 would be interested in service to your organization.

15 So I feel like the opportunity to be able to
16 create those spaces and to make those introductions
17 are really important. But of course, at the end of
18 the day, the onus is on those institutions to do the
19 work and to do the homework. And I believe the more
20 that we continue to discuss this in public, as well
21 as in private forums, and the ability to make those
22 introductions, and the ability to have it documented
23 through written documentation and reports on their
24 DEI status and goals is a very effective way to
25 address the issue.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: Thank you so much. One
3 more comment, Chair, please? Thank you. So I agree
4 with you and actually that's-- that has been
5 expressed to me. And one of the things that I said
6 was, you know, part of being a part of this process
7 is actually digging into the community, and actually
8 finding those folks for yourself because you-- you
9 maintain this this bifurcated space where you're
10 asking people to give you diverse folks when that's
11 part of the process.

12 And so I think it's a little bit of both.

13 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Mm-hmm.

14 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: And that was actually my--
15 my answer to-- they were like, "Well, can you find
16 some folks for us?" I'm like, "Well, if you show up
17 at this place and this place, you might be able to
18 meet some folks." And that further integrates you
19 into the greater community, so you become part of the
20 fabric that they're not grafted on and some kind of
21 like, "you know, okay, now we have some diversity."
22 But when it's done holistically, when it's done
23 organically, then it really becomes part of the DNA
24 of the cultural. So but I really appreciate it. And

25

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2 I hope that we'll be working on that together in the
3 future.

4 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: I think something that I've
5 seen, although it's-- it's not progress at the level
6 that it should be, or where we would even anticipate
7 that it would be. But I remember last year, at the
8 Juneteenth Celebration at Snug Harbor, just the
9 emotional connection and outpouring of support that
10 so many African American, African Diaspora people
11 coming to Snug Harbor for the first time for
12 Juneteenth Celebration was like a breakthrough and
13 huge. And I think in that moment, in that exchange,
14 it really highlighted the need on so many levels that
15 people felt that they wanted to have that ownership
16 level at Snug Harbor for that event. And with the
17 new leadership and the new director really opening up
18 (she was recently hired) to say, "This is absolutely
19 your space," I think, creates an opportunity to say
20 like, "This was great, but it should be so much
21 more." I believe I'm going to Universal Temple Of
22 The Arts, having their jazz festival there this
23 weekend. So I feel like there's a lot of exchanges
24 happening and looking forward to there being more
25 exchanges that lead to staffing and leadership and

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2 board development that also anchor the goals that
3 you're talking about.

4 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, we are a half hour
6 over. So let's keep it-- try to keep it moving. We
7 have Councilmember Stevens followed by Barron for
8 final question.

9 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: My question will be
10 quick, so don't worry.

11 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: There you are.

12 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: Hello. Yes, I'm in the
13 corner today. You're looking quite fabulous.

14 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Thank you. You as always.

15 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: Just to make sure we got
16 that on record. Just really quickly-- that's
17 important.

18 I know we talked about the Children's Museum in
19 the Bronx, which we're so happy to have, and it was
20 so great seeing you.

21 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: It was so great seeing you.

22 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: We had a-- we had a time.

23 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: With Judge Sonia Sotomayor,
24 First Lady Jill Biden, at the Bronx Children's Museum
25 for the opening. It was unreal.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: Yeah, it was great. And,
3 and those young people are going to remember that for
4 the rest of their lives.

5 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: That's right.

6 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: But I had a question
7 around just like the becoming a CIG. Because I know
8 the Bronx Children's Museum has had been having
9 trouble around that. Because-- And I'm not sure if
10 they got their CIG status yet, or if we're still
11 working on that. But just thinking about--
12 especially institutions like this that we-- everyone
13 really was rooting for and really wanted to come to
14 life, trying to understand why it's taking so long or
15 why it took so long to get their CIG status, and
16 could you talk a little bit about that process?

17 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: So the Cultural Institution
18 Groups is comprised of 34 organizations. The most
19 recent that was added to the Cultural Institution
20 Groups was the Weeksville Heritage Society. And as a
21 Councilmember, I along with members of the city
22 council, the black, Latino and Asian caucus, we
23 advocated for Weeksville to become a part of the
24 Cultural Institution Group. And an organization had
25 not been added to the cultural institutions group for

2 over 30 years prior to that. And so this is a
3 program that was created essentially, for
4 organizations on city-owned property. So the
5 organizations that are part of the Cultural
6 Institution Groups, like the mat, like the American
7 Museum of Natural History, Studio Museum, El Museo,
8 they are on city-owned property, and that city-owned
9 property gives us an opportunity to fund and support
10 those organizations.

11 But what happens in the Cultural Institutions
12 Group is that it's essentially an expansion of the
13 baseline of the city's budget. And so when an
14 organization is added to the Cultural Institutions
15 Group, as was the case for Weeksville, the budget and
16 the baseline has to be expanded.

17 This is a process that can happen. But during
18 challenging fiscal times, such as the one that we are
19 in, it is a challenge to be able to expand the
20 Cultural Institutions Group to add additional
21 organizations, because essentially, at a time when we
22 are asking organizations to-- to do cost savings, for
23 another agency to say, we are not doing cost savings,
24 but we are also expanding at this very-- we're also

2 looking to expand. It is sometimes a challenging
3 argument to make.

4 However, the argument can still be made. But we
5 also have to be mindful of the economic challenges
6 that we're facing at this time as the city has been
7 incredibly supportive of the Bronx Children's Museum,
8 in terms of a major capital investment, to make sure
9 that the building was built and created, funding that
10 comes through the CDF program, and many of the
11 initiatives that the City Council has provided have
12 provided a strong level of support for the Bronx
13 Children's Museum, but also we need to continue to
14 advocate for other avenues in the private sector as
15 well. So I certainly receive the question, have
16 asked the question, and understand the challenges in
17 this particular time, why it may be a difficult-- it
18 might be a difficult process to try to achieve at
19 this given time.

20 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: Yeah, I hear you. And
21 thank you for that response, and understanding around
22 the financial difficulties, but also thinking and
23 understanding that the cultural institutions actually
24 bring revenue into the city.

25 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: That's right.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER STEVENS: People come into the city
3 to go to cultural events, to go to those places that
4 you just-- like the Met, and the museums and the
5 plays. And all they come here for that. And so I
6 think that for us to say like, "Oh, well, we can't
7 expand because of this." Those are the attractions.
8 And if these cultural institutions at any point said,
9 "You know what, we're going to close for the winter
10 season, or the holiday season," the city would lose
11 millions of dollars. And so we have to make sure
12 that we understand that, and also the cultural
13 institutions understanding their power, and the
14 importance in the city. Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Thank you. I thank you so
16 much for your question, for raising it.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Final question from
18 councilmember Barrett.

19 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: Good afternoon,
20 Commissioner.

21 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Good afternoon.

22 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: My concern is how the
23 theaters of color-- how much money are they getting?
24 Straight talk. I don't have all that other flowery
25 stuff. Just how much money are they getting now?

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2 Because they've been struggling for a long time. And
3 we never get our fair share, as it relates to white
4 institutions, particularly the big ones, BAM,
5 Carnegie Hall, and also Sistas' Place. I remember
6 the Mayor said in his debate, you know, on TV, "What
7 place do you like going to, to relax?" "Sistas'
8 Place!" Well, did he give any money to Sistas'
9 Place? And what's happening with those.

10 And then I'd like to set up a meeting with you,
11 because there are two -- and you might know one of
12 them-- the-- they have these African artifacts in
13 Brooklyn that are incredible. You-- I think you know
14 what I'm talking about. They had something that the
15 Restoration. But we've got to find more than a
16 million dollars in the show at Restoration.

17 The capital money-- I remember Bloomberg, when he
18 was in. He gave \$100 million to a group to set up a
19 Shakespeare Theater in there. So they had \$100
20 million for that. But when it comes to our groups
21 and our organizations, we don't get that kind of
22 money. But we get something and people say, "Well, I
23 did do this for the theatres of color. So, I did do
24 this." And it's really chump change compared to
25 what's really in the budget. So if you can give me

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2 any updated information on what's happening with the
3 theaters of color.

4 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Mm-hmm. So I first want to
5 start off by thanking you. I remember being the
6 executive director of MoCADA and hearing your
7 testimony along with then Assemblymember Inez Barron,
8 and the late great Ruby Dee, and Ozzie Davis, and
9 many others. It was an extraordinary time, because
10 we saw-- I've just spoke with councilmember former
11 Councilmember Dominic Recchia.

12 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: Right, he was--

13 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Right? He explained to me
14 how-- I mean and I knew it-- but how great just
15 recently the process was that you set up the Theaters
16 Of Color Program, which had never been done before,
17 to allow eight theater organizations to receive
18 funding through that particular initiative.

19 Now why that's so important is because you set
20 the groundwork and the framework for the Theatres Of
21 Color Initiative to exist. When I came in, in the
22 city council, I wanted to see the work that you had
23 done built upon. So I was able to take-- I believe
24 The Initiative began at \$800,000. And each
25 organization got approximately \$100,000, which they

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2 had never received that level of investment before.

3 At this current time, I was able to expand the
4 theatres of color initiative from eight organizations
5 to 54 organizations. So there are now 54
6 organizations that are receiving Theater Of Color
7 Initiative. The original eight, at this point, their
8 numbers have increased significantly in terms of the
9 amount of funding. So every time a new organization
10 comes into the Theaters Of Color Initiative, we
11 always make sure that the baseline of organizations
12 that initially started this work are given the
13 opportunity to have an expansion of that funding, and
14 it's only through the work of the City Council, are
15 they able to increase that level of funding for the
16 theaters of color.

17 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: Do you know the number--
18 actual-- the actual--

19 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: We're going to get you the
20 actual number. I'm imagining, and I hate to imagine,
21 I believe the number is about \$3.5 million. I
22 believe it grew from \$800,000 to approximately \$3.5
23 million.

24 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: All right. I'm just
25 wondering, if we can, because we have to get that

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2 higher, because even though that was a good
3 achievement, you know, the need now is even greater.

4 And then on the capital side, some of the capital
5 money, whether it's from the \$164,000,000,000 ten-
6 year capital plan of the city, if we can get some of
7 these institutions and property that's renovated, or
8 newly built as Bloomberg did for the, what do you
9 call it?, Shakespeare piece. Some of that, if that
10 can happen to be-- but I want to set up something
11 with you to talk about some of the ideas I have,
12 particularly with those groups.

13 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: I want to continue to just
14 to answer the questions.

15 So the other question that you raised was in
16 regards to Sistas' Place.

17 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: Oh, right. Yeah.

18 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Right? I too love Sistas'
19 Place. And I'm a frequent visitor of Sistas' Place
20 with my dad. But I want to ensure, and you may know
21 this, at this time, if Sistas' Place has applied for
22 a CDF grant, they would be in the application pool
23 for this cycle. So it's really imperative that our
24 organizations and through you, and the work that
25 you're doing in the community, to make sure that

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2 those organizations apply every year. We do the
3 outreach. We do the letting organizations know. We
4 do the webinars. We do the marketing and promotions.
5 But you know, and I know, sometimes organizations
6 need that personal phone call from their
7 Councilmember to say, "Hey, I just want to remind you
8 that this application for our office is going to
9 be..." I think it was February 15. For the
10 Department of Cultural Affairs, it's going to be this
11 day, that it really requires a lot of that. As it
12 pert--

13 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: I-- I'm sorry to cut you
14 off, because I know time is tight.

15 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Yes.

16 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: But I know the process.
17 They know the process. But I'm looking for something
18 a little different, you know, where you sit down with
19 a group, and we can really see how we can get a place
20 that they can own, or that they can have. Not the
21 regular-- you're correct about the programmatic
22 process. But the same way Bloomberg did that
23 Shakespeare. They gave big capital money. So they
24 don't always have to struggle every year at the

25

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2 knowing whether they're going to be able to stay in a
3 place or not.

4 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Right.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: You know, just to get on a
6 bigger level. But I like to set up a meeting with
7 you to talk some more about that.

8 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: I would love to have that
9 conversation, because that it's certainly a cultural
10 treasure, and we have to make sure that it exists.
11 And as far as Mr. Edwards, Eric Edwards' incredible
12 opening. I believe his opening is going to be
13 happening this year, perhaps June of this year, which
14 is one of the largest African art collections in New
15 York City.

16 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: Right.

17 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Councilmember Ossé and
18 myself have had an opportunity to see that
19 collection. We are invested. We have had many
20 meetings. And he, as well, I hope is applying at
21 this current time for that-- those capital dollars.
22 I know he has state funding to open the process for
23 the building right now. And he's working with on the
24 Architect Rodney Leone. So there is an opportunity
25

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2 now that he has that space in Restoration for us to
3 do real investment within the organization.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, Commissioner, thank
7 you so much. We look forward to working with you
8 over the next month and a half as we negotiate the
9 budget.

10 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: That's it? I was just
11 warming up.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yeah, we are. We're way
13 over and we have NYPD next.

14 COMMISSIONER CUMBO: Thank you so much to Chair
15 Brannan. Thank you so much, Chair Ossé for your
16 incredible leadership. I see so many of my
17 colleagues and friends here. So I thank you all so
18 much for your testimonies and for being here today.
19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Okay, we'll
21 take a short break and then we're going to hear from
22 NYPD. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, good afternoon, we're
24 ready to begin. The third and final hearing of the
25 day, day eight, of Executive Budget hearings,

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2 focusing now on the New York City Police Department.

3 I'm Justin Brannan, Councilmember, and I chair the
4 Committee On Finance. I'm pleased to be joined by
5 our Speaker Adrienne Adams, and Councilmember
6 Kamillah Hanks, Chair of the Committee on Public
7 Safety.

8 We've been joined so far today by Councilmembers,
9 Won, Cabán, Brooks-Powers, Barron, Sanchez, Brewer,
10 Holden, Ariola, Hudson, Farías, De La Rosa, and
11 Schulman. Welcome Commissioner Sewell and your team.
12 Thank you for joining us today to answer our
13 questions.

14 But before I go any further I want to invite
15 Speaker Adams to give her opening remarks.

16 SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you very much Finance Chair
17 Brannan and Public Safety Chair Hanks for holding
18 today's Executive Budget hearing where we will
19 examine the Mayor's fiscal year 2024 Executive Budget
20 for the New York City Police Department. I want to
21 welcome you Commissioner. Good to see you, as
22 always, and your team. Welcome. NYPD's fiscal year
23 24 Executive Budget is \$5.31 billion, which is a
24 decrease of \$131 million from the fiscal year 24

25

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preliminary budget, and \$220 million less than the
fiscal year 23 adopted budget.

The NYPD's budgeted headcount for the fiscal year
24 Executive Budget is 569 fewer positions than in
the FY 23 budget at its adoption. The Police
Department's Executive Budget includes a \$210.3
million reduction for FY 24 from the Program To
Eliminate The Gap or PEG.

As I noted in our preliminary budget hearing for
the Committee on Public Safety, I remain concerned
about the NYPD routine practice of overtime spending.
As of April, the department had spent approximately
\$715 million on overtime, which is \$263 million and
nearly 60% More than the \$453 million budgeted for
overtime in the adopted FY 23 budget.

The budget is not a suggestion. And despite
pledges to rein in the repeated pattern of exceeding
its budget on overtime, there have been no tangible
changes to more efficiently managed spending within
the budget. The fiscal health of our city depends on
responsible budgeting, and we owe it to New Yorkers
to deliver an accurate budget that reflects their
needs. Public safety relies on us making holistic
investments that help prevent crime and violence

2 rather than solely responding to them. This requires
3 a wider set of investments into communities that
4 address root causes. The Council has been focused on
5 delivering holistic and proven safety solution for
6 New Yorkers.

7 Police accountability is also critical to public
8 safety and must not be seen as disconnected from that
9 primary objective. When accountability is lacking
10 for misconduct, New Yorkers are more vulnerable, more
11 skeptical, less safe, and less likely to take steps
12 that help contribute to safety because of broken
13 public trust. As a city, we must make the necessary
14 policy changes to eliminate discriminatory policing
15 and misconduct with the same vigor that we seek to
16 stop all violence against our communities. And that
17 requires accountability. This requires different
18 actions by the NYPD and investments in the city's
19 Civilian Oversight Board, which has experienced
20 underfunding that hampers its core objectives. These
21 outstanding issues must be addressed. Commissioner
22 Sewell, we look forward to hearing from you about the
23 NYPD budget and efforts to make our city safer, your
24 agency more accountable, and the overall trust and
25 partnership that is intended and needed for the

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2 benefit of all New Yorkers. Thank you very much. I
3 turn it back over. Oh, I turn into the hands of
4 Chair Hanks.

5 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you, Chair Brannan
6 speaker Adrienne Adams. Good afternoon. I am
7 Councilmember Kamillah Hanks chair on the Committee
8 of Public Safety. And welcome to today's public
9 safety hearing joint with the committee on finance,
10 where we will discuss the New York City Police
11 Department's fiscal 2024 Executive Budget. Public
12 safety is crucial for cities to thrive and the police
13 department plays a critical role in that effort.
14 NYPD's fiscal year 2024 Executive Budget is \$5.3
15 billion. This budget supports 35,000 uniformed
16 officers as well as 14,500 civilian personnel. In
17 this plan, we see the introduction of new needs as
18 well as adjustments for fiscal years 23, 24, and the
19 out years. We appreciate NYPD work and finding areas
20 to cut spending and its meeting the Program to
21 Eliminate The Gap target.

22 Today I hope to learn more about the department's
23 budget priorities for fiscal year 2024 including
24 diving into the changes in the budget since we last
25 met and preliminary budget hearing in March. I'd

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2 like to welcome Commissioner Sewell and her top
3 deputies to our hearing today. And I also just want
4 to take a moment to thank our committee staff. Our
5 Financial Analysts Owen Kotowski, Unit Head Jack
6 Storey, Policy Analyst Chad Benjamin, Senior Counsel
7 Josh Kingsley, and Counsel Jeremy Whiteman, my
8 Director of Legislation, David Pena, and my senior
9 Advisor and Director of Budget, Paul Casali. And
10 with that, I will hand it back over to Chair Brannan.
11 Thank you.

12 We've also been joined by Councilmembers Joseph,
13 Williams, and Velázquez.

14 Just to set the table: On April 26 2023, the
15 administration released the Executive Financial Plan
16 for FY 23 to 27 with a proposed FY 24 budget of
17 \$106.7 billion. NYPD's proposed FY 20 for a budget
18 of \$5.31 billion represents 5% of the
19 Administration's proposed FY 24 budget in the
20 executive plan.

21 This is a decrease of \$131 million, or 2.41% from
22 the \$5.44 billion originally allocated in the
23 preliminary plan. This net decrease is mostly due to
24 spending adjustments on Uniformed and School Safety
25 Division and Personal Service, uniformed hiring

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2 delays, and the recognition of the DC 37 collective
3 bargaining agreement.

4 My questions today will largely focused on the
5 recent labor agreement with the PBA, the hiring
6 delay, and department funding sources. I'm now going
7 to turn it over to my Committee Counsel Mike Toomey
8 to swear in our witnesses.

9 COUNSELL: Good afternoon. Could you raise your
10 right hands, please. Do you affirm that your
11 testimony will be truthful to the best of your
12 knowledge, information and belief, and you will
13 honestly and faithfully answer councilmember
14 questions Commissioner Sewell?

15 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: I do.

16 COUNSEL: Deputy Commissioner Ryan?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: I do.

18 COUNSEL: Chief of Department Maddrey?

19 CHIEF MADDREY: I do.

20 COUNSEL: Chief of Staff Chernyavsky?

21 CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY: I do.

22 COUNSEL: Thank you, you may begin.

23 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Good afternoon Speaker
24 Adams, Chair Brannan, Chair Hanks, and members of the
25 Council. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss

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2 with you the Mayor's Executive Budget for 2024 fiscal
3 year. It is a privilege to testify before the
4 Committees on Finance and Public Safety about the
5 hard work and professionalism of the dedicated
6 members of the New York City Police Department.

7 I am joined today by members of my executive
8 staff who will assist me in answering your questions.

9 Each and every day, members of the NYPD uniformed
10 and civilian, whether the executives you see before
11 you or the officers on the street, start their tour
12 with a clear vision: To keep New York safe.

13 Having emerged from the pandemic, New York is
14 vibrant again. It is pulsating with life, with
15 opportunity, and prosperity. Our sidewalks and
16 subways have become crowded, and our restaurants are
17 thriving. Tourists are flocking to our landmarks and
18 cultural events. Each of these developments are
19 incremental votes of confidence in an improving
20 public safety picture in New York City.

21 So it is incumbent upon the NYPD to continue to
22 foster an environment that allows every community in
23 this city to flourish. It is about people feeling
24 safe to walk our streets no matter the time of day,
25 entrepreneurs having confidence in renting commercial

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2 space, and working together to create an atmosphere
3 where our children can learn and succeed. It is
4 about New Yorkers knowing that they can freely enjoy
5 everything this city has to offer.

6 Like many of our partners in city government, we
7 have been doing more with less. Our uniformed
8 headcount is nearly 34,000, and our civilian
9 headcount is 16,758. But we have experienced a
10 reduction of over 2,500 police officers, and about
11 1,700 full time civilians since the onset of the
12 COVID-19 pandemic. We have not however, received
13 fewer requests for service. The NYPD responded to
14 over 700,000 more 911 calls in 2022 when compared to
15 2019, and nearly 530,000 more 311 complaints.

16 At the end of April 911 calls were up by 6%, and
17 requests for NYPD services from not 311 are up over
18 5%.

19 New Yorkers are reaching out and calling for NYPD
20 services and larger numbers, yet daily efforts by the
21 women and men of the NYPD remained steadfast despite
22 our significantly reduced headcount.

23 This year overall arrests are up over 20%.
24 Felony arrests are up over 16%. We have made over
25 1,450 gun arrests this year on top of achieving a 27-

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2 year high in this category last year, 2269 additional
3 firearms have been taken off our streets in addition
4 to the over 7,100 seized last year.

5 As officers address quality of life conditions,
6 the issuance of criminal court and oath summonses are
7 up by nearly triple digits.

8 We remain focused on delivering our quality of
9 life promise to all New Yorkers. We are partnering
10 with communities to clean and paint over graffiti
11 staining our neighborhoods, joining forces with other
12 city agencies to assist those living on our streets
13 to find shelter and services, working with retailers
14 to secure their businesses, and delivering a visible
15 police presence at corridors used by children walking
16 to school and employees commuting to work. Last
17 year, we issued 258,000 summonses to vehicles with
18 covered or obstructed plates, arrested nearly 4,200
19 drivers for forged or altered plates, and sees 7,520
20 cars that had fraudulent paper plates, or were parked
21 illegally while displaying temporary or paper plates.

22 So far this year, we have already issued over 103
23 summonses to vehicles with covered or obstructed
24 plates, arrested over 1,400 drivers for forged or
25 altered plates, and seized approximately 2,300 cars

2 bearing a fraudulent paper plate or were parked
3 illegally while displaying a temporary paper plate.

4 We are also conducting educational outreach to
5 put the auto parts stores throughout the city to help
6 us ensure compliance with legislation that you
7 recently passed that prohibits the sale of plate
8 covers. Addressing these issues as a daily focus for
9 the NYPD, which includes joint operations with our
10 Highway Patrol Unit, the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel
11 Authority, the MTA, the State Police and the Sheriff.

12 New challenges have also arisen. The
13 proliferation of unlicensed cannabis shops has
14 affected nearly every neighborhood and precinct in
15 this city. While recent changes in these laws as
16 part of the state budget appear to be encouraging the
17 cannabis sold and these establishments is not
18 inspected or certified in the way that legal cannabis
19 is and has often been contaminated with impurities,
20 heavy metals, salmonella, E. coli and pesticides. In
21 partnership with the sheriff's office, we have
22 conducted more than 1200 inspections of these
23 establishments, have taken enforcement action where
24 appropriate, and will continue to explore opportunity
25 to attempt to curb illegal cannabis sales.

2 Over the last year, we have increased our efforts
3 on efficiency. As part of a comprehensive staffing
4 analysis that was launched in 2022, the department
5 audited positions in each of its bureaus and
6 identified those for civilianisation and
7 redeployment. To date, we have redeployed almost
8 1,000 officers, the equivalent of two police academy
9 classes, from administrative positions back to patrol
10 duties. Just as other city agencies and all other
11 law enforcement agencies have experienced attrition
12 and recruitment challenges, we have pivoted existing
13 resources back into our core crimefighting mission.
14 Additionally, significant attention has been paid to
15 improving the department's organizational and
16 operational structure. Where we have been able to
17 act on opportunities quickly we have done so, and we
18 have also engaged in the longer term work of
19 consolidating bureaus, divisions and units to ensure
20 agency efficiency.

21 Even in the face of some of the challenges that I
22 have just mentioned, the efforts of the women and men
23 of the NYPD are yielding real benefits for New
24 Yorkers. Year to date, five of the seven categories
25 of major crime are down. We have witnessed declines

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2 in homicides, rape, robberies, burglaries, and grand
3 larcenies. In addition to the double digit
4 reductions from last year, shooting incidents have
5 decreased by 25% year to date and shooting victims
6 are down by 24%. And significant declines are
7 occurring when it comes to hate crimes and
8 shoplifting complaints.

9 These positive trends have also touched the
10 transit system and our housing developments. In our
11 NYCHA developments, shootings are down over 28%. In
12 the subway system, major crime is down, driven by
13 decreases in robberies and felony assaults, resulting
14 in an over 8% reduction in major crimes. This is all
15 occurring as ridership level in the system reaches
16 pre-pandemic levels.

17 At the end of April, subway ridership surpassed 4
18 million riders, a first since the pandemic. This
19 reflects increased rider confidence in the safety of
20 the subway system, resiliency in the city's continued
21 economic recovery, and proof positive in the
22 investment of deployed police personnel.

23 While I have discussed how the agency has become
24 more efficient, the hard work exhibited by our
25 personnel also requires the use of overtime. We

2 welcome inquiries and scrutiny into our use of this
3 necessary tool to ensure efficiency. That is why I
4 personally scrutinize the use of these funds and
5 continuously push for reductions where it is
6 feasible.

7 The department continues to focus on managing its
8 overtime utilization to ensure it is used efficiently
9 while at the same time ensuring there are no negative
10 impacts on public safety and the provision of core
11 public service. When compared to fiscal year 2019,
12 excluding protests and enhanced transit coverage, we
13 are projecting a decrease in city funded overtime
14 hours of 4%. This is being driven by successfully
15 reducing event overtime by 11% and operational
16 overtime by 15%.

17 Overtime continues to be an essential and
18 critical tool in maintaining public safety, as it
19 allows for additional deployments where and when
20 necessary, and where they are needed the most
21 including to reduce crime and enhance investigative
22 capacity. Specifically, use of overtime includes
23 detectives working overnight to interview a victim or
24 witness, to follow up on critical leads, and to make
25 sure justice is delivered for crime victims in this

2 city; officers working extra tours to increase our
3 presence on the subways; personnel coming in on
4 Sundays to make sure that the thousands of annual
5 events and millions of spectators in the city are
6 safe.

7 This is time that our dedicated members are
8 spending away from their own families and friends and
9 instead working to keep the people of New York City
10 safe beyond the confines of a typical work schedule.

11 I mention this consortium of progress, efficiency
12 and challenges to highlight a major point: While the
13 current public safety picture is improving, and
14 encouraging, I am forced to ask how much better could
15 we all be doing when it comes to public safety? What
16 more can be done to drive down violence and crime in
17 every neighborhood? If we were at our true, full
18 headcount, how much safer could New York City be? We
19 want to again attain the historic crime decreases
20 that this city achieved nearly five years ago, and
21 reach a higher level of excellence. This ideal
22 however, is dependent on a fully-resourced and well-
23 trained police department. If we cannot achieve
24 this, than our collective public safety goals will
25 suffer.

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2 There can be no substitute for adequately funded
3 public safety and a healthy and properly compensated
4 force of officers. That is why I want to praise and
5 thank the Police Benevolent Association and the City
6 for participating in a good faith and forward looking
7 negotiation to hammer home our officers'
8 groundbreaking new contract.

9 Our police officers will receive a long-overdue
10 pay raise, which will help us both with recruitment
11 of new officers and the retention of our existing
12 officers. Closing the pay gaps between the NYPD and
13 other police departments will make it easier for your
14 officers to stay with the NYPD.

15 I am also encouraged by the focus on our officers
16 health and wellness. It is my hope that the 10-and-
17 12 hour tours that we have begun to pilot in for
18 commands will make great strides forward in this
19 respect. We anticipate this neutral tour structure
20 to result in significantly more days off our officers
21 to spend with their families without cutting into
22 overall patrol coverage, while also remaining cost
23 neutral. The goal is to give the department a surge
24 in personnel during peak crime hours in patrol,
25 transit, and housing commands, such as school

2 dismissals, rush hours, and Friday and Saturday
3 evening. This restructuring will also help us
4 compete with more alternatives work schedules seen in
5 the private sector, enabling us to recruit the best
6 possible candidates.

7 We also enhance public safety in this great city
8 by being at the forefront of technological innovation
9 in law enforcement. The NYPD leads when it comes to
10 being at the cutting edge and beyond, and Mayor Adams
11 has vocalized the commitment to continue to go
12 further. We must not shy away from committing
13 resources to this end. Like other technologies that
14 we use, we must carefully balance the use of
15 technologies with the rights of individuals.

16 However, we cannot allow fear tactics about the
17 potential for misuse to be a barrier to embracing
18 innovation. For example, in order to combat car
19 thefts, we are working with the Association For A
20 Better New York to leverage the use of Apple air tags
21 to identify and notify the police about stolen
22 vehicles. The association has donated the
23 distribution of over 500 Air Tags to the public.
24 This can be a useful tool when investigating the
25 theft of an automobile.

2 As part of this initiative, the department has
3 convened meetings with auto dealers to aid in the
4 distribution of these devices. As I am sure you have
5 all saw, we have revived the robot dog program, or
6 DigiDog, as some call it. And we will be acquiring
7 two such remote-controlled robot canines. These
8 devices will play a vital role during high-risk
9 situations, such as hostage or barricade scenarios,
10 by allowing us to assess the situation and to attempt
11 to de-escalate before an officer even needs to
12 approach or during large scale events, which create
13 hazardous conditions such as natural disasters,
14 terrorist attacks, or a building collapse.

15 We have seen the advantages that remote control
16 drones and other robotic devices have given us in
17 many of these higher-risk scenarios. So there is
18 simply no reason not to enhance our existing
19 capabilities. At the same time, we are also piloting
20 technologies to provide mobile camera coverage in the
21 subway system, and to track fleeing vehicles with the
22 goal of reducing vehicle pursuits by our officers.

23 Our greatest multiplier, however, has always been
24 and remains our willingness to partner. We stand
25 committed to forging as many relationships as we can

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2 to gain the faith and the trust of the people of our
3 city. We leverage partnerships in many ways to
4 combat crime, such as our deepening partnerships in
5 coordination with the ATF, the FBI, the State Police,
6 streamlining the sharing of critical information and
7 strategies to investigate and prosecute shootings.

8 We have partnered with the Department of Homeless
9 Services and Sanitation in the Street Cleanup
10 Encampment Removal Task Force, to keep our sidewalks
11 clean and most importantly, as the Mayor has made
12 clear, to connect people with the services they
13 desperately need.

14 And more recent and critical, but perhaps less-
15 well-known partnership we have deepened is with the
16 Department of Aging.

17 In order to combat crimes against the elderly,
18 and tailor appropriate services, the NYPD has been
19 sharing crime data involving victims who are 60 or
20 older with the Department of the aging so that their
21 older adults centers can better focus their attention
22 and resources.

23 Next month, each precinct will have designated
24 community affairs officers to serve as a direct
25 liaison with the Department of the aging on matters

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2 involving local elderly victims of crime, and our
3 respective agencies will be partnering on training
4 initiatives.

5 The most important and satisfying partnerships
6 are the connections we make every day with New
7 Yorkers. We could not do our jobs without their
8 input and assistance. We hold monthly Build The
9 Block meetings and regular meetings with restaurant
10 and bar owners in each precinct, among many other
11 community meetings. I understand that at the highest
12 levels of leadership, we have to connect at the local
13 level, which is why I began holding our executive
14 staff meetings in precincts and community spaces
15 throughout the city and not in 1PP.

16 After the meetings, we have our senior
17 leadership, walk the area and interact with members
18 of the community, going into the neighborhoods,
19 talking to store owners talking to business owners
20 and meeting people where they are. We have launched
21 our groundbreaking ComStat meetings to the public as
22 well. So far, we have held to community ComStat
23 sessions at police headquarters, which had over 300
24 public participants. This will become a regular
25

2 feature of the NYPD's ongoing commitment to
3 transparency and engagement.

4 Turning to the Mayor's Executive Budget and its
5 impact on the NYPD in the coming fiscal year: In
6 totality the NYPD fiscal year 2024 all funds expense
7 budget is \$5.3 billion, the vast majority of which,
8 91%, is allocated for personnel costs. The remaining
9 9% is dedicated to non-personnel costs, including
10 technology that provides officers with immediate
11 access to critical safety equipment, tools, and
12 applications.

13 As part of this Executive Budget, the NYPD
14 reached the 4% PEG target. The NYPD-- this has
15 equated to finding city funds savings of more than
16 \$200 million each year.

17 In order to achieve this funding reductions were
18 taken in several areas, including existing vacancies,
19 salary accruals, additional revenues, and other-than-
20 personnel services.

21 As a result, the NYPD's city funds budget for
22 fiscal year 2024 has been reduced by \$5.05 billion,
23 compared to \$5.3 billion in fiscal year 2019 and
24 \$5.28 billion in fiscal year 2020.

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2 For the current fiscal year 2023, the NYPD
3 received partial funding for the Domain Awareness
4 System and Mobility Initiative, \$27.6 million, one
5 year only, and then an overtime adjustment of \$44
6 million also for one year only. Funding was also
7 added for leases and collective bargaining for DC 37.

8 Due to timing, this financial plan does not yet
9 account for the recent PBA collective bargaining,
10 which was added to the city's budget centrally.

11 The department's 10-year capital budget is \$1.6
12 billion for fiscal years 2024 to 2033. This funding
13 is critical for facility construction projects, such
14 as the 40th precinct Station House, the new 116
15 precinct facility and a renovated firearms training
16 facility.

17 This department will continue to work tirelessly
18 to drive down crime, improve the quality of life, and
19 earn the trust and confidence of New Yorkers. When
20 it comes to advancements in crime fighting,
21 community, connectivity, embracing technology, and
22 enhancing training, no police department in this
23 nation has been more successful than the NYPD.

24 I know that the success will continue because of
25 the incredible women and men who patrol our great

1 city every day. And we are grateful to be moving
2 ahead with this crucial support from the Mayor and
3 this Council. Thank you for the opportunity to
4 testify, and we look forward to answering any
5 questions you may have.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Commissioner.
8 I'm going to hand it over to the Speaker for
9 questions.

10 SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you Mr. Chair. Welcome
11 again to all of you. I'm going to go ahead and jump
12 into our favorite topic. We would sing it, but some
13 people up here can't sing.

14 So let's go ahead and talk about overtime and the
15 overtime control plan.

16 Procedure number 202-29 of the patrol guide
17 effective date January 23, 2023, outlines the
18 responsibilities for the Command Integrity Control
19 Officer, or the ICO. According to the department's
20 patrol guide, ICOs should develop and maintain,
21 quote, "a comprehensive overtime plan which includes
22 an Audit and Review process." Can you describe the
23 ICO's role in developing and maintaining
24 comprehensive overtime control plans at the precinct
25 level?

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2 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Overtime is monitored at
3 multiple levels in the police department. Our ICOs
4 play a crucial role to ensure that there are no
5 abuses of overtime, and when such happens that they
6 are immediately addressed. They are tracked by
7 supervisors and a number of bureaus as well as DCMB,
8 quality assurance, and our Professional Standards
9 Bureau along with our Personnel Bureau. I can ask to
10 talk about-- how we also [inaudible] with the Chief
11 of the Department.

12 CHIEF MADDREY: Good afternoon Speaker Adams.
13 Just specifically about the ICOs. The ICOs, they are
14 command level. They look at all the officers in the
15 precinct. They make sure any programmatic overtime
16 we have, we try to distribute it fairly to all the
17 police officers as best as we can, and to make sure
18 that there's no abuse of overtime, that they're when
19 they have arrests, that they follow the procedure so
20 the arrest is done timely. When they have late jobs
21 to make sure that they lead jobs are done in a timely
22 manner as well. And this is some of the things that
23 the ICO will look at the try to help, at the local
24 level, to make sure that overtime is controlled. And

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2 as the Commissioner mentioned, we have other levels--
3 other layers that look at overtime as well.

4 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay, thank you. What is the
5 audit and review process like for these overtime
6 control plans?

7 CHIEF MADDREY: Well, again, the ICO, they-- they
8 do their process. The ICO's usually send it to the
9 borough com-- the borough commands. So each precinct
10 will do their audit. They'll send it to the borough
11 commands. And then the borough commands will take a
12 look at it. And then eventually, it'll work its way
13 up to the Chief of Patrol, the Chief of Housing, the
14 Chief of Transit, depending on what Bureau it is.
15 And then they'll review it as well. If we see any
16 discrepancies, we bring them down, and we find out
17 what's going on, and we make the adjustments.

18 SPEAKER ADAMS: Considering the divergence
19 between budgeted overtime and actual spending, does
20 the Department believe that these overtime control
21 plans are working? or that the audit and review
22 process is sufficient?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: We do. One of the
24 things that the Commissioner mentioned in her
25 testimony was that when we look at the overtime

2 hours, and we look at where we are compared to where
3 we were before COVID, so sort of the last year where
4 we didn't have a lot of anomalies in our budget, we
5 are down 4%, when you exclude the protests and the
6 unique enhanced transit safety. So we're focusing on
7 all areas overtime, and we're seeing a lot of
8 progress is on, as the Commissioner mentioned, our
9 events overtime, which is-- the hours are down 11%,
10 as well as our operational overtime, which is down
11 15%.

12 So when you look at that, but then you put that
13 in the context of answering more 911 calls, more
14 calls for service through 311, more arrests, more
15 investigations, we're actually doing quite well in
16 managing that overtime, which is a critical resource.

17 And on top of that, we are down 2,500 staff over
18 that same period of time on the uniform side. So
19 while we do look to deploy as much as we can on
20 straight time, which is also part of the
21 civilianisation effort, where we're having more
22 officers out on the street so we can maximize that
23 straight time deployment, overtime is a necessary
24 part of our budget to make sure that we can do those
25 investigations in a timely fashion, to make sure we

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2 can respond to those 911 calls to make sure there's
3 continuity of service. So we look at all of that to
4 make sure we are balancing and prioritizing public
5 safety while at the same time keeping in mind the
6 fiscal health of the city.

7 SPEAKER ADAMS: I don't think that there's a
8 question about overtime, as it is necessary in other
9 agencies as well. But there is a context here when
10 it comes to the amount of overtime. How many ICOs
11 are there for each precinct? Is it just one per
12 precinct?

13 CHIEF MADDREY: The ICO is a lieutenant in every
14 precinct. Bigger precincts may have an assistant ICO
15 which is usually a sergeant, and then the ICO will
16 have like an assistant.

17 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay, thank you. Does the
18 Department believe that responsibility for overtime
19 control and scheduling should be designated to a non-
20 supervisory position rather than commanding officers,
21 or direct line supervisors? And why would that be,
22 or why not would that be?

23 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: I would say that the person
24 who is best able to monitor whether there is an
25 abusive over time, if an arrest is taking longer than

1
2 it should, would be a person who was a sworn-- a
3 uniformed supervisory member who can best say what's
4 necessary and what's not necessary, and I think our
5 supervisors are achieving that.

6 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay, thank you. Let's take a
7 look at the planned events and overtime, as you
8 referenced in your opening statement.

9 At the preliminary budget hearing earlier, the
10 department testified that it had focused on
11 decreasing the number of hours of overtime for
12 planned events by 14% from fiscal year 2022 to fiscal
13 year 2023. Recent data suggests that the department
14 has been successful in reducing overtime for planned
15 events from \$56 million in the first quarter to \$20
16 million in quarter three. However, these decreases
17 have been offset by increases in overtime for other
18 categories, including new arrests, overtime for this
19 year may be the highest it's ever been, and there's
20 no relative change between how much is spent between
21 quarters.

22 How will the department address the fact that
23 overtime reductions in some category seem to lead to
24 increases in other categories?

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2 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: I'll turn it over to the
3 Deputy Commissioner in just a moment. But as we saw,
4 when we addressed the crime picture: Our arrests are
5 up, our summonses are up, our case clearance rates
6 are up, and in using the overtime to be able to bring
7 justice to victims, to interview witnesses, to make
8 sure that we are able to hold people accountable,
9 overtime has been used in those areas to conduct
10 those investigations and put patrols on the street
11 and people in our subway system so people see a
12 visible presence there as well.

13 SPEAKER ADAMS: Nothing-- Nothing to add to
14 that? Okay, thank you.

15 I'm going to move on to a couple of other
16 categories. And I'm going to try to be expeditious
17 in my questions because I know that my colleagues as
18 always have a lot to talk about.

19 When I chaired the Public Safety Committee two
20 years ago, the Council passed legislation that
21 required the NYPD to conduct an independent review of
22 the work of its Equal Opportunity Division or EEO
23 from October 2017 to October 2020, a division
24 designed to prevent and investigate harassment and
25 discrimination in the-- in the workplace. At that

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2 time, the division was led by someone who was later
3 fired for comments that were described as racist,
4 misogynistic, antisemitic, and homophobic. The very
5 things that the EEO works against happening in the
6 workplace, and I believe that we all remember him as
7 being labeled "Clouseau".

8 The division leader was terminated in 2021.
9 However, a contract with an independent vendor to
10 review the work under that leader has not been
11 executed. The external consultant will have 30 days
12 to publicly post a summary of their findings and make
13 recommendations to remedy deficiencies found in the
14 EEO's work and cases that will need to be
15 reinvestigated. The police commissioner will then
16 have 120 days to post a description of actions taken
17 or to be taken in response.

18 Where are you in finalizing a contract to hire a
19 vendor to conduct this review?

20 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: I'll turn it over to Deputy
21 Commissioner Ryan, but we have been in negotiations
22 and back and forth with the vendor to conduct that
23 review. But I'll turn it over to Deputy Commissioner
24 Ryan.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: So as the Commissioner
3 indicated, we are actively negotiating that
4 agreement. Once it's in place, the services will
5 commence. And then of course, as per the legislation
6 once they have completed their work, we will put out
7 the findings.

8 SPEAKER ADAMS: Why has it taken so long to
9 perform this?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: It's been a more
11 protracted back-and-forth with the vendor than we had
12 initially hoped. But we want to make sure that we
13 get the scope right and that we make sure we get the
14 parameters around what we are requesting accurate in
15 in the contract. We are absolutely prioritizing
16 getting this done.

17 SPEAKER ADAMS: Are you giving yourself a
18 timeline at this time that you can share with us? As
19 far as, "you expect to have this done by x date"?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: As quickly as
21 possible. As you know, there are other entities that
22 have to approve all of our contracts so we are--

23 SPEAKER ADAMS: So is it 30 days? 60 days? 90
24 days? As quickly as possible is-- what's "as quickly
25 as possible" here?

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: It's probably, still
3 given where we are in the negotiations, going to take
4 over a month or two.

5 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay. At the last preliminary
6 hearing, we heard a lot about the disciplinary matrix
7 and how NYPD reviews complaints referred to them by
8 CCRB. How will the review of the summary and
9 recommendations made by the consultant be similar or
10 different to how you review and make determinations
11 from CCRB recommendations?

12 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: The review by the...? This
13 particular...? I'm sorry. I misunderstood the
14 question.

15 SPEAKER ADAMS: The review of the summary and
16 recommendations made by the consultant: How will it
17 be similar or different to how you review and make
18 determinations from CCRB recommendations?

19 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Well, as it relates to the
20 summary that-- we-- we don't have it yet. Excuse me.
21 We actually posted the revisions to the matrix this
22 morning. They are actually open for public view at
23 this time. We take very seriously the review of that
24 matrix, and being consistent with that matrix. I'm
25 actually consistent with the matrix of 99.8% of the

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2 time, I believe, but I'll ask Chief Pintos to talk
3 about how we came to the revisions of the matrix and
4 why we did so.

5 SPEAKER ADAMS: Can-- Before you do that, I-- we
6 might have gone through this, again-- but just-- I'm
7 going to ask again: Do we know how many new
8 recommendations have been made to the matrix to date?

9 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Sir, we just have to swear
10 you in.

11 CHIEF PINTOS: Sure.

12 COUNSEL: Can you raise your right hand please?

13 Do you affirm that your testimony be truthful to
14 the best of your knowledge, information, and belief,
15 and you will honestly and faithfully answer
16 councilmember questions?

17 CHIEF PINTOS: I do.

18 COUNSEL: Thank you.

19 CHIEF PINTOS: So as a Commissioner indicated, my
20 name is Raul Pintos. I am the Chief of Staff to the
21 First Deputy Commissioner. The changes-- the
22 proposed changes to the matrix went live today.
23 We're proposing 14 changes, 5 new categories, and 9
24 revisions to existing misconduct. I can get into
25 them, but just-- I just want to-- a couple of top

2 lines is that the-- the changes all deal with the
3 issue of mitigated penalty. So we have the three
4 categories: We have a mitigated, a presumptive, and
5 an aggravated.

6 These changes only deal with the issue of
7 mitigated penalties to deal with some minor
8 misconduct. So as I said, all the other presumptive
9 and aggravated penalties stay the same. The public
10 comment section, as I said, is open today. It's on
11 our website, nyc.gov/NYPD. You go to the policies
12 column, and you'll see the matrix there. You can
13 click on there, and it opens up as a draft PDF. And
14 then if you want to make any comments, you click on
15 the comments link. It takes you to a new tab where
16 you can have a free form, or you can upload documents
17 or Word Document or PDF. And that will come to us.
18 It closes June 18th. We'll collect all the comments
19 and at some point we'll discuss with the Police
20 Commissioner, and if necessary, we'll make some
21 adjustments to the proposal.

22 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: But to be clear, all
23 presumptive and aggregated penalties-- aggravated
24 penalties remain the same. Those were not touched in
25 the revision of this matrix.

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2 CHIEF PINTO: Yea.

3 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay. How are you-- How are you
4 making it known to the public? Or is the public, or
5 whomever, just going to have to know this stuff?
6 That it's-- that this is available?

7 CHIEF PINTO: Yeah.

8 SPEAKER ADAMS: We wouldn't have known had we not
9 had this hearing today. I think part of the reason
10 why we did it today was to leverage this opportunity
11 now to make it public to the Council, and hopefully
12 those that are watching. We also are-- through the
13 media, we will put out a-- DCPI puts out a request
14 for media attention, if you will. We call all our
15 media partners, and we try our best-- we leverage our
16 online communication channels to let the public know.

17 SPEAKER ADAMS: I think that something as
18 critical as the matrix that a lot of us worked on for
19 a very long time, the least that could have been done
20 with consideration to this Council, a memo, a letter,
21 an email, a something. We would have appreciated
22 that prior to having this information brought through
23 questioning at this hearing.

24 I'm going to move on. With respect to the NYPD
25 and the law department, there have been a series of

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2 articles about how the NYPD interacts with this
3 city's law department regarding police misconduct,
4 settlements and civil lawsuits that are handled by a
5 special unit in the law department different than
6 many other agencies.

7 Last year, the city paid out \$121 million in such
8 settlements. And some of this recent reporting has
9 indicated that the police department has encouraged
10 or outright requested that the law department not
11 settle cases. In many cases this led to higher
12 payouts on settlements costing the city, its budget,
13 and taxpayers more money than if the city had settled
14 earlier.

15 Can you explain whether and how the NYPD
16 communicates with the law department when NYPD
17 officers are the subject of civil suit for police
18 misconduct, and whether you've ever asked encouraged
19 or requested that the law department not settle a
20 police misconduct suit?

21 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: As you're aware, lawsuits
22 are settled by the city for a variety of reasons, but
23 I'm going to ask Deputy Commissioner Gerber to be
24 sworn in to address your question.

25

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2 COUNSEL: Do you affirm that your testimony will
3 be truthful to the best of your knowledge,
4 information and belief and you will honestly and
5 faithfully answer councilmember questions.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: I do.

7 COUNSEL: Thank you.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Good afternoon. My
9 name is Michael Gerber. I'm the Deputy Commissioner
10 of Legal Matters.

11 So we do have a unit within the Legal Bureau that
12 serves as a liaison to the law department with regard
13 to lawsuits regarding officer misconduct. We
14 certainly provide feedback and express our views
15 regarding various cases, our views on the merits of
16 cases. We certainly-- there's a dialogue that goes
17 on, and there certainly are cases where-- where we
18 express our views about-- about the strength of the
19 case or the settlement value of a case.

20 But ultimately, it is up to the law department.
21 The law department has complete authority to settle
22 the case or not, and to determine the settlement
23 value. Ultimately that's-- that's up to the law
24 department. It's not up to us.

25

2 SPEAKER ADAMS: How do you-- Okay, it's up to the
3 law department and not you. How do you work with the
4 law department to make any changes in policy, and
5 practice, and protocols?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Right, so that same
7 unit, it's our PALS Unit that that serves as liaison
8 to the law department. Part of what they're doing,
9 actually, is that sort of risk mitigation. So it's--
10 it's not just assessing cases, but also learning from
11 cases, and seeing, "Okay, here's-- here's what went
12 wrong." "How can we do better next time?" "What
13 policies should we be putting in place to prevent
14 this sort of litigation in the future?" So that that
15 is part of the job of the unit, sort of take feedback
16 from those cases, and learn from them going forward.

17 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay. Thank you. I'm going to
18 move on. My last line of questioning has to do with
19 a matter that is very, very troublesome, and that has
20 to do with Kawasaki Trawick.

21 As you may know, the disciplinary trial of
22 Officers Brendan and Thompson-- Brendon Thompson and
23 Herbert Davis, who killed Kawasaki Trawick, concluded
24 last week. There have been a series of troubling
25 actions over the course of many years by the NYPD

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2 since Mr. Trawick was killed in 2019, that at best
3 give the appearance of undermining the accountability
4 process. NYPD refuses to release-- refused to
5 release the full video of the killing for 20 months,
6 and only did so after being ordered by a court.

7 Many troubling facts revealed last week in the
8 trial and in a ProPublica report, including that the
9 officers were reviewed for only 30 minutes and never
10 asked substantive questions about how they
11 contradicted the video and each other. In addition,
12 some of the actions by the NYPD judge before and
13 during the trial also appear to be undermining,
14 including attempting to dismiss a major charge before
15 the trial began without having the authority to do
16 so, confusing even one of the officers' attorneys.

17 This past Monday, before Kawasaki's family left
18 New York City to go back to their home in Georgia,
19 Ellen and Ricky Trawick, whom I had the pleasure of
20 meeting and welcoming in my office, hand-delivered a
21 letter for Mayor Adams at City Hall. It was a letter
22 that they also copied you, Commissioner Sewell, and
23 copied me on as well via email. In the letter they
24 call for the firing of Officers Thompson and Davis
25

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2 and urge that this decision happen over the next few
3 weeks, not the next few months.

4 Now that the discipline trial is over, will you
5 commit to making a final decision on discipline for
6 the two officers within the coming weeks and not make
7 the Trawicks wait months, given that it has been over
8 four years since this devastating tragedy?

9 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: I did receive that
10 emotional letter from the Trawicks as well. That
11 case has not concluded. We are still waiting for
12 final arguments in that case, as I understand it.
13 And when that case does come to my attention, I will
14 make a decision as promptly as possible.

15 SPEAKER ADAMS: Would you commit to notifying the
16 family, the Trawicks, prior to the press getting the
17 information?

18 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: I certainly would. I would
19 definitely commit to that. As you know, there are a
20 number of things that leak out across the city. But
21 I think it's important that we notify them of the
22 outcome of that case before it does get to the press.

23 SPEAKER ADAMS: My final question on this is
24 given concerns about the repeated interference in the
25 process, what will you do to ensure that you have

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2 full and unbiased information necessary to make a
3 fair decision that isn't only reliant on NYPD
4 personnel and sources? And for transparency, will
5 you make Deputy Commissioner Maldonado's findings and
6 recommendations report to you public as soon as it is
7 received in order to avoid any further appearances of
8 attempts to obstruct accountability, and to partially
9 repair the broken public trust with transparency?

10 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Me do make our decisions
11 public. So-- So when that decision is made-- And
12 just for the record, I look at the totality of the
13 facts submitted in a case, not just the information
14 submitted by the NYPD, but all sources of information
15 as it relates to these cases and investigations. But
16 we do make those decisions public.

17 SPEAKER ADAMS: I appreciate that very much, and
18 the fact that everything is taken a look at, taken--
19 taken very seriously and looked at very seriously. I
20 do believe that what appeared in that video in
21 totality was-- was the truth. And the mere fact that
22 it's taken this long for accountability is totally
23 unacceptable in my opinion and-- and the opinion of
24 so many others that have watched this case with much
25 pain. Thank you very much. Mr. Chair.

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2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you Speaker. One of
3 the PEGs that was instituted in the executive plan
4 was a hiring delay that produced savings from hiring
5 less officers each fiscal year. Through this delay,
6 the department has seen savings of \$36 million in FY
7 24, \$34 million in 25, and \$45 million in 26. Could
8 you tell us what class size reductions will be, and
9 has the agency delayed any set start and end dates
10 for classes now?

11 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Fortunately, I'm going to
12 my guru when it comes to budgeting. But we have been
13 able to recruit a number of people over the last
14 several classes. And one of the reasons why we're
15 encouraged by the new PBA contract is because we've
16 been able to increase our class sizes. But we
17 recognize that we had-- we had to meet the PEG in
18 negotiation with the city. So I'll ask Deputy
19 Commissioner Ryan to talk about that.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: So in terms of the
21 timing of the classes, we don't anticipate any change
22 in the timing. We'll still have them four times a
23 year. But what this translates into is it will take
24 us longer to get to our authorized headcount. So in
25 fiscal year 24, we will be hiring 425 fewer uniformed

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2 officers than we had previously anticipated in fiscal
3 year 25, 400 fewer, and in fiscal year 26, 520 fewer.
4 Those are assumed numbers based on what we were
5 projecting and what's assumed in those savings that
6 you indicated. And then the objective would be by
7 fiscal year 27 to get back to our authorized
8 headcount of 35,000.

9 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Does the department have an
10 estimate on what the increased amount of overtime
11 would be due to the delayed filling of those vacant
12 positions?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: We haven't calculated
14 that. So there's a lot of factors, obviously, that
15 go into overtime. But as I indicated earlier, when
16 we have fewer individuals to deploy on straight time,
17 that can have an impact, a negative impact on what we
18 need to do on overtime.

19 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. When this year's
20 fiscal budget 2023 was adopted last year, the PD
21 budget was \$5.53 billion. Now, the FY 23 budget is
22 \$5.83 billion. So it's increased. However, FY 24
23 budget has decreased from \$5.57 to the current \$5.31.
24 And the Council appreciates the NYPD participation in
25

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2 the PEG program. But can you explain the reasons for
3 the increases in the FY 23 budget?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: Yeah. So part of that
5 is grant funding, which is put up as the year goes
6 forward. So if you look, for example, at fiscal year
7 24 right now, there's very little federal funding
8 indicated in the budget right now, because as we get
9 those awards, that's when we do the modification to
10 show the-- the money in the budget. We don't want to
11 presume what level we're going to get.

12 The other piece is in 24-- So you see that that
13 those grants have been reflected in fiscal year 23.
14 Also state grants, it's the same situation.
15 Including with the state, this year we received \$62
16 million to date from the state for the transit
17 overtime. So that's of course reflected in 23, but
18 not reflected in fiscal year 24. And on top of that,
19 we have reductions that were taken in 24, including
20 over \$200 million in this most recent round of PEGs.
21 In fiscal year 23, we received money, as the
22 Commissioner indicated in her testimony, one-time
23 funding for the Domain Awareness System. And then
24 we've also received the collective bargaining for DC
25 37.

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2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So based on previous years'
3 allocations, can we anticipate the budget would
4 increase about \$150 to \$200 million based on the
5 federal counterterrorism grants?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. So do you have an--
8 Do you know how much federal funding the PD has
9 received this year? Thus far?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: Right-- Right now
11 we're at about \$180 million, and that's about it
12 averages: between \$175 to \$200 million a year.
13 That's primarily for counterterrorism. And then we
14 also receive significant funding for protection of
15 foreign missions from the federal government.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Has attrition slowed from
17 the previous years when it was particularly high?

18 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: We recognize that we had a
19 number of people who did retire from the police
20 department over the course of the last year. Those
21 numbers are slowing, and we're encouraged by that.
22 We had a number of reasons that we attributed that
23 to. Back on September 11, that class, the people who
24 joined the police department, rightfully so, to serve
25 the city, they reached their 20 year mark. So they

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2 chose to retire. We thank them for their service.

3 But as we move forward, we do have more people that
4 are intending to take the test, and if we have the
5 ability to do so we will hire them when we can.

6 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Are there any specific
7 units that had exceptionally high attrition rates
8 that are cause for concern?

9 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Not to my knowledge, no.

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And when-- when are the
11 next academy classes scheduled to graduate, and how
12 large are they?

13 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: We have a-- I think July
14 is our next graduation coming up. That class is
15 about 500, just over 500.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Is that about average?

17 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Over the last two years,
18 that's about average.

19 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What was average before
20 COVID?

21 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: [TO OTHERS:] I think we
22 were somewhere around-- our average was-- how much
23 was that about?

24 CHIEF MADDREY: About 7 or 800.
25

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2 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Not too much, maybe 200 or
3 300 more at the time. Obviously at its peak, it was
4 much more than that.

5 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. The PBA-- Through
6 the PBA's negotiations with-- with OLR, the
7 collective bargaining agreement was ratified. I
8 wanted to talk about the pilot program from changing
9 the rotating tours within certain precincts. It is
10 actually something I worked on with my predecessor a
11 million years ago with IBO.

12 Can you explain a bit more about the new pilot
13 program, with regard to the tour-- the 12-hour tours?

14 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Sure. So we started this
15 pilot and four commands, all in the Bronx working in
16 conjunction with the Bronx DA, our supervisors, to
17 put forward a modern chart for the police officers to
18 be competitive with neighboring agencies, and to give
19 them more time off without compromising public safety
20 in any way. That was actually spearheaded by Deputy
21 Commissioner Delatorre, who is to my right, and they
22 did a fine job in actually moving that forward. We
23 hope to be able to roll that pilot out to more
24 commands in the future, but I'll turn it over to
25 Deputy Commissioner Delatorre.

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2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: We'll swear you in.

3 COUNSEL: Do you affirm that your testimony will
4 be truthful to the best of your knowledge,
5 information, and belief? And you will honestly and
6 faithfully answer councilmember questions?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DELATORRE: I do.

8 COUNSEL: Thank you.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DELATORRE: I do.

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I mean, can you just lay it
11 out for-- even if, you know, for those that already
12 know, but the current tour and what this would look
13 like for moving over to the--

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DELATORRE: Sure. So
15 currently, we have three tours, eight hours and 35
16 minutes on patrol. And they all overlap by about 35
17 minutes currently. With the new modern chart, we're
18 looking at about anywhere from 82% to 88% of the
19 command going into 12 hour tours. These 12 hour
20 tours are going to work opposite each other, they'll
21 have three days on, three days off, three days on
22 three days off, all year long. The officers will go
23 from appearing at work 243 times down to 182 times,
24 therefore coming to work 61 days less a year, but
25

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2 still working the same 2088 hours a year that they
3 normally work.

4 Now these-- this chart, because it's 12-hour
5 toys, they're actually going over the 288 that they
6 would be working so that-- that creates what we call
7 chart time. So in addition to the hours they are
8 normally working, and they have an extra 88 hours a
9 year that they could take off, you know when they
10 have opportunity obviously, when the command can
11 allow it.

12 Now the other part of this-- Now the way we
13 worked out the pilot is that we matched up the hours
14 exactly the way they were in a pre-existing command.
15 So the commands that were piloting in now are the 47,
16 the 45 up in the Bronx, PSA 8 in the Bronx, and
17 District 11 in the Bronx. We took those commands and
18 we're comparing them to other similar commands. We
19 call them control commands in the Bronx, and those
20 commands will see how those officers do over a period
21 of time, versus how the officers in the pilot
22 commands do.

23 Now, what's happening is, because of the 12-hour
24 base, we're actually seeing no change in personnel
25 for 14 hours a day. But at 1500 hours, we have what

2 we call a surge. So those extra hours I talked about
3 it's all, you know, a little bit complex math, but
4 the extra hours that we're seeing because of the 12
5 hours, and we no longer have the 35 minute overlap,
6 those hours are manifesting themselves in what we
7 call a surge.

8 So the commands that have this pilot right now
9 we're seeing a significant increase in personnel from
10 3pm to 7pm. And still an increase in personnel until
11 1am in the morning. We think that's going to work
12 favorably with after school issues, commuting issues,
13 and certainly other crime issues that we see and
14 calls for service that-- that we see in the evening
15 hours in most of our precincts, PSAs and transit
16 districts.

17 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Is the plan eventually for
18 this to be department-wide, or to be an opt in for
19 officers?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DELATORRE: So currently,
21 that's up to the Police Commissioner, but it is a
22 pilot, and we expect it to succeed. And I believe
23 our Commissioner, who's had experience with this, and
24 is really spearheading it would like to see it move
25 as quick as possible once it's proven.

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2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Is that correct?

3 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: That is correct. It's very
4 popular. And I think it shows a real investment by
5 this police department and this city to the well-
6 being of our officers and we're monitoring it as it
7 goes forward.

8 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, I've just a couple
9 more and then I'm going to turn it over to Chair
10 Hanks. The school crossing guard vacancy reduction
11 raised some eyebrows with us. In the plan, the
12 Department recognized savings of \$7.47 million for
13 the reduction of 483 school crossing guard positions.
14 Could you tell us how that area was settled on to cut
15 vacancies?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: So what we looked at
17 was where we had a significant number of vacancies
18 and we knew it would take a significant time to hire
19 up, and essentially we'd end up having natural
20 accruals even if we didn't take the cut. So, we
21 reflected in-- in the financial plan, the fact that
22 it will take us time to ramp up. And given number of
23 vacancies in that area, it is sometimes a difficult
24 position to-- to fill, we felt that that was an area
25 we can save-- take savings.

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2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Are those-- those vacancies
3 or those roles now being performed by police
4 officers?

5 CHIEF CHELL: Some someone the vacancies--

6 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: [TO CHIEF CHELL:] I'm
7 sorry. He has to swear you in.

8 COUNSEL: Do you affirm that your testimony will
9 be truthful to the best of your knowledge,
10 information and belief, and you will honestly and
11 faithfully answer councilmember question?

12 CHIEF CHELL: I do.

13 COUNSEL: Thank you.

14 CHIEF CHELL: So vacancies can be filled by some-
15 - it's by precinct, by precinct level, by need. If
16 they're short, they prioritize their posts, then will
17 make adjustments with personnel. We can use cops, we
18 can use auxiliaries if they're available, we can use
19 certain people to fill those voids. But that's at
20 the precinct level, based on-- based on a priority.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Why do we think these-- the
22 school crossing guards has always been such a
23 difficult thing to hire for?

24 CHIEF CHELL: Well, first and foremost, salaries
25 are low at \$16.39 an hour. And a lot of-- we have a

2 lot of-- about 4000 applicants but a lot of
3 applicants want to work a specific corner close to
4 their house, and they really don't want to deviate
5 from that. So it's convenient for them. So that's,
6 that's also an issue point playing into it.

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Has raising that salary
8 been a-- you know, something raised by the
9 department?

10 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: We have. I think if we
11 were a little bit more competitive with the pay that
12 we offer people for the crossing guard position, we
13 would probably have more applicants.

14 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. One or two last
15 questions. I appreciate the-- in your testimony.
16 You mentioned a whole bunch about the paper plates,
17 and the fraudulent temporary plates, which it's-- I
18 feel like I see it everywhere.

19 The state passed the bill that the Council
20 supported last year called the Sleep Act to go after
21 these guys with these-- these obnoxiously loud and
22 illegal mufflers. I think it's about \$1,000 per
23 summons that gives the police the tools to write. Do
24 you have an idea of how many of those tickets have
25 been written?

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2 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: I can ask Chief Schell or
3 Chief Maddrey to-- to give numbers. But I will tell
4 you we have gotten a number of complaints about those
5 mufflers. We have made it a.to address these issues
6 as a quality of life problem in New York City. Chief
7 Schell?

8 CHIEF CHELL: Councilmember, I don't have the
9 muffler numbers. I do know the law, but in terms of
10 the overall package of getting into cars with paper
11 plates, and forged plates, and plate covers, and it
12 would segue into illegal ATVs, just a big effort
13 from-- from the city, from our cops kind of-- kind of
14 trying to reduce that. We've had significant
15 seizures, in terms of bikes and auto. So last year
16 if we combine-- if you combine illegal ATVs and paper
17 plates and plate covers, that was over 15,000. Right
18 now in terms of ATVs we're hovering around 4500,
19 which is-- Last year at this time we were probably
20 less than 1000. How we accomplish this: Each
21 borough, a patrol borough, can either put together a
22 committee response team of one lieutenant, two
23 sergeants, and 16 police officers, including a team
24 out of my office, and we go out nightly. And that's
25 our number one quality of life issue that I hear time

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2 and time again throughout-- throughout New York City.
3 So that's a daily effort.

4 And I will say on Sundays, which we find from
5 intelligence wise and feedback, Sunday seems to be
6 the highest days when these bikes come out. So we
7 surge about roughly 250 or 300 cops every Sunday. We
8 mobilize. We use state police. We use our inter-
9 agencies. We cover bridges. And we've made a
10 tremendous impact. And how do I know that? Well,
11 one, social media dictates that too. And we look at
12 March and April when the weather got a little warmer
13 and it starts to trend. Our calls for service as it
14 relates to disorderly bikes in groups and 311s is
15 down 88%. So we're definitely making a headway with
16 that. And when the bike groups on social media are
17 talking about us and are scared of us, that's the
18 point. So it's getting better. I can get back to
19 you with the muffler summonses. I don't have that
20 with me. But I can certainly get back to you quickly
21 with that.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yeah, I think if you if you
23 looked at the obnoxious muffler heatmap you'd see it
24 glowing in my district and the Speaker's district.
25 So we'd love we'd love to know more about that.

2 CHIEF CHELL: I grew up in Bayridge. I know it
3 well.

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, I'm going to turn it
5 over to Chair Hanks. And we've also been joined by
6 Councilmembers Bottcher, Ossé, Stevens, and Hanif.
7 Commissioner, thank you. Chair Hanks.

8 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. Chair Brannan.
9 Thank you, Speaker. So I will dig right in. And
10 we're going to try and cover of course, overtime,
11 because that is always the biggest issue, but a bit
12 of the collective bargaining and the subway safety
13 program.

14 So my first question is: Do you personally,
15 Commissioner, personally scrutinize the use of
16 overtime?

17 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: As I said, in my testimony,
18 I do. There are a number of layers that do it as
19 well. But I think it's important because it's such a
20 significant issue for this police department, that I
21 take a look at it myself, and make sure that my
22 inspections teams, my supervisors are monitoring how
23 long overtime-- excuse me, how long arrests are being
24 processed, and where we deploy our resources
25 effectively. We recognize that there were some

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2 savings we could have-- have in terms of the events
3 last year, and there was a meeting in my office every
4 week to go over the special events calendar for the
5 city to determine how many people were on those
6 details, where we could cut costs, where we could
7 consolidate our resources and use environmental
8 design features to assist us. So I do review that
9 and scrutinize it myself.

10 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much. Is-- And
11 I think I've asked this question before in other
12 hearings. Is there mandatory overtime for officers?
13 In order to be able to have the presence that we
14 needed and to ensure the safety of the city, we were
15 in a position where we had to mandate some of our
16 officers come to work. Obviously, this presented
17 challenges for our members. You come into work on
18 any given day and you were told You're not going
19 home, you have to stay for the next four hours, and
20 they have their own personal obligations that they
21 have to attend to, I'm sure that presented a
22 challenge.

23 But we are mindful that our mission is the safety
24 of this city. And so although we had to do that, we
25 recognize that we also need to mitigate that in some

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2 way. So we created a number of ways that we would
3 not have to mandate certain officers when other
4 officers would volunteer for that overtime. So we
5 created a portal for them to be able to volunteer
6 even if someone is working in Queens, but there's a
7 detail in Manhattan, he or she can volunteer to work
8 that detail so we don't have to mandate another
9 officer to do that.

10 So while we do have to do that we do have to make
11 the city safe, we are mindful of the toll it takes on
12 our members, and we're doing everything we can to try
13 to address that too.

14 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you for that. So
15 you're saying that there are some opportunities where
16 higher ranking officers can volunteer? Is there a
17 time utilization report where even though they may be
18 volunteering, that that does come up with some type
19 of budgetary implication that is in kind, as it were?

20 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: We do monitor how many
21 hours that they are working. I know one of the
22 things that have come up is that-- is one officer
23 working too much overtime? We were monitoring and
24 mindful of that as well.

25

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2 They are compensated for the overtime as it
3 relates to doing it in kind. That is not the case at
4 this point. They do it for the hours, but we're
5 trying to mitigate that as much as possible.

6 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. So part of your
7 testimony was that we-- you've-- you've identified
8 where some of the overtime was really becoming, you
9 know, where overtime is a lot in whatever category.

10 So we received the breakdown of what activities
11 are driving overtime, and the reason-- one of the
12 reasons you gave was new arrests and processing.

13 Many of-- of my colleagues, you know, we're very
14 big on, you know, public safety, and reporting is a
15 very big thing for us. And so can you kind of talk
16 us through the process and why new arrests and
17 processing would be something that would be driving
18 up overtime? Is it because they may be new police
19 officers? Is-- Has the process-- is it much more
20 complicated? But kind of go over as to why new
21 arrests and processing is taking up over -- [TO
22 STAFF: What's-- half? Almost 50? How much?] -- \$19
23 million. And-- and to kind of explain as to why that
24 is.

25

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2 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: When you say new arrests,
3 you mean when a person is processing and arrested,
4 that they just--

5 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: So yes, we've made a
7 significant amount of arrests over the last two--
8 year and a half I should say. Those arrests come
9 with interviewing witnesses, oftentimes collecting
10 video, canvassing. So there's a lot that goes into
11 those arrests and the processing of them. While we
12 do have new officers we do have officers that will
13 assist in processing those arrests, so that if we
14 have an officer who is inexperienced, we do have
15 someone that can assist and that would be a
16 supervisory role as well.

17 But-- But I think when we see the overtime in
18 arrest processing and investigations, it is clearly a
19 demonstration of the work that the NYPD is doing to
20 address the crime conditions in this city.

21 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: What do you mean by address
22 the crime conditions in the city? When it-- because
23 you're talking about the-- the level of arrests, not
24 the actual process of processing?

25 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: That is correct.

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2 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you very much. All
3 right. So we're going to talk a little bit about
4 planned events and overtime.

5 In fiscal 2022, NYPD spent \$79 million on
6 uniformed overtime for planned events throughout the
7 city. Is there an estimate of overtime that will be
8 spent on planned events in the upcoming year?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: So with-- with regard
10 to estimates, it obviously depends on a lot of
11 different factors. We do have a couple of-- you
12 know, we still have a month and a half left in the in
13 the fiscal year. And there are certain events that
14 do happen in May and June that that will drive this.
15 At this point, the projection-- the percentage in
16 terms of hours that we were citing earlier, our
17 projection is that it will be down 11% from where it
18 was at pre-pandemic levels.

19 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. If there is a
20 large event in midtown Manhattan, there's an expected
21 large number of participants expected to attend, how
22 does the department reallocate resources from
23 precincts around the city whose residents may be
24 attending the event?

25

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: So I'll turn it over
3 to Chief Maddrey in just a moment. But we look at
4 each event individually. As I stated, we were having
5 a meeting every week to go over what is the threat
6 picture? How many people are coming to this event?
7 Has there been an incident in the past at this event?
8 And then we actually have our operations collect, or
9 at least work out the detail for that event. Chief
10 Maddrey?

11 CHIEF MADDREY: Yes ma'am. Good afternoon, Chair
12 Hanks.

13 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Good afternoon.

14 CHIEF MADDREY: Just in terms of when we put
15 together details-- as we call them details for
16 planned events, say in midtown Manhattan. What we'll
17 do is first we'll start with the precinct and see
18 what the precinct can provide. And then we'll stay
19 within the borough of Manhattan itself, the patrol
20 borough of Manhattan and see where we could pull
21 extra resources. And if there's not enough to cover
22 this event, then we'll start pulling resources from
23 other boroughs. We'll take one or two cops from
24 other precincts. That way we can have adequate
25 police officers there to make sure that it's safe.

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2 But we also monitor it. If we bring X amount of
3 officers and the event is not as big as we believed
4 it would have been, we'll start sending officers back
5 to their command so they can resume patrol. So
6 that's how we usually monitor our-- our details and
7 staff are details, especially with outside resources.

8 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much. So also
9 part of the testimony and some of the use of overtime
10 apart -- Pardon me, sorry -- Is the extra tours to
11 increase presence on subways. So in the fiscal 2024,
12 the Executive Budget, we saw an additional \$62
13 million from the State added to NYPD's-- NYPD's
14 budget to cover the additional overtime expense in
15 relation to the subway safety program.

16 At our last budget hearing, you stated that this
17 program would not be able to continue in perpetuity.
18 Has the \$62 million and the additional funding
19 covered the entire amount of overtime spent related
20 to the additional deployment of officers throughout
21 the subway system?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: So the \$62 million
23 that we received from the state so far covered the
24 period from the announcement that the governor and
25 the Mayor made in late October through mid-February.

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2 So that accounted for \$62 million. We have continued
3 to provide enhanced deployment in the transit system.
4 So since that announcement in October, we have spent
5 a total of \$91 million. We are still having
6 conversations with the State about the potential for
7 additional reimbursement. But to date, we've only
8 been reimbursed \$62.

9 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. Has there been
10 any recent discussion on the continuation of this
11 program to protect New Yorkers riding the subway,
12 especially including those suffering from mental
13 health crisis?

14 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: I'm going to turn it over
15 to the Chief of Transit. As the Mayor has made clear
16 that we have to bring-- we have to bring the subway
17 into a condition where people feel confident and safe
18 riding it. And that's what we've done. And part of
19 that is being able to bring services to people who
20 are in the city subway system suffering from mental
21 health crises. Chief Kimber, along with all of our
22 city partners have put together a plan that we will
23 be continuing to bring those services to the people
24 in the subway system. Chief Kemper?

25

2 COUNSEL: Do you affirm that your testimony will
3 be truthful to the best of your knowledge,
4 information and belief, and you will honestly and
5 faithfully answer councilmember questions?

6 CHIEF KEMPER: I do.

7 COUNSEL: Thank you.

8 CHIEF KEMPER: So you made mention that we-- we
9 spoke about-- and the statement was we couldn't
10 continue the volume or the amount of personnel in
11 perpetuity. And that was true. And the plan from
12 day one, we've been very vocal about, was a to
13 stabilize where we were. If you remember, you go
14 back to 2020, to where we were, crime was spiking
15 over-- over 42% or 43% in the New York City subway
16 system.

17 So starting in October is when the Cops, Cameras,
18 and Care Act was initiated with the 1200 additional
19 cops, and that 1200 number stayed in place for quite
20 a few months. It was successful. Crime went from
21 that 43% increase to, you know, where we are right
22 now. We're just about 8% down year-to-date in
23 overall crime in a subway system. To-- Just to put
24 that number in perspective, when you compare that,
25 just to show you how successful this infusion or this

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2 investment was: When you compare that to 2019, it's
3 below 2019 numbers, and it's the third lowest number
4 and overall crime recorded in the subway system in
5 recorded history. Just to show you how big of a
6 success that investment was in personnel.

7 So to get right to the answer: Yes. It's
8 continuing not in the levels that 1200 additional
9 cops a day. But certainly there is a substantial
10 infusion of additional assets and resources into the
11 subway system to prevent crime and help people.

12 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Wonderful, because that leads
13 me to my next question. At the last budget hearing,
14 your agency testified that you would focus on
15 specific areas and proper deployment of resources.
16 So have there been any changes to those areas? Have
17 they changed? Or have we added more?

18 CHIEF KEMPER: So proper deployment is critical
19 if we're going to be successful. We have to find
20 that proper balance in relation to where we deploy
21 our personnel. We spoke-- we speak about four areas
22 in the subway system. And again, that maintains. We
23 talk about patrolling trains, moving trains, we talk
24 about platforms, we talk about mezzanine areas, and
25 we talk about turnstile areas.

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2 So again, it's proper balance. A lot of time we
3 shift resources based on crime trends, or, you know,
4 current crime conditions, or crime complaints, or
5 quality of life complaints. But to answer your
6 question, again: Yes, we certainly maintain a
7 presence and a focus on those areas.

8 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: And finally, would you say
9 that that's been an adequate amount of resources for
10 this program that, you know, ensures the safety of
11 all passengers and the public and the subway system?

12 CHIEF KEMPER: I do. I think it's-- I think the
13 data speaks for itself, the success. Again, last
14 year, at this time in 2022, for the first 10 months
15 of the year, let's not forget, crime was up just
16 about 43% overall in the subway system. Starting
17 October 26 up until present we went from an extremely
18 concerning 43% increase to an immediate downward
19 trend where we're now down 8%.

20 So the data speaks for itself. And to answer
21 your question: Yes. And it's because of the hard
22 work of the men and women of the NYPD. Make no
23 mistake about that.

24 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much. So I just
25 want to have a few questions about the PBA collective

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2 bargaining agreement. Recently, through the PBA's
3 negotiations with the Office of Labor Relations, a
4 collective bargaining agreement was announced and
5 ratified. As a result of that new contract, an
6 additional cost to the city of approximately \$5.5
7 billion had been reported. We did not see the
8 changes recognized in the Department's budget and the
9 executive plan. And we understand some of these
10 changes are still being reviewed and implemented.
11 However, we'd like to ask if there's information you
12 can share with us just to see what changes that we
13 may see. Including: Can we expect to see the money
14 added to the department budget as a result of the new
15 contract?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: So as you indicated,
17 OMB is still finalizing the exact calculations with
18 regard to what our specific agency allocation will
19 be. We do expect it to be included as part of the
20 adopted budget, but we have not seen the detailed
21 numbers yet.

22 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Okay. Thank you. Will the
23 labor reserve cover the entire cost of the
24 collective-- collective bargaining agreement?
25

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DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: Through-- Through the
financial plan window? Yes.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: One more question on this:
Of this estimate, how much will go to NYPD's budget
for salaries and how much will go to miscellaneous
budget for fringe costs?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: So that is part of
what we're waiting for from OMB, but that \$5.5
billion figure includes both the NYPD's costs and
central costs, including fringe. So it's all
inclusive in the \$5.5.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much. One last
question. This is always the perennial question that
we will ask on budget hearings when we talk about
staffing, and at the preliminary budget, we hear
still a lot from NYPD and CCRB about the amount of
information, including body camera footage that needs
to be processed and reviewed for complaints made
against officers.

How many NYPD off-- staff members do you have
receiving CCRB body-worn camera footage requests,
tracking those requests, reviewing footage, and
sending the footage to CCRB in a timely manner?

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So we have a body-
3 worn camera unit. Now, they're responding to
4 requests for body worn camera from wherever it may
5 be. It can be from CCRB. Obviously, there are other
6 sources of requests for body-worn camera. A variety
7 of sources. But our total body worn camera unit has
8 43 members, six civilian attorneys, 20 civilian
9 support staff, and 17 uniformed members of service.

10 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. How many NYPD
11 staff members do you have processing the data and
12 document requests related to racial profiling and
13 bias-based policing investigations?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So we have a CCRB
15 liaison unit that has 15 members. That's 10
16 uniformed members of service and five civilian
17 support staff. I should just to be clear that the--
18 to the extent CCRB is requesting body-worn camera
19 footage, that will that will go to the body-worn
20 camera unit. And then-- And then the CCRB Liaison
21 Unit, making sure they're responding to document
22 requests, gathering materials. So when CCRB requests
23 come in, it'll be our CCRB Liaison Unit. But the
24 body-worn camera unit, of course, also plays a
25 critical role.

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2 CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY: What-- One point,
3 Councilmember is the-- the individuals assigned to
4 the unit, I think it's fair to say that CCRB is
5 probably the biggest client in terms of requests.

6 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: I was going to ask that
7 question next.

8 CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY: Yeah, I mean, although the
9 Memorandum of Understanding with the CCRB and the
10 NYPD provides the NYPD with up to 25 days to provide
11 body-worn camera footage upon request, in the vast,
12 vast majority of cases, absent the anomaly of larger
13 cases, they're receiving the footage three to seven
14 days after they request it. So it's-- it's--

15 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: So that was really my-- my
16 last question before I pass it along to my colleagues
17 is, on your end, what are the challenges that you're
18 seeing with that whole interaction between body-worn
19 cameras, between CCRB and NYPD? How long is it
20 taking? Do you keep track? And do you have
21 reporting on the amount of time it takes? Because
22 we're hearing conflicting issues? And so in order
23 for this body to make sure that everything is done
24 properly as to the law, we would-- Are you keeping
25 any kind of reports that are speaking to the fact

2 that you're providing the body one camera footage in
3 three to seven days? Because that's not the
4 information that we are receiving?

5 MR. GERBER: Sure. So-- Can I? Sure. So I
6 think what one of the-- I would call the disconnects
7 is the statute of limitations, right? So the statute
8 of limitations exists to-- to give a timeline for a
9 case. It does not mean that it's 18 months (which is
10 the statute of limitations) does not mean that the
11 CCRB has 18 months to take-- to do an entire
12 investigation to do their work, and that is it.

13 They have a part of that window, a significant
14 part. I think one of the questions that needs to be
15 asked is: What is being-- How is that time managed,
16 right? So there needs to be time left over for the
17 NYPD to do its part of the discipline process, to
18 have the reviews in place, you know, to have-- to
19 give the Commissioner and every other part time to
20 review the work and review the case. But I think the
21 real question that needs to be asked is: Why are the
22 cases arriving at the NYPD doorstep with so little
23 time left? Why are upwards of 18 months being used
24 to do an investigation when the entire window is 18
25 months? And the question needs to be asked: What

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2 is-- How is that time being utilized by the CCRB?
3 How long is the investigation? How long is the
4 intake process? How long does it take to actually
5 generate a request to the NYPD and ask them, "Can you
6 give me body cam? Can you give me this the arrest
7 report, or any other pieces?" From the time you get
8 a complaint, there should be windows, there should be
9 timelines in place, such as we have for example. If
10 we have a CCRB request for body-worn camera footage,
11 we know the outside date in the vast number of cases
12 is upwards of 25 days, but we put a process in place
13 to streamline it, and we got it done in three to
14 seven. Does that process exist on the other side?

15 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you very much. We'll
16 dig into that a little bit more. But thank you all
17 for testifying here today and answering my questions.
18 And-- And thank you for helping us protect the city
19 and the men and women who put on a uniform. We do
20 know the hard work that you have in this-- in these
21 difficult times. Thank you so much. Chair Brannan?

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Oh. Do you--
23 Does the department communicate with CCRB on a
24 regular basis?

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1
2 MR. GERBER: Yes, absolutely. And our CCRB unit
3 is talking to the CCRB regularly and there's--
4 there's back-and-forth about that, in terms of-- I
5 was referencing in terms of, you know, requests for
6 documents or body-worn camera footage. I think
7 there's-- there's very much a dialogue and a back-
8 and-forth between-- between CCRB and our CCRB unit.

9 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER LITWIN: I'd like to add to
11 that.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: We have to swear you in.

13 COUNSEL: Do you affirm your testimony be
14 truthful, to the best of your knowledge, information
15 and belief? And you will honestly and faithfully
16 answer councilmember questions?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER LITWIN: Yes, I do.

18 COUNSEL: Thank you.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER LITWIN: Amy Litwin, Deputy
20 Commissioner, Department Advocate's Office. So we
21 have a consistent relationship with the CCRB. We're
22 responsible for internal disciplinary cases
23 investigated by the department, but all of CCRB's
24 cases come through our office.

25

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2 So we are, just to answer your question, in
3 constant communication with CCRB. We have at least
4 weekly meetings about the case flow, about the
5 specific cases about some of the issues that we're
6 seeing. We're constantly trying to build a stronger
7 and better relationship. Our biggest concern, as
8 Chief of Staff Chernyavsky pointed out, is the
9 timeframes for the cases and getting them out with
10 sufficient time to actually process them and pay
11 meaningful attention to the requests for discipline
12 that they're making of the department. So that has
13 been something that we started communicating with the
14 CCRB about in the fall of 2021. And we continue to
15 communicate about that.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. Yeah.

17 SPEAKER ADAMS: I'm sorry. I just want to jump
18 in here because I'm a little perplexed. Oleg, your--
19 to your questions, and why I'm a little confused now
20 is that-- and I asked the Chair to ask if there-- if
21 there's communication between NYPD and CCRB. Your
22 questions were very pointed. Why have not those
23 questions been asked to them, and you know, to get an
24 answer. Because we're going to now have to, you

25

2 know, and we will, you know, do our due diligence,
3 and, you know, follow up with that, but...?

4 CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY: The questions have been
5 asked. It's-- It's been a process. Commissioner
6 Litwin sitting to my right would definitely-- can
7 give you a play-by-play with granular detail. But we
8 have asked the question informally. We have asked
9 the questions formally. We have letters dating back
10 to, I believe, 2020 or 2021 that outline the
11 timeframe, that gives the-- the police department a
12 really short period of time. But we agreed to that
13 because the backlog was growing. We saw the train
14 coming with the backlog of COVID cases when there was
15 work from home, and we understood the hurdles. With
16 that said the words an extension of the statute of
17 limitation during COVID time. I think there was an
18 additional nine months added. Whether that time was
19 being utilized efficiently was a question. It was
20 certainly a concern for us. We raised these
21 concerns.

22 What we didn't want to see happening was hundreds
23 of cases being dropped on our doorstep with literally
24 days if not a couple of weeks to review them, because
25 we have a responsibility, the Commissioner has a

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2 responsibility to the members of service to ensure
3 that they have faith in the process.

4 But that's exactly what actually happened:
5 Hundreds of cases dropped on our door lap with
6 literally days if not a few weeks before the end of
7 the SOL.

8 SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Okay, we're going to have
10 questions now starting with Brooks-Powers, followed
11 by Sanchez.

12 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you, Chairs.
13 Thank you, Commissioner, for your testimony as well.

14 A couple of questions. First, how many NYPD
15 officers are stationed in the subway system at one
16 time?

17 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: So that number varies by
18 day. As you know, we had to surge additional
19 officers into the subway system, but I'll ask Chief
20 Kemper to talk about the deployment into the system.

21 CHIEF KEMPER: Who am I talking to, so I can...?
22 Hi. It varies. Just like the Police Commissioner
23 says. It depends on the day of the week. It depends
24 on the hour. Obviously, ridership is important to
25 us. We watch peak ridership times, the a.m. rush,

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2 the p.m. rush is very important. We would like to
3 have more police officers working at that time,
4 school dismissal time, obviously.

5 So I can't give you a-- I'm not going to lock
6 myself into an answer, because there is no answer.

7 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: What specific
8 allocations are made in this budget related to
9 officers in the subway?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: So overall, the
11 transit bureau-- excuse me one second; I have this.
12 It's about-- The permanent head gets about 2700. And
13 the funding for that is \$250 million, excluding
14 overtime, which is budgeted centrally within the
15 department's budget.

16 CHIEF KEMPER: If I may, that's also-- there's a
17 supplement to that also. There's supplement-- Those
18 numbers supplemented by police officers from
19 different bureaus on straight time and on overtime.
20 If I may, I'll give you an example of what I'm
21 talking about. If you're a precinct that has a
22 subway station. I'll go to Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. And
23 if there's the 68 precinct has a subway station, they
24 may be directed to supply a police officer from the
25 68 precinct to patrol a subway system in their

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2 respective precinct. We-- We're upwards of
3 approximately a couple of hundred additional police
4 officers assigned to the subway system to police it a
5 day throughout the entire city in a fashion like
6 that. And also we're still supplementing through the
7 State-funded overtime. Certainly not at the levels
8 as we were back in October to about mid-March. But
9 we still have overtime that's funded through the
10 State.

11 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Fare evasion
12 enforcement is historically biased against
13 communities of color. How is NYPD working to reduce
14 this biasness in our subway system?

15 CHIEF KEMPER: So first and foremost, let me
16 start by saying we-- we never police and we never
17 conduct enforcement based on demographics, race,
18 religion, sex, or anything like that. But fare
19 evasion enforcement is critically important to the
20 MTA. It sets the tone of rules and law and order in
21 the subway system. If you look at it this way, it's
22 the-- the first and last thing the average rider is
23 going to see when they-- when they use the subway
24 system. What do I mean by that? When they walk into
25 the system to use it within seconds, they get to see

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2 turnstiles and when they leave, they've got to pass
3 the turnstiles. And if they see open lawlessness
4 with people swiping people in, or hopping the
5 turnstile. It creates a sense of lawlessness and
6 fear and a perception that things are out of control.
7 And at the end of the day, it's illegal. You know,
8 and we're the police. It's still a law on the books
9 that you have to pay your fare.

10 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Chair, may I ask
11 two more questions?

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Sure.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: The MTA has touted
14 its use of unarmed private security guards to help
15 deter fare evasion in the subways and recommended an
16 increase in the presence of these guards moving
17 forward. What is NYPD's position on expanding
18 private security enforcement and the subway system?

19 CHIEF KEMPER: So we-- we are well aware of-- of
20 them. And listen, we welcome any idea or any-- any
21 alternative approach to effectively curbing fare
22 evasion in in the subway system. So they're there.
23 They have a job to do. And so do we. Let me say
24 this: They take no enforcement action.

25

2 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: I've introduced a
3 bill that would require NYPD to hand out Fair Fares
4 material in the subway when issuing a summons or
5 arrest to someone. Does NYPD currently do anything
6 to promote the Fair Fares Program when enforcing fare
7 evasion?

8 CHIEF KEMPER: So currently, it depends on the
9 situation. But the Fair Fares Program, we are in
10 full support of it, expanding it. I know there's
11 conversations-- strong legitimate conversations that
12 the MTA is having. They just released a blue-ribbon
13 panel report yesterday afternoon, at least that's
14 when-- the first time I got a glimpse of it. And
15 that's detailed in there that they want to expand
16 that program. And we're in full support of that.

17 I just want to make mention since we're talking
18 about fare evasion, and I think it's important that
19 people realize that this is to correct behavior.
20 This is not to arrest people. This is to correct
21 behavior in the subway system, behavior that to be
22 quite frank needs-- you know, some times, needs to be
23 corrected. Over 97-- Over 97% of the people that get
24 stopped for fare evasion are released on scene with a
25 civil summons, with a summons within minutes.

2 So this isn't about arresting people or
3 incarcerating people, you know, you're probably well
4 aware back in 2018-ish. You know-- You know,
5 substantial changes were made in relation to how we
6 approached fare evasion. And a key component of that
7 was a through civil tabs summonses. And that's what
8 I'm talking about. So over 97% of people stopped are
9 released within minutes, the 2.5% to 3% that aren't,
10 those are the people that you wouldn't expect to be
11 released because they're-- you know, for the most
12 part, they're wanted, they have warrants. As we're
13 sitting here, literally in Brooklyn, on Hoyt street,
14 a fare evader was caught with a loaded handgun on
15 him. He didn't stop at for police and ran onto a
16 train, and was apprehended with a loaded gun, just as
17 we were sitting here.

18 So just to show you, you know, we wouldn't expect
19 that far evader to be allowed to run. So there's--
20 people with warrants. There's, you know, reasons why
21 they are not released within minutes on a civil
22 summons.

23 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: In terms of the
24 bill that I have introduced in the Council, which
25 would, like I said, require the police officer when

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2 they're giving a summons or a ticket to include
3 information on the Fair Fares program. What is the
4 NYPD position on that?

5 CHIEF KEMPER: We support the Fair Fares Program.
6 We support the expansion. We support anything to--
7 to improve upon that process.

8 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Councilmember Sanchez,
10 followed by Brewer.

11 COUNCILMEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you, Chairs. And
12 good afternoon, Commissioner. And Oleg, long time,
13 no see. I first want to just start by thanking my
14 local precincts, which I have a very great
15 relationship with and the Intergov Team for always
16 answering my questions and being responsive.

17 But my question today is on a somber note, and it
18 is following up with Speaker Adrienne Adams'
19 questions regarding the case of Kawasaki Trawick. As
20 you know, April 2019, four years ago, Kawasaki, who
21 lived in my district, in district 14 in the Bronx, in
22 a supportive housing facility was shot and killed by
23 two NYPD officers while cooking in his home when
24 officers illegally entered his home, shouted
25 commands, and created a horribly tragic situation.

2 Since it's been four years and just last Friday--
3 I was under the impression that the inves-- the
4 disciplinary trial had concluded, but heard you
5 earlier say that it has not concluded, that there's
6 still some steps to go. I'm still just calling
7 attention to some extremely troubling facts that the
8 disciplinary trial brought to bear, including that
9 the Force Investigation Unit questioned officers for
10 only 30 minutes, not even asking clarifying questions
11 when officer testimony contradicted videos that have
12 been available to the public, as the Speaker called
13 out.

14 So I thank you for responding to letters and
15 calls and inquiries that that came from my team. But
16 on behalf of Ms. Ellen and Mr. Rickey... Miss Ellen,
17 who just spent her fifth Mother's Day without her
18 son, I'm here joining in this forum and on the record
19 in calling for accountability and no more delays.

20 There are significant concerns that the
21 department has been engaging in for years of cover
22 up, obstruction, and delays to block the firing of
23 these two officers and their killing of Kawasaki
24 Trawick.

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2 So I have a series of questions I'll start with
3 the first as a follow up to the Speaker.

4 Commissioner, understanding that you responded to the
5 Speaker that you'll make the NYPD's decision public.

6 Can you commit specifically to making the Deputy
7 Commissioner Maldonado's findings and recommendations

8 report itself? Can you make that public as soon as

9 you receive it in order to avoid further appearances

10 of attempts to obstruct accountability, and to

11 partially repair the broken public trust and

12 transparency?

13 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: When the case is concluded

14 and my decision is made, we will release the

15 documentation.

16 COUNCILMEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you.

17 My second question is: The NYPD judge's actions and

18 remarks related to the illegal entry charges raised

19 the question of whether the NYPD would ever find any

20 officer guilty of illegal entry. Are there any

21 examples of the NYPD formally finding an officer

22 guilty of illegal entry? And if so, what was the

23 formal discipline?

24

25

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2 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: I'm going turn it over to
3 legal for that question. Actually Department
4 Advocate will answer that.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER LITWIN: So I think the issue
6 in this particular case was specific to the way that
7 CCRB filed the charges pertaining to this case.
8 Certainly, the department evaluates and CCRB does
9 request discipline at times for an improper entry
10 into an apartment, an improper search.

11 Under these circumstances, the statute of
12 limitations had expired. And they used--

13 COUNCILMEMBER SANCHEZ: I'm sorry, I'm on a
14 limited clock, and I'm specifically asking about
15 other cases. Has a-- Has a finding of illegal entry
16 ever been filed in other cases?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER LITWIN: Yes. The CCRB has
18 substantiated allegations about illegal entries and
19 the department has disciplined when-- when-- where
20 the department is in agreement that the officer
21 entered the--

22 COUNCILMEMBER SANCHEZ: And what has been the
23 NYPD disciplinary action?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER LITWIN: So usually, those
25 cases come from the CCRB. Under Commissioner Sewell,

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2 we have complied with the matrix on all CCRB requests
3 for discipline. So I don't have sitting here in
4 front of me a chart of every disciplinary outcome for
5 all cases involving an illegal entry. But there has
6 been discipline on cases where CCRB has requested it.

7 COUNCILMEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you, and if I can
8 have the Chair's permission to just wrap my-- my last
9 two together.

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Sure.

11 COUNCILMEMBER SANCHEZ: So my third question is,
12 Commissioner-- and thank you. Commissioner, what
13 actions would you take to ensure integrity and
14 transparency of the department systems of
15 accountability related to cases like this?
16 Especially in light of what many believe is a
17 disciplinary process that is unfair, given a Force
18 Investigation Division that has never substantiated
19 any charges against officers in any of the 35 most
20 recent police killings that they were responsible for
21 investigating? So that's-- that's my third question.

22 And the fourth one is, would you commit to
23 personally reviewing the footage of this incident for
24 yourself before making a final determination of
25 discipline?

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2 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Well, I will absolutely
3 review that footage of this event before I make my
4 determination. And I believe the NYPD is probably
5 one of the most transparent police agencies. We
6 release our decisions. We have dashboards online.
7 And I think that is consistent with building the
8 public trust. Aside from that, we go out to
9 communities. We talk to people when there's a
10 troublesome case. We make sure we liaison with
11 clergy and leaders to show the community that we too
12 are concerned when there is an incident that is
13 noteworthy or troublesome. We will continue to post
14 our decisions online, and we'll be as transparent as
15 possible in this case as well.

16 COUNCILMEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you,
17 Commissioner.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, we have Brewer
19 followed by Barron.

20 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Thank you. Smoke shops.
21 So there's a new state law, as I understand it. So I
22 wanted to know if it is budgeted in your situation?
23 What's the status of how you're going to comply with
24 this new state law? We have in my district 63, and,
25 I don't know, 1700 citywide.

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2 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: So while we have taken an
3 aggressive approach to that and working in
4 partnership to address that, I'll turn it over to
5 Chief of Patrol John Chell.

6 CHIEF CHELL: This relates to the sale of
7 marijuana being a misdemeanor from-- from a smoke
8 shop. So obviously, this law just came out. But we--
9 - the Police Commissioner allocated an extra 125 on
10 narcotics.

11 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: 125 police officers?

12 CHIEF CHELL: In our narcotics division--

13 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay.

14 CHIEF CHELL: --to take a look at smoke shops.
15 To give you some numerics, we gave a list of 80 smoke
16 shops to our narcotics division to take a look at.

17 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay.

18 CHIEF CHELL: This was based on community
19 complaints, high volume 311, and things we hear from
20 sources. Of the 80 smoke shops that we gave to our
21 narcotics division, 73 were positive for narcotics
22 and marijuana sales.

23 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay. And this is before
24 the state law passed?

25

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2 CHIEF CHELL: This was before the state law
3 passed?

4 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: So now that there's a
5 state law, will it be any different in terms of
6 approach? I don't know. I'm asking.

7 CHIEF CHELL: Well, we have-- Now, with the law
8 in place for the sale of marijuana from a-- from a
9 smoke shop, we can make an arrest if we choose to on
10 the scene, and it's a misdemeanor, a misdemeanor desk
11 ticket. So it's another tool-- tool to use. And
12 sometimes we might not do it, based on-- based on the
13 way the investigation goes, rather than making an
14 arrest right away.

15 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: And in the past-- I'm
16 sorry.

17 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Go ahead. No please.

18 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: In the past, when we were
19 resorting to nuisance abatement efforts, we now have
20 a little bit more resource and a little bit more
21 teeth to be able to enforce this.

22 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: If you could keep us up to
23 date, that will be helpful. Number two is abandoned
24 cars. So I understand from here when the Sanitation
25 Commissioner spoke, she said, to her credit, that

2 she's got six officers from NYPD plus her officers,
3 and they have a better approach to abandoned cars.

4 So I'm just wondering if that's happened. We
5 obviously get calls. What's the status of abandoned
6 cars?

7 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: So we recognize that there
8 are a number of abandoned cars around the city and
9 each instance may have a different person or agency
10 who is responsible--

11 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Correct. One has a set of
12 plates on it. One doesn't have plates on it. Blah,
13 blah.

14 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Right. One will be
15 sanitation, one will be the NYPD. And what we were
16 doing before was we were referring the complaint to a
17 particular agency and then they would get there and
18 say, "It's not our problem. You need to go to--"

19 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Correct. I've been there
20 and done that.

21 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: So I've actually-- I
22 actually transferred police officers to the
23 Department of Sanitation to work in conjunction with
24 them to be able to have a task force model to go to
25 the locations and say, "Well, it's not mine. It's

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2 yours," so we can take that action right then and
3 there, as opposed to referring the complaint to
4 someone else. So that model, I think, is going to
5 yield some success.

6 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay. So will you keep us
7 up to date as to-- or maybe the Sanitation
8 Commissioner as to how it's working?

9 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Yes.

10 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay. Number three in
11 terms of overtime. So I went to Planned Parenthood
12 on Bleecker Street the first Saturday of the month,
13 and you've got the pros and the cons, and I don't
14 know what. A little bit of everything there. But
15 what was challenging was from one of the Catholic
16 Churches, people walked over, that's fine. They have
17 every right to do that. But they came over with 85
18 police officers for two hours. So I'm just wondering
19 why in the world, somebody would need 85 police
20 officers. There weren't that many people there in
21 terms of the support that they were offering. Do you
22 know anything about this?

23 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: So--

24 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: It looked like an overtime
25 misuse.

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2 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: So when we staff a detail,
3 it may appear as though there are a number of people
4 that are there, more than we need at the time. But
5 we're usually probably looking at the entire threat
6 picture, chatter that we see online, threats that
7 were made to the opposite side. So we will deploy
8 accordingly. But we can also adjust that, as Chief
9 Maddrey mentioned before. If we get there and
10 realize that there-- a threat no longer exists,
11 there's not enough people that would necessitate the
12 number of resources that we have on scene, we can
13 scale that back.

14 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay, I would suggest that
15 you look at that, please. And then just quickly, the
16 community affairs officers: Are they assigned now
17 locally by the precinct, because I love the 2-4, the
18 2-0, and the Central Park, or are they assigned
19 centrally?

20 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: So we-- The Community
21 Affairs Bureau has the right to be able to deploy
22 that community affairs officers across the city based
23 on the need. Obviously it helps us deploy them more
24 efficiently. But a commander will always have the
25

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2 ability to control the community affairs officers in
3 their command.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Commanders don't like this
5 program that you have, just so you know. They like
6 to do it themselves. I just point that out. All
7 right, thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, we have Barron
9 followed by Cabán.

10 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Commissioner.
11 The question of trust, obviously you don't trust us.
12 You got half the brass in the city here. So I don't
13 know what you expected. But I want to ask you a
14 question about accountability, and I'm going to raise
15 the question of two of your chiefs, one who I worked
16 with very well in the 75th. But Lieutenant Chell,
17 about 13 years ago, shot and killed an unarmed black
18 man in the back, said it was an accident -- he fell
19 down and shot him. And when it went to the civil
20 court, they said it was intentional, and he never
21 fell down. It was intentional. And he went from
22 Lieutenant Chell to now Chief. Chief Maddrey (and I
23 worked well with him in the 75) went over to the 73rd
24 when a retired police officer terrorized three young
25 boys and got him out real quick. So when we see

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2 that, that they can rise when these things happen,
3 people begin to question credibility, trust. And
4 when we look at the fact when we look at the
5 statistics of the Civilian Complaint Review Board,
6 and you have some appointments on there, the Council,
7 the Mayor, and then the bottom line, it comes back to
8 you, that is not a system of accountability. And I
9 don't know what your record is, but in the past 90
10 some odd percent of those cases that come back by the
11 CCRB are either not substantiated or given a slap on
12 the wrist, which is losing vacation time, two or
13 three times and vacation time. I'm putting in a
14 resolution or a law calling for a-- an elected
15 civilian complaint review board so it can take the
16 weight off you -- police policing the police -- and
17 allow for the people to have a real Civilian
18 Complaint Review Board that would have the power to
19 do the investigations. I want to know your position
20 on that. And also, in the case of-- by the way,
21 Ortanzo Bovell, the young man that Chief Chell
22 killed, the family-- the mother did get \$2.5 million
23 awarded to the family from the civil court.

24 Also Jordan Neeley: Do you think-- first of all
25 he came to the precinct, and was released. And then

2 later on he was surrendered himself, didn't have to
3 do the perp walk like many have to do. With the
4 information that's already in, is already seen, a lot
5 of people are calling that vigilantism. And for the
6 Mayor to have a weak response originally, and then
7 gets-- when he got pushback, come out and say a
8 little more. What do you think about that. I mean,
9 based upon a Marine who's trained to kill, holding
10 someone in a chokehold for 15 minutes, you know, your
11 body had to go limp at some point. You had to know
12 he was not responding. But 15 minutes? Do you
13 support that kind of vigilante justice?

14 And then finally, I think there should be a
15 disbanding of the Strategic Response Group. The
16 Strategic Response Group, when it comes to our
17 rallies-- Matter of fact, they came together in 2015
18 to deal with terrorism. We were talking about just
19 peaceful rallies, and too many peaceful, nonviolent
20 protesters were brutalized violently by this
21 Strategic Response Group. They got from \$13 to now
22 some say \$90 million. I think there's a better use
23 of our money in preventing crime and doing other
24 things than to have such a violent unit-- and I'm not
25 talking about them arresting violent protesters, but

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2 I'm talking about the peaceful, nonviolent protesters
3 who get beat down by this group badly and had those
4 tactics where they surround you, and you can't get
5 away so they can apply the violence that they have.
6 And to have a special prosecutor's office and
7 attorney general Tish James' office is a waste of
8 time, because she got the cases and didn't prosecute
9 anybody doing anything wrong, no matter how obvious
10 it was.

11 And then bail reform. Do you agree with me that
12 bail reform was miscommunicated to the public by the
13 Mayor? Bail reform was for nonviolent misdemeanors,
14 not violent-- nonviolent misdemeanors, and 92% of
15 them did not-- did not commit another crime. But yet
16 the Mayor put out there like the reason why crime is
17 going up is because of the bail reform.

18 To me, these are very serious issues. The NYPD
19 doesn't have a good record and our communities. You
20 brought back Giuliani's street crime unit called it
21 something else, and said you're going to have
22 different policies with them. But same game
23 different name. And it seemed like that relationship
24 has not improved as much as you want to point a--
25 make a rosy picture of it. It has not improved. And

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1
2 oftentimes in our neighborhoods, they just get away
3 with a whole lot. And by the way, stop and frisk is
4 still happening. They're not filling out the forms.
5 And I've seen it myself, where they would stop a
6 young man, cuss him out, pat them down, and tell him
7 to keep walking. How will you monitor that if
8 they're not filling out the forms. I suggested one
9 time you get a disguise and drive through the
10 neighborhood and watch, and you'll see it for
11 yourself. So if you can answer some of those
12 questions, I'd appreciate it.

13 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: I'll start with the one
14 that you mentioned with Jordan Neely. Obviously,
15 that case has stirred quite a lot of emotion and
16 opinions. But as you know, that individual was
17 arrested after a charging decision was made with the
18 NYPD and the Manhattan DA's office. So I'm going to
19 limit my discussion on that topic.

20 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: Yeah, I just wanted to
21 know that he first came in, he was released. That
22 doesn't happen to us. That doesn't happen to black
23 people. He was brought in-- This has nothing to do
24 with the DA. He was brought in and released.

25

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2 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Councilmember, I know you
3 realize that the CCRB has opened an investigation
4 into that. So I'll be limited on that topic as well.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: I'm not talking about the
6 investigation. I'm saying do you think it was proper
7 to release somebody who just killed somebody in the
8 subway? And that doesn't even happen to us when we
9 do lesser crimes? I have to come down to the
10 precincts to try to get a desk appearance ticket for
11 people who were loitering, or doing much less and
12 they keep them in and put them through the system,
13 and have to go to night court. This guy walks in
14 after killing somebody and walks right out. You
15 can't hide behind investigations. We're-- you know--
16 -

17 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Councilmember, as with all
18 investigational-- homicide investigations, the NYPD
19 works in conjunction with the DA's office to develop--
20 -

21 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: I'm familiar with that.
22 But the initial arrest is on the NYPD, not the DA.
23 The initial investigation is-- when our people come
24 into the office-- when they arrest youth, black youth
25 in the city, they don't wait for no investigation for

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2 nobody. You arrest them, charge them with something.
3 They go to a grand jury, and they determine whether
4 the charges are relevant or not.

5 MR. CHERNYAVSKY: Councilmember, homicide
6 investigations, as a general course, wherever they
7 are, happen in conjunction with the DA's office.

8 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: I understand that.

9 MR. CHERNYAVSKY: So when the time to make an
10 arrest, the gathering of the evidence, the
11 determination of probable cause, that's done in
12 tandem. It's not like a graffiti crime, or criminal
13 mischief, or even a felony assault crime. You know,
14 homicide investigations are always done in
15 partnership with the DA's office. And this didn't
16 differ from the normal pattern.

17 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: All-- All crimes are--
18 You have to deal with the DA's office because that's
19 where it ends up all the time.

20 MR. CHERNYAVSKY: But I'm saying from the outset.

21 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: That happens--

22 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: From the outset, all
23 homicides are done like that.

24 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: I understand. But I've
25 seen-- I'm telling you, I've seen cases where they

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2 won't charge them with the murder or manslaughter.
3 They'll have a much lesser crime when they really
4 think he did something wrong, and then allow for the
5 investigation in the DA's office for the crime to go
6 up further.

7 And by the way, in that case, I think there
8 should have been-- this is nothing to do with you,
9 but multiple indictments, not just a singular
10 indictment, but that's my opinion.

11 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, we're going to move
12 on to Councilmember Schulman followed by--

13 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: No, they didn't finish
14 answering my questions.

15 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I got 12 members after you.
16 Councilmember Schulman followed by Ariola.

17 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: No. So you can't do this
18 every time it comes to me. And you other people
19 talk. Let her answer my question.

20 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Councilmember Schulman
21 followed by Ariola.

22 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: No, I'm not going to stop
23 this time, because you do this to me every time.
24 Everybody else.

25 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. Ask your question.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: I asked it. I just want
3 her to get an answer.

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: You asked 35 questions.
5 Which one do you want them to answer?

6 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: No. Answer the questions,
7 please.

8 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Which question?

9 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: The ones I was asking you
10 about, the bail reform and the Strategic Response
11 Group.

12 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: SRG is probably one of the
13 most highly trained disorder control units in the
14 police department. And consistent with policy, when
15 they are deployed, they're deployed off site, where
16 community affairs is the first unit that goes and
17 sets the ground rules and talks with the organizers
18 at those locations.

19 As it relates to-- I think your other question
20 was about bail reform. We talked about that last
21 year. I will tell you, I think we did ourselves a
22 disservice just calling it bail reform. It was
23 criminal justice reform. There were a number of
24 different aspects of that legislation that were
25

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2 troublesome, not just for the Police Department
3 before our criminal justice partners as well.

4 We said over and over again that recidivism is
5 one of the issues that was driving--

6 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: But that wasn't happening.
7 95% did not commit another crime.

8 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: 327 people were arrested
9 6000 times last year.

10 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: Bail reform said those
11 were non-violent offenses, they released-- 95% found
12 they didn't commit a crime, and your Strategic
13 Response Group is violently suppressing protests.
14 And that's wrong.

15 CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY: So councilmember, I think
16 what the law actually did, it didn't make that
17 distinction in the law. The difference between a
18 recidivist or a first-time offender or not? And I
19 think that's the flaw. I think we're in agreement in
20 the sense that the changes in the law work for the
21 significant majority of the people, the first time
22 low level offenders. But what the law didn't do--
23 what the law didn't do is account for those repeat
24 offenders, the recidivists that are gaming the--

25

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2 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: Yes it did. 90-- You
3 can't deny the facts. 95% were not re-arrested.
4 That's a fact.

5 CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY: Councilmember, I'm not--

6 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: You can't deny it.

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, we're going to move
8 on. We have Councilmember Schulman followed by
9 Arriola. Everyone will have only three minutes and
10 you can thank Councilmember Barron.

11 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: Commissioner-- Good
12 afternoon, everyone. Commissioner, I want to tell
13 you, I have a great relationship with my precincts.
14 And your leadership team has been very responsive to
15 me. And we're really pushing and trying to get-- and
16 Chief Chell as well, trying to get real community
17 policing in my area. So I wanted to thank you for
18 that.

19 I do have a question. The theme is overtime.
20 And the reason why we have a theme of overtime is
21 because we've got units of appropriation in last
22 year's budget negotiation. So in 1994, the agency
23 introduced a PEG that reduced the processing arrest
24 time to four hours. Additionally, in April, a
25 compensation was caught between two officers asking

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2 if they are going to, quote unquote, "milk it a bit,"
3 referring to processing the paperwork for a desk
4 appearance ticket or DAT. It was later shown that
5 the officer spent five hours writing up the DAT. I
6 don't want to ask specifically, but do the integrity
7 control officers look at how many how much time it
8 takes for officers to do certain tasks and monitors
9 that. That's-- That's what I'm asking, because to be
10 honest with you other than that, I've actually heard
11 it from people in my precincts.

12 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: So the answer to your
13 question is yes. They do look at how long it takes
14 officers to process arrests. And the case you
15 mentioned is under investigation as well.

16 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: No, I appreciate that.
17 And if we can bring those issues to your attention
18 when we hear them, that would-- that would be great.
19 But I do want to thank the men and women of the NYPD
20 for the-- for the work that you do. And yes, there
21 are accountability issues, but in general, I
22 appreciate the work that you do.

23 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Thank you.

24 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: Okay. Thank you.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Councilmember Ariola
3 followed by Holden.

4 COUNCILMEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you Chairs. So what
5 I'd like to say is all the measures that you have put
6 forth before us today, I've seen in action, and they
7 work. I've worked closely with Chief Chell and Chief
8 Maddrey, and our former patrol of Queensborough
9 South, Chief Beltran, currently Chief Williams, on
10 cannabis shops. You are partnering with the DA's
11 office and with the Sheriff. Just the last three
12 arrests and closures that were made, so you know,
13 took in 223 pounds of illegal cannabis, some of which
14 was being sold to minors and resulted in felony
15 arrests. We've had illegal pop-ups of vendors, that
16 the NYPD works in tandem with the DSNY to make sure
17 that those pop-up vendors are taken down.

18 The school-- The school youth officers, and the
19 deployment at schools at dismissal has been a
20 tremendous success. We've seen less violence at
21 school dismissals.

22 The new recruitment foot patrol that you have
23 out: Tremendous success. The very first day they
24 were out in the 106 precinct made an arrest for
25 shoplifting.

2 We have--- I'm so happy to hear about the
3 community affairs working with the elderly, because
4 there are so many scams, my mother is 85, and she
5 falls prey to everything, even though I make her
6 aware. So I want to thank you for that. And for the
7 outreach that your office does-- your Department does
8 with merchants associations and business
9 associations. There is transparency, there is
10 accountability, there is interaction. And thank you
11 for that. So I'm worried now about your NYPD
12 officers: Are they utilizing the mental health
13 services that they're provided?

14 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: So we recognize that-- that
15 the department's been through a lot in the last few
16 years.

17 COUNCILMEMBER ARIOLA: Yes.

18 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: And we recognize that we
19 need to make an investment in their health and well
20 being. So we are encouraged that they are taking
21 advantage of the services that the department
22 provides. We realize that in some respects,
23 depending on the incident that the officers respond
24 to, there may be a stigma that is associated with
25 seeking help. So we make it mandatory that everyone

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2 goes, because we're going to tell them and show them
3 how we value their mental health.

4 For the new pilot program, part of that pilot has
5 a built-in assessment of how this is affecting our
6 officers. We do a number of things to show the
7 officers in the police department that we care about
8 their well-being and their quality of life as well.

9 So we're encouraged that they're reaching out
10 for-- for these mental health services. But we
11 realize too the onus is on us to make sure we give
12 them the tools they need to be able to access that
13 without the stigma that may be associated with it.

14 COUNCILMEMBER ARIOLA: That's wonderful to hear.
15 So the raises that you've gotten-- and
16 congratulations, they are very much needed. And I'm
17 hoping that that improves recruitment. And I hope
18 that also it-- it stalls the resignations and
19 retirements. And thank you for all that you do and
20 may you stay safe.

21 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: We're very encouraged by
22 it. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Councilmember Holden,
24 followed by Williams.

25

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2 COUNCILMEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you Chairs. And
3 thank you, Commissioner, for all the great work your
4 staff does, and all the great officers that we have
5 in NYPD. I just want-- I just want to say that on
6 Tuesday, I went over to roll call in the 104
7 precinct. And it was a PAPA event. We were actually
8 feeding the officers and giving them you know, a pat
9 on the back which-- which they need. But I'm seeing
10 a disturbing trend. And it's not only in that
11 precinct. It's in other precincts around where the--
12 the officers are demoralized. They are exhausted.
13 They there are fewer of them.

14 For instance, I went up to the squad Tuesday, up
15 in the 104, and they are down almost cut in half.
16 And they-- their workload is ridiculous.

17 I went over to the 110 precinct, and we have one
18 detective that has-- last year we had 600 cases. And
19 most of them are averaging in the 104th 400 cases.

20 And when I listened to the scanner, I told you I
21 did, I hear a lot of holding jobs. They're holding
22 jobs. And obviously Central is taking them in
23 priority order, what they think, but it's not always--
24 - that's not always the case, where-- how it comes
25 across, and if they don't get there in a timely

2 fashion, everybody has-- they start taking it out--
3 people start taking it out on the NYPD. They say,
4 "They don't care. They don't-- They're not
5 arriving." So not only do we have to keep the
6 officers that we have, and how do we get-- because I
7 hear a lot of officers tell me, police officers,
8 they're counting the days until they retire. I've
9 heard that for years, but I'm hearing it more. And I
10 think you know that. You know, this is the case.
11 And we have to-- So what are we doing to try to
12 retain officers, but also the-- I'm really afraid. I
13 saw so many experienced officers just, you know,
14 retire.

15 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: So I think we're seeing
16 some improvement in that regard, when it comes to the
17 morale of the police department. And I've heard it,
18 and I've seen it. We've made investments in the
19 facilities in the department. And we're moving
20 forward with renovating every break room in the
21 facilities and the precincts, and the districts, and
22 the PSAs in New York City. We were able to do that
23 with the generosity of New Yorkers who share in the
24 commitment that we all have to work together to make
25 the city safe.

2 We recognize that the workload for the-- the DB
3 was becoming a bit of a wait. We transferred more
4 people into the DB to be able to alleviate some of
5 that caseload. But we have to do that while also
6 keeping our focus on the mission of keeping our
7 streets safe.

8 We're encouraged by the new contract, the pay
9 increases that the Congressman mentioned. But it
10 comes down to more than that. It comes down to
11 treating our people well. And it comes down to
12 having the investment and the engagement with the
13 community, so the officers feel valued by the
14 community that they serve.

15 So I think it's important that we tell them, that
16 we show them, and that we work in conjunction with
17 the community to make them feel welcome and
18 appreciate the job they're doing every day.

19 COUNCILMEMBER HOLDEN: Chairs, if I may, just to
20 follow up on that. When they-- When they-- It's up
21 there really the COs to really-- kind of-- I think
22 they-- they have to really work, to really try to
23 keep the officers, especially the officers that are
24 doing a great job, a pat on the back, something, an
25 award. I'm trying to-- I ask the COs, "Who can I

2 give a proclamation to?" You know, I mean, there--
3 We have to encourage our officers to-- that they are
4 appreciated. But just then, when you talked about
5 facilities. In 2019, I had facility-- NYPD
6 facilities look at my present, especially the 104.
7 But every precinct that I have is like from the 1920s
8 or 30s. And they're-- they should be three times the
9 size that they are. And they're not. They're just--
10 Everybody's crammed in there. And it's a mess,
11 inside and out. Yet, in 2019, we did-- you know got
12 a blueprint. They were going to implement changes.
13 They said the president was upside down. Then the
14 pandemic came, and we haven't heard from them since.
15 So the conditions are bad in the precincts. The
16 work. I mean, I did ride-alongs. I had at one point
17 to leave the ride along to the police car because it
18 got too dangerous. So it's a, you know, it's a
19 difficult job. Police officers go from one bad
20 situation to another. And many of them are taking it
21 home. We have to work on their mental health, but
22 just look at everything that we have. And we're not
23 even-- the precincts are miserable. They're not--
24 They're dimly lit. They're depressing.

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2 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: So I don't disagree with
3 you about some of the facilities. And I've just made
4 it my business to review that with the Deputy
5 Commissioner next to me. We actually take our staff
6 meetings to the precincts and then afterward we
7 actually went upstairs and we recognized that at one
8 of the squads, only two of the lights worked
9 upstairs. So immediately we were able to fix that.

10 I think what we're seeing, when we talk about
11 that, you know, we're down in five of the seven major
12 crime categories, transit crime is down 8 percent. I
13 think it's a testament to the exceptional women and
14 men of the NYPD because they are able to do this work
15 in those facilities.

16 COUNCILMEMBER HOLDEN: Right.

17 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Imagine what we could do if
18 we had newer facilities, better parking, it would
19 just be something that we would all be proud of. And
20 the work would be so much better. But I'm proud of
21 them that they do it.

22 COUNCILMEMBER HOLDEN: And chair, I'm sorry. But
23 you know, whenever anybody criticizes the police,
24 they haven't done a ride-along. They haven't seen
25 what they see, what our officers see every day, and

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2 they haven't lived that. So I think any of my
3 colleagues, I feel they want to criticize the cops
4 for making one bad move out of 1000s and think that
5 you know it's a conspiracy, really don't know the
6 police officers on the street and really don't know
7 the dedication that we have at NYPD. I want to thank
8 you again for your service.

9 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Thank you, Councilmember.

10 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Councilmember Williams
11 followed by Ossé.

12 COUNCILMEMBER WILLIAMS: Hello. I'm going to
13 just, I guess, ask all my questions. I don't know.
14 Okay, I'll try to do one at a time. So I was told
15 that sometimes the Police Department does special
16 operations, essentially spot check officer behaviors.
17 So I know there was a case where there was-- it was
18 alleged that an officer would wrongfully assault
19 folks before he arrested them. And so an undercover
20 officer performed an operation. And in fact, it was
21 true that he was hitting folks before he arrested
22 them. So how many of these operations happen like
23 the one that I described? And are you aware of this
24 operation? Does it happen? Are there like spot
25 checks around officer behavior?

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2 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: We do have integrity
3 control officers. I'm not familiar with the case
4 you're citing in your question. But it's every--
5 every supervisor's jobs and make sure that we check
6 on what our officers are doing out there. So in
7 terms of an operation, it does the operation and the
8 need of the police department to make sure that we
9 review officer behavior. But I will turn it over
10 right now to-- that's the Chief of Internal Affairs
11 Bureau, Miguel Yglesias.

12 COUNSEL: Do you affirm your testimony will be
13 truthful, to the best of your knowledge, information
14 and belief. And you will honestly and faithfully
15 answer councilmember questions?

16 CHIEF IGLESIAS: I do.

17 COUNSEL: Thank you.

18 CHIEF IGLESIAS: I'm not really familiar with the
19 case you're speaking about. But as of practice, we
20 have what we call our [inaudible] awares in Internal
21 Affairs. Well, we have a team specifically that does
22 integrity testing. This team goes out at least three
23 times a week throughout the city where we see issues
24 and address those issues. They do any type of
25 operation, whether we have a missing property

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2 allegation, whether we have like you said assault, a
3 particular officer that is assaulting people, maybe
4 taking property off for people. And that's the type
5 of way that we will target that particular officer.

6 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: I also want to add that we
7 created a Professional Standards Bureau to be able to
8 monitor officer actions as well as in the street.
9 And it's actually providing dividends for us in that
10 regard. And I'll turn it over right now to our Chief
11 of Professional Standards, Matt Pontillo.

12 COUNSEL: Do you affirm your testimony will be
13 truthful to the best of your knowledge, information
14 and belief. And you honestly and faithfully answered
15 councilmember questions?

16 CHIEF PONTILLO: I will.

17 COUNSEL: Thank you.

18 CHIEF PONTILLO: Yes. So good afternoon. Thank
19 you. As the Commissioner said, we're kind of the
20 other side of what Internal Affairs Bureau does.
21 We're looking at things more proactively. So while
22 we are not conducting investigations into particular
23 acts of misconduct, we're looking at patterns of
24 behavior across the department. So as part of our
25 early intervention program, for example, we're

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2 looking for indicators that-- that may be a red flag.

3 And we'll review people based upon a whole host of
4 criteria, including things like civilian complaints
5 of certain types of allegations, to see if there's a
6 pattern. And then we'll do a deep dive on that
7 person to look at-- take a holistic view of their
8 career and of their work history, including looking
9 at their body camera videos.

10 So we'll take a sample of body camera videos over
11 a period of time. And through that we have
12 identified people, some who need some additional
13 training, but others where we've uncovered
14 misconduct, and then we'll refer that over to-- back
15 to internal affairs for a further investigation and
16 disciplinary action.

17 COUNCILMEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you, and I'm sure
18 the Chairs will allow me to ask the 36 questions that
19 Councilmember Barron asked. Thank you very much
20 Chairs.

21 So continuing on with my questions: How many
22 people are in that unit? Do you feel you're properly
23 staffed to provide the integrity testing that you all
24 mentioned?

25

2 CHIEF PONTILLO: Absolutely. We are properly
3 staffed.

4 COUNCILMEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. And what
5 type of disciplinary action is granted? Is it all
6 negative [inaudible] or command disciplines? Is
7 there any opportunities for a positive or corrective
8 behavior disciplinary action?

9 CHIEF PONTILLO: Sure. So it's everything. So
10 from our perspective, we're not just looking for the
11 negatives, but we're also looking to accentuate any
12 positives. So whenever we observe some exemplary
13 performance, some exemplary service, we recognize
14 that and we reward it.

15 So in addition to the remote supervision that I
16 described, where we're looking at a person's record
17 their history, their body camera video, we're also
18 doing random sampling of body camera video citywide
19 to look for both good and bad examples. And when we
20 find examples of good policing, good tactics, good
21 customer service, we then use that for training, and
22 use that as an example to help guide others and to
23 say, here's the standard we all have to live up to.
24 And here's how somebody else did it.

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2 In addition to that, we also have a team in the
3 field every day, going out to every command, every--
4 every precinct, every housing, public service area,
5 police service area, and every transit district,
6 observing police officers on patrol to make sure that
7 they are doing what we expect, make sure they're
8 properly attired, that they're professional. And
9 when we observe violations, we will take corrective
10 action. That that could be discipline.

11 But I'm very happy to say we also observed many
12 examples of police officers going above and beyond.
13 And when we see that we also call that out and reward
14 them, and make-- make their commanders aware of it.

15 COUNCILMEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, I had two more
16 questions, but I'll just roll it up in one because
17 it's about budget stuff. One was about the 10-year
18 capital commitment plan. So I know that you've lost
19 some of your impound lots. I know you don't have a
20 lot of heavy duty tow trucks. So wanting to
21 understand your budget allocations, your needs around
22 the heavy duty tow trucks. I know there's some money
23 in the budget and just wanted to understand, as you
24 review your fleet, is this for new vehicles,
25 replacing existing vehicles. I know that there are

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2 not a lot of officers that also have the CDL license,
3 so only a small portion of police officers can
4 actually control the vehicles. So is there any plan
5 to increase more officers with the CDL license.

6 And last, but certainly not least, my favorite
7 department in the police department is the Community
8 Affairs Bureau. And oftentimes, they don't have a
9 lot of money to do the wonderful community programs,
10 they have to beg for money and other resources to do
11 really nice things for the community. And so I just
12 wanted to know, within your existing budget, is there
13 any plans to provide more resources to that unit to
14 have more discussion around how they use the money?
15 Because one of the biggest complaints I always hear
16 from them is: "We don't have the money" or "We can't
17 spend the money" or "We're not able to get reimbursed
18 for the money." And so oftentimes, I've had to work
19 with the community affairs officers in my district to
20 put on prom dress giveaways or Easter egg hunt
21 events-- all beautiful things, that they have to
22 literally be super scrappy, to gather resources to do
23 these events. So I would love, you know, a
24 reappropriation of funds to go to both the Community
25 Affairs Unit to do the community events, and also to

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2 the Traffic Enforcement Unit to really tackle the
3 issues of illegal truck and illegal park-- illegally
4 parked cars and abandoned vehicles. Thank you.

5 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RYAN: So I'll just speak
6 quickly to the budgetary aspects. So with regard to
7 our fleet of both capital and our expense funded
8 fleet, we are-- At this point, the City rules are
9 essentially a one-to-one replacement for vehicles.
10 So we don't have a lot of resources for adding
11 additional vehicles above our-- our vehicle cap. But
12 we do look to maximize the resources we have. As you
13 can imagine, with supply chain inflation, things like
14 that, parts, the prices do continue to increase. And
15 with the-- the City's fiscal situation, sometimes the
16 capital budget doesn't quite keep up with that. But
17 the tow trucks are a critical part of our fleet, and
18 we do look to make sure we maximize the replacement
19 of them as much as we as we can.

20 With regards community affairs, or do we did just
21 take a 4% PEG, so it is difficult to-- to discuss
22 adding--

23 COUNCILMEMBER WILLIAMS: Yes. And you guys
24 always cut from that unit. And that unit is doing
25 the work that I think all of us want to see. We all

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2 talk about, like, relationships, great positive
3 relationships with the police department, and that is
4 the only unit and the police department is actually
5 trying to build positive relationships with the
6 community, and often they are completely under
7 resourced. I mean, my colleague just whispered over
8 to me and said that she has officers asking her for
9 pizza. Like--

10 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER RYAN: There are-- There
11 are also city rules with regard to--

12 COUNCILMEMBER WILLIAMS: I know. They told me
13 that too. But hopefully you can find a legal way to
14 provide some level of resources to them. I've heard
15 it all. I've had this conversation a thousand times
16 with many officers, and many people with a cab,
17 upwards of commanding officers, down to like a
18 regular officer and cab.

19 I hope that you guys can figure out a legal way
20 to do it, because you have officers literally asking
21 and begging for water and pizza. It's like not fair
22 to them. It's not fair to the community especially
23 because they want to do such good work in the
24 community and they're unable to do it because they
25 don't have the money.

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2 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: We agree with you.

3 Community Affairs does a tremendous job. They are
4 100% part of our efforts to make this city safe.

5 I'll ask Chief Tolentino to speak about some of the
6 efforts of Community Affairs.

7 COUNSEL: Do you affirm your testimony will be
8 truthful to the best of your knowledge, information
9 and belief, and you will honestly and faithfully
10 answer councilmember questions?

11 DEPUTY CHIEF TOLENTINO: I do.

12 COUNSEL: Thank you.

13 DEPUTY CHIEF TOLENTINO: Good afternoon. I'm
14 Deputy Chief Maximo Tolentino, the commanding officer
15 of the Community Affairs Bureau. And I agree,
16 community affairs officers do such a great job out in
17 the field. And one of the reasons why Community
18 Affairs was put under one umbrella was just for that
19 reason: Because we all have to have one mission and
20 one message. And that's what Commissioner Sewell
21 wants. The ability to be able to move resources to
22 areas that need it, the ability to have officers in
23 Community Affairs who can communicate with us
24 directly.

25

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2 And we have some-- we have some leverage over--
3 as we work with the Police Foundation and over some
4 of our resources, we can leverage some of those
5 resources into the local community affairs that need
6 the help. The more important message is that at any
7 given time, we may leverage an entire borough
8 Community Affairs Bureau personnel into another area
9 with one single message out to the field. And that's
10 what we now have the capability of doing it.

11 Today, at nine o'clock in the morning, it was in
12 hot dogs or hamburgers in the park with over 1000
13 kids here in Manhattan. We've done that for the last
14 four days. And we're going to do it in the five
15 boroughs. And that's what Community Affairs is about
16 is-- is having the interaction with our youth, with
17 our older adults, with our community, to kind of work
18 on the issues that really impact the city, impact the
19 NYPD, and then bringing them together to resolve
20 those things.

21 COUNCILMEMBER WILLIAMS: I know the Chair said
22 that's it. I'm just reiterating and doubling down to
23 support Community Affairs so they can do more of the
24 great work that they do. Thank you.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: We have Councilmembers Ossé
3 followed by Hudson.

4 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Good evening Commissioner
5 and other members of the Police Department. Recently
6 the NYPD came under fire in a lawsuit for a multitude
7 of assaults within Mott Haven in the Bronx. In 2020-
8 - in your words Commissioner, "highly trained" SRG
9 trapped, beat, and arrested 263 protesters, medics,
10 and legal observers in Mott Haven. More than 60
11 people were injured. And in a 2020 report, the Human
12 Rights Watch called it quote "serious violations of
13 international human rights law."

14 Do you know the number of tax dollars the city
15 has to pay to the persons injured by the SRG in this
16 case?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So we are in
18 settlement negotiations regarding litigation of
19 those-- those protests, those settlement negotiations
20 are active, ongoing. We are working very hard to
21 resolve those cases. We have been advised by the Law
22 Department that given those ongoing settlement
23 negotiations, we have been advised not to speak about
24 the subject matter of those negotiations while they
25

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are ongoing. Again, we're hoping to resolve the
cases. And once those cases are resolved--

COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Just for the sake of time,
I'm going to move on. It was reported in the New
York Times that would be approximately \$21,500 per
person who was impacted in that-- in that case. Do
you know the total number of tax dollars the city
pays out each year in misconduct settlements against
New Yorkers? Let's say last year, for an example.
You may have those numbers, right?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So for calendar year
2022, in terms of the payouts in civil actions
alleging police misconduct, that that value is
approximately \$120 million.

COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: \$120 million. Wow. And
that doesn't come out of the Police Department. That
comes out of the city's budget as a whole, right?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: As with any city
agency, it comes out of the city budget.

COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Amazing. Well, not amazing.
But I do thank you for that-- that point. Do the
officers who commit the abuses that result in payouts
cover any of the expenses out of pocket? No, right?

25

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So just to be clear,
3 of that \$120 million, roughly half of that, actually,
4 more than half of it relates to wrongful conviction
5 cases. And many of those cases go back decades.

6 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Still, around \$50 million
7 for injuries, correct?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: So we're talking
9 about, to a very large extent, to a very meaningful
10 extent, we are not talking about conduct by police
11 officers in the department today. In many cases, we
12 are talking about conduct going back decades. And in
13 fact, in fact, what the data shows is that over the
14 last, let's say approximately eight years or so,
15 claims against police officers have fallen
16 dramatically.

17 So we take 2022 numbers, that's-- that's down
18 over 10% from the prior year. And going back eight
19 years, it's-- the claims against police officers have
20 fallen approximately 50%. A 50% drop in claims.
21 That's on the Comptroller's report.

22 And so that is really a measure in sort of
23 looking now on claims against police officers. In
24 fact that those numbers have fallen again and again,
25 year after year. That I think is a very powerful

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2 testament to improved training, improved procedures,
3 the work of the Professional Standards Bureau. I
4 think that's really the key measure here.

5 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Chair may have some more
6 time? Thank you very much. So as reported in the
7 New York Times, again, the city is expected to pay
8 around \$21,500 per plaintiff for legal costs and an
9 extra \$2,500 to protesters who were given court
10 appearance tickets at that Mott Haven incident. The
11 council was told constantly during this budget fight,
12 during the dance that we're in right now that we
13 don't have enough money for various other city
14 agencies, yet we're seeing settlements like this
15 turnout for folks who are protesting and then being
16 harmed by the NYPD Strategic Response Group.

17 One of these abuses that have been noted in some
18 of these cases is in result to kettling. Have you
19 ever heard of the protest containment tactic ascribed
20 to the NYPD referred to as kettling, Commissioner?

21 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: That is actually also part
22 of these negotiations. But if you want to talk about
23 SRG's policies or tactics specific-- generally, I can
24 turn it over to Chief Aramboles.

25

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2 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Have you heard of kettling,
3 yes or no?

4 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: I've heard the term.

5 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Okay. So just to remind
6 you, if you've heard of it, the phrase is in common
7 use in discussions surrounding police response to
8 protesting. This is where police will use bikes,
9 fences, barricades or other barriers to form a wall
10 and prevent protesters from moving forward. Again,
11 the Human Rights Watch released a report on the
12 NYPD's use of kettling at a protest in Mott Haven, as
13 I noted before, and the report outlines how
14 protesters were trapped and also suffocated while
15 being kettled by the police.

16 This is extremely unfortunate to hear especially
17 given the fact that, you know, we are seeing lawsuits
18 that the city has to pay for year in and year out.
19 What is being done by your-- your leadership to
20 attend this highly trained-- or change this highly
21 trained Strategic Response Group when it comes to how
22 they interact with nonviolent protesters?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: If I may,
24 Councilmember. I mean, first of all, just to be
25 clear, there are certain premises of your question

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1 that I don't accept. But be that as it may, we-- we
2 cannot talk about this right now. Again, on advice
3 of Counsel, these are precisely the issues you're
4 asking about, are precisely the types of issues that
5 are the subject of settlement discussions. Again, we
6 want to settle those cases, we are working towards
7 that. And once that is done, we will come back here
8 and we will answer all of your questions. But-- but
9 for now, we cannot.

11 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: So my last question: Were
12 any cases last year settled that you can speak about
13 that were the result of kettling in prior years?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: Putting aside the
15 2020 cases? I'm not aware of any sitting here today.
16 I'm not aware.

17 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: If you-- If there are some
18 cases, could you get those to me?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: The question is:
20 Are there cases that were settled last year--

21 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: In previous-- In previous
22 years?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: I just want to know
24 what the question is.

25

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2 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Yeah. If there are some, if
3 there's some cases or settlements that were, you
4 know, on record, in terms of folks receiving money in
5 terms of the SRG injuring them. I would love to see
6 some statistics or data coming from the NYPD on those
7 settlements.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GERBER: We have the
9 question, and we will-- we will take that back. And
10 to the extent we have information that is responsive
11 to your question, we will provide it.

12 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Thank you. And thank you,
13 Chair.

14 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Councilmember Hudson,
15 followed by Velázquez.

16 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Thank you. I have three
17 questions. I'm going to tell you the topics at the
18 top. So the first-- Well, I don't know the order
19 yet, but one is about older adults, one is about
20 clearance rates, and then one is a followup from
21 Councilmember Sanchez regarding the Kawasaki Trawick
22 case.

23 So I guess I'll start with older adults actually.
24 In your testimony, you mentioned the work you're
25 doing to address crimes against older adults. How

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2 much are you spending on this program, both on
3 personnel services and also non personnel services?

4 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: We recognize the need for
5 this particular program. I don't have the data on
6 how much we're spending because we're rolling it into
7 the rest of our work in the police department. So
8 those exact figures I don't have for you. But-- But
9 we recognize that there is a significant population
10 of the city that are being taken advantage of. And
11 so we recognize that we need to partner with other
12 city agencies to be able to address it head on. So
13 it is our mission to use the resources that we have,
14 obviously, in the DB and other units to be able to
15 work in conjunction with the Office Of The Aging to
16 help our older New Yorkers.

17 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: I appreciate that. I'm
18 chair of the Aging Committee. So it was good to
19 hear, you know, in your testimony, what you are doing
20 to support and help older adults. I would be really
21 curious, though, to know what the actual numbers are,
22 because the Department For The Aging which has a
23 total budget of only \$469 million, which is a
24 fraction of even the overtime spending just from your
25 agency, and we're facing \$70 million in cuts. So,

2 the numbers, specifically, if that's something you
3 all can follow up with would be really helpful as I
4 make my case to the Mayor about why we need to
5 increase funding or maintain funding for older adults
6 and that-- and that agency.

7 And, you know, we need more agencies to be
8 working with NYC Aging in combating all that older
9 adults are dealing with. So I'm hoping that those
10 numbers might help me to make my case on the other
11 front, so thank you.

12 My other question is: You mentioned case
13 clearance rates being up. What are your current case
14 clearance rates?

15 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: The DB has been working
16 incredibly hard over the last several months to make
17 sure we bring justice to victims and work on those
18 case clearances. I'm going to ask Chief of
19 Detectives James Essig to step in.

20 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Sure.

21 COUNSEL: Do you affirm that your testimony will
22 be truthful to the best of your knowledge,
23 information and belief? And you will honestly and
24 faithfully answered councilmember questions.

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2 CHIEF ESSIG: I do. Yeah. So last year's
3 clearance rates for homicides were at about 85%, with
4 non fatal shootings 45%. For the other seven major
5 crimes, it was about 22%. But what's the most
6 difficult crimes? If you take out--

7 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: I'm sorry. Real quick.
8 You said 22% for other major crimes?

9 CHIEF ESSIG: Major crimes. But I'm talking
10 about-- if you're talking about the grand larceny
11 autos, and this scam grand larcenies, which are very,
12 very difficult to-- to make arrests, were at about
13 45% where we make arrests on robberies, and
14 burglaries, and the other crimes.

15 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Okay.

16 CHIEF ESSIG: But when you add in those two
17 categories, we significantly decrease.

18 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Do you know the highest
19 your case clearance rates have been?

20 CHIEF ESSIG: In terms of overall?

21 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Yeah.

22 CHIEF ESSIG: Well, the last four years in terms
23 of homicides, last year was one of the highest. It
24 was the one of the highest clearance rates in about
25 25 years for homicides, up at around 85%.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: And what would you
3 attribute to that high rate of--

4 CHIEF ESSIG: I think the new techniques,
5 technology the detectives use, the tracking of video,
6 the new technology in terms of plate readers. We're
7 getting very good at working with our district
8 attorneys at doing video compilations. A lot of
9 these crimes are very difficult. You've seen in the
10 last few years, autos, scooters, masks being used.
11 It's very labor intensive, but we've gotten very good
12 at tracking our perpetrators.

13 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Okay, and of the of the
14 overtime spending, is that-- is there a particular
15 portion that you know of that is used specifically to
16 address case clearance rates, or...?

17 CHIEF ESSIG: That would be our investigative
18 overtime?

19 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: And so how-- do you know
20 how-- a percentage of the total overtime is used
21 specifically for that?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: As so, to date, we
23 spent in total on city funds \$444 million dollars in
24 uniformed overtime. And investigations represents
25 about \$127 million of that. So about a quarter.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Okay. Thank you. And
3 then my last question is a followup from
4 councilmember Sanchez, who asked some questions
5 earlier about the Kawasaki Trawick case. And I'm
6 quoting her here: "Commissioner, can you follow up
7 to this hearing with the number of cases where NYPD
8 has specifically found illegal entry, so not just
9 improper entry, and what the NYPD disciplinary
10 penalty was? And can you send the council over the
11 next week? Can you send that information to the
12 Council over the next week?"

13 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Yes. Yes, I'm sorry.

14 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Okay.

15 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Yes. Well, we'll go back
16 with that.

17 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Great, thank you so much.
18 That's it for my questions. And I do want to just
19 make one statement. And I'm not being facetious.
20 This is a genuine statement that it's really great to
21 see you and everybody here for this hearing. And
22 we've had other hearings where you all haven't been
23 present. I don't think-- now, you know, this is
24 coming from my perspective and not from yours, but I
25 don't think this has been awful. And so I would just

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2 encourage you all to continue to show up in full
3 force like this. I think it just helps us all get to
4 the bottom of some things not just for us, but also
5 for New Yorkers. So thank you for being here.

6 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Councilmember Velázquez
8 followed by Joseph.

9 COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: Hi. Thank you,
10 Commissioner for coming here today. And I really
11 wanted to start with a thank you for launching the
12 pilot program in my district. I really appreciate
13 it. I've been hearing good things about it. This is
14 the 10-12 hour tour. And so I just wanted go over
15 what is then the next steps after this completion?
16 What was stated earlier was saying once it's proven,
17 that it's successful, what is it going to take for
18 you to count it as proven, to roll it out, and what
19 does the rollout look like? Will it go to other
20 boroughs? Or will it just be citywide?

21 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: So we're encouraged by the
22 success we're seeing so far with this program.

23 Obviously, it's still in its infancy stages. But
24 we've already started to identify commands to expand
25 this program to. Again, I'll say it involves

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2 monitoring the officers wellness, monitoring officer
3 fatigue, how long it takes for an officer to get to
4 and from work if there's some hardship in that area
5 as well. I'll turn it over again to Commissioner
6 Delatorre.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DELATORRE: Yes. Thank you
8 for the question. So just to give context to this,
9 the officers-- when the ballots went out for the
10 union to vote on this contract, which included raises
11 and the compressed tours, 21,861 ballots went out.
12 Historically, less than half of the ballots that go
13 out and voted on. That's-- This is all according to
14 the Union. In this case, 85% of the members voted.
15 And of the 85% of members that voted 98% of the
16 members voted yes. 2%, slightly over 2% voted no.
17 So the members of the NYPD have really embraced the
18 new contract that includes the compressed tours.
19 They're enthusiastic. We are looking at them daily,
20 when they come back from the 12 hour shift. We're
21 interviewing them. We're taking surveys. Our
22 wellness teams are going out and talking to them.

23 We expect everything is going really well right
24 now. And we fully expect to have some preliminary
25

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2 sense of where we're going within the next couple of
3 months.

4 COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: As part of that
5 wellness that's checked at the end of the tour, do
6 you also do a mental health check to make sure that
7 they have the proper followup if in case they do need
8 help?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DELATORRE: Yes. Yes, we do.
10 So we have wellness teams of psychologists that
11 actually go out and speak to them. And in addition
12 to that, of course, in the police department, it's a
13 little different from other agencies. We stand these
14 offices in rollcall at the beginning of the tour, and
15 our supervisors obviously are instructed to take a
16 look at them, and to see if anybody looks like
17 they're suffering from fatigue or any other issues.
18 And so far, the results have been very positive.

19 COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: I have a question with
20 regards to the retail theft plan that was announced
21 yesterday. Can you give us a little bit more detail,
22 and what does that rollout look like?

23 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Sure, I'm going to turn it
24 over to Chief Mike Lipetri of Crime Control
25 Strategies, who worked very hard on this program.

2 CHIEF LIPETRI: Good evening.

3 COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: Good evening.

4 COUNSEL: Do you affirm your testimony be
5 truthful to the best of your knowledge, information
6 and belief? And you will honestly and faithfully
7 answer your questions?

8 CHIEF LIPETRI: Yes, I do.

9 COUNSEL: Thank you.

10 CHIEF LIPETRI: So just like any other initiative
11 in the Police Department, it's multi-layered and
12 multi-pronged. The first aspect of it that I really
13 think, we have seen by the way, retail theft
14 decreased by over 1000 complaints this year. And
15 what we've also seen is retail theft arrests
16 increased by 1500 individuals. And we're also
17 clearing our retail theft complaints at a much higher
18 rate than we have in the past by dedicating more
19 detectives into the grand larceny unit, into the unit
20 that oversees the crimes against property.

21 First and foremost, increased foot posts in and
22 around business districts, not just in Manhattan, but
23 in the Bronx, and Queens, and Brooklyn. We're
24 talking about officers on Picking Avenue and
25 Brownsville. We're talking about officers on White

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2 Plains Road in the 47. We're talking about offices
3 on Main Street in Flushing. And we're not just
4 talking about a few offices, we're talking about
5 hundreds of officers dedicated to business districts
6 throughout the city. Working with our private
7 partners and working with the Mayor's office and
8 other city agencies across the city. We're
9 identifying the recidivists that continue to prey on
10 not just businesses, but New Yorkers. As I said
11 yesterday at the retail theft summit that-- that, you
12 know, the Mayor had given a month ago, you know, it
13 affects people when they have to go to the pharmacy
14 to get a prescription filled that they usually would
15 walk one block, but now they have to get on a bus or
16 ask somebody to drive them maybe half a mile away.

17 So by identifying the recidivists, you know, the
18 Police Commissioner talked about the 327 individuals
19 that were arrested 6000 times last year, how about
20 the 250 individuals this year that have been arrested
21 almost 2500 times and when we look at who those
22 individuals are: Last year those 327, 45% have been
23 convicted felons. This year it's 51%. Last year 30%
24 were incarcerated. This year it's 25%. So we're
25 really leveraging the prosecutors and having a good

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2 rapport with our prosecutors of really, again,
3 looking for swift and certain consequences on the
4 prosecutable and on those recidivists.

5 So we're identifying those recidivists, we're
6 sharing the intelligence with our private partners.
7 Our private partners are also sharing the
8 intelligence with us. So the data is going both
9 ways, and we're sharing the data with the DA's
10 offices. So when we do arrest these recidivists,
11 they know who they are at arraignment, and again,
12 we're looking for swift and certain consequences.

13 COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: And how much does this
14 initiative cost us? And how much more do you think
15 it's going to increase?

16 CHIEF LIPETRI: The, you know, the-- the money
17 value, I can't tell you. But I will tell you this:
18 You know, I've been doing this for a while. Our
19 businesses need-- need help. And you know, the
20 police department is there to help them, and whatever
21 it is, like I said, we've moved hundreds of officers
22 to our business districts to help the retail theft,
23 you know, industry.

24 COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: I appreciate it. And
25 just for sidenote, the 49th precinct, I have Morris

2 Park Avenue. That's the commercial corridor that
3 does need the support as well.

4 Now on to capital, I'd ask-- One thing that's
5 been talked about for ages in my district, Rodman's
6 Neck. We see right now that the capital plan, the
7 executive capital plan was removed from fiscal 25 to
8 fiscal 24, committing all of \$225 million in funding
9 for this project for fiscal 24. What's the reason
10 for moving this project forward in 2024? And are you
11 expecting to be completing this in 2024.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: So the funding was
13 accelerated, because we're actually going to be
14 entering into the construction contract in the next
15 few months. So to be able to enter into the
16 contract, we have to have the money in that fiscal
17 year. So we accelerated it because it's moving more
18 quickly. And we anticipate that the construction
19 will be done late summer 2027.

20 COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: Perfect, and that
21 includes the bathrooms that are dated back to like
22 the 1950s?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: I've been in those
24 bathrooms. And we're looking to improve as much as
25 we can the entire site.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: Including a training
3 facility that our cops deserve?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: Yes.

5 COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: Thank you. Another,
6 follow up to the fleet question that fellow
7 Councilmember Williams had asked: You had mentioned
8 that it's a one-for-one replacement. Is there a way
9 that we could actually increase the numbers because
10 of the increase that we've seen in our communities
11 that do need the towing?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: I think these are
13 conversations we can continue to have with DCAS,
14 which handles the fleet for the city as a whole. And
15 with OMB. One of the initial reasons for really
16 making sure the fleet for the city as a whole didn't
17 grow in prior administrations was concern about the
18 emissions and fuel usage, and things like that. As
19 we move toward having the opportunity to explore
20 electric vehicles, there may perhaps be more
21 flexibility, so it's a conversation I think we can
22 have.

23 COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: I appreciate that. And
24 then, following on Councilmember Holden's question on
25 precinct conditions. What can we do as a Council to

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2 fund our communities, right? I have the 45th
3 precinct and it's pretty old. And when we're looking
4 to expand and to meet even the standards that we're
5 having for our own buildings, right? How do we
6 ensure that our precincts measure and meet those
7 standards?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER RYAN: So as-- as was
9 indicated, we have a lot of precincts and-- and
10 admittedly are they are not in-- all in the ideal
11 condition. Many are 50, some more than 100 years
12 old, as councilmember Holden indicated. So not only
13 sometimes is it the physical condition of the
14 buildings, but the size itself is not adequate. So
15 you know, we would welcome any resources as the
16 council gets their allocations with regards to
17 capital funding that you want to put toward-- toward
18 precincts, we would welcome that.

19 COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: I appreciate it. Next
20 question is: Why is SRG being deployed to Planned
21 Parenthood Clinics?

22 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: As I stated earlier, and
23 I'll turn it over to Chief Aramboles in a moment, the
24 SRG is not the first unit that we assign to protest
25 or disorder. We actually have Community Affairs

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Units that will go out. SRG is only deployed when
required, but I'll have Chief Aramboles speak to it.

COUNSEL: Do you affirm that your testimony
truthful to the best of your knowledge, information
and belief and you honestly and faithfully answer
councilmember questions?

CHIEF ARAMBOLES: Yes, I do. Good afternoon.
The SRG is usually when-- when the borough commanders
or probably the incident commander requests based on
knowledge of the-- of the probably protests or-- or
the event. They will analyze and put together and
see what it is or the time of day. The-- you could
say the sensitive locations, and probably they need
specialized officers, that are handled-- that are
trained to handle these types of situations. And
they are called to this event.

I specifically don't know exactly which one
you're talking about. But I know for every event, we
usually, you know, they call us. It goes through
borough commanders, operations, and then to Chief of
Special Operations.

COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: Thank you. And I guess
my final question, going back to school crossing

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2 guards, we discussed that it was \$16 an hour that you
3 guys currently pay them?

4 BACKGROUND SPEAKER: \$16.39.

5 COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: \$16.39 an hour. How
6 much more should we advocate for to increase their
7 rates so it can be more competitive?

8 CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY: Councilmember, I don't think
9 that's-- that's really a question for us to answer.
10 But we certainly-- I think, the-- the Commissioner
11 had said that certainly a more competitive salary
12 would increase recruitment in that title.

13 COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: Okay. Do you have an
14 idea as to how much then we should look into funding
15 for you guys?

16 CHIEF CHERNYAVSKY: I-- I think any kind of
17 analysis that you do to fund such positions, you
18 know, any upward modification would certainly be
19 good.

20 COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: We have councilmember
22 Joseph followed by Farias.

23 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you, Chair. Thank
24 you, Commissioner. Always good to see you guys.
25 Chief Maddrey. How are you? I have a question.

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2 Y'all got-- You guys forgot my school. You forgot
3 my students. I didn't hear anything about New York
4 City Public Schools. You have a new unit called unit
5 response-- youth unit-- Youth Response Unit. Who are
6 they? What are their roles in the school? How many?
7 How much does that cost us?

8 CHIEF MADDREY: The Youth Response Team was a new
9 unit that we created this year, earlier this year, in
10 response to some of the issues that we had seen at
11 some of the schools, a couple of shootings, issues at
12 basketball games after school. So we created this
13 unit, to have a set of officers who were dedicated to
14 working with young people, being able to respond to
15 these events, build on relationships, and just, you
16 know, create an overall safe atmosphere. So the unit
17 is set to be at 48 officers, 48 officers in the unit
18 for now. I don't think we've-- the unit is fully
19 funded yet. I think we're at about 34 officers. We
20 didn't get the other-- we didn't get the remaining
21 officers that we needed. So we're working through
22 that. We're taking our time making sure we're
23 recruiting the right people, people with the right
24 attitude to work with young people.

25

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2 The unit is, you know-- There's no special funds
3 that was dedicated to the unit. It's just, you know,
4 the officers themselves. That's the only money
5 that's dedicated to the unit.

6 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: So it's on a voluntary
7 basis?

8 CHIEF MADDREY: Well, the officers volunteer for
9 the position and we interview them, and then we
10 select them.

11 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: And what type of
12 programming are you having?

13 CHIEF MADDREY: Well, right now the unit is new.
14 So the first thing that we're doing is just, we're
15 making sure that we're working closely with the
16 schools. And then as the summer approaches, we're
17 going to be doing a lot of things, a lot of events in
18 the park, in patrolling the parks. Because we do
19 have some crime, we've seen some crime increases in
20 our parks. So they'll be-- they will be patrolling
21 the parks, trying to create a safe atmosphere there.
22 And as things go along, we'll develop some
23 programming working with community partners.

24

25

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2 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: How do you identify the
3 schools that you decide to work with, or the young
4 people how do you identify them?

5 CHIEF MADDREY: Well, the schools of course is
6 based on our data. If we see crimes at school, if
7 there's a heavy incident to school, of course the
8 school in the 9-0, we had the two high schools in the
9 9-0 that had shootings right near them at the
10 beginning of the year. We work closely with them all
11 year long, Grant Street Campus near the charter
12 school. In terms of, you know, programming and
13 things that we will do and the young people, as
14 officers out there getting to know the young people,
15 a lot of times the young people come to the officers,
16 and they recommend certain things. We listen to
17 them, we try to be responsive to what they need,
18 besides what we think they need.

19 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: Absolutely should be
20 designed by them and with them, not for them.
21 Another-- Officers are trained to interact with
22 students with disabilities. Can you give me an idea
23 as to what kind of training? What does that look
24 like?

25

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2 CHIEF MADDREY: All of our officers go through
3 our CRT training, which is a three-day training or
4 four-day training, I'm forgetting how many days it
5 is, but they go to a CRT training to help them
6 recognize young people who-- you know, anybody for
7 that-- anybody who may be having any kind of mental
8 health issues and mental health episodes. So this is
9 some of the training that they get. And there is
10 other training department does. I think-- who is it?

11 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: I'm going to asked my new
12 Chief of Training, [inaudible] Obe, to be sworn in.

13 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you.

14 COUNSEL: Do you affirm your testimony will be
15 truthful, to the best of your knowledge, information
16 and belief? And you will honestly and faithfully
17 answer councilmember questions?

18 CHIEF OBE: I do.

19 COUNSEL: Thank you.

20 CHIEF OBE: Good afternoon, everyone. So just
21 very specifically, we do have the CIT training, and
22 that's geared at the police academy level towards
23 adults. So we're working very closely with the DOE.
24 I just got a call from Mark Rampersad, where we are
25 looking to actually coordinate working with his

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2 staff, just towards a program that's geared towards a
3 younger than the kids in schools.

4 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. Yes. That is
5 something I was interested in. Because the council
6 just passed a law that will require officers to be
7 trained when they interact with students with autism,
8 on the spectrum, because some of our students are
9 nonverbal. They don't look at you. They don't
10 communicate. We want to be able to-- if they're put
11 in a situation, where an officer can identify what's
12 happening. Do all schools have YCO's assigned to
13 them?

14 CHIEF MADDREY: Not every school. Not every
15 school. Most precincts have approximately four to
16 six YCOs. And again, you know, they make a
17 determination as to where they're patrolling based on
18 some of the data. But that doesn't preclude other
19 officers from responding as well, our neighborhood
20 coordination officers, our NCOs as well, I mean, our
21 community affairs officers as well. They will, you
22 know, it's a team effort. We go out to the schools,
23 work with young people, work with the staff and the
24 parents and address their needs.

25

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2 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: And Chair, one last
3 question: What is your collaboration with New York
4 City public schools overall?

5 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: It is mandated. It is
6 warranted, and we value that relationship with the
7 DOE. The school's chancellor in my office, we meet
8 bi-weekly to discuss issues and concerns relative to
9 specific schools, but overall across the public
10 school system.

11 So while we do that, even from my office, it also
12 trickles down to every single Commander, the Mayor
13 and Chief of Department also initiated that our
14 commanders check in with superintendents regularly to
15 make sure we have each other's cell phone numbers.
16 So that dialogue happens at every level in this
17 Police Department.

18 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you. I think that's
19 it Chair. Or do I-- I can put in one more. I just
20 had a quick question. Do hate crimes reported in
21 ComStat. Is that part of your ComStat reporting?

22 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Yes.

23 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. Final questions from
25 councilmember Farías.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: I thought they'd never
3 gets to me. Hi, everyone. I will try to be as swift
4 as possible with just some district-related but also
5 budget-budgetary related questions. What is the
6 purpose of the NYPD alert system? And do we have a
7 cost?

8 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: The alert system as it
9 relates to the messages that we send you?

10 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Yes. In my district on
11 Lafayette and Samuel on April 15, we had a traffic
12 deaths, and my office was not notified about it until
13 I saw it in the media.

14 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: So beginning last year, we
15 instituted an alert system for our elected officials
16 to be able to get you the information you need of
17 what's happening in your district and your
18 communities. So you were able to subscribe to get
19 those emails. If you have not been getting them, we
20 can make that correction ,because you should be
21 getting those.

22 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: No. I get them citywide,
23 I get every precinct's notifications.

24 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: So-- So you should have
25 gotten a notification that there was an issue-- at

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2 that-- with that auto accident at that location. So
3 if there was one that was missed, we can make that
4 correction going forward.

5 COUNCILMEMBER FARIAS: Thank you. I appreciate
6 that. I did not get-- receive a notification.

7 How is the NYPD responding to the issue of double
8 parking and illegal parking by local precincts?

9 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: So we recognize that that's
10 a significant issue. We've had a number of community
11 complaints. I'm going to ask my Chief of
12 Transportation Kim Royster to be sworn in please.

13 COUNSEL: Do you affirm that your testimony be
14 truthful to the best of your knowledge, information
15 and belief, and you will honestly and faithfully
16 answer Councilmember questions?

17 CHIEF ROYSTER: I do.

18 COUNSEL: Thank you.

19 CHIEF ROYSTER: Good afternoon, Councilmember.
20 Kim Royster, Chief of Transportation. If I may ask,
21 can you repeat your question?

22 COUNCILMEMBER FARIAS: Sure. How is the NYPD
23 responding to the issue of double parking and illegal
24 parking by local precincts? And that's officers
25

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2 utilizing their NYPD vehicles, double parking and
3 triple parking.

4 CHIEF ROYSTER: Thank you for repeating the
5 question. Chief Chell will answer.

6 CHIEF CHELL: Thank you.

7 COUNCILMEMBER FARIÁS: We swore you in for fun.

8 CHIEF CHELL: We have-- this issue is-- has been
9 near and dear to me in terms of what we are doing on
10 precincts. We have multiple levels of what we call
11 inspection units, whether it be the actual from the
12 precinct. The overhead borough has an inspection
13 unit. I have an inspection unit, and there is other
14 bureaus. So to give you some numbers, so far, we
15 performed 6788 inspections year to date, we've had
16 262 violations. And those-- those violations are
17 adjudicated in whether a negative craft on your
18 evaluation. It could a one and a minus based on the
19 situation. And in 81 times, we issued what we call a
20 command discipline. And depending on the fraction,
21 the infraction, that could be an admonishment up to
22 10 days.

23 So we are continuously looking at this. We do it
24 repeatedly. We just don't do a once. Obviously,
25 parking around a precinct. There are-- there are,

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2 you know some of the precincts that I was talking
3 about today, it's tough to park. The facilities are
4 small with more cars. But that doesn't mitigate the
5 fact that you can't park where sometimes we park. So
6 by virtue of the amount of investigations we're
7 doing, we're going to keep doing it.

8 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Okay, thank you so much
9 Chair. If I may, I have a couple more questions.
10 Thank you. Recently in my district, there was an
11 incident where the NYPD was able to stop a sex
12 trafficking ring and arrest the men involved. I'm
13 wondering how the NYPD offers to support survivors of
14 trafficking and sexual assaults or sexual violence?
15 And does the NYPD have a list of survivor and-or
16 victim services ready to give out those that they
17 discover have been harmed or trafficking sites like
18 this.

19 So we meet regularly and work with sexual assault
20 advocates, with the Chief of Detectives and my entire
21 team to make sure that we have those resources
22 embedded with the police department that are
23 available to survivors. Chief Essig can go in to
24 additional detail.

25

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2 CHIEF ESSIG: Yeah. In the detective bureau, we
3 work very closely with advocates and any sex worker
4 is never arrested. They are offered the services
5 right there. So when they work with our vice
6 enforcement, our human trafficking units, and before
7 anything goes forward, they are offered to do
8 services before arrests.

9 COUNCILMEMBER FARIÁS: Okay, great. Thank you.
10 And I do want to say thank you for that great work in
11 my district and working in conjunction with my DA.

12 I swear I'll be quick. Okay, school crossing
13 guards. I know we spoke about it earlier and the--
14 and Chair Brannan mentioned it. I did want to ask:
15 The hearing report states that the NYPD is going to
16 eliminate 483 school crossing guard positions but
17 there are a total of 688 vacancies early in the
18 prelim? How are we ensuring that we aren't leaving
19 entire neighborhoods without crossing guards, and
20 that there is an even distribution throughout the
21 boroughs?

22 CHIEF CHELL: So currently, right now, we are
23 allotted for a budget of 2702 two crossing guards.
24 Were at 2030.

25

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2 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Right. That reduction
3 will bring us down to about 2100. Correct?

4 CHIEF CHELL: Correct. And-- But I'm happy to
5 say we just hired 103 last week, and they'll be
6 hitting the streets on May 23.

7 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Right. So I have, like--
8 for example, I have precinct-by-precinct, borough-by-
9 borough numbers. I guess I'm more so looking at--
10 are we looking at a school district wide or a borough
11 wide landscape in saying there are four schools in
12 this area, 12 schools in another. How are we
13 disseminating school crossing guards? Or is it that
14 it's on a case-by-case of when principals are
15 requesting? Like what what's the metrics or the--

16 CHIEF CHELL: So the precinct commander will--
17 will-- through working with the school principals,
18 will designate what they would call priority cross--
19 school crossing posts.

20 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Right.

21 CHIEF CHELL: Like I mentioned earlier, a lot of
22 the people who wanted to be crossing guards want to
23 work in a specific place, right next to their house,
24 so their flexibility is minimal. That's why I say we
25 have 4000 applicants, but you would say-- and we hire

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2 every other month, but we're not getting there for
3 that very reason, and we talked about the pay. In
4 terms of shortages in different precincts, different
5 areas. Again, that's on a case-by-case basis. That
6 commanding officer has to make a decision to
7 prioritize the top posts and to try to backfill
8 whether it be officers or auxiliaries, TEA agents.
9 We can use them also. So again, that's how they do
10 it.

11 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Would you say that there
12 are large areas in certain boroughs that just do not
13 have a designated school crossing guard that will be
14 because of safety infrastructure or traffic in the
15 general area, it's necessary, or is that something
16 that we're responding to already?

17 CHIEF CHELL: I can't speak specifically to that
18 question. But like, I want to go back to if there's--
19 - if there's a need in places we move quickly, and we
20 can cover them to the best of our ability.

21 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Are there requests that
22 are-- should be priority and are needed that we
23 haven't failed yet because of vacancies?

24 CHIEF CHELL: I'm sure there are. I'm not aware
25 of any specifics.

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1
2 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Okay. Thank you. My last
3 question is just-- second to last question:

4 Catalytic converter etching rollout. How's that
5 going? Will we see a city-- are we at citywide
6 rollout? Are we close to it when we get to it?
7 What's the costs? Anything at all?

8 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: We have quite a demand for
9 the catalytic converter etching program. I'll turn
10 it over to Chief Lepetri.

11 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Thank you.

12 CHIEF LEPETRI: Good evening. So we've conducted
13 two, and we are scheduled to do two more in the near
14 future. You know, it's going well. Auto crime
15 division leads, you know, does the etching. And I
16 will say this: We have made more arrests because of
17 the etching.

18 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: So that's great to hear.

19 CHIEF LEPETRI: Yeah. So that's a good thing.
20 And it's working with not just other agencies, but
21 also local police departments in and around New York
22 City. Because a lot of times, you know, these are
23 organized theft crews that we're seeing. And we are
24 definitely making more arrests, and hopefully it will
25 make less complaints.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: And can I just ask for a
3 clarification point? And I-- And I'm sorry, I don't
4 remember all the bill language. Are we supposed to
5 get to a point where every precinct has this
6 offering? Or is this-- will this just be a division
7 that goes through each precinct to offer-- to offer
8 this to residents?

9 CHIEF LEPETRI: The way I understand it is that
10 our Auto Crime Division will be the ones that are
11 going to be doing the etching.

12 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: Okay. Thank you.

13 CHIEF LEPETRI: You're welcome.

14 COUNCILMEMBER FARÍAS: And just my last question,
15 Commissioner: What's your opinion on an annual
16 physical exam requirement for active police officers,
17 if you have one.

18 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: I am always concerned about
19 the health and wellness of the Police Department, and
20 I'm a proponent of incentivizing physical fitness for
21 the members of the police department. So I would
22 support physical testing for their own well being,
23 but also so that we have the best, most capable
24 physically fit police department to serve the people
25 of the city.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER FARIAS: Awesome. Thank you so
3 much for your time, folks.

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I just have like 10 or 20
5 more. Thank you for your time. I appreciate the
6 work that you guys do. We need each other to do our
7 jobs as best as we can. So I look forward to
8 negotiating this budget, and getting us to a good
9 place to keep our city safe.

10 COMMISSIONER SEWELL: Thank you, Chair. Thank
11 you all.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. With that day eight
13 of Executive Budget hearings is adjourned.

14 [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date 05/24/2023