

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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December 6, 2011
Start: 10:53 a.m.
Recess: 11:30 a.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E: DOMENIC M. RECCHIA, JR.
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Gale A. Brewer
Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.
Lewis A. Fidler
Helen D. Foster
Robert Jackson
G. Oliver Koppell
Darlene Mealy
Diana Reyna
Joel Rivera
Albert Vann
Fernando Cabrera
Julissa Ferreras
Karen Koslowitz

A P P E A R A N C E S

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

James G. Van Bramer

Vincent M. Ignizio

James S. Oddo

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

Preston Niblack
Director of the Finance Division
New York City Council

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2 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Everyone
3 calmly find their seats, even those members who
4 are not on the Committee.

5 [background conversation]

6 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. Good
7 morning. Welcome to today's Finance Committee
8 hearing. My name is Domenic M. Recchia, Jr. I'm
9 the chair of this wonderful Finance Committee.
10 Before I introduce my colleagues individually I'm
11 going to first thank all of them for coming in
12 today on such short notice. Thank you all. I
13 want to thank my staff, the Finance staff, who
14 prepared for today's hearing, and especially
15 Tanisha Edwards, who has been working hard,
16 Preston Niblack and Jeffrey Rodus [phonetic], the
17 first deputy and Preston Niblack, the director of
18 the Finance division. With us today we have Brad
19 Lander, Fernando Cabrera, Lewis Fidler, Jumaane
20 Williams, Karen Koslowitz, Jimmy Van Bramer,
21 Robert Jackson, Joel Rivera, Gale Brewer, Leroy
22 Comrie, Diana Reyna and Vincent Ignizio. Okay.
23 Did I miss anybody? I think we got everybody.

24 Today we have one item on the
25 agenda. The Finance Committee will vote on

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2 proposed resolution 917-A. On Sunday, Governor
3 Cuomo issued a statement calling for reform of the
4 tax code to make it more fair and more
5 progressive. While comprehensive details of the
6 proposal were not released--not fully released I
7 should say--the proposal is expected to do the
8 following: create one or more temporary tax
9 brackets for high earner incomes, lower the tax
10 rate for middle income earners and address tax
11 loop holes. This resolution supports the
12 governor's - - legislative efforts. Finance
13 Director, Preston Niblack, is here to answer any
14 questions on this resolution. As a reminder on
15 Thursday, December 8th--this Thursday--there will be
16 a Finance Committee hearing at 10 a.m. in this
17 room. There will only be one item on the agenda,
18 the commercial motor vehicle tax legislation,
19 which is proposed Intro 643-A. There will be a
20 vote, so a quorum is necessary. Finance counsel,
21 Tanisha Edwards, will e-mail the briefing report
22 for this legislation tomorrow morning. Okay? In
23 addition I would like to now recognize Jumaane
24 Williams, who would like to make a statement on
25 the proposal.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank
3 you, Mr. Chair. Thank you everybody who worked on
4 this resolution. I'm very happy that the Governor
5 has taken the steps. I want to thank the Speaker
6 and Chairman Recchia for their prompt response to
7 the issue. I know we've been talking about it for
8 some time, and seeing that we've put it on speed
9 to get it done is very important as the Governor
10 is discussing these tax changes that the things
11 that many of us have been speaking on for a long
12 time are taken into account. I believe this is
13 actually a positive response to us as well as to
14 the Occupy Wall Street movement that I've been
15 supporting. The 99% have expressed real concern
16 and fear over economic equality and I think that
17 discussion in combination with what is going on
18 with Occupy Wall Street is beginning to change the
19 landscape and how we have the discussion and I
20 believe this resolution is a part of that. The
21 Governor is right in saying that this is about
22 fundamental fairness, but it is also about closing
23 the deficit and restoring funding to state and
24 city programs the middle class and working poor
25 rely upon. I don't believe that the Governor's

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2 plan also precludes continued discussion over the
3 millionaire's tax, which I do hope will be
4 extended and that discussion should keep going.
5 Some initial estimates including from state
6 Senator Liz Krueger indicate this plan still falls
7 short of closing the gap in our budget. We're in
8 difficult economic times and - - New York's
9 wealthiest prospered in part off the backs of the
10 99\$. Fundamental fairness, as the Governor puts
11 it, dictates that in harder times, we should all
12 contribute our fair share towards recovery and
13 return to growth. Under this plan, the rich will
14 still be rich and the poor will still be poor. It
15 will, however, give all New Yorkers a fighting
16 chance in this economy and I'm happy that this
17 reso is going forward. I want to thank everybody
18 for supporting.

19 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: We've been
20 joined by Jimmy Oddo and Helen Diane Foster. At
21 this time, I want to recognize Brad Lander.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you
23 so much, Chair Recchia. I also want to thank you,
24 the Speaker, the Finance Director Preston Niblack,
25 the staff and Council Member Williams for bringing

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2 this resolution forward at this time. I'm also
3 encouraged that the Governor and the state
4 legislature have come around to a measure of both
5 tax and budget sanity hopefully. Since 1980 the
6 wealthiest 1% of New Yorkers have seen their share
7 of New York City's income grow from 10% to 45% and
8 yet despite bringing home 45% of the city's
9 income, they're only paying 34% of the city's
10 taxes, so we just have fundamental issues of tax
11 fairness that need to be address. At the same
12 time we continue both in Albany, but boy,
13 especially here to struggle to keep our firehouses
14 open, to keep teachers in our classrooms, not to
15 be closing daycare centers. We're not adding
16 services. We're just desperately trying to keep
17 the basic programs and services—the after school
18 programs, the libraries that New Yorkers rely on.
19 It's not a time when we can afford to be giving a
20 \$5 billion tax break targeted to millionaires and
21 billionaires. I'm very happy to hear that
22 progressive tax reform hopefully is moving in
23 Albany in a way that will achieve some additional
24 measure of tax fairness and it also helps us to
25 preserve basic services for the New Yorkers that

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2 need them. I'm very pleased with passing this
3 resolution today. I hope the legislature and the
4 Governor will quickly reach a deal in Albany, and
5 that we will be able to move in the direction of
6 both more tax fairness and adequate revenue to
7 meet the basic needs of New Yorkers. Thank you
8 very much.

9 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Councilman
10 Jumaane Williams would like to add something.
11 Okay. Also, we'd like to thank all the advocates
12 that worked with Jumaane Williams, Brad Lander,
13 myself and the entire Council. We're going to
14 recognize Council Member Jackson.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Thank you,
16 Chair, my colleagues. I don't stand to rise, but
17 I rise seated to express clearly my support for
18 this proposed resolution, 917-A. Clearly, as you
19 turn the page and read the proposed resolution,
20 part of the resolution says that part of the tax
21 on the tax reform there will be a dedicated fund
22 which will be used solely for the payment of
23 education aid to school districts and board of
24 cooperative educational services around the state
25 of New York. I don't need to remind you that in

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2 the budget that was passed by the state last year—
3 this fiscal year—\$1.5 billion was cut out of
4 education. Now more specifically that was at
5 least \$800 million cut to New York City. As a
6 result of those cuts and the city's financial
7 situation, they have proposed to lay off 6,000
8 teachers, and I don't need to tell you that there
9 are many, many people that are unemployed and
10 there are many, many needs out there for our
11 constituents. I said loud and clear before that
12 as a family, not as individuals, but as a family
13 those family members that have more at times of
14 need should help other members of the family, and
15 that's what this is about. Clearly the lower
16 incomes of the poorer families are suffering and
17 the more wealthier members of our family are not,
18 so we are asking them in times of need to help the
19 more needy members of our family. That's what
20 this is about. I ask all of my colleagues to look
21 at the situation knowing that for example as my
22 colleagues Jumaane Williams and Brad Lander said
23 that even if we did a simple extension of the
24 millionaire's tax that exists right now that would
25 bring in \$5 billion. Even if you take the

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2 Speaker, Shelley Silver's, millionaire's tax on
3 individuals that truly earn a million dollars or
4 more based on the Fiscal Policy Institute that
5 would bring in \$4.1 billion. The question is how
6 do you spend that in support of other family
7 members so they don't go homeless, so they don't
8 go hungry, so they don't lose their homes? Things
9 like that. That's the type of compassion that we
10 need as members of our entire family in order to
11 get us all through these tough times, so I thank
12 all of my colleagues and the Speaker's Office and
13 everyone involved in bringing about proposed
14 resolution 917-A. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. We've
16 been joined by Council Member Vann, Oddo and
17 Barron. Okay. I would just like to make a
18 statement in regards to in the Assembly's proposed
19 bill, they wanted 30% to go towards a school fund.
20 That is not clear yet if that is going to happen.
21 That's why we put in our reso a percentage of the
22 revenue attributed to this tax reform should be
23 dedicated to a fund solely for the payment of
24 education aid. So Councilman Jackson, your
25 desires, your interests, what's of great concern

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2 to you is addressed in this resolution. Okay. I
3 just want to - - on to that. Next we have Jimmy
4 Oddo wants to say a few words. If anyone wants to
5 speak... he'll be followed by Gale Brewer. Is there
6 any other speakers after that? Charles Barron.
7 Are you on this Committee?

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [off mic]

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[laughter]

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CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay.

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Alright. Oddo.

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COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: I want to

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pass until Charles speaks.

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CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. You

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want to pass?

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COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: No, no, no.

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CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Go ahead.

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COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: So last week

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this body voted in favor of the extension of the

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hotel tax that we imposed in 2008 or so and at the

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time I said that it wasn't the most egregious tax

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in that as Council Member Fidler pointed out most

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of it would be paid by out of towners, but that I

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and the members of the Republican delegation voted

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against it because we still hadn't fixed the hole

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2 in the bottom of the glass and you can get as
3 creative as you want in pouring more water into
4 the glass until we in New York City got control of
5 the "uncontrollables"—pension, debt service,
6 Medicaid, healthcare costs. To us, there was no
7 point in trying to fill the glass up, which makes
8 it sort of even more curious to read Mayor
9 Bloomberg's comments yesterday that you can't tax
10 your way out of a problem until you control your
11 expenses. When Andy Lanza [phonetic] and I said
12 that in 2002 when we voted against the property
13 taxes, we were treated as if we had leprosy. I
14 have yet to see New York City in fact control its
15 expenses. Governor Cuomo on the other hand last
16 year in his budget and going after a \$10 billion
17 reducing it actually went to the source of the
18 spikes in the gap. I think he has perhaps a
19 little bit more credibility when he talks about
20 changing the tax rate in that he tried to go to
21 the source of the problem. I'm not sure quite
22 frankly how rational it is for us to vote on a
23 resolution when the Governor hasn't finalized his
24 package. I think the Governor had an outstanding
25 first year. I think he had an epic first year. I

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2 have a great deal of confidence in this governor.
3 I want to see what he has to say, but I'm not
4 going to put my name to this resolution when the
5 package that he is contemplating and working on
6 with the other leaders in Albany hasn't finalized
7 yet. I perhaps would have kept an open mind to
8 put my name in support of changes, but I'm not
9 going to do that prematurely. I think this is all
10 changing rather quickly. We read about it on the
11 blogs and I think that the Governor should be—we
12 should have enough confidence in our Governor that
13 the package he'll put together is something that
14 we could all support at the right time. I just
15 think that what we're doing here is premature and
16 I'm going to wait to see what the final package is
17 before I put my name to it.

18 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you,
19 Council Member Jimmy Oddo from Staten Island.
20 We've also been joined by Oliver Koppell from the
21 Bronx. At this time we recognize the Councilwoman
22 from the Upper West Side, Gale Brewer.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you.
24 I just have a question. I think we know the
25 amount that would be generated from the

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2 millionaire's tax, so I have two questions. Maybe
3 it's here and I'm missing it, but how much does
4 this resolution think would be generated, number
5 one, going with the suggestions here? And then my
6 second question is is there an assumption that if
7 this tax code changes that the governor will not--
8 again, this is a guess--endorse or support the
9 other millionaire's tax? Those are my two
10 questions.

11 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: We recognize
12 our budget director, Preston Niblack, to answer
13 that question.

14 PRESTON NIBLACK: So to answer your
15 question, Council Member, I think at the moment
16 until we have a final deal, it's not going to be
17 clear how much revenue will be raised, I would
18 imagine given the general shape of the proposal
19 that it will be less than a straight extension of
20 the millionaire's tax, and then, I'm sorry, your
21 second question was about--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:
23 [Interposing] Do we think that this will supplant--
24 [crosstalk]

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yes.

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2 PRESTON NIBLACK: I this this is
3 intended to supplant an extension of the
4 millionaire's tax. There were reports in the
5 paper this morning that the top marginal rate
6 being contemplated was just below the current top
7 marginal rate, which is under the millionaire's
8 tax 8.97%. They were talking about a rate that
9 was like 8.2% or something. Again, this is in the
10 newspaper, so who knows? This is clearly intended
11 to be in place of an extension of the
12 millionaire's tax.

13 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: We do not
14 know all of the details because there are lots of
15 questions that I have because if we're getting
16 more money in from the upper portion of the
17 millionaires and we're giving the middle class a
18 tax break, then where is the money? How are we
19 making money to cut the deficit? That's a
20 question. In addition they're closing some tax
21 loopholes and those tax loopholes are very
22 interesting to me. I need to know what they are,
23 but - - passing this resolution today is saying
24 that Mr. Governor, state legislature, we need to
25 pass a bill now. We need to get the extra revenue

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2 in now in order for our state to survive. Okay?
3 That's what we're sending the message. Yes, we
4 don't have all the details. Yes, - - been in
5 touch with the Governor's office and the Assembly,
6 but we need to send a message loud and clear that
7 this state needs reform now and now is the time,
8 and that's why we're saying that we in the City
9 Council encourage this and support this. Okay?
10 Council Member Brewer, any other-

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

12 [Interposing] I just assume that this is a concept
13 that the great state senator Liz Krueger has been
14 advocating for.

15 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Yes. Okay.
16 At this time, we will recognize the council member
17 from the borough of Brooklyn.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: It's the
19 People's Republic of Brooklyn. We've changed it.

20 [laughter]

21 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Go ahead,
22 Charles.

23 MALE VOICE: Chairman Barron?

24 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Chairman
25 Barron?

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: This works.

[background conversation]

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Go ahead.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I don't think you should push that I'm running for Congress in the City Council 'cause that's not the right thing to do. We're here to discuss City Council business and you should not... Remember that please 'cause I don't want anybody saying I'm running for Congress. It's just not the place to do it.

[laughter]

[background conversation]

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: In the 10th Congressional District. You need to stop, Jimmy. Jimmy, you need to really stop.

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Mr. Barron, we want to hear what you have to say. Go ahead.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Well, I just say like Jimmy and I we are good colleagues, but we definitely see the world differently 'cause anybody that thinks Andrew Cuomo is doing a great job is really—it's like A Tale of Two Cities. Talk to union workers. Talk to working class.

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2 Talk to all the agencies that were cut. This
3 state I think for the first time in a long time
4 has a governor who uses just cuts to balance the
5 \$9 billion deficient. There is few things you can
6 do to balance a budget—raise revenue, cut
7 services, borrow, sell assets. He just cut, and
8 it's been disastrous for the people in the state.
9 This resolution I'm just trying to find out where
10 we're going because the Assembly passed a real
11 millionaire's tax where it was on those making a
12 million and up and make the percentages higher.
13 You make \$200,000 a year, you're not rich. You're
14 not "making it." \$200,000 a year is very
15 challenging for people in this state, so I think
16 we should put a lot of pressure on the state
17 because you know once we get to June if this stuff
18 doesn't happen now, when we get to June, we're
19 going to be saying we're up against the wall. The
20 city Council can only pass the property tax, can't
21 raise anything, but this is where we need to begin
22 the real struggle to get—and even if they raise
23 the percentage progressively up to as the income
24 goes up. You're making a million five point five,
25 making \$5 million or 7.5, all the way up. If we

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2 progressively go up, we can get billions of
3 dollars, and then nobody talks about it, but I
4 think at some point we need to deal with the stock
5 transfer tax that I understand is on the records,
6 but it's rebated back to Wall Street. That's
7 close to 10 to 16 billion dollars. If we don't
8 deal with this stuff now, we're going to be
9 hearing from the Speaker and the Mayor how we have
10 no choice and I don't even agree with that when we
11 still have other choices. So I'm just saying
12 today we have to be strong as a City Council that
13 when it comes to our negotiating time if revenues
14 are off the table, we're going to be up against a
15 fight that's just incredible and is going to be
16 painful for the working class people. Andrew
17 Cuomo has been a disaster as a governor. He is
18 trying to squeeze the unions. He's trying to
19 freeze wages and hit their pension and those who
20 cooperate with him are alright; those who don't,
21 they punish. So those days have to be over, and
22 we have to be the conscience of this city. This
23 city—stop shaking your head, Domenic. I know that
24 means stop. So just stop 'cause you're not
25 agreeing. When you shake your head at me, you

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2 mean enough, and I just want to let you know I
3 read body language, so I'm wrapping it up in the
4 last two seconds.

5 [background conversation]

6 [laughter]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So Jimmy, A
8 Tale of Two Cities. Come over to my city so I can
9 explain to you what's really going down, but I
10 hope we can do something real strong on the
11 revenue side or else we're going to be in trouble
12 when it comes to negotiating. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you,
14 Council Member Barron. Council Member Fidler?
15 We've also been joined by Council Member Koo and
16 Council Member Mark Weprin. Peter Koo.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Thank you,
18 Mr. Chair. I find myself agreeing with a couple
19 of things that the Minority Leader said, but
20 coming to a different conclusion. I also have a
21 great deal of faith in this governor, and I'm
22 also-want to read my body language, dude? Keep
23 joking. Feel free. Actually, this is very
24 serious. I really want to talk about it
25 seriously. I do have a great deal of faith in the

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2 governor, but I also want to vote for something
3 for which we don't have the details, so I really
4 read through this resolution a couple of times,
5 and you have to read the resolve clause that says,
6 "The Council of the City of New York supports the
7 governor and legislature's efforts to reform New
8 York State's tax code to allow for a fairer and
9 more progressive distribution of the burden of
10 taxation on New York City residents." It would be
11 very, very difficult to disagree with that in
12 principle and I don't and so I'm going to vote for
13 this resolution as an act of faith in my governor
14 and as an act of faith in the understanding that
15 this governor understands that two income families
16 that are considered middle class are barely making
17 it in this city, and that the former millionaire's
18 tax, which affected those of us who really were
19 far from wealthy, we'll get tax relief in this
20 proposed code. The families—I'll speak for my own
21 self—I had to send two kids to college at the same
22 time, and I know what the cost of that is. There
23 are families that are sending multiple kids to
24 private schools in the city of New York. I know
25 what that costs. If we're talking about a tax

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2 code that's going to recognize that in the city of
3 New York the cost of living, what a middle class
4 family earns is much different than it is in other
5 places in the world and it is going to recognize
6 that and provide the appropriate tax relief for
7 people who are barely making it and calling
8 themselves middle class, then I'm all for it. I'm
9 going to cast my vote in favor of this resolution
10 in that act of faith that the Governor and the
11 legislature understand that and that there will be
12 an additional burden upon those who can most
13 afford it, who will in fact help to contribute to
14 make sure that we don't see further draconian cuts
15 to services that also affect our poorer and middle
16 class New Yorkers. For me, this is a yes vote,
17 but it's a leap of faith, and I think it's a
18 warranted leap of faith based on what we've seen
19 from this governor in the past year.

20 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you
21 very much, Council Member Lew Fidler. Does any
22 other Council Member have any other questions?

23 [background conversation]

24 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Alright,
25 Jumaane Williams just wants to make a statement.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank
3 you. Because my name is on here, I just want to
4 respond to a few of the things. I too don't know
5 my level—well, I don't think the Governor has been
6 a great governor, so I oppose that. I'm hoping
7 and it seems like the conversations are going in a
8 direction that I approve of and so my name is on
9 here precisely because of what Council Member
10 Fidler said. The resolve part is just saying that
11 we support these efforts and discussions that are
12 happening to have progressive distribution and I
13 hope that what comes out of it is reflective of
14 that. If it's not, I'll be the person speaking
15 the loudest. I also do not think and my name on
16 here does not mean that I think the millionaire's
17 tax should not be discussed and/or passed. I
18 don't think these things have to be mutually
19 exclusive, and they can be done in tandem. There
20 are also things that are in here that make a lot
21 of sense and many of the taxes discussed is
22 discussed to make sure that we use this to address
23 the gaps, which I assume is all of the gaps. So
24 there are things here that I think make sense in
25 terms of the discussions we've been having and

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2 I've been having, so I'm hoping to see what comes
3 out of it, and I hope it's reflective of what has
4 been talked about in the newspapers, and I will
5 continue to support progressive taxation and the
6 millionaire's tax.

7 [background conversation]

8 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Hold on.

9 Hold on. Hold on. Okay. I'm going to have
10 Oliver Koppell make a statement, then Brad Lander.
11 You need a microphone.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Chairman
13 and members of the Committee, I support this
14 resolution and - - to make our tax code, which if
15 you look at the numbers that were just given out,
16 is terribly unfair to the lower income taxpayers
17 compared to the higher income taxpayers. I also
18 strongly support increase in education aid. I
19 have some concern about talking about education
20 aid in the Albany context without talking about
21 the education formula because education aid has
22 been a way in Albany--and as you know I spent two
23 decades there--has been a way in Albany to favor
24 affluent, suburban areas over the more needy urban
25 and rural areas. We have an unfair education aid

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2 formula. We've had it for many years. It's
3 somewhat better than it was years ago, but it's
4 still not the way it ought to be and shortchanges
5 New York City and shortchanges the children in New
6 York City. I just want to—when we say we want a
7 fund specifically dedicated to education, that's
8 fine. I'm all for it as long as that fund is
9 equitably distributed, and the problem is that I
10 know what will happen up there. The Republicans
11 in the state senate will take that fund and
12 distribute it unfairly as part of their price for
13 whatever they're being asked to support, and that
14 gives me some concern. I'll still support it. I
15 strongly support education aid. I don't support
16 education aid the way Albany distributes it.

17 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you.

18 Council Member Brad Lander?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I just want
20 to make note of for the record that we've just
21 been handed this very useful information from
22 staff and I just think everyone should take a look
23 at it. If the governor and state legislature
24 don't reach a deal by December 31st, then on
25 January 1st the current rates will go back to

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2 applying. I just think it's worth everyone
3 understanding that the current rates say that
4 above \$20,000 for a single or \$40,000 for a couple
5 every single New York City taxpayer pays the same
6 tax rate of 6.85%. A single earner earning
7 \$20,001 a couple, two income earners earning
8 \$40,001 pays the same tax rate as a couple earning
9 \$1 million, \$2 million, \$5 million, \$800,000, how
10 anyone could think we could look ourselves in the
11 mirror as New York State and say we have a
12 progressive tax rate with that just extremely
13 regressive tax formula I don't know, so it's
14 important that we learn the details of course and
15 obviously the Governor and the legislature
16 together will reach details, but I think what
17 we're saying here today is that structure—
18 something that's flat above \$20,000 for a single
19 or \$40,000 for a couple is not what we can have in
20 New York State, so I want to thank the staff for
21 providing this and giving us that clarity.

22 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you.

23 Council Member Barron would like to make one brief
24 statement.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I just

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2 think that when we say education aid, it should
3 include higher education 'cause CUNY the tuition
4 has been raised I think \$300 each year for the
5 next five years and they're cutting the amount of
6 public commitment to higher education aid. So we
7 speak of education aid, I think we should make
8 sure that—I know that the Assembly usually doesn't
9 mean higher ed when they say education, but CUNY
10 should be included in that.

11 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay, Council
12 Member Barron. It's a good point. It's something
13 we have to take up with the state legislature up
14 in Albany. Just have to include it. Does any
15 other Council Member have any questions or make
16 any statements? Without saying that, we're going
17 to call the roll. I encourage all my colleagues
18 to vote aye.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,
20 Committee Clerk. Roll call vote in the Committee
21 on Finance Resolution 917-A. Council Member
22 Recchia?

23 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: I am going to
24 vote aye on this resolution and encourage all my
25 colleagues to vote aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Rivera?

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COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I vote aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Reyna?

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COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: I vote aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Brewer?

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I vote aye

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and appreciate the effort to try to restructure
the state tax code. I vote aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Comrie?

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COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I vote aye

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and want to remind folks that Land Use starts
immediately [off mic].

12

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Fidler?

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COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I'm pleased

15

not to be on Land Use and I vote aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Foster?

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COUNCIL MEMBER FOSTER: Aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Jackson?

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COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Koppell?

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COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Vann?

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COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Cabrera?

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COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Koslowitz?

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Van Bramer?

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Ignizio?

COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Yes, if I could just briefly explain my vote. Perhaps not popular amongst this room, but I have to give my opinions about this. I just genuinely believe this emergency meeting to hear this resolution would have had to be had right now when we have a Finance Committee meeting a couple of days later just shows my view that this is more about political theatre than it is about reality. We do not have a proposal from Albany. I was an Albany legislator. Okay. So I know that when the Governor comes out with his plan, they will know it, they will use their legislative authority to go through it, and then they will vote it up or down, but I believe the political theatre that is in this room today is about running in front of the parade and then saying we're leading it. I genuinely disagree with a lot of what's being

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2 said. There is some of which that I agree that is
3 being said, but I think what's really transpiring
4 here today is more of a Seinfeld episode. It's a
5 meeting about nothing because we don't have
6 anything in front of us, and everyone in this
7 room, my legislators who are all very smart, they
8 know that, but I guarantee you if you stay tuned
9 to your fax machine, stay tuned to your e-mail
10 box, you're going to read things from different
11 Council Members that say, "Council passes
12 resolution fighting for a millionaire's tax to
13 save New York." We've thrown around words about
14 progressive and fair tax code and we're going to
15 do all this. It is political theatre. I think we
16 should await the governor and the state
17 legislature's proposal. That's why we have a
18 governor and a state legislature, and this Council
19 ought be dealing with what this Council deals with
20 which is New York City matters. I vote no.

21 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Before we
22 call the next Council Member to vote, I have to
23 address what the Council Member has just made a
24 comment--I have a lot of respect for Vincent
25 Ignizio, but I disagree with your comments.

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2 Number one, this is not politically motivated. I
3 am not Jerry Seinfeld. This Committee is taken
4 very seriously. Let's state for the record the
5 legislature was called into Special Session to
6 address these tax issues. It's time that they
7 hear from us. It can't wait until Thursday
8 because Thursday will be too late. They have to
9 hear from us now. We in the City Council feel
10 very strong that it's time for the state to step
11 up to the plate and help the city out. We have
12 not received proper funding from the state in this
13 last budget. We can no longer stand by. Our
14 surplus is running low. We must make a move and
15 the state legislators need to hear from us. We
16 can't be kept quiet on this. This is not
17 politically motivated. If you think helping the
18 people, the taxpayers of the city of New York is
19 politically motivated, then you're wrong 'cause
20 this City Council united together stands up for
21 the taxpayers to see that we're going to get our
22 fair share of the budget next year to make sure we
23 have a balanced budget, to make sure that programs
24 don't get cut and many programs which aren't in
25 your district we are looking to protect, to see

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2 the seniors get funded properly, the schools get
3 the proper funding that they need, and we are
4 united together as a City Council. To all my
5 colleagues, we should stand proud of this
6 resolution. Be proud that under the leadership of
7 Speaker Christine Quinn that we are making our
8 voices heard. Thank you very much. Finish the
9 voting.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: Oddo?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: May I be
12 temporarily excused to explain my vote? I didn't
13 support Andrew Cuomo for governor when he ran. I
14 didn't support the Republican candidate, and I
15 sure as hell didn't support the Freedom party
16 candidate when he ran. I didn't mean to turn this
17 hearing into a referendum on Governor Cuomo, but
18 if I were to play the role in defending him, boy,
19 oh, boy, do I have plenty of ammunition to do
20 that. I think the Governor injected reality into
21 Albany--no more monopoly money. I think the
22 Governor injected leadership and I will take the
23 advice of Chairman Barron, my good friend, and
24 talk to all of those folks, if he talks to the
25 people of California, who by the way are on the

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2 cusp of falling into the Pacific, not because of
3 an earthquake but because of all the debt. We
4 were going down the same path and yeah, when you
5 cut \$10 billion out of a budget, it's painful, but
6 we could do what other places have done and mask
7 the problem, and the Governor didn't. So I just
8 think that we don't get the privilege in this body
9 of picking clauses and saying, "I will attach my
10 name to this clause, but don't attach my name to
11 the rest of it." I appreciate the comments about
12 the resolve clause. It's the rest of it that's
13 troubling to me. And again, cart, horse, horse,
14 cart. We all know what the order should be, so I
15 will join Council Member Ignizio in voting no.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote 13 in
17 the affirmative, 2 in the negative, no
18 abstentions, item is adopted. Members, please
19 sign the Committee Report.

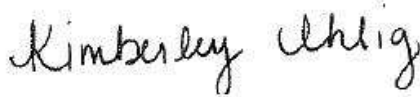
20 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay, we've
21 also been joined by Council Member Vacca and
22 Council Member Lappin. Without any further
23 questions, this meeting is adjourned.

24 [gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature



Date

12/29/11