

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

-----X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS JOINTLY WITH THE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES

-----X

March 8, 2013
Start: 10:21 a.m.
Recess: 2:49 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm
14th Floor

B E F O R E:

JAMES G. VAN BRAMER
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Council Member Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.
Council Member Elizabeth S. Crowley
Council Member Daniel Dromm
Council Member Domenic M. Recchia, Jr.
Council Member Gale Brewer
Council Member Brad Lander
Council Member Steve Levin
Council Member Leticia James

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

Kate Levin
Commissioner
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs

Norma Munn
Chairperson
NYC Arts Alliance

Margaret Honey
President and CEO
New York Hall of Science

Vincent Gentile
Chair
Select Committee on Libraries, NYC

Linda Johnson
President and CEO
Brooklyn Public Library

Tom Galante
President and CEO
Queens Public Library

Anthony Marx
President and CEO
New York Public Library

Eileen Muller
President
Local 1482, DC37

Valentin Colon
President
Local 1930, DC37

John Hislop
President
Local 1321, CD37

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

Marcy Wartell Brown
Treasurer
Local 1501, DC 37.

Cuthbert Maurice Dickenson
President
Local 374

Carolyn McIntyre
Representative
Citizens Defending Libraries

Michael White
Representative
Citizens Defending Libraries

Judy Francis
Representative
Citizens Defending Libraries

Annalynne Swann
Representative
Committee to Save the New York Public Library

Veronica Conant
Representative
Committee to Save the New York Public Library

Monica Strauss
Representative
Committee to Save the New York Public Library

David Johnston
Executive Director
Exploring the Metropolis

Cristobel Guff
Representative
Society of the Architecture of the City

Anthony Bush

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

Anthony Donovan

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --are in
3 transit to get to this hearing. We're hearing
4 from lots of folks so I think we'll go ahead and
5 get started in five minutes or so. But, thank you
6 for being here and thank you for being patient.
7 Thank you, Commissioner. [off mic] Thank you very
8 much. Good morning and welcome to the FY 2014
9 Preliminary Budget Hearing of the Cultural
10 Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup
11 Relations Committee on this very snowy morning.
12 And thank you to all of our culturals, all of our
13 organizations, all of our artists, all of our
14 partners. It's a testament to how strongly you
15 feel about the cultural community in New York City
16 that all of you are here on time from your various
17 boroughs and here to share your thoughts and
18 feelings, even if you're not testifying, I hear
19 you loud and clear about how important all of this
20 is to you and to our city. My name is Jimmy Van
21 Bramer. I'm Chair of the Committee and I expect
22 that several members of the Committee will be in
23 shortly. Every year the Department of Cultural
24 Affairs is asked to make drastic reductions in
25 funding to the cultural institutions and programs

2 that they support. And I'm proud to say that as a
3 council under Speaker Quinn's leadership, every
4 year we manage to restore crucial funding that,
5 were it not restored, would harshly impact
6 residents across this city. Culturals, very
7 broadly defined, generate billions in taxable
8 revenue and provide unparalleled education
9 opportunities for children in communities
10 throughout the five boroughs and employ tens of
11 thousands of New Yorkers. In the adopted fiscal
12 2013 budget the Council, with the administration,
13 restored \$55 million in funding. Unfortunately,
14 those gains were lost in the preliminary fiscal
15 2014 budget. So, we are here once again
16 discussing the devastating losses that would occur
17 to one of the prime economic engines in the city
18 should this funding not be restored. As everyone
19 in the room knows the November plan included a mid
20 year PEG for DCLA [phonetic] of \$8.4 million and
21 \$8 million PEG in the out years. Needless to say,
22 we're all glad that some of that funding was
23 restored but it can never be enough. And
24 compounding the cuts that we've already received,
25 obviously, there was no base lining of any of

2 these funds. So, we will go through this brutal
3 dance once again. And we are left with a gap of
4 \$64 million, \$64 million in DCA's budget. Cuts of
5 this magnitude are unacceptable to me, to this
6 Council and I'm sure everyone else in the room.
7 And all of these cuts happen despite the Mayor's
8 preliminary management report which, once again,
9 highlights all the positive trends that we all
10 know, including an increase of visitors by at
11 least one and a half million from FY '11 to '12.
12 People from all over the world come to New York
13 City to visit this city because it is so rich
14 culturally speaking. And that experience, the
15 cultural experiences embedded in the heart of what
16 is New York City. The institutions, the
17 organizations, the non profit theater companies,
18 dance companies, artists, all serve as a magnet to
19 our various communities whether it's in midtown
20 Manhattan or in the greatest council district
21 known to man, the 26th Council District. And they
22 not only do all the wonderful things I've already
23 spoken about but we all know that they are
24 incredibly vital to small businesses, the local
25 restaurants, café's, printers who are nearby and

2 who rely on them for so much of their support.

3 And in the wake of Super Storm Sandy we know that

4 our culturals have really helped in what is, what

5 we have seen as the recovery so far and will

6 continue to do that with programming, programs

7 like Casa, Materials for the Arts, our schools and

8 nonprofits are really filling gaps. And if we

9 allow cuts to the cultural community those gaps

10 will grow wider and will not be met. I want to

11 say that the magnitude of these cuts is

12 exacerbated for some of the smaller cultural

13 organizations and institutions who are really

14 dependent on city funding. We all know that

15 private funding opportunities are becoming rarer

16 as foundations and donors struggle to cut back.

17 And all groups but particularly smaller groups

18 plan their year ahead based on city funding that

19 they believe they will receive. Proposed

20 reductions every year destabilize their planning

21 and eliminate programs, exhibitions, residencies

22 and impact the entire organization. If these cuts

23 were not resorted, rest assured, the impact would

24 be felt across the entire city. The Council looks

25 forward to discussing with the administration and

2 with the Commissioner how we're going to avoid
3 these very painful cuts. I want to thank Nora
4 Yahya who is here on her first hearing, her very
5 first hearing as our liaison and representative
6 with the finance committee. So, I want to thank
7 Nora and congratulate her on her first appearance
8 here with the Committee. And, of course, Ty Mia
9 [phonetic] our Counsel who is been with us and my
10 Chief of Staff, Matt Wallace who is at a very fun
11 event at the moment today. He got to go to that
12 and not come to the Committee meeting so, I'm not
13 sure I'll be thanking him but he is going to be
14 doing that. And, of course, Cody Ryder,
15 [phonetic] my legislative liaison who is here.
16 Obviously, I will have questions and other members
17 will as well but now I invite Commissioner Levin
18 to give her testimony.

19 COMMISSIONER KATE LEVIN: Is that
20 working? Yes, thank you. Good morning. I am
21 Kate Levin, Commissioner of the New York City
22 Department of Cultural Affairs and I'm here today
23 to testify with regard to the Mayor's FY 2014
24 preliminary budget. And with me today from the
25 Department of Cultural Affairs are Deputy

2 Commissioner Margaret Morton, Assistant
3 Commissioners Kathleen Hughes, Tim Thayer and
4 Andrew Burmeister, Chief of Staff, Shirley Levy,
5 General Counsel, Tracy Knuckles, Finance Director,
6 Phillippa Shao, Director of External Affairs,
7 Danai Pointer and others. So first, let me
8 discuss our expense budget outlook. DCA's FY '13
9 adopted budget was \$155.6 million, which included
10 a \$46 million restoration, \$3.9 million in one
11 time member items and \$5.1 million for the
12 Cultural After School Adventures Program. At the
13 time of the FY '13 adoption our baseline budget
14 for FY '14 was \$100.2 million. While the City's
15 economy continues to show signs of recovery budget
16 gaps remain in the out years due to projected
17 increases in non controllable expenditures and the
18 City's increasing share of non Federal education
19 costs. In order to address these gaps in
20 September the Mayor asked agencies to forecast a
21 5.4 percent reduction to their current year
22 budgets. For DCA, this equals \$8.45 million which
23 decreases the FY '13 budget to \$147.2 million.
24 However, as part of the January plan, \$2.4 million
25 of this cut was restored and with the addition of

2 member items and other adjustments, DCA's FY '13
3 budget currently stands at \$150.1 million.
4 Looking ahead to FY '14 the Mayor's preliminary
5 budget forecasts an eight percent reduction to
6 agency baseline budgets. For DCA this is an \$8.1
7 million reduction that brings our FY '14 baseline
8 from \$100.2 million to \$92.1 million. Remember,
9 that these are baseline figures exclusive of any
10 restorations, initiatives or City Council Member
11 items. According to the forecast for FY '14,
12 programs groups would receive \$14.1 million in FY
13 '14, this is a reduction of \$1.3 million from the
14 previous FY '14 base of \$15.4 million. According
15 to the forecast for FY '14 at CIG's would receive
16 \$73 million, this is a reduction of \$6.7 million
17 from the previous FY '14 base of \$79.8 million.
18 We've structured the out year reductions for the
19 field in a way that we believe is most responsible
20 and consistent with past practice. For program
21 groups we considered several options but have
22 proposed an across the board reduction. We
23 believe this is the most responsible approach
24 given the number of organizations that receive
25 funding, the variety of their programs, the

2 varying size of CDF allocations and the wide range
3 in our constituents overall operating budgets.
4 For the CIG's, after reviewing a variety of
5 scenarios we've made the decision to apply the
6 reductions across the board for FY '14. As you'll
7 recall the FY '14 budget contains baseline
8 reductions from previous years including the FY
9 '10 cuts which were implemented across two tiers.
10 The tiers provided relief to the smaller
11 institutions whose sources of funding tend to be
12 less diversified. By reducing the operating
13 subsidies of the eight largest institutions by a
14 higher percentage cut. Implementing the current
15 reduction across the board ensures that we
16 preserve the two tiers that are built into the out
17 year budget. There is a significant difference
18 between the FY '13 adopted budget and the FY '14
19 baseline. This is a result of the budgeting
20 process for DCA and a number of other agencies.
21 While reductions are implemented against the
22 agency baseline budget and therefore affect all
23 out years, money that is restored as part of the
24 adoption process is registered for the current
25 fiscal year only. We're engaged in ongoing

2 dialogue around this issue and continue to seek a
3 viable solution to addressing the severe disparity
4 between baseline and adopted budget. City support
5 is one part of a larger funding mix for non profit
6 cultural organizations that include other
7 government sources as well as corporate,
8 foundation and individual giving. These funding
9 sources have been unstable over the past few years
10 due to global economic uncertainties. Looking at
11 cultural data project information as well as the
12 most recent quarterly reports from the cultural
13 institutions groups we can report very broadly on
14 key trends. Board and individual giving are
15 generally higher as is earned income. Foundation
16 funding is mixed. In many cases this is due to
17 the effect of multi year smoothing rules that
18 provided higher support during the worst of the
19 recession that began in 2008 but have since
20 adjusted spending downward even as the financial
21 markets have started to recover. Corporate
22 funding remains down but does seem to be inching
23 up in some cases. For those organizations with
24 endowments their value has increased although we
25 don't yet have clarity about whether values have

2 generally equaled pre 2008 levels. Despite these
3 fluctuations non profit managers have continued to
4 demonstrate creative and resilient leadership.
5 One benchmark of the appeal of cultural
6 programming is in NYC and Company's tourism
7 statistics. In 2012 the City, once again,
8 achieved a new record attracting 52 million
9 visitors, almost half of whom said that culture
10 was a key reason for their decision to come to New
11 York. I'd now like to turn to DCA's Capital
12 Budget. Thanks to our partnership with you and
13 the borough presidents the agency is advancing a
14 central infrastructure improvements, facilities
15 upgrades and capital equipment purchases at
16 numerous organizations throughout the five
17 boroughs. At this time no cuts have been proposed
18 for the agency's capital budget. Over the next
19 four years DCA will provide \$685 million for more
20 than 400 projects at 198 organizations including
21 design, construction and equipment purchases.
22 Last fall we were pleased to open the new BAM
23 Fisher theater and the renovated Public Theater.
24 Early next month we'll join Chairman Van Bramer at
25 a groundbreaking for sculpture center and later

2 this year we'll cut the ribbon on an expanded
3 Queens Museum of Art. We'll also continue
4 construction on several projects including a new
5 leopard exhibit at the Staten Island Zoo, a
6 renovated facility for line builders in the Bronx
7 and in downtown Brooklyn renovated homes for brick
8 and urban glass and a new building for Theater for
9 A New Audience. Recent equipment projects include
10 a new performance tent, lighting and sound systems
11 for the Big Apple Circus and a new piano for
12 Pregones Theater. In addition, I'm pleased to
13 report that the agency is continuing its
14 successful track record in implementing green
15 capital projects on city owned property in
16 conjunction with PlaNYC the city's roadmap to
17 reducing carbon emissions by 30 percent by 2017.
18 To date, \$43 million of PlaNYC energy efficiency
19 retrofit funding has been allocated for projects
20 including HVAC upgrades, lighting retrofits,
21 occupancy sensors and cooling towers at 22 members
22 of the CIG. The agency also continues to lead in
23 local law 86 green building efforts ensuring that
24 applicable capital projects follow the US Green
25 Building Council's Lead Standards and reduce

2 energy and water use beyond that required by the
3 New York City Building Code. Approximately 30
4 percent of the City's local law 86 projects and
5 40, and 14 percent of the total cost have been
6 attributed to DCA projects. The agency will
7 continue to support thousands of core programs,
8 operations and capital projects at hundreds of
9 cultural organizations across the five boroughs.
10 Through our regrant program, administered by local
11 arts councils in every borough we continue to
12 provide support at the grass roots level to
13 hundreds more organizations and artists. Despite
14 the economic challenges we're committed to working
15 in every way that we can to support the field
16 during these difficult times. For example, the FY
17 '14 cultural development fund process is underway.
18 This year we held 12 applications seminar
19 throughout the five boroughs which were attended
20 by 382 representatives from cultural
21 organizations. Between the announcement of the
22 application timetable in December and the February
23 deadline we also fielded 480 calls from applicants
24 on our applicant helpline. The panels we convened
25 to review applications will begin later this month

2 and from now through June we anticipate conducting
3 21 panel sessions. In addition to the 702
4 organizations that submitted an FY '14 application
5 online another 351 groups have commitments for FY
6 '14 as a result of their multi year grant cycle.
7 Together, the total number of organizations
8 participating is on par with last year. Materials
9 For the Arts continues to support cultural
10 organizations and public schools by providing free
11 materials for their programming needs. For
12 example, since July 1st, MFTA has distributed
13 donated materials to 938 non profit organizations
14 and 528 public schools including furniture, filing
15 cabinets, fabric and frames, poster board, pens
16 and props and 8,000 pounds of brand new crayons.
17 Over the past year MFTA has expanded the variety
18 of classes, workshops and public events available
19 to teachers, school groups and member
20 organizations. This includes a newly developed
21 teacher training program to support the Department
22 of Educations implementation of New York State
23 Common Core Learning Standards. We're also
24 working in partnership with the Department of
25 Sanitation to update the reuse, reduce, reuse,

2 recycle curriculum manual which is distributed to
3 all 7,180 of the city's public schools. To
4 complement the updated manual the Sanitation
5 Department has sponsored teacher workshops at the
6 MFTA warehouse. And since the partnership began
7 in September, 14 schools have visited the
8 warehouse and educators for more than 20 schools
9 have received training during six teacher
10 workshops. This year marks the 30th anniversary of
11 the Percent for Art program which allocates one
12 percent of the budget or eligible city capital
13 projects for the commission and installation of a
14 permanent work of public art. Neither, nearly 300
15 projects have been completed since 1983 and we've
16 increased the entire portfolio by 30 percent over
17 the past ten years. To commemorate this milestone
18 the agency is launching several online resources
19 to help the public engage with the city's
20 collection. These include a percent for art
21 tumblr blog, a new bubble friendly percent for
22 art website, accessible on all smart phones and
23 incorporating percent projects on the social media
24 platform, foursquare. Now, I'd like to bring your
25 attention to several other ways the agency is

2 working to support the field. As you may recall,
3 seniors partnering with artists citywide or SPARC
4 is an initiative of the Department of Cultural
5 Affairs and Department for the Aging that places
6 artists in senior centers across the five
7 boroughs. The program began in 2009 as a pilot
8 with 12 artist in nine centers, expanded last year
9 to 50 artist residencies at 45 centers citywide
10 through a grant from the National Endowment for
11 the Arts and continues this year with 50 artist
12 residencies at 48 senior centers thanks to funding
13 from the Department for the Aging. In addition to
14 providing seniors with interactive arts activities
15 resident artists produce public programs at their
16 centers that are open to all New Yorkers in the
17 spring. Feedback has been extraordinarily
18 positive thus far. We've encouraged the artists
19 to inform the Council of public events taking
20 place in districts throughout the five boroughs
21 and look forward to working with you to find ways
22 to continue the program next year. DCA continues
23 its partnership with NYC and Company in which
24 events featured on the NYC Culture Calendar are
25 also posted on NYC and Company's Culture Calendar

2 on nyc.go.com. Events submitted to the culture
3 calendar are also shared with nyc.gov and the
4 city's 311 call centers. The DCA calendars
5 featured more than 25,000 events from across the
6 five boroughs and is searchable by categories
7 including artistic discipline, kid friendly and
8 free. Our goal remains to help visitors and
9 residents understand the breadth and depth of New
10 York City's cultural offerings and offer another
11 resource to cultural organizations seeking to
12 build audiences. We urge all of your cultural
13 constituents to submit their events to the
14 calendar at nyc.gov/nyculture. Finally, I'd like
15 to remind you that April is National Poetry Month
16 and April 18th is Poem in Your Pocket Day, the city
17 wide celebration of literacy and poetry. As
18 always, the day will feature numerous spoken word
19 and poetry programs across the five boroughs.
20 Mayor Bloomberg will host the 4th Annual Poetweet
21 contest from the 1st to the 8th and winning tweets
22 will be published in Metro on Poem in Your Pocket
23 Day. I encourage all of you to carry a poem and
24 share it with your colleagues, friends and
25 families and Twitter followers. Visit

2 nyc.gov/poem for poetry events and more
3 information about this annual celebration. In
4 closing, I would like to thank Chairman Van
5 Bramer, committee members and all your colleagues
6 on the City Council for your continued support.
7 As we work through challenging fiscal times your
8 partnership has never been more crucial. I'm
9 happy to answer any questions you have.

10 CHAIRMAN VAN BRAMER: Thank you
11 very much, Commissioner. I want to acknowledge my
12 colleague, Council Woman Elizabeth Crowley, also
13 from Queens, who gets extra credit for being the
14 first one to brave the snow and get in. Thank
15 you, Commissioner for your testimony and I want to
16 say for the record that I know that you are a
17 tremendous champion of the arts in New York City.
18 That is a big part of who you are in your life. I
19 know that the First Deputy Mayor Harris also cares
20 a great deal about this committee and I believe
21 Mayor Bloomberg understands how important all of
22 this is. Having said that, you know, I asked Mark
23 Page some questions on Monday morning and I want
24 to ask you some of the same questions because, you
25 know, we're getting to what may be the last budget

2 of this administration and, you know, we start to
3 think about legacies and we have gotten into this
4 awful situation where your agency and the cultural
5 community face these horrific cuts every year.
6 And most of it gets restored but there is a
7 chipping away at this community. And I want to
8 ask you, I mean, you must believe, as I do, that
9 this is destabilizing for organizations,
10 institutions and is not good for this community to
11 go through this exercise every year.

12 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: Having a
13 retreating baseline is a real difficulty and I
14 think it's a significant technical problem for a
15 number of agencies and there have been
16 conversations over the years around a number of
17 solutions and I think we're all committed to
18 trying to find something meaningful in the next
19 couple of months.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, I
21 think you would agree that we can't keep doing
22 this, you know?

23 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: Well, I mean,
24 unfortunately government could keep doing this.
25 It's not a great idea to keep doing it and I think

2 we all need to really work very seriously no a
3 disciplined solution for it.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I agree
5 with you that government could and no one's in a
6 greater position to make that happen than the
7 Mayor and the administration. And what I think
8 would be a great legacy for this administration is
9 to work with the Council to fully restore these
10 cuts and then to baseline everything going into
11 next year. Would you agree that that would be a
12 great legacy?

13 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: I think the
14 great legacy is figuring out an ongoing mechanism
15 to ensure that baseline erosion is not the
16 technical part of budgeting that it currently is.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, do you
18 not support base lining?

19 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: I think, what
20 I--

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER:
22 [interposing] - - restorations?

23 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: --what I
24 support is fiscal discipline and base lining
25 becomes an important tool in trying to manage

2 that, whether we like it or not. But I think
3 there does need to be a different approach to the
4 agencies that have a retreating baseline and my
5 colleagues within the administration agree and are
6 committed to working very closely with the Council
7 to figure out how to do that.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: You know,
9 we have lost too much already. And we really
10 can't afford to lose anymore. I think you know
11 that and I think you would agree with that. And
12 we, we're gambling with the future of our city by
13 gambling with the health of the cultural
14 community. Because, every time we get a proposed
15 budget that cuts \$30, \$40, \$60, \$70 million to the
16 cultural community we are gambling that it's going
17 to come back. Most of it's going to come back.
18 And there are going to be a lot of changes here
19 next year and we can't keep gambling with the
20 future of this community because one of these days
21 it's not going to work and then where will we be,
22 right? We think we've got it figured out in terms
23 of there's supporting the administration, there's
24 supporting in the Council and we can get there.
25 And all of these people swing wildly every three

2 or four months and it's a gamble. And we've got
3 to stop gambling. We've got to baseline this.
4 And you haven't exactly said that that's something
5 that you forcefully believe in and that we're
6 forcefully working to accomplish. But I wish you
7 would and I think you believe that. Because I
8 know, Commissioner, that you fight for this
9 community.

10 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: I certainly
11 do. Again, I think base lining is one of a number
12 of tools that go into building any budget. The
13 City's overall responsibility is to be fiscally
14 disciplined. I think it doesn't do this
15 constituency or any other group of city services
16 any benefit to have a destabilized budget process
17 in the course of every year. The question is,
18 what's the best and most responsible way to
19 develop an approach to fixing it? So, base lining
20 needs to be part of that solution. It's not the
21 only part of it.

22 COMMISSONER VAN BRAMER: I agree.
23 I want to recognize that we've been joined by
24 Councilman Gale Brewer, thank you, Councilman
25 Brewer, for joining us. Yes, base lining is part

2 of it but it's an awfully big part of it. And,
3 you know, fiscal responsibility is incredibly
4 important. But I'm sure that you know and would
5 agree that this community, your budget directly,
6 unlike many others, actually generates revenue for
7 the City of New York and spins off incredible
8 amounts of tax revenue. So, the fiscally
9 responsible thing to do for the City would be to
10 baseline and ultimately increase the budget for
11 the cultural community because that would actually
12 be a revenue generator for the City. Would you
13 agree with that?

14 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: I think under
15 the auspices of this administration in partnership
16 with the Council the agency's budget has been at
17 its all time highs and FY '13 budget was higher
18 than FY '14. So, we absolutely agree with you
19 that increased support to this community is a
20 benefit to everyone in the city.

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I want to
22 just mention the, 'cause you talked a lot about
23 the capital budget and the projects and those are
24 great. And everyone in this room loves to get
25 capital, right? We all love capital. It's a good

2 thing. But, the operating support needs to follow
3 the capital because we can build great buildings,
4 we can expand theaters but they all need the
5 operating support to staff that additional space,
6 to program that additional space, and you know
7 that. We all know that. So, we have to, once
8 again, do the fiscally responsible thing and not
9 expand on the capital area without supporting
10 those expansions with operating support. Would
11 you agree that that's what we should do?

12 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: Actually, I
13 regret to say I don't because if the City had to
14 make a commitment on the operating side every time
15 it built a capital project it would be deeply
16 constrained from pursuing capital projects. There
17 just isn't the money available at this particular
18 moment in our economy. So, a lot of what we look
19 to do is build capital projects that help
20 organizations reduce costs, earn greater income,
21 create greater public safety, but we simply can't
22 undertake a capital program in which it is assumed
23 that additional operating costs will also be
24 funded by the City. Our cultural constituency
25 tends to bring us capital projects in which they

2 believe the asset will help them raise the
3 additional dollars and that's a very important,
4 sort of, gating conversation around which projects
5 to fund. But, you know, I think several years ago
6 the City of Dallas stopped funding cultural
7 capital projects for a period because the cultural
8 community was assuming that operating dollars
9 would follow and, you know, they simply can't
10 necessarily. Particularly in New York City where
11 the generator of the capital budget is very
12 different from the generator of the expense
13 budget, you know, the dollars just aren't
14 available in the same way at the same degree.
15 And, you know, protecting the City's fiscal
16 profile has made it possible for us to continue
17 to generate capital support in a way that I think
18 we call want to continue. But I, you know, I
19 think, in other words, it is, I, it would be great
20 to live in a world in which additional operating
21 support could follow capital projects. They
22 really kind of can't. so, we have to make sure
23 that we are as prudent as possible in picking the
24 kinds of capital projects that if not becoming
25 self sustaining are partnerships with cultural

2 organizations who can then shoulder the additional
3 operating costs if there are or do capital
4 projects that help reduce or otherwise rationalize
5 the operating costs or organizations. It's part
6 of the reason that, frankly, we have been very
7 aggressive in taking part in PlaNYC initiatives
8 and nobody really likes to hear about my
9 composting toilet but I'm really proud of all the
10 green initiatives that we undertake because they
11 do have an operating payback that, you know, is
12 significant both in the short term but we also
13 believe long term really does lead the way to
14 greater operating efficiencies for organizations.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I think we
16 disagree on this one. And let me just say a few
17 things. When you say that operating can't follow
18 capital. I think it should. And I've never been
19 involved or spoken to or supported a cultural
20 capital project where the organization didn't want
21 additional operating support or at a bare minimum
22 to maintain the operating support that they have.
23 But it is absolutely irresponsible to continue to
24 expand and fund capital and to cut drastically
25 operating support. That doesn't make any sense.

2 And I think we're in a place where we all want the
3 capital but the capital shouldn't only be to
4 reduce scope. It can expand and should expand
5 scope. And I think that this community struggles
6 with very much wanting and needing to expand in
7 terms of their footprints and their institutions.
8 But, we should not short change them when it comes
9 to operating support, particularly if we are
10 getting bigger, getting stronger, increasing the
11 footprint. I mean, I just think that that makes
12 sense. And again, it's fiscally prudent to do
13 that. So, I know some of my colleagues have some
14 questions. I'll come back but I just want to say
15 one more time, Commissioner, we've got to baseline
16 this budget and I think this is the year, it's the
17 last year for this administration to be able to
18 accomplish something great. And I know you've
19 done a lot of really great things and you know
20 that I genuinely believe that. This is the time
21 to do something really great and I hope that we
22 can do that this year. Councilwoman Crowley.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ELIZABETH CROWLEY:

24 Thank you, Chair Van Bramer and, of course, I too
25 agree with the Council Chair of this Committee.

2 It would be good to see an executive budget that
 3 includes the cultural programs fully funded. I'm
 4 curious to know, you talked a little bit about the
 5 economic impact of cultural programs to, you know,
 6 attract more visitors to the City of New York.
 7 How do you quantify the impact, economic engine of
 8 cultural programs in the City?

9 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: There, I
 10 think there may be two parts to your question.
 11 How do we know that culture is a driver of
 12 tourism. The NYC and Company research unit does a
 13 bunch of surveying and takes part in certain
 14 national survey mechanisms. For example, there
 15 is, there are surveys submitted to visitors at
 16 airports, train stations, et cetera at various
 17 times during the year and there are various
 18 studies done around specifically the travel and
 19 tourism industry that indicate who is coming and
 20 then finds out what the major motives are for
 21 people coming here. So, that's one of the ways
 22 that we're able to specifically pinpoint the role
 23 of culture as an attractor of people to the city.
 24 In addition to certain survey instruments
 25 distributed in the course of the year at various

2 sites asking people why they're here. So, that's
3 how we know culture as a driver of that. In terms
4 of economic impact of culture, there are various
5 data sets, the most recent is the introduction of
6 the cultural data project that has helped us start
7 tracking the kind of spend within the city that
8 various cultural organizations have. Things like
9 office supplies, in addition to basic things like
10 people being hired, what would be ideal in the
11 future and what's been done from time to time is
12 to also be able to survey the impact on recipient
13 small businesses. I am very, still jealous of a
14 study done by colleagues in Los Angeles around ten
15 years ago that looked at the impact of non profit
16 culture on the dry cleaning industry. It sounds
17 kind of goofy but it's a really, in some ways,
18 illustrative way of understanding, not just the
19 purchase of services by cultural organizations in
20 the aggregate but specific industries and how
21 they're touched on by the existence of cultural
22 organizations because of not, of course, not all
23 cultural organizations draw tourists and visitors.
24 That's not necessarily their role. That's not
25 within their scope. They, none the less, perform

2 a really important function as part of the city's
3 small business community.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Have we
5 done any studies in particular about maybe a
6 museum having one event. I know that when the
7 MOMA was out in Queens there were a lot of folks
8 that came to see the Picasso and Matisse show.
9 And I often hear that in Queens the number one in
10 the City of New York the number one sporting event
11 that draw so many people happens to be the US
12 Tennis Center in Queens when we have the two week
13 US Open. So, are there specific, have there been
14 times when specific studies have shown that
15 specific cultural events have brought upon a
16 greater amount of economic activity?

17 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: Absolutely.
18 They tend to be done by larger organizations who
19 can afford the time and technology to do that kind
20 of research. The city from time to time with
21 major events has also done that. For example,
22 when we did Major Public Art Project in Central
23 Park, the gates, the economic impact surveys
24 showed that in 16 days this \$254 million was added
25 to the city's tax base. The Olafur Eliasson, NYC

2 City Waterfalls Project, I think it was a \$69
3 million impact. So, you know--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY:
5 [interposing] It seems like a long time since
6 we've had something like that.

7 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: Well, I mean,
8 I know for example, the Metropolitan Museum looked
9 at the McQueen show impact and I just don't happen
10 to remember off the top of my head--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY:
12 [interposing] Right.

13 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: --what those
14 statistics are.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: But those
16 two events that you referenced were both on public
17 land, like, one was in the Central Park which, you
18 know, we wouldn't think of - - Central Park.

19 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: Right.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Or the
21 other on the Brooklyn Bridge.

22 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: Right.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Is there
24 any plans to bring a particular show like that
25 back?

2 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: We're not
3 looking at doing something of that scale this
4 summer but there are a number of, I think, really
5 excellent public art exhibitions planned. There's
6 actually a nice story in the New York Times today
7 that mentions some upcoming projects that are at
8 the New York Botanic Garden, on the roof of the
9 Metropolitan Museum and, you know, those are just
10 a couple. And there are more anticipated around
11 the city in the months ahead and some that haven't
12 yet been announced that I think will be
13 attractors. In general, the sort of annual
14 calculation we do suggests that nonprofit culture
15 is a \$6 billion business in the City of New York
16 and it's part of a \$21 billion annual economic
17 impact of the creative sector as a whole, which
18 includes commercial as well as non profit. And,
19 of course, there's a lot of porousness there.
20 This last year I think the Tony nominees for 2012,
21 60 percent of them were generated at off Broadway
22 theaters. So, you know, even though the ultimate
23 product is captured as part of the commercial,
24 cultural sector, it is driven by the contributions
25 of the non profit world as well.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Great.

3 And my last question has to do with your capital
4 damage brought on by Sandy. I was with the Chair
5 when we visited earlier, or was it last month, the
6 Intrepid and I was disappointed to see how much
7 damage happened to that particular cultural
8 center. And I know that many more in the city
9 have and I'm sure you mentioned this is in your
10 testimony but I came late. And I was wondering,
11 now, I know--

12 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: [interposing]
13 That was actually last week's hearing. I didn't
14 mention it this--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --last
16 week.

17 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: I didn't
18 mention anything.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Yeah,
20 that's right. I was at last weeks too. But where
21 are we going to make up the difference for these
22 programs to make sure that they get back up and
23 running as they once were prior to October 30th?

24 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: From what we
25 know around 25 percent of our organizations

2 sustained some kind of property damage. And of
3 that 25 percent there's a pretty small subset, I
4 would say under five percent that sustained really
5 severe property damage. Organizations like the
6 Coney Island Aquarium, the South Street Seaport
7 Museum, you know, have some major infrastructure
8 rebuilding to do. It, so far there's been a
9 combination of some successful insurance claims,
10 although we are very much mindful of the fact that
11 the insurance industry hasn't done a great job of
12 stepping up with, I would say, the notable
13 exception of some art insurers and in particular,
14 Acts of Fine Art has done a really good job of
15 issuing checks to organizations where they hold
16 the policies. In some cases private funders have
17 stepped into the gap. For the really severe
18 issues we have, I think, at this point, 134
19 cultural organizations with active FEMA
20 applications and are, we serve on the city wide
21 taskforce that's coordinating our FEMA
22 allocations. And my Chief of Staff who we call our
23 FEMAnator spends a lot of time each and every day
24 on pushing ahead each of those allocations. You
25 know, the downside of FEMA funding is that it

2 takes a while to receive. So, you know, some
3 organizations are caught in a difficult position.
4 But again, the vast majority of even the FEMA
5 damage claims are not holding organizations back
6 from doing their current funding. But it's that
7 small group that has very severe infrastructure
8 issues that, you know, are in a difficult
9 situation. 'Cause part of the problem with FEMA
10 is if you go ahead and make the repair before you
11 get the dollars you're then ineligible for the
12 funding. So, we're working with organizations to
13 really make sure everybody agrees it's worth
14 waiting for the hoped for reimbursement before you
15 go ahead and just figure out how to do the project
16 yourself. It is an awkward relief situation for
17 this group of institutions.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Yeah, it's
19 very tough. I can only imagine how badly hit the
20 South Street Seaport Museum was and I've been down
21 to that area and it's very disappointing that the
22 city really hasn't helped the--

23 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: [interposing]
24 The museum is up and running. The city, EDC was
25 very helpful in terms of doing the power washing

2 is working to restore building systems as we
 3 speak. I urge everyone to go, you know, shop in
 4 their gift shop, et cetera. But, you know, there
 5 are some real issues about restoring elevator
 6 service, et cetrea, that everybody is working to
 7 try and figure out the best strategy going
 8 forward.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Okay,
 10 thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER:
 12 Councilwoman Brewer?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GALE BREWER: Thank
 14 you very much. I have a dry cleaning story which
 15 is, any time Obama gets reelected the frame shops
 16 do very well. [laughter] My question is, the, on
 17 the programs side. I think a lot of programs were
 18 hurt, not just by the hurricane but by the bus
 19 strike. So, I'm just wondering maybe you talked
 20 about this, but how are we going to help them and
 21 could there be more money for the panel dollars?

22 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: We are hopeful
 23 that there will be additional, the way we do the
 24 panel process is that, in essence, relative awards
 25 are made through the panel process and then we

2 wait and see how much money we have. And, you
3 know--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:
5 [interposing] Can we do more, though, like a lot
6 more?

7 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: I'd love to
8 work with you to see if we can do a lot more.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.
10 Because, is there some way we could tap into other
11 private sources for more money? Because I really
12 think that this bus strike hurt a lot of the arts
13 education programs in particular and that's where
14 the bread and butter comes for a lot of, as you
15 know, small programs. So, they really need a lot
16 more money this year. I, we'll talk about these
17 things and I certainly agree with the Chair, but
18 how are we going to get more money for the
19 programs?

20 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: In, how we get
21 more money for programs is, again, I hope that we
22 can all work together to figure out how to do
23 that. In particular, for organizations that lost
24 revenue around the bus strike, we're working with
25 the Department of Education on a strategy that is

2 similar to the impact on arts ed organizations who
3 lost revenues around the hurricane because schools
4 were closed or they couldn't otherwise deliver
5 services, which is to figure out as often as
6 possible if there is a way of rescheduling some of
7 that service so that ultimately the revenue does
8 come through.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Are those
10 programs aware that we're trying to help them?

11 COMMISSONER LEVIN: I don't know
12 that they are but we are. So...

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: 'Cause,
14 they really need, they need a lot of help. And I,
15 just on arts education in general I've lost track.
16 I know there's no more project arts, the blue,
17 whatever that thing was is gone. And everybody
18 says, oh, we have art teachers. But we need a
19 whole lot more in the schools and after schools
20 despite wonderful Domenic Recchia, Casa, et
21 cetera. Is there any discussion of that? I know
22 this is all revenue based but it makes no sense
23 not to have more support.

24 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: The cultural
25 blueprints, which are the arts curriculums are in

2 schools and we've added one for film and media
3 that seems to be--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

5 [interposing] For money for that or just--

6 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: --quite
7 successful. The way DOE is currently running is
8 that there is no specific set aside for cultural
9 programs. When there was such an allocation it
10 was not properly tracked. So, it's not clear that
11 that was the beneficial way to go. We do have an
12 accountability system at this point called Arts
13 Count, that looks on an annual basis.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Is that
15 online?

16 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: Yeah, it's
17 online for every school and then there's a
18 document that's published annually. What we're
19 seeing is that K-12 and high, I'm sorry, K-6,
20 lower school and high school, we have seen an
21 increase in overall the provision of arts
22 education in the school system. Middle school
23 continues to be difficult. A slight diminution in
24 provided services for this past year. Working
25 very hard to try and bump that up. And as you

2 said, one of the key strategies the Department of
3 Education is pursuing and that, frankly, DCA
4 supports is having schools make the commitment to
5 hire full time arts teachers in addition to
6 continuing to contract with non profit cultural
7 organizations to provide services.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right.
9 They're owned, I love the studio in the school got
10 a nice, Daily News, I think or Times, I can't
11 remember, article. But, you know, it's so hard on
12 those groups. I don't need to tell you but they
13 need more money. When I went once to the
14 Metropolitan Museum there was Hillary Clinton
15 talking, to her credit, as Secretary of State,
16 about how she had used the Department of Defense
17 dollars to bring some challenging situations to
18 closure or at least discussion by using art. You
19 know, places in the world having problems have art
20 back and forth, that's the simple version. My
21 question is, do you ever look to the Department of
22 Defense or any other locations to get money for
23 our arts institutions in the City of New York?

24 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: DCA does not
25 directly apply except for the NEA for dollars on

2 behalf of cultural institutions but we certainly
3 support cultural institution activities and have
4 written letters in support of the New York based
5 cultural organizations that have been part of the
6 State Departments international outreach programs.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. But
8 you could, you think that more could be done along
9 those lines, like, putting more resources in your
10 Washington office to look for DOD as a, in
11 addition to State money?

12 COMMISSONER LEVIN: We can
13 certainly look at it. What we've done in the past,
14 in particular, is look at opportunities to bring
15 security dollars to the city and that has proved
16 to be difficult because of the federal constraints
17 around how those dollars can be spent. It's hard
18 for the City to advocate for those dollars to come
19 in and then be dispersed to non profits that the
20 City doesn't own as opposed to reinforcing our
21 police department.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. You
23 mentioned free in terms of the calendar and
24 listings. Did, one of the newspapers, I think it
25 was the Post, I can't remember, you know, had a

2 discussion about a family that's suing the Met on
3 the free issue. My question is do they, are they
4 suing the museum or are they suing DCA and the
5 City and core Council has to get involved or do
6 you know?

7 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: My
8 understanding is that they are suing the museum
9 and because it's an ongoing legal action I'm not
10 permitted to comment on that.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I guess my
12 question is, in order to stop these kinds of suits
13 we can just make the font bigger. Because it
14 makes no sense to have these kinds of suits. And
15 we should make the font bigger and then we
16 wouldn't have the lawsuit. Do you think that's a
17 possibility in all of the relevant museums?

18 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: I think that
19 the specifics of this lawsuit are going to need to
20 be discussed and addressed in various kinds of
21 ways. And again, I just, I'm not allowed to
22 comment 'cause it's an ongoing--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:
24 [interposing] But I am.

25 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: Absolutely.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And it
3 would make a lot of sense. We have a lot of times
4 where we spend money that doesn't need to be
5 spent. And then, my final question is, just in
6 terms of the SIGS [phonetic]. I know you had a
7 lot of discussion with the Chair. Do you have any
8 sense that because of the huge number of tourism,
9 my understanding is that a couple of days at the
10 end of last year were their biggest days ever.
11 And it wasn't that there was a huge blockbuster
12 exhibit, it was just that they're really good and
13 they're doing a great job and there are a lot of
14 tourists here. So, my question is, how is it
15 possible that, you know, other aspects of the City
16 get funded. I won't mention four new charter
17 schools but I might, get funded and not the
18 cultural institutions which are the ones that
19 bring in the money to the City of New York?

20 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: Again,
21 currently the Department of Cultural Affairs has
22 one of its highest budgets ever, even despite a
23 major cut.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: But it's
25 not high enough.

2 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: The, I, happy
3 to figure out how to make money with you and add
4 it to the agency. The question is, how are we
5 looking at next year? The only other thing that I
6 feel compelled to say is that basing support for
7 culture solely on tourism is an okay strategy--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:
9 [interposing] No, I understand that.

10 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: --but it
11 doesn't reflect the strength of organizations that
12 aren't tourist draws.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I
14 understand that but we're trying every possible,
15 I've suggested Department of Defense, Department
16 of State, everything unusual and we need, they
17 need more money. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you
19 very much, Councilwoman Brewer. And I echo the
20 Councilwoman's support for expanding CES budget in
21 addition to the SIG's and generally speaking,
22 cultural and the arts. So, my last question
23 before we hear from Margaret Honey and Norma Munn
24 [phonetic] is, when we talk about base lining,
25 restoring and base lining, is that an active

2 conversation that you and the First Deputy Mayor
3 are having now? Can you say that that is a part
4 of the conversation and the goal here?

5 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: Again, I can't
6 speak as to goal but it is an ongoing conversation
7 every month of the year is how to figure out how
8 to deal with the baseline attrition of the
9 department and several other agencies that, again,
10 are in the same unfortunate technical position in
11 the City's budget.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So the, I,
13 let me urge you, then, to see that as the goal.
14 If it's not yet the goal of the administration to
15 see this funding baseline, I'd like to suggest
16 that's the best course for the City of New York,
17 the best course for cultural. And I hope to be
18 here next year at this hearing and wouldn't it be
19 great if I could open the hearing and say, thank
20 you to Mayor Bloomberg and Commissioner Levin, who
21 made it so much easier for us this year. That
22 would be a great legacy and I would like to say
23 that that is something that I am pushing for, will
24 push for and I hope that your side pushing, our
25 side pushing, we can finally get this done.

2 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: Duly noted.

3 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [off mic]

4 And Councilwoman Brewer has another question.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Are any
6 layoffs planned for this year, fiscal year of - -
7 ?

8 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: From what we
9 know from the CIG universe I believe there have
10 been eight layoffs so far that, but ten hires to
11 balance that. Less clear to us is what happens in
12 the program population because of the complexity
13 of reporting full time and FTE kinds of positions.
14 At the moment we are, we are not anecdotally
15 hearing that organizations are using furloughs or
16 layoffs the way they were back in 2008. But
17 again, we don't have a precise picture of what's
18 going on in the vast majority of the field.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: But you're
20 going to get a lot more money from the panel so
21 we'll be fine.

22 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: Absolutely.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: With that,
24 thank you, Commissioner and Margaret Honey and
25 Norma Munn for our next panel.

2 COMMISSIONER LEVIN: I'm going to
3 leave this microphone on. [background noise] [off
4 mic]

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: All right.
6 Norma, why don't you begin.

7 MS. NORMA MUNN: I'm not sure this
8 is working. Is it on now? Okay. The light is
9 on. First, let me apologize for the fact that
10 there's no written testimony today. Two days in
11 Albany fried my brains. [laughter] I want to
12 start, however, by pointing out the two thirds of
13 the events of the arts groups in the not for
14 profit sector of this city are free. They can't
15 continue to be free and when I hear testimony
16 about higher income, that means higher end income,
17 that means the ticket prices went up. I also want
18 to compliment you, Jimmy. I have never heard in
19 26 years, a better cogent statement about the need
20 for dealing with baseline issues. And trust me,
21 we have heard them. And it is a serious issue.
22 Also, the question of expansion of capital without
23 dealing with content, which is what operating
24 costs are about, is critically important. I'm
25 also sure the agency and Kate recognize both

2 fully. I agree with you. This is déjà vu though.
3 26 years I've been coming here. This really is the
4 same kind of conversation. And for 26 years the
5 City Council has done what you know, they have,
6 you have, put money back in the budget. Next
7 year, the same problem. It's also clear that
8 everyone in the cultural sector recognizes that we
9 have done better under the Bloomberg
10 administration and the partnership with the City
11 Council during those years, and we appreciate
12 that. We need to do more. We can't continue to
13 gamble, we really can't continue to gamble.
14 Corporate funding is not trending up for anybody
15 that I'm hearing on, quite the contrary. In the
16 last few days I've heard from three organizations
17 that lost longstanding corporate grants.
18 Directions of the corporation changed, not the
19 income of the corporation. The programs at DCA to
20 which Kate pointed, working with the Department of
21 Aging, the new peer panel process that the CDF and
22 actually the expansion of capital to programs,
23 those are real legacies for the Bloomberg
24 administration in partnership with the City
25 Council. But I want to ask a question. What

2 would we be looking at today if the last ten years
3 had not been the constant budget dance? How much
4 more economic benefit would we have had? How many
5 more kids would have seen arts in their schools?
6 And how many more arts administrators would still
7 be in this field rather than having given up? We
8 keep losing generations of arts administrators
9 because we can't provide ongoing stable income and
10 because they work 60 and 70 hours a week. The in
11 time work from the arts professionals is
12 extraordinary and it isn't measured. So, my final
13 question is, I'd like people next year, as you
14 would, to not be having this budget dance and to
15 be able to dream about a future and ten years from
16 now look back and say, we accomplished so much
17 more when we were not being destabilized every
18 year. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you,
20 Norma. You're going straight to heaven for doing
21 this for 26 years. [laughter]

22 MS. MUNN: That's true.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I'm in my
24 15th for my ties with the library and as a Council
25 Member and thank you for what you've done.

2 Margaret Honey.

3 MS. MARGARET HONEY: Thank you.

4 Since the Commissioner's testimony ended with a
5 conversation about both the implications of Sandy
6 and the bus strike I just want to take a minute
7 and comment on that. 'Cause I think Councilwoman
8 Brewer was making a very good point. Just
9 speaking personally from my own institution, the
10 New York Hall of Science, we, during the weeks we,
11 our parking lot is typically full of yellow buses.
12 And we went through a period of about two months
13 when our building was empty. And that's true for
14 other institutions like ours as well. We're
15 working on, we don't have it yet, but we're
16 working on pulling together what the losses
17 represent to our institution. But, you know, as
18 everybody has noted, it's, you know, yet more hits
19 on top of more hits. So, I just wanted to say
20 that at the beginning. So, thank for the
21 opportunity to testify. As you already noted I am
22 here with lots of my colleagues from other CIG
23 institutions and colleagues representing New
24 York's culture and arts sector more broadly. We
25 all care deeply about this. And as you also

2 noted, Jimmy, in your opening testimony, last year
3 you restored cuts to the Department of Cultural
4 Affairs and you did a good job of making sure that
5 there would be no loss to education programs, to
6 community engagement activities, to world class
7 exhibitions, performances and events at our
8 institutions. And as Chair of this Committee we
9 owe you an enormous debt of gratitude along with
10 Speaker Quinn, Chairman Recchia and the borough
11 delegations for being such an incredibly
12 phenomenal advocate on our behalf. And again, as
13 you pointed out, here we go, right? We're at the
14 start of another budget year. Norma said it well,
15 I've often wondered since assuming this role, if
16 we weren't doing this dance every year, what could
17 we be doing, right? You know, how much more would
18 we be able to bring in the way of culture to New
19 York City, to school kids, to seniors and so on
20 and so forth? But here we are again and we have
21 to ask for your help in restoring cuts that would
22 be devastating. So, as of today, the CIG's are
23 facing a loss of \$40 million in operating support,
24 the biggest ever. And particularly, again, as you
25 noted, for the smaller institutions this

2 represents as much as a 65 percent cut since last
3 year. And that's huge. That's just absolutely
4 huge. We know that cultural institutions are no
5 less essential to the economic and social vitality
6 of the city than they were last year yet the cuts
7 we face continue to be even more extreme. And
8 they'll be severely devastating not just to our
9 institutions but to the New Yorkers we serve, the
10 children, the families, the seniors and the
11 teachers who participate in our programs. So, not
12 only do our institutions provide educational
13 programs for school children and families. We
14 also employ more than 9,000 people, residents of
15 every Council District in all five boroughs. Some
16 CIG's are, in fact, the largest employers in their
17 communities and we spend more than \$500 million
18 annually on purchased goods and services. These
19 are the jobs, programs, services and purchasing
20 power that are jeopardized by these cuts. In
21 addition, with year after year of record breaking
22 tourism our sector has more than proven itself as
23 core to New York's economic vitality. So, these
24 are just the statistics that the CIG institution
25 that I represent here today can deliver but the

2 economic, social and educational impact of culture
3 in New York as a whole can be multiplied
4 exponentially when you consider the work of the
5 hundreds of cultural institutions throughout the
6 city. And, as we know, as Norma just mentioned,
7 their funding is also in jeopardy and it's just as
8 crucial to their ability to operate and serve New
9 Yorkers effectively. Investing in culture is an
10 investment in children, an investment in teachers,
11 seniors and families. CIG provides services to
12 more than two million school children city wide.
13 We provide free hours, programs for seniors,
14 outreach programs in shelters, hospitals, and in
15 the juvenile justice system. Investing in CIG's
16 returns funds back to the city. The \$500 million
17 spent by our organizations last year helped
18 support nearly 13,000 vendors. We generate
19 millions of dollars in indirect spending on top of
20 that. Again, as you've noted, this money is spent
21 at restaurants, shops and other services that
22 wouldn't occur if our institutions were
23 diminished. And finally, investing in CIG's means
24 investing in city assets. In the unique
25 public/private partnerships that makes this city a

2 capital of culture, it is city investment that
3 enables our institution that's, to act as stewards
4 of city owned facilities and lands. When we talk
5 about cuts having a destabilizing effect on
6 cultural organizations these are the types of
7 programs, services and economic activity that are
8 in jeopardy unless the Council acts to restore
9 funding, once again, for the Department of
10 Cultural Affairs. So, I'm here today as Chair of
11 the Cultural Institutions Group and my testimony
12 centers around the work of our coalition. But, as
13 I said earlier, the entire cultural sector in the
14 city deserves to have a rational, long rang
15 funding plan put in place to ensure that this city
16 remains preeminent. Thank you for the opportunity
17 to testify today and for your generosity to our
18 institutions. We have met, already, with a number
19 of Council Members and we intend to meet with many
20 more before this budget season is over. We're
21 very grateful to the Council's unwavering support
22 and ask you, once again, to assure that culture
23 remains viable in New York City. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you
25 very much, Margaret, for representing the team and

2 all the work that you do and I don't really have
3 questions for the two of you because I think we
4 see things very similarly. But I do want to thank
5 you for continuing to fight the fight, as
6 difficult as it gets every single year. And, you
7 know, I know that most of the people in this room
8 may have already heard me say it but, you know, I
9 used to sit in those seats over there and I know
10 it's frustrating and I know it's, you know,
11 difficult and there's just so much you can say and
12 do. And, you know, but, you know, I want you to
13 know that we appreciate, the Council appreciates
14 everything that you both have done and continue to
15 do, will do, and you do it within this ridiculous
16 framework of a budget dance. Which feels like
17 you're not being valued, right? The work is not
18 being validated and I just want you to know that
19 it is. From my perspective and from the Council's
20 perspective and I hope, although Norma, you'll be
21 perhaps living in another state, that we can call
22 both of you and everyone and one day celebrate the
23 base lining and increases to the budget.

24 MS. MUNN: For that I will bring
25 champagne and come back. [laughter]

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, with
3 that I just want to say thank you to both of you
4 for being here today on this snowy day. And next
5 we'll hear from Eric O'Brien, the Museum of
6 Natural History workers and Marcy Wartell Brown, I
7 believe, of Local 1501 DC37, Treasurer, if they in
8 the room. We will hear from them. Is Eric here
9 or Marcy? If not, then we will [off mic] for the
10 library systems. All right. So, if, we're not
11 going to hear from them so I think that closes the
12 Cultural Affairs portion of the hearing. We'll
13 take a quick break and then we will resume with
14 the libraries portion of today's hearing. Thank
15 you very much. [background conversation] Good
16 morning, it's still morning. And welcome to
17 everyone for the second half of our Cultural
18 Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup
19 Relations Committee hearing, joint with the Select
20 Committee on Libraries. [off mic] And I want to
21 welcome Chair Jim Tilley for joining us for this
22 portion and Council Member Brad Lander is also
23 here. So, right now Brooklyn is in the house.
24 [laughter] In the, normally Queens is heavily
25 represented in these meetings but I believe we'll

2 be joined by several other Queens members [off
3 mic] there you go. There you go. Thank you. So,
4 welcome to Tom Galante, Linda Johnson, Tony Marx,
5 each respective Presidents and CEO's of our three
6 great library systems and I will simply say with
7 as much exasperation as I possibly can that a \$106
8 million proposed reduction for libraries is
9 outrageous and it's hard to believe that we've
10 gotten to this point that we would be looking at a
11 proposed cut to, of \$106 million. And, of course,
12 that's on top of what you've already had to
13 endure. So, you know, we are at a disastrous
14 scenario. If those cuts were not resorted it
15 would be the end of public library service as we
16 know it. And have come to rely on for well over
17 100 years in the City of New York. And it can't
18 stand, obviously it won't stand, but more than
19 that we really have to get to a place where we're
20 having serious discussions about base lining,
21 funding for libraries and base lining these
22 restorations because this number grows every year
23 and, you know, as I said in the previous portion.
24 We are really gambling, we are throwing the dice
25 every year believing that this money will come

2 back and, god forbid, one year we fall short and
3 we don't get what we think we're going to get.
4 That would be devastating to our systems but, more
5 importantly, devastating to our communities and
6 the people who rely on libraries. So, I am
7 anxious to hear your testimony, I guess. But more
8 than that I just want you to know that we're going
9 to fight and I really hope one day to end this
10 horrible, horrible thing we go through every year.
11 So, with that, I will ask the Chair of our
12 Selected Committee on Libraries to say a few
13 words.

14 CHAIRPERSON VINCENT GENTILE: Thank
15 you. I'd like to start by thanking you, Mr.
16 Chairman for your steadfast commitment to the
17 vital library systems that we have. The fiscal
18 2014 preliminary budget for the three library
19 systems is devastating. The administration is
20 proposing a 35 percent decrease in funding which
21 is as Council Member Van Bramer highlighted, \$106
22 million reduction for the three systems. Every
23 year it seems we continue to fight to restore the
24 library systems to sustainable levels and yet
25 every year we are left holding the empty bag. The

2 reduction comes at a time when library program
3 attendance is increasing and a demand for more
4 library service hours at branches are on the rise.
5 We know, all of us here, the libraries are no
6 longer used just to borrow books for recreational
7 research purposes. And so I say, wake up New
8 York. Wake up for the answer to the educational,
9 social and workforce development we strive to
10 provide in our city budget is right here in front
11 of us, all bundled together in our libraries which
12 have expanded and reinvented their role among
13 every day New Yorkers. Today, libraries serve as
14 community hubs throughout all five boroughs as
15 they carry out their multi level mission of
16 education, socialization and workforce
17 development. The mission and the vision of the
18 public library systems have changed, as we've
19 said, during this economic struggle when
20 communities are still recovering, libraries have
21 managed to serve communities who need it most with
22 educational programs, workforce development
23 resources and English language learner classes,
24 all while still managing to maintain their roots
25 as cultural capital in hard pressed communities.

2 Needless to say, cuts for this magnitude may very
3 well threaten the multi pronged mission of
4 libraries. I'm concerned, as we all are, how
5 these harsh reductions will impact the core of the
6 three systems and what in turn that will mean for
7 New Yorkers. Indeed, the recent report on
8 libraries from the Center for an Urban Future has
9 similar concerns. After interviewing community
10 based leaders the report concluded that, quote,
11 libraries have a unique strength. No other
12 institution in New York serves so many different
13 people in so many different ways. The report
14 further said that, quote, the libraries are also
15 uniquely positioned to help the city address
16 several economic, demographic and social changes,
17 challenges that will impact New York in the
18 decades ahead. From the rapid aging of the city's
19 population, libraries are a go to resource for
20 seniors and the continued growth in the number of
21 foreign born, libraries are the most trusted
22 institution for immigrants. To the rise of the
23 freelance economy, libraries are the original co
24 working spaces. A troubling increase in the
25 number of disconnected youth, libraries are a safe

2 haven for many teens and young adults. Despite
3 all of this, New York's policymakers, except for
4 maybe those on the Council, social service leaders
5 and economic officials have largely failed to see
6 the public libraries as the critical 21st century
7 resource that they are. The report then concludes
8 with a warning to New York, one way or another, it
9 says, New York needs to better leverage its
10 libraries if it's to be economically competitive
11 and remain a city of opportunity. And I've taken
12 the opportunity to present a chart that's in this
13 report to each of my members of the committee here
14 that talk about the, over the last decade the
15 changes in usage and funding for the libraries.
16 And I know you've all seen that report. Let me
17 just conclude by saying that we here at the
18 council, along with the library systems in our
19 communities, understand the importance of
20 investing in a resource that has the ability to
21 improve and enrich life of every single New York
22 City resident. In the fiscal 2013 adoption the
23 administration and Council made libraries a
24 priority by making a joint effort to restore
25 funding. And while the administration restored a

2 laudable \$67.5 million it's disheartening that it
3 wasn't enough of a priority to baseline that
4 funding this time around. The burden is too
5 large, really, for this Council to carry alone.
6 And the committee can only hope that the
7 administration and the Council working together
8 will once again demonstrate how the library is an
9 important priority to this city. So, I join the
10 Chair in looking forward to the testimony this
11 morning.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you
13 very much, Chair Gentile. We've been joined by
14 our Finance Chair, Domenic M. Recchia, Jr. which
15 just exacerbates the Brooklyn/Queens situation I
16 alluded to earlier [laughter]. So, with that, we
17 will go right to the Brooklyn Public Library and
18 Linda Johnson.

19 MS. LINDA JOHNSON: [off mic] It's
20 a pleasure to speak to a panel of people who so
21 deeply understand - - . [off mic] Well, actually
22 you hardly need it because you've all done such a
23 wonderful job talking about the problem that we
24 face and that I feel I hardly need to embellish.
25 But, I will, of course, and I thank you all for

2 inviting us here today. Joining me are the
3 Presidents of the New York Public Library and
4 Queens Library, Anthony Marx and Tom Galante,
5 respectively. Thank you to Speaker Christine
6 Quinn, Council Members Dominic Recchia, Jimmy Van
7 Bramer and Vincent Gentile as well as the entire
8 City Council for their strong support of New York
9 City Libraries. Today, we will talk about the
10 collective impacts of budget cuts on all three New
11 York City Library systems and also about how much
12 more we could all accomplish if our libraries were
13 fully funded. And as Councilman Gentile
14 mentioned, the Center for Urban Futures released a
15 report titled, Branches of Opportunity, describing
16 the crucial and growing role that New York City
17 Libraries Play in the communities they serve.
18 While there's been speculation that with the rise
19 of the internet, eBooks and search engines the
20 relevancy of libraries would decrease, the increase
21 in usage of our libraries shows that the exact
22 opposite is true. As stated in the report, in
23 fiscal 2011 the city's 212 public library branches
24 greeted over 40,500,000 visitors or more than all
25 of the city's professional sports teams and major

2 cultural institutions combined. The report shows
3 that over the past decade our libraries have
4 experienced a 24 percent increase in programs
5 sessions, a 40 percent increase in program
6 attendance and an incredible 59 percent increase
7 in circulation. These gains occurred even though
8 our systems suffered a decrease in city funding
9 over the same period of time. Unfortunately, city
10 funding is not living up to New Yorkers clear need
11 for more library service. Despite impressively
12 increasing usage across the entire city of New
13 York, only eight libraries currently offer Sunday
14 service and nearly 30 percent of our libraries are
15 closed on Saturdays. In fact, New York City's
16 libraries already rank well behind Columbus, Ohio,
17 San Antonio, Texas, Toronto, Chicago, and even
18 Detroit in average hours per week. Every day our
19 doors are closed is a day New Yorkers of all ages
20 and backgrounds miss out. Children are deprived
21 of story time, students cannot borrow books, job
22 seekers lose access to computers and the internet
23 and immigrants can't attend English classes. Our
24 libraries should be accessible for everyone. The
25 rising demand shows our amazing potential to reach

2 even more New Yorkers if we had the necessary
3 funding to offer additional hours every week. As
4 the CUF states, no other institution in New York
5 serves so many different people in so many
6 different ways. Today, each library system will
7 detail some of the important services we provide
8 to New Yorkers and discuss how much more we could
9 be doing if the city were to adequately fund
10 public libraries. One of the most important ways
11 we help New Yorkers is through workforce
12 development and business support programs. During
13 the recent recession many New Yorkers visited
14 their local library to search for jobs online,
15 access career assessment and exploration software,
16 learn the computer skills needed to compete in the
17 modern workforce and receive help building and
18 editing resumes. Our libraries encourage the
19 creation of many new jobs by helping entrepreneurs
20 learn how to open and manage small businesses
21 through our libraries, though our libraries offer
22 countless services to assist job seekers and
23 entrepreneurs today I will focus on two of our
24 most popular initiatives, our Workforce One Career
25 Centers and business plan competitions. To help

2 address rising unemployment during the recession
3 the three library systems collaborated with the
4 Department of Small Business Services to Open
5 Workforce One Career Centers in libraries in
6 Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx. At the centers
7 qualified job seekers are prepared and matched
8 with companies looking to expand their workforces.
9 In calendar year 2012 the four Workforce One
10 Career Centers referred more than 9,000 job
11 seekers to interviews and made nearly 2,000 job
12 placements. In a wonderful example of how our
13 library programs can complement each other, just
14 this week two students from Brooklyn Public
15 Library's Young Adult Pre GED Program attended a
16 Workforce One recruitment event and were hired by
17 Nathan's Famous in Coney Island. In recognition
18 of the Workforce One expansion center initiative
19 the three libraries received a 2012 top innovator
20 award from the Urban Library Council. Through
21 Brooklyn Public Library's Power Up Business Plan
22 Competition and New York Public Library's and
23 Queen's Library's Start Up Business Plan
24 Competitions our libraries promote local job
25 creation and entrepreneurship. As part of the

2 contest participants attend classes and are
3 introduced to resources to help them write a
4 business plan, then start and actually run a small
5 business. Sponsored by City Foundation, top
6 contestants win thousands of dollars in start up
7 capital to help launch their businesses. Since
8 their inception the three competitions have
9 received applications from more than 6,600
10 individuals and awarded over \$585,000 in prize
11 money and helped launch dozens of businesses that
12 are still in operation and contributing to their
13 local economies. One of the latest ways we are
14 supporting the city's workforce is through the new
15 Shelby White and Leon Levy Information Commons at
16 Brooklyn Public Library's Central Library. The
17 info commons offers 25 computer workstations,
18 including ten iMacs running advanced creative
19 software and a large co working space with seating
20 and electrical outlets for 70 people. Seven
21 meeting rooms that can be reserved for use by the
22 public and a 36 seat training lab offering free
23 programs such as resume writing help, internet
24 basics, digital story telling and podcasting
25 computer topics for seniors and community

2 workshops with the New York Writers Coalition.
3 The info commons is an incredible resource for
4 freelancers, for creative professionals, for
5 students and for anyone who wants to learn more
6 about computers and the internet. It was built
7 with private money but our capacity to deliver
8 more spaces like the info commons is constrained
9 by our limited funding. Now, to speak about the
10 potential impacts of the proposed budget is
11 President and CEO of Queens Library, Tom Galante.

12 MR. TOM GALANTE: Good afternoon.
13 Thank you, Linda, and thank you to the City
14 Council and this Committee for inviting us to
15 testify today. This years city budget proposal is
16 as grim as it has ever been. Each year for the
17 last four years we have faced enormous proposed
18 cuts. Thanks to the diligent leadership of the
19 New York City Council we have preserved the
20 minimal five day service in every one of the 212
21 communities served by a public library. This is a
22 victory. But despite these efforts every library
23 across the city has sustained annual and mid year
24 cuts that have added up. We are currently funded
25 at minus 18 percent or over \$57 million lost below

2 our 2008 funding levels, which was when we last
3 had six day service city wide. You are all no
4 doubt familiar with the term, doing more with
5 less. We are too. As a result of year after year
6 of funding reductions the library workforce in
7 this city is down 19 percent or over 200, over 900
8 talented staff. We could surely use their talent
9 now. We have also slashed book budgets, leveraged
10 private and grant dollars, sacrificed weekend
11 hours, found deficiencies in back office
12 operations and stretched our staff thin in order
13 to keep library services strong. Despite our
14 record of resourcefulness this years city budget
15 proposal is the largest reduction New York City
16 Libraries have ever faced. A 35 percent reduction
17 below current funding or \$107 million less. This
18 is a staggering 51 percent below 2008 levels. To
19 repeat that, more than half of our money would be
20 gone from when we provided six day service back in
21 2008 city wide. This comes at a critical time
22 when library usage and demand is clearly on the
23 rise. We cannot sustain another funding
24 reduction. There is nowhere else to cut. In
25 short, the effects on library hours and workforce

2 will be drastic. The city wide impacts we have
3 are 1,445 library employees would be laid off and
4 another 124 lost to attrition. At least 66
5 libraries will be closed all together and dozens
6 of others will have their hours drastically
7 slashed. Today, the average library in New York
8 City is open about 44 hours per week. This
9 proposal would bring that average down to a dismal
10 22 hours per week, half. This is certainly not
11 sufficient to serve working families and students.
12 Public libraries are a critical component of the
13 city's educational infrastructure, offering after
14 school care, homework assistance, recreational
15 programs, support to parents and youth
16 development, all rolled into one. We know that
17 you understand that. Because we already have a
18 trusted presence in every community in walking
19 distance from any students we are able to provide
20 these services reliability and cost effectively.
21 In Queens, our attendance for young adult programs
22 doubled between 2002 and 2011. And the story is
23 similar acrost all systems. In fiscal 2012
24 attendance at all after school and out of school
25 programming at public libraries exceeded 1.1

2 million. These students got homework help,
3 participated in summer reading and much, much
4 more. All our library systems place special
5 emphasis on the teen population offering special
6 teen rooms and other programs that engage young
7 people with books and homework help as well as
8 comics, web surfing and video games. In Far
9 Rockaway, the Queens Library for Teens provides a
10 separate space tailored to the interests and needs
11 of teens who live in a neighborhood challenged by
12 violence and who especially need help improving
13 their academics and finding opportunities to
14 improve their lives. Libraries also provide
15 robust programs for at risk youth and for students
16 of all ages who need to prepare to get their GED.
17 According to the CUF report an alarming 30 percent
18 of New York City residents don't even have a high
19 school diploma. In a world that increasingly
20 requires a Bachelor's degree for entry level work,
21 this is a looming crisis. This year, in
22 collaboration with the Department of Education all
23 three libraries are rolling out the My Library NYC
24 Initiative in which 250,000 students across 400
25 public schools will be able to search the catalogs

2 of all three libraries and have those materials
3 delivered to them at their schools. This should
4 greatly expand students access to the kind of
5 quality information that will enable them to
6 develop the key skills for the common core
7 curriculum. Older students aren't the only ones
8 who benefit from free library services. Emerging
9 literacy is and will always be a primary goal of
10 public libraries. Many of us can trace our
11 earliest love of reading to library story times.
12 Libraries across the city hold early childhood
13 programs and many have early childhood computers
14 to teach important skills when they are most
15 easily cultivated. Little ones from non English
16 speaking families come to the library to learn
17 English and get a head start in their academic
18 careers. Libraries also offer early literacy,
19 numeracy and STEM literacy programs and
20 supplemental education services for students with
21 autism. Our library served 600,000 young learners
22 in this service category just last year alone.
23 Imagine the impact on families if those services
24 were no longer available. Regarding immigrant
25 services, our libraries also are the primary

2 destination for immigrants who need help to
3 navigate this vast city. About 37 percent of the
4 cities population is foreign born. In Queens,
5 nearly half the population was born in another
6 country. One fourth of New York City is less than
7 fluent in English. Of the ten public library
8 locations in New York City with the highest
9 circulation, six are in immigrant dominated
10 neighborhoods including Flushing, the Queens
11 Central Library in Jamaica, Kings Highway in
12 Brooklyn, Elmhurst in Queens, McKinley Park in
13 Brooklyn and Fresh Meadow, Queens. Our Flushing
14 Library serves New York's largest Chinese
15 community and boasts an annual circulation of over
16 three million, which puts it in the top five
17 branches in the entire US. So many immigrants
18 turn to the library to gain information and skills
19 that many people now hear about the library before
20 they even leave their home countries. With that
21 track record in mind there's no wonder that New
22 York City's libraries offer free citizenship,
23 naturalization and educational services tailored
24 for that community. Last year we offered
25 thousands of hours of programs that support the

2 newest New Yorkers. At Queens Library we've been
3 providing free citizenship, naturalization and
4 bridge educational services to new immigrants for
5 over 35 years. We are the boroughs leading
6 provider of free ESOL instruction and we're
7 recognized internationally as one of the worlds
8 leading informal education providers for new
9 residents. Queens Library's family literacy
10 program gets parents and school aged children
11 learning English together so they can better
12 navigate the city's public education system,
13 improve their career options and better understand
14 the public services available to them. Last year,
15 75 percent of parents who took part in that
16 program reported improvement in their reading
17 levels, eight percent obtained jobs, many earned
18 their citizenship and all reported an increased
19 ability to get involved in their children's
20 education. We can have every expectation that in
21 these two areas, student support and immigration
22 services, the need for service will not diminish
23 and may, in fact, grow in the coming years.
24 Libraries need to be there and be open to meet
25 these needs. now, I'd like to turn it over to New

2 York Public Library President Tony Marx, to
3 discuss technology, adult education and the road
4 ahead.

5 MR. ANTHONY MARKS: First, thank
6 you for the opportunity to testify. It's an
7 honor. And let me just point out, as you will
8 have noticed, that this is a landmark day. We are
9 testifying jointly and coordinating our testimony,
10 which is symbolic of how we are increasingly
11 working to coordinate our efforts across three
12 systems, logos across the top. The, so as you've
13 heard from my great colleagues, Linda and Tom,
14 libraries provide many different services in one
15 trusted place, serving as a one stop shop for many
16 New Yorkers. Technology, access and training are
17 among those essential services that New Yorkers
18 need and depend on libraries to deliver. Together
19 the city's library systems provide access to
20 nearly 7,000 public computers and 26 dedicated
21 computer labs that are used for both everyday
22 technology and access and formal computer
23 training. Last year we provided over 9.3 million
24 computer sessions on our library computers and
25 patrons using their own devices logged another 2.2

2 million sessions through our free wifi. And, of
3 course, many of these patrons have no alternative
4 but the library if they want to have digital
5 access so essential in the 21st century. The
6 important role that libraries play in technology
7 therefore cannot be overstated. Since over one
8 third of the city's residents and three quarters
9 of - - residents lack access to broadband at home,
10 libraries are helping New Yorkers bridge the
11 digital divide not only by providing computers and
12 wifi but also by providing vital technology
13 training that teaches them new skills. Our
14 students typically come from the most
15 disadvantaged backgrounds. The New York Public
16 Library's most recent technology training survey,
17 53 percent of students reported household incomes
18 of under 25 percent, 83 percent were below
19 \$50,000. And I just want to point out that, for
20 instance, at the New York Public Library we've
21 been able to more than double our computer skills
22 training classes just in the last four to five
23 months and just as we've more than doubled our
24 English language training we're all trying to do
25 more with less resources. I also want to add that

2 in addition to access to computers and wifi the
3 libraries are committed to ensuring access to the
4 corpus of the worlds books to people who want to
5 and increasingly are reading digitally. And the
6 Public Library's of New York are taking a leading
7 role in negotiating with the publishing industry
8 headquartered in New York, to really break through
9 a log jam that has been threatening to keep our
10 citizens from access to books that they've enjoyed
11 physically but might not enjoy virtually and, of
12 course, technology is also what made possible the
13 partnership between our three systems and the
14 Department of Education that will provide access
15 to 17 million circulating books to 1.1 million
16 public school students in the city. Public
17 libraries also provide vital adult literary
18 services. Our programs serve the most
19 disadvantaged New Yorkers and the need for our
20 services far exceeds our current capacity to
21 provide them. Libraries disproportionately serve
22 adults with reading skills below the 6th grade
23 level. New Yorkers who don't have basic literacy
24 skills that allow them to read the bus schedule
25 and who cannot help their children with school

2 work. With our help, graduates from our programs
3 move on to pre GED and GED classes at the library
4 or elsewhere in the city. Patrons that come to us
5 barely speaking a word of English with no formal
6 schooling learn how to speak, read and write
7 English and they do so free of charge and they do
8 so in huge numbers because they feel, as
9 Councilman Gentile noted, welcome at the libraries
10 in a way that they may not feel welcome in other
11 institutions in this city. Our programs are
12 essential building blocks for their future and
13 therefore for all of our futures. Libraries are
14 already the third largest provider of adult
15 literary services but we need to do more. We hate
16 turning people away but our funding limitations
17 leave us no choice. At New York Public Library
18 during recent registration events for the spring
19 English for speakers of other languages, ESOL
20 class cycle, so just one of four cycles in the
21 year, for every one student who secured a seat two
22 could not be accommodated. That meant we turned
23 3,000 people away. Even as we have doubled our
24 ESOL classes we are turning tens of thousands of
25 people a year away. In a city of immigrants,

2 built by immigrants we are not able to provide the
3 key ingredient to access the citizenship and
4 access to employment and to engagement with all
5 that the city has to offer. Today, you've heard
6 about all of the essential services that libraries
7 are offering. You've heard about the devastating
8 impacts if library funding is cut further. You've
9 also heard how more New Yorkers than ever need and
10 demand the free services that libraries provide.
11 No institution in this city is better poised to
12 meet the rising demand than libraries. We are
13 embedded in just about every neighborhood in the
14 city and our infrastructure is already in place.
15 We are eager to have a conversation about how New
16 York City Library's can improve this city if
17 funding is increased, not just restored. We
18 welcome that conversation. Together, we can
19 develop a stronger workforce and small business
20 community by adding seats in job search, small
21 business and entrepreneurship programs. We can
22 bridge that threatening digital divide by
23 providing more technology training, by expanding
24 our free internet access and wifi and to the array
25 of content that we can make available digitally.

2 We can help build a more informed, engaged
3 population by expanding our ESOL programs to help
4 more New Yorkers learn English. By adding adult
5 literacy classes to accommodate more students and
6 by providing citizenship and naturalization
7 support for more immigrants. With additional
8 funding we can increase after school programming
9 and offer more early childhood programs to help
10 young New Yorkers realize the promise of higher
11 education. We can help more people prepare for
12 the GED and other continuing education programs
13 that will elevate them toward the degrees and
14 careers they dream of and that we must have them
15 achieve. By building up our jobs skills training
16 programs we can keep the unemployment ranks from
17 swelling further and by increasing our hours of
18 operation we can reach more of those underserved
19 New Yorkers who are just scraping by could do so
20 much more with even a little bit more help. We
21 fully appreciate the difficult funding decisions
22 that you need to make and the importance of all of
23 the city's municipal services. But the time for
24 libraries is now. As the city's only free
25 provider of education for all, cradle to grave,

2 New York City's libraries are essentially and
3 uniquely positioned to offer people the solutions
4 they need in the information age. If we are to
5 continue to be the capital of the information age,
6 to draw the talents of the world and to put those
7 to work for everyone's benefit and for the city's
8 benefit, the library is the central and essential
9 institution. To succeed in this era we must all
10 be not only literate but digitally literate and
11 business literate. That's not going to be easy,
12 to put it mildly. For almost 30 percent of New
13 York City's children who still, shockingly, live
14 in poverty. Or the 20 percent of the adults
15 living in poverty, including a record 1.8 million
16 fellow New Yorkers relying on food stamps. If
17 libraries are not funded these people will fall
18 even farther behind. In years past, Speaker
19 Quinn, you, my colleagues, the City Council, have
20 championed funding of the city's libraries to an
21 astonishing degree. We could not be more grateful
22 for your support but the reality is this. Over
23 the last five years libraries have none the less
24 seen a steep decline in funding. This year's
25 budget does it again, proposing the most drastic

2 cut yet. While the CUF study concluded, as has
3 been quoted already, New York policymakers, social
4 service leaders and economic officials have
5 largely failed to see the public libraries as the
6 critical 21st century resource they are. We know
7 that this City Council do appreciate the
8 importance of libraries and have demonstrated that
9 appreciation time and time again. We, again, seek
10 your support in ensuring that New Yorkers receive
11 the library service they need and deserve. Now is
12 the time to position our city for success by
13 educating our students, updating our workforce and
14 supporting our entrepreneurs and small business.
15 Now is the moment to invest more, not less, in our
16 city's libraries. Once again, thank you for this
17 opportunity on behalf of all of us to testify and
18 we remain available and happy to answer any
19 questions that you may have.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you
21 very much Tony, the closer, Marx for [laughter]
22 what you've just said. And I want to say it's a
23 great idea to have the three of you testify
24 jointly. I'm just a little envious that I did not
25 think of it myself when I was in a position to do

2 so for 11 years. I want to recognize we've been
3 joined by a number of other Council Members,
4 Council Member Dromm from Queens, Council Member
5 Steve Levin from Brooklyn, Council Member Leroy
6 Comrie from Queens, Council Member Tish James from
7 Brooklyn and I think we have a quorum from
8 Brooklyn delegations, so, Linda Johnson, I would
9 get ready right about now. [laughter] I don't have
10 any questions. I'll throw it to Chair Gentile
11 soon and then we have Steve Levin, Brand Lander,
12 Tish James in the queue for questions. I just
13 want to say this because no one understands the
14 position that you're in more than I do. Having
15 said that, I think someone has to say that we're
16 not in this position if we don't have an
17 administration. If we don't have budgets for
18 Mayor Bloomberg that have proposed over \$300
19 million in cuts to libraries over the last four
20 years. We are in this position because of the
21 administration proposing a \$106 million budget
22 reduction to you this year. And that has got to
23 be said. The Council has done an amazing job but
24 if we had an administration that did not propose,
25 that did not think it was wise in any way, shape

2 or form to propose over \$350 million in four
3 budgets alone to libraries, we wouldn't be where
4 we are. And I think we have to make a distinction
5 between the administration and the City Council
6 and not lump us in together and say the City, the
7 City, the City. That's incredibly important to me
8 that we recognize what the administration has done
9 to you all by putting your backs up against the
10 wall every single year and then making you feel
11 happy for whatever you get at the end of the
12 process. That is what I really want to say. It
13 is an outrage, it is shameful that an
14 administration would propose a \$106 million budget
15 reduction to libraries given what we know about
16 libraries, the fact that you are literally saving
17 lives and if you had to endure these cuts New York
18 City would crumble. So, I just want to put that
19 on the record and say that I know my colleagues
20 will join me in fighting but I really look forward
21 to a day when we not only have an administration
22 that doesn't propose cuts like this but that we
23 baseline your funding so that we don't have to do
24 this every year and you can go on with planning
25 great, more great programs, expanding the programs

2 that you already have and expanding funding so
3 that we can get to the point where we have six and
4 seven day service again everywhere. So, you know,
5 I thank you for what you do. I know it's
6 frustrating. I know I'm frustrated. This is the
7 15th year in a row in one way, shape or form that I
8 have been to these hearings, 11 years in those
9 seats where Josh Nachowitz [phonetic] and Dave
10 Wallach [phonetic] and George Mahaltas [phonetic]
11 are and now this is my fourth preliminary budget
12 as Chair of this Committee. So, yeah, it's
13 incredibly frustrating and I look forward to
14 working to make sure that we get what we deserve
15 when it comes to libraries. With that, I will
16 call on our Chair of the Select Committee on
17 Libraries, Vincent Gentile.

18 CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: Thank you,
19 Mr. Chairman, and I just want to follow up on some
20 of those numbers just to be clear for all my
21 colleagues here. The \$106 million reduction,
22 proposed reduction includes the eight percent PEG
23 that was in the November plan, the \$16.7 million,
24 am I correct about that?

25 MR. MARX: Correct.

2 CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: And, of
3 course, the \$89.5 million, is it, that is not part
4 of the baseline.

5 MR. MARX: Correct.

6 CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: Which was
7 restored last year but, again, has to be restored
8 again. So, those two numbers added together give
9 us the \$106. Right? Okay. And if we were to put
10 that \$106 back as joint effort with the
11 administration it would just keep you stable of
12 where you are now, not any ability to grow. As
13 you've all said you need that growth given the
14 services that you provide. I want to highlight
15 some of the numbers that you gave us, I think,
16 today, about staff that would be lost to you if
17 the proposed reductions went through. I see here
18 numbers for each system, NYPL estimates about 720
19 employees that would be lost through layoffs and
20 attrition and BPL estimates about 421 employees
21 through layoffs and attrition and Queens Library,
22 428 people lost through layoffs and attrition.
23 And that's on top of what you've lost already
24 since 2008. So, let's discuss that a little bit,
25 these are big numbers. We're talking about over

2 1,600 people, I think, right? Over 1,600
3 employees across the three systems. Is there any
4 contingency plan in place or how do you get, how
5 do you approach a number like that? I just don't
6 know how you approach numbers like that.

7 MS. JOHNSON: Well, I mean, as all
8 of us testified earlier it would decimate library
9 service as we know it today. For Brooklyn, you
10 know, it's a third of our workforce which means
11 that you'd see not only library closures, at least
12 16 of them, but also severe reduction in hours.
13 And so, the work that we're doing today, and we've
14 all, I think, worked hard to, sorry to use the
15 cliché but do more with less and to keep the
16 libraries open longer hours despite declining
17 budgets. There comes a point, of course, where
18 you can't do it anymore. This isn't even a close
19 call. A budget cut that's proposed like this we
20 would really become a shadow of our former selves.

21 MR. GALANTE: On our end we
22 developed service plans, probably a hundred of
23 them in the last, you know, five years with every
24 time we get different numbers and different
25 proposed cuts. So, a lot of time and effort goes

2 into that that doesn't, it means we're not moving
3 things forward but we're worrying about how do we
4 hold the fort down? And I think we all kind of
5 know what's going on here, right? It's budget
6 negotiation and we just need the City of New York,
7 ONB to find a more creative way to negotiate a
8 budget than slashing the heck out of us and which
9 puts us in a position, like Jimmy mentioned, \$300
10 million the Council has put back in our budgets,
11 right? But we're still down \$54 million in the
12 end because of all those, 'cause the Councils put
13 so much back in but the cuts have been so big
14 proposed by the administration. And we just need
15 people to wake up and see how much we could help
16 New Yorkers in the agenda that I think the
17 administration shares and that libraries can be
18 partners to accomplish a lot of goals. So, we're
19 not spending time, I got to tell you, I'm not
20 spending time going through the 683 people that I
21 would have lost, would have lost and 428 more.
22 I'm not going to spend time on that one. It's
23 just something that I just want, would like to
24 think would never happen. We will prepare, we'll
25 have letters ready to rip in June if this doesn't

2 happen. We will prepare that but other than that
3 we're not going to spend more planning time on
4 that.

5 MR. MARX: So, just to reiterate
6 what my colleagues have said, we have been doing
7 more with less. You know, with the amazing
8 restorations and efforts of the City Council, in
9 particular, we've seen a 20, roughly a 20 percent
10 reduction in discretionary funding of the library
11 in just the last five years. We've managed to not
12 see reductions of, certainly at NYPL and in hours.
13 We haven't closed any branches. A cut of this
14 magnitude, of \$100 million plus across the three
15 systems, that's the end of that game. We're just
16 in a different place. Let's be, let me be very
17 clear on behalf of my system. The New York Public
18 Library is the largest circulating library system
19 in America. It's the most used research library
20 in America, perhaps in the world, servicing all
21 five boroughs. It is the loadstone, the
22 foundation of an educated society at a moment when
23 we know that it what is essential to be able to
24 compete and for New York to be great. Cuts of
25 this dimension will simply effectively eliminate

2 the library to be able to serve in that way. Jobs
3 will be lost, and that's tragic for those people.
4 But as you know from your visits of our branches
5 or of our research libraries, the real impact is
6 multiplied many fold beyond the impact on those
7 who lose their jobs by the people who depend on
8 us. Every one of our systems, every seat is
9 filled. People are lining up for computers.
10 People are turned away from educational programs.
11 Detroit does a better job on libraries? With all
12 due respect to Detroit, they've got some serious
13 financial problems last time I checked. You know?
14 I mean, this really is sort of on a shocking sort
15 of moment to even contemplate this kind of cut.

16 CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: And to
17 underscore that, well said, I think, from all
18 three systems. To underscore that, you've
19 calculated at least what the average number of
20 hours would be under this scenario should these
21 cuts take effect. And those numbers, for my
22 colleagues in New York Public Library, would go
23 from 46.6 hours on average to 23.82 hours average
24 if the cuts went through. And for BPL, for the
25 Brooklyn system, from 43.3 hours to 21.5 hours.

2 And that's a weekly average. And for Queens
3 Library from 39.9 to 20.6 hours of weekly. So,
4 and it is just those numbers alone are devastating
5 as to what service you would be able to provide in
6 those cases. So, let me just [off mic]

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER:

8 [interposing] Apologies to Chair Gentile but I was
9 asked to mention, I forgot to mention, apparently
10 we have some overflow issues. There is an
11 overflow room on the 16th floor with audio/visual
12 capability if anyone is uncomfortable or standing
13 and wants to participate in the hearing. We do
14 have an overflow room on the 16th Floor. Thank
15 you.

16 CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: I'll just
17 finish up with this and I'll come back with some
18 questions later on but I just thought it was
19 interesting that the urban, Center for Urban
20 Future report on libraries, a copy, one of the
21 charts that they have put in their report, and
22 I've given a copy of the chart to every member
23 here. It talks about out of the 25 urban
24 libraries nationwide how, where the three systems
25 rank nationwide with the 20 urban libraries

2 nationwide, where you rank in terms of number of
3 program sessions and in number of average hours
4 per week, currently the number of average hours
5 per week. And thought it was interesting because
6 of the 25 urban library systems nationwide as far
7 as program sessions per thousand residents,
8 Brooklyn ranked second out of those 25, New York,
9 NYPL ranked sixth out of those 25 and Queens ranks
10 fifth out of those 25. So, you're in that top
11 tier of those 25, and yet when it comes to number
12 of hours, average hours per week that you now are
13 open, NYPL ranks 12th out of those 25, Brooklyn
14 ranks 15th out of those 25 and Queens ranks 20th out
15 of those 25. So, it is that, in and of itself,
16 really, I think, reflects the type or work you're
17 doing with all the program sessions that you're
18 trying to jam in in those hours that you have,
19 given that fact that you're at the bottom of the
20 list when it comes to the top 25 cities in terms
21 of number of hours per week.

22 MR. MARX: Yeah, the game needs to
23 change. If the city really wants to move forward
24 and achieve the goals that I think everyone more
25 or less agrees on, in building up business and

2 helping immigrants to become citizens and all of
3 the things that we offer. And by us constantly
4 being part of a budget negotiation strategy as
5 opposed to a policy decision it sets us back more
6 and more in the big picture every year. You know,
7 this is Groundhog's Day, right? And, you know,
8 what we should be talking about, the dialogue
9 should not be about this. The dialog should be,
10 what are all the things we can do to move the city
11 forward in a cost effective way to achieve its
12 goals? And we miss that picture every year,
13 publically and in what we're planning and doing
14 because of a budget negotiation strategy that
15 really is very uncreative and that could be looked
16 at differently, you know? So, that's just my, but
17 when you look at the overall, look over this five
18 years, ten years, we're in this position we're in
19 now not just because of this budget or the one
20 last year. And the Council worked so hard to put
21 monster money back in the budget, then when it's
22 not put in the financial plan for the future year,
23 how do we even plan anything going out any farther
24 than that? It's impossible. And we have a
25 workforce of people that I got to tell you, have a

2 lot of guts and a lot of commitment and passion
3 for what we do because they've stuck with us even
4 though they know hundreds of jobs are on the line
5 every year. So...

6 MS. JOHNSON: I'd add, I'd like to
7 add something about what it does to the workforce
8 because that's something I don't think people
9 focus on. But because of seniority in the
10 workforce these kinds of cuts will hit the
11 librarians who are working with some of our most
12 vulnerable populations. So, in the case of
13 Brooklyn Public Library the most recent tranche of
14 hiring that we did, which by the way, was before
15 2008, so we haven't hired a new librarian with
16 city money since 2008. But those are largely
17 children's librarians. So, if you think about the
18 way seniority works, if we were to sustain these
19 kinds of cuts and have to lay off these kinds of
20 numbers, the population that would be most
21 drastically affected would be children and
22 children and young adults are obviously among the
23 populations that we see as our highest priority.

24 CHAIRMAN GENTILE: That's good to
25 know. Mr. Chairman, I will have other questions

2 later.

3 CHAIRMAN VAN BRAMER: Thank you
4 very much, Chairman Gentile. I want to recognize
5 we've been joined by Council Member Gale Brewer
6 for her second round today with our Committee.
7 Yes, she was also at the Cultural Affairs piece a
8 little bit earlier. So, I want to thank her for
9 that. We're going to start our questions with
10 Council Member Steve Levin.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVE LEVIN: Thank
12 you very much, Mr. Chairman. So, in listening to
13 your testimony and listening to my colleagues
14 questions, you know, it strikes me that where we
15 are right now is an unacceptable position for us
16 to be in year after year. It's just not an
17 acceptable way forward, you mentioned a way
18 forward. This is not a sustainable thing to do.
19 So, actually I wanted to ask, my first question is
20 just, I've only been here since 2010. If you
21 could help me provide some historical context
22 here. Has this always been the case? Are they,
23 has it always been the case going back, say, the
24 last 20 years that cuts of this magnitude are
25 proposed and then some restored and then back

2 again the next year? Is that always been the case
3 because it seems like if it had always been the
4 case we'd, the system wouldn't be even functional
5 at all. So, could you give me some historical?

6 MR. GALANTE: It's been the case
7 the last five or six years.

8 MR. LEVIN: But not before?

9 MR. GALANTE: With the numbers
10 getting bigger and bigger exponentially every
11 year.

12 MR. LEVIN: Mm-hmm.

13 MR. GALANTE: I've been with Queens
14 now 26 years and there are, there were, I can give
15 you one year I know of off the bat where there was
16 an increase proposed on library funding from the
17 administration in their budget. Usually, though,
18 it'll be a small amount of money and then
19 oftentimes that money will be put into the
20 financial plan. So, you're not starting over
21 every year to [crosstalk] ridiculous now.

22 MR. LEVIN: So, even Rudy Giuliani
23 never proposed cuts?

24 MR. GALANTE: He was the one that
25 proposed the increase in one year. [laughter]

2 MR. LEVIN: No, because, I mean, it
3 makes me question the Bloomberg administrations
4 commitment to the library system in a very
5 fundamental way. If they're, I don't understand
6 how that could, there's, like, some dissonance
7 there. If they support, our budgets, your budgets
8 are city budgets are our statement of priority.
9 That is what, the statement of what we believe in
10 as a city. And if they propose these, the cuts of
11 these, this magnitude I just don't quite
12 understand how they could say that they support
13 the library system. So, I kind of want to ask
14 you, I mean, do you believe that the Bloomberg
15 administration fundamentally supports the library
16 system? [laughter]

17 MR. GALANTE: I think that, I'll
18 jump right in, what the hell. [laughter]

19 MR. LEVIN: Wait a minute. Wait a
20 minute. Let me save Tom Galante from himself
21 right here. [laughter] I used to be able to do
22 that. Now - - has to do that. But, [laughter] do
23 not answer that question, Tom. [laughter]

24 MS. JOHNSON: [crosstalk] Step away
25 from the mic. [laughter] Step away from the mic.

2 MR. LEVIN: From my perspective it
3 doesn't look like they do. [laughter] I want to
4 ask you about capital because we've, Linda, we've
5 talked a lot about capital over the last few weeks
6 in the district that I represent I have two
7 branches that are, there is, have been proposals
8 or discussions about potentially selling branches.
9 And that is a major concern to me. It's a major
10 concern to my community. There's a petition
11 that's got 8,000 signatures, a lot from the, my
12 constituents. And so, I, in terms of capital
13 needs if you could, each of you could just quickly
14 say that the, your respective capital needs in
15 your systems and how the administration is, what
16 the conversations with the administration are
17 regarding capital. Because if the capital needs
18 are at this point between the three systems it's
19 probably close to a billion dollars, right?

20 MS. JOHNSON: Yeah, so, we're here
21 talking about the operating budget but since you
22 asked [laughter] the capital budget is also a very
23 large problem in Brooklyn. We have about \$230
24 million in deferred maintenance across a million
25 square or 750,000 square feet of real estate. And

2 the sale of branches that you raised is designed,
3 actually, to free up that value in certain
4 branches to provide better library facilities in
5 those communities. And to accomplish all of this
6 without ever interrupting service in the
7 communities. And so we are trying to be strategic
8 about the way forward, about how to provide the
9 very best 21st century level of service in a
10 facility, in a set of facilities that were
11 designed, some over 100 years ago before
12 technology was envisioned, much less accounted
13 for. So, it's challenging not only because of the
14 crumbling - - but also because of the disparity in
15 the value of some of the branches and the capital
16 needs in so many of the libraries. So, for
17 example, in the two libraries that are in your
18 district, as you've heard many times. There's
19 over \$10 million of need in each of those branches
20 and that's not to redesign the library to make it
21 more hospitable to existing or even emerging
22 technology. That's just to make sure that it's
23 comfortable in the summer when we need air
24 conditioning and it's warm enough in the winter
25 and, you know, it's not about anything fancy. We

2 need to be thinking about how to provide spaces
3 that really allow us to do the great work that we
4 want to do. We need to stop having to work on
5 libraries when we're in states of crisis when an
6 HVAC system blows out. We need to be able to do
7 preventative work to make sure that we're not
8 every closing for emergencies.

9 MR. LEVIN: And with regard to that
10 then, I mean, how much is the city, I mean, how
11 much do each of you get from the city every year
12 in terms of capital?

13 MS. JOHNSON: So, we average around
14 \$15 million a year in capital to deal with \$230
15 million of deferred maintenance.

16 MR. LEVIN: How about Queens?

17 MR. GALANTE: About between \$30 and
18 \$40 million a year.

19 MR. LEVIN: \$30 and \$40, between
20 \$30 and \$40 million a year for how many, for,
21 what's your?

22 MR. GALANTE: 62 libraries.

23 MR. LEVIN: What's the dollar
24 amount you think, can you place on your capital?

25 MR. GALANTE: About \$30 to \$40

2 million in capital funding a year.

3 MS. JOHNSON: For what kind of?

4 MR. LEVIN: Right, for what need?

5 For what, what's your deferred maintenance,
6 basically in capital?

7 MR. GALANTE: Oh, our deferred
8 maintenance is roughly about \$200 million. But at
9 the pace, you know, given the elected officials in
10 our borough, [crosstalk] in five or six years we
11 should be about caught up.

12 MR. LEVIN: Right.

13 MR. GALANTE: With most of that.

14 So...

15 MR. MARX: So, we have about \$25 to
16 \$30 million of capital allocated each year.

17 MR. LEVIN: Mm-hmm.

18 MR. MARX: Thanks to many of you
19 and to, obviously, and to the citizens of New
20 York. We currently have in our system as a whole,
21 I think the number is \$263 or \$270 depending on
22 whether we finish something today or not of
23 current capital expenditures in our system and
24 that's not including the Central Library plan.

25 MR. LEVIN: Mm-hmm.

2 MR. MARX: Which has city capital
3 funding in large part because it's to create a new
4 mid Manhattan library which is the most used
5 branch library in America. That said, we probably
6 have deferred maintenance in the \$800 million to
7 billion range.

8 MR. LEVIN: So...

9 MR. MARX: And, you know, let's be
10 clear about what that actually means. Go around
11 to the branches in the city. Some of them are
12 spectacular, right? And the City has made it
13 possible to build some unbelievable new ones and
14 we hope to continue to do that and by the Central
15 Library Plan is about that. But there are
16 facilities in our system that are not just
17 shocking but an insult to the citizens of New
18 York, right? In neighborhoods where we want to be
19 lifting people's aspirations and inspiring them
20 we're providing them with library facilities that
21 are not doing that, to put it mildly, right? So,
22 the needs are great, even as the investment is
23 great.

24 MR. LEVIN: But we're funding about
25 less than between five to ten percent, maybe at

2 most and that's just, again, not sustainable. So,
3 it, I think the city needs to come up with a
4 capital, a way to address the capital needs in a
5 systemic way that is responsible, which is not
6 what we're doing now. And then just lastly,
7 Linda, if I could just mention very quickly. With
8 Brooklyn Heights Branch, I'd very much like to
9 work with you and your staff over the next several
10 months with the summer coming up and a way to
11 address the immediate needs of the HVAC system
12 there and the staff who last year, you know, sat
13 through many, many very hot days. You know, if it
14 didn't get to the thermal heat index, you know,
15 maybe they came close and they really worked in
16 very difficult conditions. And so, I would just
17 request that we can maybe offline work together
18 over the next couple of months to address those
19 needs in a responsible way.

20 MS. JOHNSON: Look forward to it.

21 CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: Thank you.

22 MR. LEVIN: Thank you very much,
23 Mr. Chairman.

24 CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: Sorry, did
25 you want to add something there?

2 MR. GALANTE: Just to say, you
3 know, there is no set budget, we all know this.
4 This gets negotiated every year. We come to our
5 members every year and look for projects that
6 work. And, you know, we're grateful to your
7 support but, of course, we have to keep, we keep
8 doing that. And we will, we look forward to those
9 conversations as well.

10 CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: Before I call
11 on Council Member Tish James I just wanted to go
12 back to where Council Member Levin was a second
13 ago. A, there's a little bit of history that we
14 all share in the room so that's why I interjected
15 and but I want to say that the administrations
16 handling of the budget when it comes to our public
17 libraries is disrespectful to what you do. It
18 almost, not almost, it says, in my mind, I believe
19 there are people that, who believe you have too
20 much money already. That you don't need
21 everything. They believe that. 'Cause if you
22 didn't believe that it would be immoral to do what
23 they're doing to you. \$106 million, \$350 million
24 in the last four budget cycles alone. To propose
25 those reductions to you is outrageous and does

2 reflect a belief that maybe you've got too much
3 already, that you don't need all of this funding.
4 That's wrong. It's dead wrong. I know it. And
5 furthermore, it's not understanding of the amazing
6 staff that you have, people that I worked
7 alongside with for 11 years, people who, whether
8 they're librarians or clerks or custodians, they
9 are literally the person who is just been
10 diagnosed with cancer, who has just come to this
11 country, that's the person they go to, often the
12 first person they see. So, your staffs save lives
13 every single day at every single of our over 200
14 libraries. And the administration by proposing
15 budget cuts year after year is saying that they
16 don't believe it's as important as I know it to
17 be. You can't say that, but I can. Council
18 Member James.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER TISH JAMES: Thank
20 you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, I know that the
21 needs of the libraries are great but I also know
22 selling off historic treasures should not be the
23 answer. And so, as I've told this story time and
24 time again, I grew up in Park Slope and I grew up
25 in the library on 6th Avenue next to PS 39 where I

2 graduated. And I grew up in the stacks of the
3 libraries reading Grimm's Fairy Tales. I guess
4 some people argue that's why I'm so dramatic.
5 [laughter] But I grew up reading the entire series
6 of Grimm's Fairy Tales as a child. It was a safe
7 haven for children like me. Growing up in a
8 humble family where my mother, unfortunately,
9 could not afford child care service while she was
10 at work. She knew that I would be safe in the
11 library. And so I would curl up on the 2nd floor
12 with these amazing books and would dream of far
13 away places. And here I am, this is just another
14 example, unfortunately, of how public resources in
15 our city are being starved of money. I was at a
16 rally earlier where hospitals in downtown Brooklyn
17 are being sold to build more luxury housing. The
18 answer again, over and over again, is luxury
19 housing, real estate. And here we are and I
20 admire you for all that you are doing but rarely
21 do you hear the word free in our society anymore.
22 And so the libraries offer free and open service
23 to books and periodicals and the internet and
24 electronic service. And as all of you know I have
25 been in the forefront in the City of New York

2 advocating to increases literacy rates in the City
3 of New York. It's really critically important.
4 I, this is not the time where we should pull back
5 on investments in our public libraries. And I
6 support a project in Brooklyn, as all of you know,
7 called BAM South and I just, I did not know that
8 one aspect of that project in BAM South, which is
9 right across the street from BAM in BAM's parking
10 lot, is the selling of a historic library on
11 Pacific Street, which is not in my district.
12 That, selling off that library and moving the
13 services to BAM South. And I support BAM South
14 because it provides much needed affordable housing
15 in the district that I represent where countless
16 individuals are being displaced. That's why I
17 came out forcefully in support of that project.
18 But I did not know that the library that would be
19 included in that project is as as result of
20 selling off the Pacific Street Library in Park
21 Slope. And so now, I have deep reservations about
22 this project overall because if it means selling
23 off a historic library in a wonderful building to
24 pay for a library in a new, shiny development
25 project then there's something wrong. And so last

2 night the park, I understand the Park Slope Civic
3 Council passed a resolution in opposition to the
4 library being sold. And I stand with them. I
5 join with them. And I wish I had known that they
6 had passed that resolution, I would have been
7 there to tell them about my Grimm's Fairy Tales
8 story. But there's got to be a better way. There
9 has to be a better way to save these libraries.
10 That's a, that hopefully shall be or could be or
11 will be a landmark building. It's a treasure, a
12 national treasure, and to sell it off just to
13 create a library for residents that are coming to
14 Brooklyn. I just don't see it, I really don't see
15 it. And I guess I have to revisit my support now
16 for this project.

17 MS. JOHNSON: Well, I'd like to put
18 your mind at ease. The project is a great one.
19 And the idea of Brooklyn Public Library sharing
20 space in that project is actually one that we were
21 very excited about for a number of different
22 reasons. We will have an opportunity to build a
23 space that I think will be far more effective than
24 the Pacific Branch to which you've referred. And
25 while it is an old Carnegie Library I would love

2 to take you through it so that you can see exactly
3 what it's like to try and provide service in that
4 building. I am an enormous fan of great
5 architecture. I know a lot about it. It's a
6 personal thing of mine and I'm as much a
7 preservationist as anyone. That particular branch
8 is not capable of the kind of work that needs to
9 be done in order to serve that community. You and
10 I have taken great pleasure in the other Park
11 Slope Branch that we recently renovated and opened
12 this summer. It is a great example of how a
13 Carnegie Library can be renovated and can be used
14 to provide 21st century service. I don't believe
15 that can happen in Pacific. And I certainly know
16 that I don't have the money to make it happen.
17 In, you know, it's just, it's overwhelming what
18 needs to be done in that library just to make it
19 ADA compliant, which it is not. So, I think that
20 we should go on a tour and we should take a look
21 at just what the library is proposing to do in BAM
22 South because we are extremely excited, not only
23 about the service that we can offer there but what
24 it means to be in centrally a cultural condominium
25 where we can collaborate with our neighbors and we

2 can do all kinds of exciting things that we
3 couldn't do on or own in a stand alone library.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: So, I would
5 love to go on the tour with you but I would also
6 love an independent assessment of that library.

7 MS. JOHNSON: Oh.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: To determine
9 whether or not it cannot, it can be saved.

10 MS. JOHNSON: Sure.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: And I also
12 believe that, and I don't know, and I guess there
13 has to be a legal analysis as to whether or not
14 one can sell off a Carnegie Library. The question
15 is whether or not there's restrictive conveyance
16 on the ability to sell off a treasure of that
17 magnitude. And so, again, let me reiterate my
18 concern, let me join with my friends in Park
19 Slope, a neighborhood where I was born and raised
20 and, obviously, pay very close attention to what
21 happens in Park Slope. And let me just also go on
22 to say that I'm very much concerned about selling
23 off this historic treasure notwithstanding the
24 fact that it does have great capital needs. I
25 just believe that we can do better and we should

2 do better for the children and for all those who
3 utilize its service. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: Thank you
5 very much, Council Member James. Council Member
6 Lander.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BRAD LANDER: Thank
8 you very much, Mr. Chairman and to all three of
9 you. It's great to see you. I want to give, like,
10 a shout out to the Center for Urban Futures as
11 well. It was great to have you guys be able to
12 present in such clear detail. I know they're
13 doing a series of events which our Chairman has
14 been at all of and I've been at some of and I'm
15 looking forward to the coming ones. And I want to
16 thank the Nathan Cummings Foundation also for
17 helping support that and supporting you guys
18 because I think at least the advocacy work, the
19 bringing you guys together helping make this case,
20 helping New Yorkers see collectively the need is
21 really important and I think it's a challenge for
22 everyone, you know, we have in our minds a 19th
23 century vision of the library system. And in some
24 ways that is wonderful. We do love the branches
25 and the Carnegie compact and the buildings and the

2 history and the stacks and the leather and the
3 smell. And we want to hold that but I think
4 coming to see what a 21st century system is is just
5 so important. And, you know, even that fact that
6 what we have is, you know, I, to me I joke
7 sometimes, I know you guys know this, that the
8 three, the organization of the three library
9 systems is the only thing that I can find in New
10 York City that still essentially is a relic of pre
11 consolidation New York City and while we still see
12 that as the great mistake over in Brooklyn
13 [laughter]. It, we need to be thoughtful about
14 how, what we're doing here. So, I want to, I
15 mean, you know, as Linda knows, I, today I don't
16 represent the Pacific Street Branch but if I have
17 the good fortune to be reelected that, it's been,
18 it's proposed to be redistricted into the 39th
19 Council District. I was supposed to pick up the
20 Kensington Branch but the way they redrew the
21 lines cut out that block. I'm very, very upset
22 about that.

23 MS. JOHNSON: That's too bad. It's
24 a very beautiful branch.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: It's that

2 new Kensington Branch that we stood together and
3 it's extraordinary and I really am also very
4 grateful for the reopening of that Park Slope
5 Branch. But here's my question, I guess, and it
6 takes a step back. I mean, and I will need to be
7 working with my colleagues and meeting with the
8 neighbors there and trying to figure out some of
9 the issues that you and Council Member James and
10 Council Member Levin were talking about. But, I
11 guess I want to ask the question and take a big
12 step back in a funny way. I know there's this,
13 last night I was in a meeting of this, the Mayor's
14 SIRR's, Strategic Initiative for Recovery and
15 Rebuilding, which is a bit infrastructure effort
16 related to how we think about infrastructure and
17 climate change and planning post Sandy but it's
18 not just supposed to be about hurricanes, it's
19 supposed to be about all the impacts of climate
20 change. What's going to happen if we have a heat
21 wave like we had in, like they had in Chicago?
22 And so I guess what I wonder is has the Bloomberg
23 administration reached out to any of you to
24 include the libraries? EDC is making the plans, I
25 hear they're heading it up. Have they reached out

2 to you to include you in the conversations and the
3 dialogue about the SIRR and future sustainability
4 and infrastructure in the city? 'Cause I would
5 imagine given the footprint you have and what you
6 did during the storm.

7 MR. GALANTE: Not that we're aware
8 of.

9 MS. JOHNSON: No, yeah. I've not
10 been aware of any outreach.

11 MR. LANDER: So, it must be then
12 that you weren't impacted by the hurricane, is
13 that right? [laughter] What happened, CEO Galante,
14 am I right about that?

15 MR. GALANTE: I was just this
16 morning at 9 o'clock with the Ambassador to the US
17 from Japan at our peninsula library, which is
18 closed to do a walk through there. And we have
19 two libraries still closed. We have a third one
20 that's closed but will be reopening in May and we
21 just opened our fourth, Broad Channel Library,
22 about a week and a half ago. So, yes, we were
23 impacted dramatically.

24 MR. LANDER: Brooklyn must not have
25 been.

2 MR. GALANTE: Now, we have warming
3 centers. We have cooling centers for the summer
4 [crosstalk]

5 MR. LANDER: And that's a future
6 question. Don't spoil that one yet, first.
7 [laughter] Brooklyn must not have been impacted in
8 any way by that - - hurricane?

9 MS. JOHNSON: Of course Brooklyn
10 was dramatically impacted. We still have three
11 libraries that are closed. We are hopeful that
12 the Red Hook Branch will be opening by the end of
13 the month or certainly by April. And we've got
14 Coney Island, which that whole community, as you
15 know, is devastated. And, so anyway, three of
16 them are closed and we're working hard to restore
17 all of them and, of course, the issue's that you
18 raise about sustainability and what should the
19 rebuilt libraries look like is weighing heavily on
20 us.

21 MR. LANDER: And as you say, you
22 know, again, this as I understand the SIRR, it's
23 not only supposed to be about, sort of, the last
24 storm but about resilience in the face of climate
25 change.

2 MS. JOHNSON: Yeah.

3 MR. LANDER: And as mentioned, you
4 know, we saw what happened in Chicago where more
5 people died in Chicago in that heat wave than died
6 in New York City as a result of the hurricane.
7 So, it must not be that the libraries are cooling
8 centers or places that we would want to make sure
9 we're up and running and had the infrastructure
10 they needed. In the case of the heat wave, no,
11 you guys are not cooling centers?

12 MS. JOHNSON: Of course we are, in
13 fact, cooling centers and I think as our Governor
14 said in the aftermath of Sandy. Since we'll be on
15 the receiving end of a hundred year storms about
16 every other year, it becomes increasingly
17 important for us to be proactively dealing with
18 how climate change can affect our ability to
19 remain open.

20 MR. LANDER: So, I just--

21 MS. JOHNSON: [interposing] And,
22 you know--

23 MR. LANDER: --I'm grateful that
24 the administration is convening this SIRR but I
25 think the fact that they haven't invited the

2 library systems, that while they say in some cases
3 they rely on them and I know some of the branches
4 played an important role in the recovery and
5 response and are vital as cooling centers. It
6 really is just a galling oversight that while we
7 here see it as a central infrastructure they seem
8 to see it as something else, something more
9 trivial and less central to the cities
10 infrastructure. And that really is the big
11 problem because if we can't make plans, if we
12 can't provide you the certainty, the capital, the
13 resources then on the one hand, I don't know how
14 we would expect it to be actually part of our
15 infrastructure, of our sustainability and
16 resilience response. And I do think this goes to
17 the issues that, that Council Member James and
18 Linda were talking about. Because the big picture
19 planning we have to do for what the footprint of
20 the library is, for what the future of them needs
21 to be, for how it fits into the educational goals
22 and the cultural goals, the civic goals and the
23 infrastructure goals just absolutely require that
24 kind of thinking and engagement with the
25 administration. So, we'll keep doing the budget

2 dance even though it seems more and more like
 3 musical chairs every year but I think under the
 4 leadership of our current Chairman and the
 5 speaker, we're also just going to keep pushing.
 6 And if we can't get it from this administration
 7 then we'll get it from the next one because the
 8 long term need to think differently about the
 9 importance of our library systems is fundamental.
 10 And I know, I appreciate the leadership of our
 11 Chairman and Speaker and of the whole Council.
 12 But, it's a battle that is not going away and
 13 we're going to keep fighting it with you. So,
 14 thank you very much.

15 CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: Thank you
 16 very much, Council Member Lander, and clever
 17 questioning, as always. [laughter]

18 MR. LANDER: It's a lot easier with
 19 cooperating witnesses.

20 MS. JOHNSON: Yes. [laughter] Yeah,
 21 right, we rehearsed.

22 CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: They're
 23 librarians. They know everything. [laughter] some
 24 of you are librarians. I just want to say,
 25 Council Member Lander, you know, both the budget

2 in terms of what it says about what the
3 administration thinks about libraries and
4 oversight that you just highlighted, you know,
5 might reflect of a lack of appreciation to what
6 they're doing and what they really mean. And
7 there are those who are misguided and believe that
8 libraries are no longer as relevant or no longer
9 as needed or no longer as important and everyone
10 has computers at home and everyone has iPads. But
11 the only people who can think that are people who
12 haven't been into those library branches and seen
13 what is going on there. And if you did you would
14 never think that libraries are no longer relevant.
15 In fact, they're more important than ever. With
16 that, Council Member Brewer.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I so
18 concur. This week I think I was in Morningside
19 and Bloomingdale and St. Agnes and they're all
20 packed. So, there is no question that they are
21 busier than ever and not just at their computers
22 but at the after school and seniors and their
23 libraries are so generous about space, you know?
24 Just a committee room or a meeting room has got a
25 meeting in it. We had the - - we had all of the

2 delivery people who are the ones who commercially
3 deliver our food and they needed helmets and vests
4 and the library was generous enough to welcome 500
5 of them. And that's endless. So, I just want to
6 thank you very much for all that you do. One
7 question for New York Public Library. There, I
8 noticed in the testimony that Workforce One is
9 operating in the other branches or are we doing it
10 also in Manhattan, in terms of that collaboration.

11 MR. MARX: We have one in the Bronx
12 at this point in our system.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

14 MR. MARX: But we do have within
15 SIBL, within the Science Industry and Business
16 Library, we have lots of services there,
17 obviously, advisories for people starting
18 businesses, looking for jobs, and, in fact, every
19 one of our branches, while we are delighted to
20 partner with Workforce One, every one of our
21 branches and so many of our staff, of course, are
22 trained to help people apply for jobs, construct
23 resumes, all of which they need our computers and
24 wifi to do.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: but the

2 collaboration, does it bring in funding or is it a
3 loss of funding or is it sort of a wash?

4 MR. MARX: I think it's basically
5 they're covering the costs of that use of space
6 and the staff required.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. I'm
8 always thinking it, you know, 'cause my next
9 question for each of you is, I concur 100 percent
10 the libraries should be, get twice the amount and
11 one of my questions is, what would be your, you
12 know, not pie in the sky but kind of optimum that
13 you would like to see to be open seven days a
14 week, which is what some of us have been saying
15 for a very long time, what that number would be?
16 I would like to know that number. [crosstalk] and
17 then secondly, what are, are there any, I know
18 you've been thinking creatively about how to do
19 partnerships. I obviously have a background in
20 technology so that's something that I don't want
21 to overuse it or over extend it but how are other
22 partnerships that you've been thinking about, have
23 any of them been fruitful or productive in terms
24 of funding? So, those are my two questions.
25 What's your optimum and are there any creative

2 partnerships that might not have been available in
3 the past that are available now?

4 MR. GALANTE: Yeah, I think that a
5 rule of thumb would be, we've talked about this
6 with our staff, we've been working on it too, is a
7 60 hour a week average would be somewhere in the
8 middle of where the rest of the world is, really.
9 Not something that's, you know, some are this high
10 to reach. The libraries in Columbus are open on
11 average, 70 some hours a week. Just over the
12 river in Jersey and Hoboken you're looking at,
13 like, 60 hours a week. So, you know, we used to
14 be at 45 or looking at 22. We need to just change
15 our thinking on what we're all about and this huge
16 infrastructure we all have, right, with books,
17 with people, with buildings. So, the cost to
18 increase hours is not, you know, it's a chunk of
19 money but it's not that much money in the big
20 scheme of things. And the other thing I just
21 wanted to say is that when, if the say were to
22 come, which I think it will, with this Council or
23 the next Council, right? Where we're expanding
24 services back, right? But when we do that I think
25 we're going to be so positioned to be able to be

2 more, in every borough, more of what everyone here
3 knows of us to be. But it moves us to a new
4 place. We'll be hiring professionals but it won't
5 be all librarians. It may be social works, it'll
6 be folks that work with kids. You know, so, we
7 really are positioned for that next step forward
8 to be doing things like putting ereaders into the
9 hands of every person with their library card who
10 can't afford one. You know? Putting a mobile
11 device, you know? So, that type of technology
12 allows us also to expand out our ESOL programming,
13 our classes that we do now, into huge, you know,
14 we could, without having to have the facility,
15 right? People come in for a class, we do an
16 assessment, they go back out, they're on the
17 train. They're using their mobile devices to
18 learn. They come back in for the next step. So,
19 we have tremendous capabilities that I think we
20 all could be achieving with rather small amount of
21 money in the big picture of things.

22 MS. JOHNSON: So, I just would like
23 to add. You mentioned technology and I think we
24 all agree that technology is our way forward,
25 really. And we've been relying on some great

2 collaborations to enhance the amount of technology
3 that we can put in the hands of our patrons and
4 the programming that we're doing to help them
5 learn how to use technology. We all know that
6 sitting somebody in front of a computer just is
7 really not effective. And so, in addition to the
8 hours that we need to be open in order to allow
9 people to come in and get the kind of programming
10 that they need we also need to be able to invest
11 in technology that is not on the leading edge,
12 certainly.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right.

14 MS. JOHNSON: But which is far
15 enough in front of what people have at their
16 disposal to make sure that we're really doing our
17 jobs.

18 MR. MARX: So, I think the optimum,
19 as you asked is, first, you know, whether it's
20 this administration or the next administration, we
21 have to stop this dance so that we can do the
22 planning--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

24 [interposing] Right.

25 MR. MARX: --to be, meet the needs

2 of the citizens of New York, and beyond. And I do
3 think that, you know, if you could imagine, and we
4 can imagine a baseline so that we're not, sort of
5 feeling in jeopardy constantly and thrown off
6 course and demoralizing our workforce. With some
7 additional city investment I think in return we
8 would be prepared to commit to the kinds of
9 additional hours across the three systems to
10 significant additions across the three systems of
11 the kinds of educational programs that have been
12 discussed here. And to the degree it's possible
13 also to private fundraising to help make that
14 possible, in partnership. Because going back to
15 Andrew Carnegie, we have always been
16 public/private partnerships, certainly the New
17 York Public Library is proudly been that. As for
18 partnerships more generally, when we now look to
19 expand our educational programs we are talking to
20 major providers in the city who's best, what,
21 whose the best practice? Can we get facilities
22 too? Can we partner with? When we look to
23 increase the access to content digitally we are
24 partnering with the publishing industry of New
25 York. We, as you know, have partnered now in a

2 historic way with the Department of Education to
3 provide library service to 1.1 million kids. We
4 partner, as I've already said, with private
5 funders, though, of course, they worry about, and
6 it's hard to raise money privately when they see
7 the city cutting us so the money goes in one side,
8 goes out the other side. You cannot raise, we're
9 professional fundraisers, that doesn't work. And
10 then lastly, I'll just point out, as today's
11 testimony was meant to symbolize, we're also
12 partnering across the three systems. Whether it's
13 joint amnesty for book fines for school kids or
14 with the publishing industry, with the Department
15 of Education, back office consolidations in order
16 to be more efficient and save money so we can use
17 it for front office services. I mean, there are
18 all kinds of ways in which we increasingly see
19 that we could do better by working more closely
20 together as three systems.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. And
22 then at the DYCD hearing we learned that, I think
23 there are eight official OST after school
24 programs. But, of course, you are the after
25 school location, de facto or not. So, that

2 doesn't bring in any funding. It's obviously a
3 huge resource for the parents in our city and for
4 students. Is that something that really is
5 unfunded, I'm sort of asking.

6 MR. GALANTE: A decision was made
7 when that program was revamped that libraries
8 would not be eligible to apply for that funding.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: 'Cause
10 that, when we asked at, I asked at the hearing on
11 DYCD, I don't know if anybody was there but I
12 asked how many libraries. And this gentleman who
13 came from DYCD and he said he was the coordinator
14 between DYCD and the libraries. I had never met
15 him before. So, I don't know how that program
16 works. So, you're not eligible so they just must
17 be working with a non profit?

18 MR. GALANTE: We do receive some
19 funding from DYCD but it typically is a Council
20 Member where there's a numbered item, of sorts,
21 that helps us fund this specific program--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:
23 [interposing] Maybe we have to do some.

24 MR. GALANTE: --and when it comes
25 to all of the after school programs and services

2 we offer, that comes out of our operating budget
3 or private funds or state funds. There, we're not
4 eligible to receive any city OST program funding
5 at all, even though we are probably the largest
6 provider in the city.

7 MS. JOHNSON: In fact, last year at
8 this time during the budget dance it was a bit
9 demoralizing because we were told that part of
10 what was holding up a restoration of the budget
11 cut was the fact that everybody was focused on out
12 of school learning and we were sitting there
13 going, well--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:
15 [interposing] What do you think we do?

16 MS. JOHNSON: --yeah, exactly.
17 That's one of our main focuses and it's obviously,
18 if you come to any branch after school in the
19 afternoon.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know.

21 MS. JOHNSON: As you clearly have,
22 it's heartwarming but it needs to continue.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.
24 Well, obviously I'm a big supporter and then I'm
25 going to ask, just like the Chairman, my, I don't

2 know, has the Mayor ever been to a branch library?
 3 [laughter] I know he's been to Central Libraries
 4 but has he ever been to a branch library? And
 5 maybe you're not allowed to answer but it would be
 6 nice if you did.

7 MR. GALANTE: Yes, I can say yes.
 8 In Queens, like, we had an announcement when the
 9 city had done the survey work of all the
 10 communities a few years back and the Forest Hills
 11 Library was the press conference to announce that
 12 city initiative. It was inside. It was inside.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: All right,
 14 I won't believe it but I'm making my point. So,
 15 one, one. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you
 17 very much, Councilwoman Brewer who I have to say,
 18 even when there's no one watching in a private
 19 room with Council Members, Gale Brewer is always
 20 there saying, we really need seven day service.
 21 She's a real champion of our libraries. I have
 22 one last question before we hear from our DC37
 23 Library Union Local Presidents. And it's related
 24 to your staffing. I know that there is
 25 essentially been a hiring freeze for several

2 years, really, I remember.

3 MR. GALANTE: Six years now.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah.

5 MR. GALANTE: Or something.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah,
7 yeah, when it was--

8 MR. GALANTE: [interposing] Five
9 years anyway, yeah.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Instituted
11 at the Queens library when I worked there. So,
12 you're down a whole bunch and how do you replace
13 people and then how do you handle non union staff
14 as opposed to union staff? So, you're still
15 hiring some folks there. Do you replace union
16 staff at all? If you're not replacing union staff
17 are you replacing management staff? How are you
18 handling that?

19 MR. GALANTE: So, I can speak for
20 Queens on that. Basically, given the funding
21 reductions we've received so far and also the
22 proposed. Positions that involve direct public
23 service, which is the bulk of our positions, our
24 librarian and clerical staff, those positions are
25 in hiring freeze. We've been lucky enough or I

2 should say talented enough among our workforce
3 that we've been able to fill every promotion
4 internally for people moving to supervise all of
5 out customer service staff, which doesn't require
6 a Master's degree or our Assistant Managers in
7 each of our libraries or our Branch Managers as
8 well, have been all through internal promotion so
9 we haven't had to go external. It takes a lot of
10 time and effort and work by the employees as well
11 as management and having a great professional, you
12 know, development and training program. Then we
13 have, we also have non union positions which are
14 based on a negotiated contract with the union that
15 goes back years as to what positions are in the
16 union and which positions are out. Was that, did
17 that cover everything, Jimmy, or was there another
18 part of that question?

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Linda.

20 MS. JOHNSON: So, yes, we have not
21 hired anybody with city money but we are fortunate
22 enough to have been able to hire people through
23 grants that we've applied for. So, with private
24 money. And the issue with whether or not we're,
25 whether they're union employees or not depends on

2 the length of time that the grant covers and so it
3 varies depending on what the grant situation is.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: How does
5 that work, the length?

6 MS. JOHNSON: For--

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER:
8 [interposing] Time determines if they're--

9 MS. JOHNSON: --yeah, well if it's
10 three years then the employees are, in fact, union
11 employees.

12 MR. MARX: So, we have had, of
13 course, net reductions of both union and non union
14 staff, though without layoffs, I'm pleased to say
15 - - for the individuals involved. But we have
16 also replaced as many as possible given our
17 funding, union and non union. Again, we use
18 private support where we can to bolster what we
19 can. And then particularly as our aspirations,
20 despite loss of funding our aspirations go up
21 because the needs in the city go up. So, you
22 know, that is the state. I do want to go back to
23 Council Member Brewer's question. I will say I
24 have been with the Mayor in at least two branches,
25 the Bronx Library Center and Seward Park. And,

2 actually, I'm not sure if I can sit here and
3 remember the last time or whether I've been with
4 him in what's called our main building. The, and
5 I do want to say, you know, I hope that the City
6 Council, if it's appropriate for me to say this at
7 this juncture, that as we, as you consider your
8 response to the Mayor's preliminary budget I do
9 hope that, you know, that we, I know you all
10 believe this even as strongly as we do. You know,
11 to a degree that it's possible even in this round,
12 you know, to baseline funding and to--

13 MR. GALANTE: [interposing] To give
14 it a shot.

15 MR. MARX: --and to change this
16 game. Here's a, I'm, let's put it, maybe I'm
17 naïve but I like to think there's always an
18 opportunity to change game for the better rather
19 than to say we have to wait to do so.

20 MS. JOHNSON: [crosstalk] Yeah, we
21 don't let it go that--

22 MR. GALANTE: [interposing] Yeah,
23 we all--

24 MS. JOHNSON: --e all feel strongly
25 if this were the moment it would be a wonderful

2 thing and any way we can help make that happen
3 we're available and ready to do.

4 MR. GALANTE: Yeah, we plan on the
5 three of us are going to be, are looking for a
6 meeting with the administration that we'll be
7 planning before the executive budget and we're
8 going to give it a shot to ask for more funding
9 then the \$106 million to expand our services out
10 as well. So...

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I couldn't
12 agree more and I questioned Mark Page, the OMB
13 director on Monday morning and spoke at length
14 about the legacy that they would be leaving behind
15 after 12 years. And we could feel a lot better
16 about that if we were able to baseline, fully
17 restore baseline libraries. That would be great
18 and Tony, thank you for being every the optimist
19 and--

20 MR. MARX: [interposing] I'm the
21 newest here.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --yes,
23 yes, yes. [laughter] So, 25 years from now you'll
24 be here, [laughter] the Tom Galante of the next
25 generation. And I mean that in the most positive

2 way.

3 MR. GALANTE: [laughter] I know you
4 do. I know you do. I know you do.

5 MS. JOHNSON: He did, I know he
6 did.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, unless
8 there are any other questions from members, thank
9 you, push hard on the inside with the
10 administration and continue your advocacy. And
11 we've got to do right by libraries in the City of
12 New York. So, thank you very much for that.

13 MS. JOHNSON: Thank you.

14 MR. GALANTE: [crosstalk] Yeah, I
15 want to thank you all for being such great
16 supporters of public libraries. Everybody who's
17 here now and who was here, I know is, are great
18 supporters.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And now
20 we're going to hear from Valentin Colon, President
21 of Local 1930, DC37, John Hislop, President, Local
22 1321, DC37, Eileen Muller, President of Local
23 1482, DC37 and is Cuthbert Dickenson, I don't see
24 Cuthbert. Okay. So, we'll hear from Cuthbert
25 later, maybe. All right. So, let's hold Cuthbert

2 for the Cultural Group. [off mic] [background
3 noise] All right. We're going to continue with
4 our next panel. Thank you very much for the
5 break. Why don't we start, just as we did in the
6 first panel with the Brooklyn Public Library and
7 Eileen Muller, President of Local 1482.

8 MS. EILEEN MULLER: Great. Thank
9 you. Good afternoon, again. My name is Eileen
10 Muller, President of District Council 37, Local
11 1482, the Brooklyn Library Guild. And I represent
12 about 900 members working in the 60 branches of
13 the Brooklyn Public Library System. Having said
14 all that, today I'm here to deliver a very simple
15 message on behalf of my membership and the
16 hundreds of thousands of Brooklynites that they
17 serve every day. Simply put, our city public
18 library system have reached the breaking point.
19 We can't cut any further without doing irreparable
20 harm to the services that our members provide to
21 the public of Brooklyn. Before this fiscal crisis
22 hit in 2008 the city funding for Brooklyn Public
23 Library reached a historic high water mark. The
24 library was able to expand its hours and services
25 into hire scores of new employees. We thought that

2 after years of chronic underfunding things had
3 finally were heading in the right direction. But
4 then the economic crash happened and the bottom
5 fell out again. Since fiscal year 2009 overall
6 library funding across the three systems is down
7 \$67 million or 22.1 percent, falling from \$366
8 million to \$299 million. Over that period,
9 Brooklyn Public Library city funding has fallen
10 off dramatically. In 2009 BPL received \$100
11 million. Last year it received only \$83 million.
12 That's a decrease of \$17 million or 17 percent in
13 just a year. All this comes at a time when the
14 demand for public library service has exploded. A
15 recent report of CUF, Center for Urban Future,
16 found that since 2002 circulation across the three
17 library systems has increased by 59 percent,
18 program attendance by 40 percent and the programs
19 themselves, the sessions and the programs by 27
20 percent. This large increase in both circulation
21 and programming has come at Brooklyn Public
22 Library where our members, excuse me, where my
23 members are doing more than they have ever done
24 before. In this last decade circulation at
25 Brooklyn Public Library has increased by 77

2 percent while program and - - has gone up by 41
3 percent. If you'd like to put a face on the, on
4 what I'm telling you right now all you have to do
5 is go into any of the 60 branches of the Brooklyn
6 Public Library and you'll see that every computer
7 terminal is packed with job seekers and - -
8 looking for programming and tutoring sessions.
9 You'll also see the ever growing number of new
10 Americans coming in for free English language
11 classes as well as citizen classes. These things
12 don't happen on their own. The library needs
13 members, my members, to do their job, to do the
14 work that makes all of these wonderful programs
15 possible. But over the last few years the number
16 of frontline staff has gone down by approximately
17 eight percent. Members who have retired or
18 otherwise separated from Brooklyn Public Library
19 are just not being replaced. All of the
20 neighborhood library branches are severely
21 understaffed and as a result the employee morale
22 has gone down. My members are constantly telling
23 me how difficult it is for them to do a job that
24 they love, they truly love their jobs. They love
25 working for the libraries yet you have no idea how

2 hard it is for me to hear them say that. Many of
3 them are working in libraries that are now in dire
4 need of upgrades and repairs, we've talked all
5 about this. As well as this summer, hours at the
6 Brooklyn Heights Branch, the ever popular Brooklyn
7 Heights Branch, will have to be severely curtailed
8 because of the air conditioning system that is
9 beyond repair. The Pacific Branch is so
10 dilapidated that the library is planning to sell
11 off this historic Carnegie Building so we can
12 build a newer and much smaller library nearby.
13 All told, the systems faces approximately \$230
14 million in needed repairs that it simply can't
15 finance under the current budgetary restraints.
16 For the last years the mantra we keep hearing from
17 City Hall is that we have all got to do more with
18 less. Well, I think that anyone could tell you
19 that we are doing more with less. As a matter of
20 fact, considering the situation or members
21 confront every day, they are doing more than they
22 probably should be doing. The simple fact is that
23 things don't have to be this way. It's time for
24 the city to stop the cuts and to dramatically
25 increase the funding for the increasingly

2 important public service. It's time to end the
3 annual budget dance by establishing a reasonable
4 level of baseline funding for each of the three
5 library systems. In the end, it's not a matter of
6 money, it's a matter of priorities. The money is
7 there for New York City to build the best library
8 systems in the world. The question is whether or
9 not it has the willpower to do what needs to be
10 done. Thank you for allowing me to be here today
11 and to share my thought with you this afternoon.
12 And I hope that we can work together as we have in
13 the future to get the money that's needed. So,
14 thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you
16 very much, Eileen. Valentin Colon?

17 MR. VALENTIN COLON: Good morning,
18 I mean, at this point afternoon. [off mic] Good
19 afternoon. My name is Valentin Colon. I
20 represent the members of the DC37, the New York
21 Public Library, Local 1930. And I want to thank
22 you for once again allowing me to address you
23 today on a very important matter, that matter
24 being the libraries. And the financial attack
25 that has plagued the New York City Library systems

2 for way too many years. It has been said many
3 times before and in many different ways, city
4 workers are a vital entity to the survival and
5 prosperity that has made this city great. And I
6 am not here to reiterate that comment but to
7 assure you that it is a reality. But continued
8 budget slashing has taken its toll on diminishing
9 resources. If we look at the statistics that have
10 been reported within the pages of the study,
11 Branches of Opportunity written by the Center for
12 Urban Future one will find that despite years of
13 budget abuse and assault library frontline workers
14 have really done a tremendous job. They have
15 worked under do more with less too many years now
16 and it is really taking its toll on the workforce.
17 And you can tell that by the shortages in branches
18 and the difficulty that staff are having just
19 manning a branch. While for the most part library
20 workers are all very professional and do a
21 phenomenal job at leaving their own personal
22 problems at home the joyful gait that they had is
23 starting to wane. Library workers not only have
24 to deal with the personal situations of trying to
25 make ends meet, they also fear not being able to

2 have the needed financial support to properly and
3 adequately supply the ever increasing demands from
4 their communities and the multiple multitudes,
5 excuse me, of individuals who seek them out.

6 Library, in a definition, a place in which
7 literary, musical, artistic or reference material
8 as books, manuscripts, recordings or film are kept
9 for use but not for sale, is no longer what it
10 used to be. The day of quiet reading with
11 borrowing of material has now become much, much
12 more. The library is your home away from home.
13 It is a vacation spot for many who wish to escape
14 the day to day burdens and hustle and bustle of
15 the city and life. It has become a place of
16 relaxation and enjoyment. A library is much more
17 than just information. It is a place to meet, to
18 learn, to educate, to explore and a whole lot
19 more. The library caters to one and all and we
20 work to make our home open to all without
21 exception. A library workforce does whatever it
22 takes to make our workplace inviting, safe and
23 fun. If libraries are to continue what they do
24 best, serving the ever increasing needs and wants
25 from our communities, adequate funding must be a

2 major priority. The Mayor can no longer expect
3 libraries to continue meeting the challenges of
4 today's society and our communities without the
5 vital resources needed to make this all happen. A
6 reality check is in order. And adequately funded
7 budget not only allows libraries to continue
8 providing top notch service but it allows us some
9 wiggle room to not only enhance our services but
10 to expand on our services. Rich soil is needed so
11 that the seeds of knowledge can grow. I strongly
12 urge you to please make library a top priority
13 during this years budget negotiation and to
14 strongly oppose any attempts to further ruin the
15 mission of libraries. Allow me to apologize for
16 my emotional plea but I sit here before you to
17 plead for the jobs of my members and for the right
18 to allow them to do what they do best, to serve
19 every individual who seeks their help. Thank you
20 for the opportunity to address you today.

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you,
22 Valentin and you never have to apologize for
23 fighting for your members and speaking with the
24 passion that you do and Eileen does and John will.
25 You know, it's human lives we're talking about

2 here, not just numbers on a page. So, I thank you
3 for being passionate in saying what you do. So,
4 thank you.

5 MR. COLON: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: John?

7 MR. JOHN HISLOP: My name is John
8 Hislop, President of Queens Library Guild, Local
9 1321, DC37 ASME, AFLCIO. I want to thank the
10 Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and
11 International Intergroup Relations and the Select
12 Committee on Libraries in hearing my testimony on
13 the Mayor's preliminary budget. I wish that at
14 one of your preliminary budget hearings I could
15 tell you how invigorating the coming years budget
16 will be to library services, the staff and public.
17 Unfortunately, I cannot. Once again, the Mayor's
18 proposed a preliminary budget that drastically
19 cuts the libraries budgets leaving the libraries
20 scrambling to figure out how they are going to
21 operate and adds more anxiety and anger to an
22 already demoralized staff. You probably do not
23 remember but I said these, this last year and
24 unfortunately, I'm saying it again because the
25 Mayor's preliminary budget follows his four year

2 financial plan and proposed at \$29.5 million cut
3 to the Queens Library and \$102 million cut to all
4 three systems. We know that the City Council
5 cares about libraries and will restore most of the
6 proposed cuts as they have done every year. I am
7 confident that the next mayor will have different
8 financial priorities. Maybe not next year and
9 maybe not the next four years but I guarantee that
10 I or my successors will be back in front of the
11 City Council begging for budget restorations
12 because this budget process for libraries is
13 broken. I make this prediction based on very real
14 experience. Almost every winter for the past ten
15 years the Mayor has proposed a budget that is
16 drastically less than what the libraries actually
17 received in the prior fiscal year. Every spring,
18 library staff waste extremely limited resources
19 advocating and planning for an unknown future,
20 worrying about library services and our careers.
21 Finally, the budget is passed and thanks to the
22 City Council much of the proposed cut is restored.
23 However, not all the budget is restored and in the
24 end the Mayor gets what he wants. It cuts the
25 libraries budgets. I want to say, Local 1321

2 members are angry, angry that we are stuck in the
3 middle of this budget process of proposed budget
4 cuts threats of layoffs and eventual budget
5 restorations. We are fortunate to have City
6 Council Members who understand our value and
7 support us, however, we are still angry.
8 Therefore, District Council 37 and Locals 374,
9 1321, 1482 and 1930 are compelled to take bold
10 action at proposing legislation that guarantees
11 consistent and adequate funding of libraries year
12 to year. This legislation will allow the three
13 systems staff to provide all the services our
14 customers expect, to plan for new and innovative
15 library services, to ensure our customers have a
16 vast array of materials, programs and services and
17 for our staff to feel secure in their profession.
18 In fiscal year 2008 budget, the Mayor's budget and
19 four year financial plan, everyone was told
20 funding was base lined and libraries would have
21 the necessary funding to provide a minimum of six
22 day service. All three systems hired hundreds of
23 librarians, clerks and custodians to meet this
24 goal. The very next year the Mayor's four year
25 financial plan cut our budgets and every year

2 since then is proposed budget cuts. Granted, this
3 country had just begun the great recession but in
4 all the years since 2008 the Mayor's proposed cut
5 never materialized because the City Council
6 provided the restorations. I will quote, because
7 everybody else is, the Center for Urban Futures
8 recent report, Branches of Opportunity. It is a
9 must read for every New York City resident because
10 it documents the positive impact libraries have on
11 all of us and reinforces what library workers have
12 been saying for years. Library workers provide
13 more and more central services to every New York
14 City resident. However, library budgets continue
15 to be inconsistent and underfunded. I quote from
16 the report, despite record attendance and
17 circulation numbers and a dramatically expanded
18 list of programs and resources, New York City's
19 libraries face a number of serious challenges to
20 the continued success and number one, without a
21 doubt, is funding. All three library systems have
22 experienced funding cuts totaling tens of millions
23 of dollars in recent years. But cuts aren't the
24 only, they're only the financial obstacle. In
25 many ways the lack of security afforded by the

2 City's budget has been at least as big a problem.
3 Furthermore, the revenue sources both parties
4 agree upon in order to provide library funding are
5 guaranteed for only one year. The discrepancy
6 between libraries ostensible budget as seen in the
7 financial plan and their actual budget has tended
8 to not only continue from year to year but widen
9 even further. Let us stop this seesaw budget
10 dance. Every library supporter, every library
11 staff member, every politician that cares about
12 their libraries must stand up and say, we need our
13 libraries fully funded with a consistent budget
14 every year. It is time for a budget that
15 consistently allows every Local 374, 1321, 1482
16 and 1930 member to provide the excellent services
17 our customers demand. It is time for real budget
18 reform that protects all library services and
19 staff. It is time for baseline funding
20 legislation. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you
22 very much, John. That was very powerful
23 testimony. As someone whose office used to be
24 down the hall from your old office before you
25 became President of the local I thank you for

2 that, John, and thrilled to have you as head of
3 Local 1321. I want to first ask if any of my
4 colleagues have any questions for our three local
5 presidents? Gale Brewer.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: First of
7 all, thank you. I couldn't concur more and your
8 members are so helpful and great. My question is,
9 do you have just some examples, 'cause even when
10 we restore it, 'cause I always also think we
11 should have a lot more money allocated to the
12 library. But even when you restore it's not
13 catching up with inflation and so on and so, you
14 do end up with cuts. So, my question is, what are
15 some examples that you end up not being able to
16 provide because of the budget cuts, not even keep,
17 'cause you don't keep up with what you actually
18 need. Just a general example of what you're not
19 able to provide when you don't have full funding.

20 MS. EILEEN MULLER: Thanks, John.
21 Every aspect of the work that the libraries do are
22 effected. The first is the affect of the hours
23 that we're able to keep open. You know, it was
24 one of the goals to have a six day library usage
25 and as well as seven days in some locations.

2 That's one of the things that's the first thing on
3 the chopping block that happens. So, that's the
4 most devastating. By not having a library door
5 open you're not allowing the public to come in and
6 to use the services that the library provides. In
7 some cases because of wifi I have actually seen
8 the public standing outside of a library building
9 and near a window and using the wifi services of
10 the library.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:

12 [interposing] I see it all

13 MISS MULLER: Wouldn't it have been
14 better if they were inside?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I see it
16 all the time.

17 MISS MULLER: Right. Right. I
18 mean, this happens all the time. But it also
19 affects the, I've spoken about the hours, it
20 affects the amount of materials that we can buy
21 and the services that we can offer them, the
22 programs that could be offered. My branch, my
23 office in the Brooklyn Public Library is in the
24 Flatbush Branch of the library on Linden Boulevard
25 and Flatbush Avenue. Right outside of my office

2 they host a pre GED class. It is the most
3 inspiring thing that I have ever sat and listened
4 to because these are people who really want to
5 come and learn. They haven't had the opportunity
6 for whatever reason but they have come back and
7 they want to learn. This is something that I see
8 that could be also on the chopping block if we're
9 not open, they can't offer those classes. Those
10 classes need to be held during the day when if
11 you're a mother or father, sister, brother,
12 whoever, you have other responsibilities. So,
13 when the little ones are in school you're in
14 school also and you are taking classes. So, I can
15 only see that really working, maybe during that
16 time as well as in the evening time if you're a
17 worker during the day and you want to aspire to
18 something else, to something higher, you would
19 have to have the libraries open in the evening.
20 So, those are things that I can see, you know,
21 that really have a permanent effect on the program
22 that we're allowed to, that we have in the
23 libraries and we're able to provide to other
24 people.

25 MR. COLON: I agree with Eileen.

2 It is a major thing. Programming is a very big
3 thing. At NYPL it's a major problem with staff
4 doing all sorts of things. They're being, you
5 know, creative thinking of new ideas, actually
6 asking people, you know, what kind of programs
7 would you like? You know, what would you like to
8 be seeing more? But a closed branch, you don't
9 see that. And if you don't have staff and you
10 need to open a building, well, you have your
11 patrons showing up for a program that's scheduled
12 to find a sign that says, closed due to staff
13 shortage. So, that is a very major concern. So,
14 the budget and as I stated, we're looking at over
15 1,500 layoffs, yeah, what's that going to do to
16 the city? At a time when we're, like, the number
17 one thing on the block.

18 MR. HISLOP: Everything that my
19 colleagues have said is true. I mean, Queens
20 Library, the same thing. Hours of service, lack
21 of material, and staffing, but, and to reiterate,
22 even with our drastic attrition rate we still do
23 an amazing amount of work. We're doing so much
24 more with a lot less and it's add, and there is a
25 toll on the staff. People are tired. They're,

2 'cause our customers want this stuff. They come
3 to us and they, hey, I want a program. I want a
4 book and we try, we do our best but it's just too
5 much. It's becoming overwhelming.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you
7 very much.

8 CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: Just as a
9 matter for my colleague Gale Brewer, if you look
10 at this, the chart the Center for Urban Future put
11 together in the report it does indicate on this
12 chart what more the libraries can do with funding
13 in addition to what we restore. So, it is
14 telling, as you have said. I'm just curious, have
15 you, were you told about the projections of staff
16 reductions or was this the first time? [off mic]
17 You heard them today?

18 MS. MULLER: Today.

19 MR. COLON: Today.

20 CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: Today was the
21 first time you heard the proposed staff
22 reductions? In each of the systems? [off mic]
23 How about the proposed hours of service, if,
24 should the budget cuts go through? Were you told
25 anything about those?

2 MR. COLON: I copied them all from
3 Eileen's notes.

4 MR. HISLOP: All the changes that
5 we, that I heard today, for the first time I've
6 heard them.

7 CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: First time.
8 I see. I see. Okay, I guess and in just
9 listening to your testimony, John, you had
10 mentioned that your members are angry and I think
11 Eileen and Val, I guess, described, the way you
12 put it, that your members were frustrated in
13 trying to do their job. I'm just curious, how do
14 you respond to them as the head of the local when
15 your faced with those situations?

16 MS. MULLER: You know, I'm glad you
17 kind of asked that question. And I want to give a
18 little bit of a personal story. And that story is
19 a few days after the hurricane. I went to visit
20 the Red Hook Branch of the library. Now, anybody
21 who lives in the New York City knows that that
22 area was devastated by the, you know, the terrible
23 storm Sandy. And I met a member who lived in the
24 area. And not only was she devastated by the
25 storm but she lived very, very close to the

2 Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. And every time the
3 Brooklyn Battery Tunnel is - - it was closed
4 because it was flooded, I think, for the first
5 time in history, it was flooded and closed. Well,
6 when they took the water out of the Brooklyn
7 Battery Tunnel her house was flooded again, and
8 again and again and again. And she came to work
9 very single day. She moved to her sisters home in
10 another part of Brooklyn but she came to work
11 every day to a building that was devastated by the
12 flood. And she came to work because she loves her
13 job. She loves what she does. And she said to
14 me, Eileen, what are we going to do? This is, you
15 know, this is just so terrible. What are we going
16 to do? And what do you sit and say to a person
17 that asks you a question like that? You know, you
18 try to give her a good, uplifting response and you
19 say, we're going to get through it no matter what's
20 going to happen, you know, we're going to get
21 through it. But our members love their job. They
22 love coming to work. They love what they do.
23 They love when somebody comes in and asks them a
24 question and they can find the answer for them.
25 That's, you know, that's a wonderful reward at the

2 end of the day. So, what do we tell them? We try
3 to tell them, I try to tell them, I'm a person who
4 looks at the glass half full. I don't look at the
5 glass half empty. Although I have to tell you,
6 with the budget the way it is right now it's
7 really making me look at the glass, forget about
8 being half empty, it's almost empty. You know? I
9 mean, it's really, and that's really sad for me to
10 have to say that because I hate to say that. But
11 what do I tell them? I try to tell, uplift them
12 and try to give them, you know, a good example but
13 it's getting very, very difficult, very, very,
14 difficult. Because they're, they are angry. They
15 are frustrated. You know, but they come to work,
16 you know, because they love their job and they
17 love what they do.

18 MR. COLON: My, I try to press on
19 the staff just the value that they have to the
20 community. And how what they do means something.
21 I tell them to think about the people that they're
22 serving, whether it's the children, when they do
23 toddler time, and the parents, when they do read
24 aloud to the kids. Think of the faces that you
25 see. And the kids are so happy to see you, to

2 hear you and, you know, you see the kids sometimes
3 screaming, oh, you know, is so and so doing the
4 program today? I remind my staff, think of those
5 things. Okay? Try to make that your goal. But
6 yes, it is getting harder. And we, then you have
7 the other side and you get the staff who have
8 created new programming who love doing it but now
9 find that, you know, I got so much other stuff to
10 do. I'm constantly doing, being pulled here,
11 being pulled there. I now have to, you know, in
12 order for me to do the program right I got to pay
13 for it out of my own pocket. So, they're saying,
14 I don't want to do it anymore. So, it's kind of
15 difficult at times.

16 CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: I understand.
17 John, did you want to say something?

18 MR. HISLOP: In addition to what
19 Eileen and Val said, I, that's one of the more
20 challenging questions I deal with as a President
21 because it's almost like we're powerless in this.
22 The library is not hiring public service staff
23 members, librarians, clerks, custodians because of
24 the budget cuts. We got budget cuts because the
25 Mayor's doing this and the City Council restores

2 it and we're just kind of stuck. And so the staff
3 are, it's very challenging for me to answer that
4 question. But I do encourage, as Val said, and
5 Eileen said, what we do, and everybody knows this
6 in the public library, what we do is so valuable
7 so, to the community and the people really
8 appreciate us. So, that does resonate with the
9 staff. But, it's very challenging to answer that
10 question because we're powerless in this budget,
11 this crazy budget dance.

12 CHAIRPERSON GENTILE: I imagine it
13 is and certainly I think your workers are the
14 frontline warriors here in this whole battle and
15 they are to be commended. But I can imagine the
16 frustration and just the lack of knowing what
17 their own future will be, it's got to be taxing on
18 them. So, well, I'll leave it at that, Mr.
19 Chairman, thank you, all. [crosstalk]

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you
21 very much Chair Gentile and just in closing with
22 this panel I just want to say thank you, again,
23 and I said this earlier to someone, you know, that
24 this process certainly doesn't lead one to feel
25 validated, that their work is important. And

2 obviously, when someone as important as the Mayor
3 of the City of New York seemingly says to you what
4 you're doing is not that important to me, we don't
5 really need it that much, or we don't need as
6 many. And, you know, that can be a pretty awful
7 thing. So, I just want you to know that there are
8 other people, you know, like us, who get it and
9 who see it, who've felt it and, you know, we're
10 going to fight with you and it's an awful feeling
11 to feel powerless. And I hope you don't feel that
12 because, you know, you can raise your voice. You
13 have that matters and the reason we've had
14 restorations in such great numbers is partly
15 because of the work that you do and the members
16 advocating, fighting and pushing, DC37, your
17 locals. You know, I want you to feel like it does
18 matter. That your work is validated and you're
19 not powerless and with your help we'll get to that
20 place where libraries are getting what they truly
21 deserve.

22 MS. MULLER: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, thank
24 you very much.

25 MR. HISLOP: Thank you.

2 MS. MULLER: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And we are
4 going to hear from two other members of the DC 37
5 family, Cuthbert Dickenson, President of Local 374
6 of DC 37 and Marcy Wartell Brown. Is Marcy
7 Wartell Brown here? She right there? Treasurer
8 of Local 1501, DC 37. And then we are going to
9 hear from some folks from Citizens Defending
10 Libraries and then the Committee to Save the New
11 York Public Library. And I'll call those folks
12 after this panel is through. So, Miss Wartell
13 Brown, do you want to go first?

14 MS. MARCY WARTELL BROWN: Sure. My
15 name is Marcy Wartell Brown. I'm Treasurer of
16 Local 1501. I'm a zookeeper at the Queens Zoo for
17 24 years now, almost eligible to retirement.
18 Anyway, good afternoon Chair Van Bramer and
19 members of the City Council. As I said, my name
20 is Marcy Wartell Brown, Treasurer of Local 1501
21 which is the New York Zoological Society
22 Employees. My local represents all of the
23 unionized workers employed by WCS, Wildlife
24 Conservation Society, Bronx Zoo, the Aquarium,
25 Three City Zoos, we also now represent the Hall of

2 Science, Staten Island Cultural of Arts and
3 Sciences, Staten Island Zoological Society, Staten
4 Island Historical Society, Museum of the City of
5 New York and the Museum of Del Barrio. And as a
6 result the most recent budget cuts, Local 1501
7 lost over 50 members who were laid off as a direct
8 result of these budget cuts. Our membership has
9 been reduced and it has resulted in the closure of
10 a number of the buildings and exhibits that the
11 public will no longer enjoy. The service provided
12 by our members has been stretched really to the
13 breaking point. It's year after year now. It's
14 heartbreaking to me when I listen to what's going
15 on in all the locals with all the libraries and
16 all of the institutions in this city. It's really
17 sad. The proposed cuts of approximately \$6.8
18 million for fiscal year 2014 will most likely lead
19 to additional layoffs at our members resulting in
20 the additional closure of more buildings and
21 exhibits. In addition to these cuts we'll most
22 likely restrict the ability of many institutions
23 to hire seasonal workers for the summer months.
24 These seasonal workers are usually residents of
25 the five boroughs of the City of New York. The

2 inability to hire these New York City residents
3 will have a negative impact on the families which
4 depend on this income. A large percentage of
5 these workers along with their families reside in
6 the city and its five boroughs. The members of
7 local 1501 are hard working men and women who send
8 their children to city schools, we pay our taxes,
9 spend our hard earned dollars in both the city and
10 private owned businesses. The Mayor's preliminary
11 budget for fiscal year 2014 calls for an
12 approximate \$6.8 million reduction in city support
13 to the institutions which Local 1501 represents.
14 Clearly, you can see in these reductions in
15 support are allowed to go forth the results will
16 be devastating to both members of the Local 1501
17 and the institutions in which they are employed.
18 The reduction hours or service, staff and
19 additional closure of exhibits are a real
20 possibility. We represent world renowned
21 institutions known for having diverse exhibits and
22 unique creatures. Like the City of New York these
23 institutions represent a collective group of
24 diverse beings. These reductions in support would
25 clearly negatively affect that diversity and

2 provide a less attractive option to surrounding
3 communities and international tourists. These are
4 the things we must address. We must find a way to
5 not only stop these proposed reductions but to
6 increase funding because it's year after year.
7 You should see what we have to, just like
8 everybody else is saying, we do so much more with
9 less people, less money, giving our time, giving
10 our own personal resources. I'm sure you are all
11 aware that the City of New York is not only the
12 financial capital of the world but also the
13 cultural capital. Thank you for the opportunity
14 for you to testify for you today and I will answer
15 a few questions.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you
17 very much. I just want to take a moment of
18 personal privilege and say that as a Queens kid
19 the Queens Zoo is my favorite. [laughter] And I--

20 MS. WARTELL BROWN: [interposing]
21 I'm glad to hear that you actually know there's a
22 zoo in Queens [laughter] because--

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --that is
24 where, you know, they used, when we were kids they
25 had pony rides. And I know they don't do them

2 anymore.

3 MS. WARTELL BROWN: No.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: But we
5 used to go all the time as little kids and I still
6 like to go there and take my nephews and nieces
7 there. It is a great, great zoo and I love every
8 inch of it. So, thank you very much for being
9 here. It's a treat to have the Queens Zoo
10 representative in testifying.

11 MS. WARTELL BROWN: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Mr.
13 Cuthbert Dickenson.

14 MR. CUTHBERT DICKENSON: You always
15 have a beautiful sense of humor. [laughter]

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

17 MR. DICKENSON: Good afternoon, Mr.
18 Chair and Gentile, good afternoon. My name is
19 Maurice Dickenson, I'm the President of Local 374.
20 Normally when I come to you I come to you on
21 behalf of the library because I do have workers at
22 the library as well. But today I'm coming on
23 behalf of my members in the Botanical Gardens.
24 The proposed preliminary budget 2014 includes cuts
25 of approximately \$85 million of city - - funds for

2 the Botanical Gardens and overall cost of
3 approximately \$60 million to all the cultural
4 institutions which DC 37 represents. Local 374
5 members work in New York Botanical Garden, Queens
6 and Brooklyn Botanical Garden and - - in the Bronx
7 as well as in our largest library system, the New
8 York Public Library. I have indicated above the
9 approximate \$60 million cut in city funds to the
10 culturals are drastic and unproductive. Some of
11 these cultural are so small that the cuts are
12 having a disproportionate effect on the overall
13 budget. These institutions are available to
14 tourists and residents alike. Their incredible
15 beauty and education opportunity, for their
16 incredible beauty and education opportunity they
17 provide. These institutions are highly respected
18 by professionals in the field of horticulture
19 research and rely on their resources. This tax
20 - - funds pay for the modest salary and health
21 insurance for hundreds of workers. We are the
22 custodians who clean the gardeners who cultivate,
23 the secretaries who keep us organized and the
24 maintenance who fix the plumbing and machinery but
25 keep the building together. Sometime we have to

2 use duct tape and say prayer. Service is all we
3 do all day long. We know that as City Council
4 Representative you are not responsible for the
5 magnitude of the cuts. But we come here humbly
6 asking you to do your best to restore the funding
7 and avoid the stress, the drastic impact that
8 could result. We urge the budget negotiating team
9 to make the cultural institution a priority in the
10 restoration discussion. On behalf of our members
11 and the citizens of New York we thank you. And I
12 just would like to say as well that, you know,
13 over the years we are made to do more with less.
14 You know, we have gone in just about every agency,
15 every institution, you know, some of us have lost
16 thousands of members. But yes, the workforce, the
17 workload has increased. So, yeah, I think that's
18 reality and management, the times we were said to
19 us, you know, things are changing and you have to
20 change. So, we don't buy that concept, you know?
21 And, of course, over four years we haven't
22 received a raise as well.

23 MS. WARTELL BROWN: That's right.
24 The bridge have gone up and everything else has
25 gone up.

2 MR. DIKENSON: Right.

3 MS. WARTELL BROWN: But salaries
4 haven't.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: No I,
6 first of all, let me just say thank you. And I
7 think we have talked about this, Mr. Dickenson,
8 but my stepfather was a custodian and a cleaner, a
9 school cleaner. And my mother was a cashier at a
10 supermarket. And so, I very much appreciate the
11 work that all the members do in whatever capacity
12 they do it. And coming from a union household let
13 me just say I have always and will always support
14 you and your members. And I understand from a
15 firsthand perspective how difficult it is to pay
16 the rent and raise a family and do all the things
17 that you need to do on a modest salaries. And
18 then to not get a raise for several years in a
19 row. And as I said to the previous panel, you
20 know, to not feel respected or validated by
21 leaders is very, very powerful leaders, it's a an
22 awful thing. And your members don't deserve it
23 and no members deserve it. So, you know, I just
24 want to say that whether it's the culturals or the
25 libraries, you know that I'll be there fighting

2 and believing in the power of what you do and the
3 power of us as a collective. So, really, I just
4 want to say thank you for being here and for
5 testifying and for continuing to do the amazing
6 work that you do in a very, very difficult
7 climate. And, you know, we hope that this is, you
8 know, this is the last budget of the current
9 administration and we can all be very hopeful that
10 a brighter and newer day is going to dawn when it
11 comes to the members or organized labor and, you
12 know, for that, I'll channel John Hislop's
13 optimism and we'll be a little bit more
14 optimistic.

15 MR. DICKENSON: Unless he go off
16 his course. He may seek a fourth term. [laughter]

17 MS. WARTELL BROWN: Yeah.

18 CHAIRMAN VAN BRAMER: If I'm asked
19 to, I will vote against that. [laughter] So, I
20 don't know if Chair Gentile has anything to say
21 but I think, just know that we thank you, we're
22 grateful for everything you do.

23 MR. DICKENSON: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And we're
25 fighting.

2 MS. WARTELL BROWN: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And we
4 love the Queens Zoo. [laughter] Love, love, love.
5 So, with that we are going to hear from some of
6 our advocacy groups. And I know that there were a
7 lot of folks who came out today from Citizens
8 Defending Libraries. We're going to call three
9 representatives of the group to speak on behalf of
10 the community, Carolyn E., looks like McIntyre,
11 Carolyn McIntyre [phonetic], Michael D.D. White, I
12 think, is that, and Judy Francis [phonetic]. I
13 got them all three right? Good stuff. So, the
14 three of you will represent your group and then we
15 have three folks from the Committee to Save the
16 New York Public Library as well. So, choose who
17 you want to go first and go for it.

18 MS. CAROLYN MCINTYRE: Thank you,
19 very much for this opportunity and I really feel
20 that your heart is in the right place and it's,
21 makes me feel some validation. It's very hard to
22 do this. I'm not used to being the angry
23 activist, okay? So, I also want to first
24 acknowledge the other people who came here to
25 testify who took days off from their jobs just

2 because this is, to be with you and us today.
3 Please stand up. All of you who came here to
4 testify who aren't getting the chance to testify,
5 please stand up. Thank you for being here. I'm
6 sorry that you're not getting this opportunity. I
7 would like you to be in this chair with me. So,
8 our hearts together on this. Watching from the
9 16th floor, the videotape of this, what was
10 happening in this room before we came down, leaves
11 me with some very mixed feelings. On the one
12 hand, I'm very heartened by the people who are
13 speaking up to protect funding for the libraries.
14 But I'm also deeply disturbed by what I heard was
15 the leadership up here. When I heard Linda
16 Johnson from Brooklyn Public Library speaking on
17 the one hand saying that she wants money for the
18 libraries and on her other hand saying that they
19 don't have money to fix the air conditioning and
20 are going to sell off the branches. And Tish
21 James says to her, we have a Carnegie Library that
22 we need to protect. And she says, come look at
23 the plan that the developer has where we'll
24 destroy that Carnegie Library, shrink the
25 services. So, I'm sorry, but there's a mixed

2 agenda going on here and it's very demeaning. I
3 mean, we see through it. And when Steve Levin
4 said to her, you know, is Mayor Bloomberg, does he
5 want these libraries or is he trying to get rid of
6 them? Is he in favor of them? And they laughed.
7 I'm sorry, it - - at all, it's deeply demeaning to
8 us. It's very damaging that there are people in
9 the leadership positions of these libraries whose
10 hearts are not in the place of the libraries. And
11 we're seeing it played out in the local level.
12 Let me tell you what's happening. Josh Nachowitz,
13 who is in this room, walking out of this room with
14 Linda Johnson is in charge of the Brooklyn Heights
15 Library meetings where we are talking about what's
16 going to happen with the Brooklyn Heights Library.
17 Let me tell you what happened a month ago. He
18 hosted a meeting at the Brooklyn Heights Library
19 where he announced that they are going to close
20 that library, they're going to sell that Art Deco,
21 historic library to a private developer. Then he
22 said they were going to get rid of the business
23 and career services and then he said, they would
24 sell the building to a private developer who would
25 have a library on the first floor that would be

2 one fourth, one fourth the size of the library
3 now. Okay? Is everybody hearing this?

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I hear
5 you.

6 MS. MCINTYRE: Decreasing space is
7 decreasing opportunities. It's the same thing.
8 And my heart goes out to these librarians, to John
9 Hislop, whose come to our meetings. They are
10 working under horrible conditions by a leadership
11 that doesn't have their heart in line with what
12 they're supposed to be protecting. This is
13 outrageous. We are giving away tremendous real
14 estate so that a few people who are connected to
15 Bloomberg via Linda Johnson and Josh Nachowitz,
16 who's chairing these meetings so that they can get
17 more and more. And they can, at the same time,
18 decrease, decrease, decrease with every shrinkage,
19 with every foot lost, they are decreasing
20 opportunities for the public to learn and to grow.
21 The libraries are the least expensive way for the
22 public to learn and to get a foothold in this
23 society, the least expensive. They are less than
24 one percent of the city budget.

25 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: If I could

2 just interject. We are going on a three minute
3 time.

4 MS. MCINTYRE: Okay.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Gladly, we
6 let you go over 'cause, obviously, you feel very
7 passionate.

8 MS. MCINTYRE: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And I
10 appreciate that passion, I do. So I just wanted
11 to remind the other speakers from here on in, when
12 you hear that clock you're supposed to stop
13 talking. [laughter] But, I understand you feel
14 very strongly about this. So, I just want to be
15 respectful and allow you your time. And I know
16 you're speaking on behalf of all these other folks
17 here. So, thank you very much. And whoever you
18 want to go next.

19 MR. MICHAEL WHITE: I did notice
20 that you just turned on the three minute clock.
21 Do we want a shrinking library system for a
22 growing, wealthier, citier, city? 'Cause that's
23 what were going to get as the principal purpose of
24 as library system becomes a generation of real
25 estate deals for developers. The new city wide

2 policy has in a very harmful way turned into a
3 perverse incentive for the city to fund libraries
4 and drive them into the ground. That libraries
5 are underfunded is without doubt. Most people,
6 more people visited public libraries in New York
7 than every other major sports team and every other
8 major cultural event combined. The funding of
9 libraries is one of the highest priorities of the
10 community boards. And yet, libraries do not
11 receive funding anything like, for instance, the
12 massive subsidies which handle the Yankee Stadium,
13 the so called Barclay's Bruce Ratner Mikhail
14 Prokofiev Arena. With all due respect, and I will
15 leave it to you decide how much respect is due,
16 the process of the annual funding dance for
17 libraries in this city is a farce. That cannot be
18 allowed to go on for more than even one more year.
19 In noticing New York I have lifted the veil. We
20 know that insiders are referring to this process
21 as dwarf tossing.

22 MS. MCINTYRE: We're all the
23 dwarves, everyone in this room.

24 MR. WHITE: Libraries are the
25 little guys. They are the pittance that should be

2 easy to include in the city budget, especially
3 given that the money goes so far since the
4 libraries are used so well. Everyone will care
5 about libraries as their funding fate is cruelly
6 tossed around in an annual battle that serves as
7 political distraction. The political theater is,
8 the Big Bad Mayor makes, cuts the libraries and in
9 the end the City Council borough presidents ride
10 in like heroes with discretionary funds to make up
11 some but only some of the cuts. In the end, we
12 are funding our well used libraries at such a low
13 level we keep them open even less than Detroit, a
14 city on the verge of bankruptcy. Meanwhile, the
15 Mayor is getting what he wants. Low funding is
16 being used as an excuse to push the systems
17 valuable assets out the door to real estate
18 developers in crony capitalism abuse. You're
19 essentially funding the asset stripping by the
20 Mayor. The greatest shame of underfunding the
21 libraries in order to create real estate deals is
22 that even if it shakes loose a few deals, just a
23 few every year, it's an utter travesty to
24 continually drive all the libraries and the entire
25 system into the ground financially.

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you
3 very much. You came in under time. [laughter]

4 MR. WHITE: I timed it well.
5 [crosstalk] I'm used to the three minute limit. I
6 actually had a moment to, I could slow down and
7 usually try to fit in too much information.
8 [laughter] But, you know, we divided our testimony
9 up and you're only hearing a very small fraction
10 of it.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I just

12 MR. WHITE: [interposing] But the
13 rest of it's going to be on the web and you'll
14 have the physical copies of it.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Sure.
16 Thank you, I understand the constraints that
17 you've testified under and, again, I appreciate
18 your very strong feelings on this. And you'll be
19 the last and third, third and last?

20 MS. JUDY FRANCIS: [off mic] very
21 difficult place to be. I can't say it better than
22 Carolyn or Michael have. But I, everybody here--

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER:
24 [interposing] Do you want to put the mic a little
25 bit closer:

2 MS. FRANCIS: Yeah, everybody here
3 has a personal story. In 1973 my husband was
4 contemplating a career and he spent every night
5 and every day at the business library at - - in
6 Brooklyn Heights. He read every periodical and
7 book in his field. 40 years later, his successful
8 advertising agency is responsible for launching
9 such iconic brands as Haagen Daz and Snapple and
10 many other companies. Everybody has a story here
11 if they were a child or an adult. Libraries are
12 the pebbles that create the waves that become the
13 engines of commerce. To take them down on the
14 short term thinking of real estate deals is a
15 travesty. Closing this one branch will close
16 forever those bootstrap companies, the pluck of
17 entrepreneurs, that have really created this city
18 and will create it in the future. We need a
19 cooling off period. We need to stop and really
20 think about what we're doing. These are short
21 term solutions and frankly, cooling off is kind of
22 the operative word because every time a library is
23 considered to be closed, it seems that the cooling
24 systems are not working. I mean, it seems so
25 ridiculous but the reason the Donald Library

2 needed to be closed and sold and shrunk, an air
3 conditioning problem, demolishing a historic
4 research book stack at Tilden, again, an air
5 conditioning problem. You need to sell off the
6 Brooklyn Heights Branch? Huh, an air conditioning
7 problem. Sell the Pacific Branch? An air
8 conditioning problem. [crosstalk] All these air
9 conditioning problems are a problem for all of us.
10 It's a problem for our future. We are asking that
11 there be a cooling off period. That you actually
12 have an audit, a moratorium and an audit of all of
13 these air conditioning problems. It seems so
14 simple but everybody has a simple story here and
15 what the libraries have meant to them. So, let's
16 take this simple problem of air conditioning and
17 lets fix it so that we can save these buildings.
18 It's just really ironic, that's all I can say.
19 And I want to close by saying, if you're really
20 looking for some more money why don't we just shut
21 down the EDC? You know,[laughter] my husbands
22 business, no honestly. It's just, like,
23 ridiculous. Because \$100 million, just \$100
24 million, which is what these guys were saying that
25 they needed just to get them through this year,

2 \$100 million was given by the EDC to Fresh Direct.
3 Okay, that's one company. Think of all the
4 entrepreneurs and all the pluck of all those
5 entrepreneurs if we kept all the libraries open as
6 opposed to one company. Certainly, the tax
7 revenue generated from all those companies would
8 be far greater than the one that has been given
9 the money from the EDC. And I've saved you 16
10 seconds too, 13, 12, 10 [laughter] we're either
11 moving towards the more caring society or we're
12 moving away from it. If we follow the leadership
13 in selling off these branches we're moving away
14 from a caring society.

15 MR. WHITE: Beautiful finish.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah.

17 MS. FRANCIS: Thank you. [applause]

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you
19 very much for coming out here today, for waiting.
20 I know it was a long, long wait and, you know, I
21 think that as Chair of the Cultural Affairs and
22 Libraries Committee, you know, we'll take
23 everything that you've said and go back and talk
24 to the systems. It affects not just the Brooklyn
25 Public Library System, obviously, as our next

2 panel will speak too. And I can say to you that
3 probably like everyone else in this room, right,
4 my life would be very different if it were not for
5 the Broadway Branch of the Queens Public Library
6 System in Astoria. And you probably heard me say,
7 obviously, we did not have a lot of money. I'm
8 one of eight children but we had the public
9 library. And I was the first person in my family
10 to go to college and now I'm a City Council Member
11 and Chair of the Committee that I once wrote
12 testimony for. So, it's something I appreciate
13 and I very, very much appreciate everything you've
14 said and we really do need to be able to get to a
15 place where we can invest in and fix air
16 conditioning units. [laughter] And so, thank you.
17 Thank you for your passion and I know that if we
18 didn't have a three minute time you'd all still be
19 going and, I mean that respectfully because I know
20 you care. And it's important and I want to thank
21 all of the other folks who came today, who waited
22 and this is a budget hearing so normally we don't
23 hear non budget testimony but because I know the
24 issue is important we wanted to allow folks to
25 speak and so that's why we have three

2 representatives. So, for those of you who didn't
 3 get the chance, thank you for coming. Thank you
 4 for your advocacy and for believing in public
 5 library service. Normally we don't take questions
 6 from the field in raising a hand but [crosstalk]
 7 Yes. The Sergeant of Arms will happily take the
 8 [off mic] Oh, I'm sure you could send it to me or
 9 to [off mic] okay. [off mic] So, we'll definitely
 10 get that done. So, with that I say thank you all
 11 very, very much. And we will hear from, next, the
 12 Committee to Save the New York Public Library,
 13 Annalynne Swann [phonetic]?

14 MS. ANNALYNNE SWANN: Here I am.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Annalynne
 16 is here?

17 MS. SWANN: Yeah.

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Veronica
 19 Conant [phonetic], veronica Conant and Monica
 20 Strauss [phonetic], Monica Strauss? Okay. Should
 21 I see Veronica, is Veronica? [off mic] Okay. All
 22 right, everyone's here, I think. Okay. Here we
 23 go. [off mic] Why don't you start.

24 MS. SWANN: Okay. And you thought
 25 the Brooklyn crowd was passionate, wait for our

2 performance. [laughter] I'm Annalynne Swann,
3 biographer, critic and writer and I put that in
4 because I often am in the Rose Reading Room of the
5 New York Public Library. So, I sort of know
6 whereof I speak. What we know is the Central
7 Library Plan is a spectacularly misguided plan.
8 If indeed, the word plan can even be applied to
9 something so poorly conceived and badly designed.
10 It will at once eviscerate one of the worlds
11 greatest research institutions, shoehorn the
12 existing branch libraries of midtown into a space
13 far too small and starve other branch libraries
14 throughout the city of desperately needed funds.
15 Other than that, it's a brilliant idea. [laughter]
16 In the interest of time I will raise only two
17 essential questions about the funding for the
18 project. First, the libraries as chosen by far
19 the most expensive option going forward at a time,
20 as Tony Marx stated sitting right here earlier, of
21 quote, unquote, devastating funding cuts. One
22 central reason given for the huge costs of the
23 plan is the expensive engineering needed to
24 demolish the stacks which support the floor of the
25 Rose Reading Room above them. The lead engineer

2 has likened the procedure to, quotes, cutting the
3 legs of a table while dinner is being served. By
4 contrast, the 2003 design by Gwathmey Siegel &
5 Associates to rehabilitate the mid Manhattan
6 library across the street was estimated to cost
7 \$120 million. Even allowing for inflation the
8 difference between the cost of the project and the
9 300, of that project and the \$300 to \$350 million
10 estimated price tag of the 40th Street makeover is
11 eye popping. Second, the library has
12 overestimated operating savings from the Central
13 Library Plan. Again and again we have heard the
14 library claim poverty as the reason for
15 consolidating the two midtown branches into the
16 40th Street, 2nd Street main library. \$15 million
17 annually could be saved, we were told. However,
18 the library has more recently acknowledged in the
19 person of the Chief Operating Officer, that the
20 library was conservatively counting on realizing
21 only \$7 million in annual operating savings, less
22 than half the original estimate. Given so many
23 major questions about both the funding and the
24 nature of the project the Committee to Save the
25 New York Public Library believes the Central

2 Library Plan should not proceed until there has
3 been an independent study of its costs, its
4 disproportionate gobbling up of funds while the
5 branch libraries fight for every crumb. And
6 finally, a review of Norman Foster's less than
7 rapturously received remake of the stacks. I
8 would submit that maybe it's time for plan B.
9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Next.

11 MS. MONICA STRAUSS: I'm going to
12 be repeating some of the statistics but I think
13 they're complicated enough to bear repetition.
14 The Committee to Save the New York Public Library
15 is very concerned about the imprecision with which
16 the cost of the Central Library Plan, the closing
17 of the mid Manhattan and the Science Industry and
18 Business Library, the selling of their premises
19 and the consolidation of their functions within
20 the 42nd Street Research Library has been presented
21 to the public. The massive construction project
22 will involve the demolition of seven stories of
23 stacks. Since they serve as the structural
24 support of the Rose Reading Room, highly
25 sophisticated engineering skills will be required

2 to fulfill the promise that the Reading Room will
3 remain open for research throughout construction.
4 And it's been claimed that we won't hear a thing.
5 A new delivery system for books will have to be
6 devised. At least 1.5 million volumes will have
7 to be moved to remote storage before the planned
8 circulating library can be built in the space thus
9 made available. In 2008 the estimated cost for
10 the complex plan was \$250 million. At the
11 presentation of Norman Foster's design in December
12 2012 it was presented as \$350 million. In
13 February 2013 the New York Public Library Chair,
14 Neil Rudenstine, admitted that the budget
15 estimates, quote, cannot be refined with any
16 precision at this stage, end quote. Knowing
17 Norman Fosters reputation for cost overruns as
18 well, there can be no doubt that costs will go
19 higher still. Can the Committee on Cultural
20 Affairs countenance such fiscal unpredictability
21 particularly during a period of economic
22 uncertainty? To confuse matters further the
23 source of the funding has also shifted. Now it is
24 presented as \$150 million of New York City
25 taxpayer money and \$150 from the sales of the

2 Donnell Library, the Research Annex and five
3 floors of office space in the Science and Business
4 Building. Since the mid Manhattan Library
5 originally the lynchpin of the Central Library
6 Plan is no longer mentioned as part of the funding
7 mix why can it not be developed as the star
8 circulating library of the system at far less cost
9 and without the destruction of a great New York
10 City monument? And independent review of the CLP,
11 Central Library Plan, is clearly required. Thank
12 you.

13 MS. VERONICA CONANT: I am Veronica
14 Conant a member of the Committee to Save the New
15 York Public Library as well. And I am also
16 retired librarian. I want to address the capital
17 budget for the New York Public Library System and
18 oppose its use for the Central Library Plan as
19 mentioned by the, my friends here. But in
20 particular the \$150 million in capital funds and
21 the total cost of this enormous and sort of futile
22 venture, not very wise venture to be \$300 to \$350
23 million. Many of the New York Public Library
24 Systems 87 neighborhood circulating libraries and
25 4 research libraries are in bad physical condition

2 with longstanding problems needing attention. At
3 the New York City Library's website there is a
4 list of the New York Public Library Systems
5 estimated construction needs for 2012 to 2017.
6 And in my handout to you I gave you the website.
7 There are 64 libraries listed, and actually this
8 is a list of them, and the 64 libraries listed,
9 this construction is for partial or full interior,
10 exterior renovations, air conditioning, lots of
11 air conditioning [laughter] windows, fire
12 protection and the total cost is close to \$337
13 million, which is very comparable to the cost
14 estimates we have been hearing about the Central
15 Library Plan. According to the New York Public
16 Library's 2011 annual report the research
17 libraries had almost 2.5 million users, the 87
18 branches, 15 million or over. During the present
19 economic times the more library users than ever
20 have been turning to the libraries and library
21 resources, neighborhood libraries are very
22 important. According to the Branches of
23 Opportunity, I am also turning to that one, which
24 is a great, really very useful publication, as we
25 have all finding. Renovated libraries have

2 significant increase in their use. For example,
3 in the Bronx they built a new library for \$50
4 million, which has 200,000 volumes, 78,000 square
5 feet, and since 2006 it tripled the use to over
6 600,000. It became the second most used library
7 in the New York Public Library System. Now, the
8 only higher is the mid Manhattan, which is under
9 the ax right now. The other, only other branch
10 library higher is the Donnell Library, which in
11 2000 and, in its last year before it was sold was,
12 had over 700,000, you know, attendance. And in
13 the last year of its operation it was claimed that
14 its air conditioner repair would have cost \$50
15 million. We heard that one before. But that was
16 the first use of it. [bell ringing] Oh, can up
17 please exercise your oversight function and have a
18 careful look at the needs of the branches. A -
19 - approach is needed looking at the entire system
20 and beyond. As for the Donnell, I would like to
21 ask you and the New York Public Library to make
22 sure it will be rebuilt at the same size as
23 before. Since the new building will be in a 46
24 story high condo hotel and at the time of the sale
25 they said it would be 11 stories high. Please

2 protect our branches, against their sale, not only
3 to Manhattan but in all the boroughs and we ask
4 you to, as the others I can only repeat, that the
5 Committee To Save the New York Public Library
6 believes that this mustn't proceed until there has
7 been an independent study of the costs and the
8 costs of all the feasible alternatives. And the
9 impact of the plan on the branch libraries, the
10 research library and on the 42nd Street building
11 itself. Too more statements I would like to make.
12 One is that President Marx always, they cannot
13 change it because these \$150 million was for the
14 plan that they have. However, I have done grants
15 before and budget modification could redirect the
16 funds towards alternative plans. And the branches
17 and also for the renovation of mid Manhattan,
18 which is for many of us a very good alternative.
19 And then one last recommendation, I would love to
20 have or would it be possible for the City Council
21 to have a library committee which has every
22 borough representative strong and strong oversight
23 of all this? That's all. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you
25 very much. First of all, I want to say you're

2 very clever 'cause when you went over three
3 minutes, I'm reading your testimony, I let you
4 keep going 'cause there's only a paragraph left.

5 MS. CONANT: [interposing] I
6 appreciate it, thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And then
8 you adlibbed even more in there. [laughter]

9 MS. CONANT: I appreciate it.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And I
11 thought, how much does she have that she's not
12 actually giving me?

13 MS. CONANT: Everybody knows me.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So...

15 MS. CONANT: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I want to
17 say, first of all, there are members of our
18 Committee from four of the five boroughs, Staten
19 Island, as you may know, has three Council
20 Members, none of them currently sit on the
21 Committee. But, we do have at least one member
22 from four of the other five boroughs represented.
23 Obviously, I'm from Queens and Council Member
24 Gentile is from Brooklyn. But I appreciate you
25 coming. Again, you spoke once before this

2 Committee.

3 MS. CONANT: I spoke a number of
4 times before because I was involved with the West
5 54th, 55th Street - - Association.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yes.

7 MS. CONANT: And preservation and
8 last year we came, actually - - .

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yes, I
10 remember your very distinctive voice and you're a
11 librarian, right?

12 MS. CONANT: Yes, retired
13 librarian.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Which I
15 like. Right. Once you're a librarian you're
16 always a librarian, right? Even if you're
17 retired. You can still probably answer.

18 MS. CONANT: But I loved, I loved
19 it. So, it's easy.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah. So,
21 thank you for coming and waiting again and for
22 sharing these thoughts with us. And I will
23 definitely take this back to Mr. Marx and see what
24 we can do with your recommendations. But, let me
25 just say I appreciate how strongly you all feel

2 about this and I know the three of you are simply
3 representing even more people who obviously
4 couldn't be here today.

5 MS. STRAUSS: And could we just say
6 that we have, we are leaving, left behind things
7 for you. We have a, sort of, what we call a truth
8 and consequences document which we've compiled a
9 lot of information. And that represents our whole
10 group. There are quite a number of us.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Okay.

12 MS. CONANT: Yes, that is one.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: This,
14 right? Yes. I have it here. And I appreciate
15 the thought and the detail. I was looking through
16 it as you were speaking and it is very detailed
17 and I very much want to--

18 MS. STRAUSS: [interposing] It
19 shows the mark of many librarians wouldn't you
20 say?

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER:
22 Absolutely. And you have lots of references at
23 the back. So, I appreciate you coming here.

24 MS. CONANT: Show the scholarly
25 component.

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And
3 probably not the last time we'll hear from you.
4 So, thank you very much for coming by and we have
5 two more panels.

6 MS. CONANT: Thank you very much.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.
8 So, I want to recognize the folks who have waited
9 here. We're almost five hours strong. This is
10 the longest Cultural Affairs, Libraries meeting I
11 think I've ever had. So, David Johnston, who I
12 see right in front of me. It looks like
13 Christabel Guff [phonetic].

14 MS. CHRISTABEL GUFF: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Okay. And
16 Liz Chualo [phonetic], is it Chualo? Liz, is Liz
17 still here? No Liz Chualo? So, we will call
18 Anthony Bush. Is Anthony Bush here? There's
19 Anthony. Do you want to join us, Anthony? Thank
20 you. All right. David, why don't you go first
21 and then we'll go down the line.

22 MR. DAVID JOHNSTON: Okay. Good
23 afternoon. I am David Johnston, Executive
24 Director at Exploring the Metropolis. We are a
25 non profit service organization dedicated to

2 finding workspace solutions for the performing
3 arts community of New York City. I would like to
4 thank the Committee today for the opportunity to
5 testify and thank the Chairman, Councilman Jimmy
6 Van Bramer for his steadfast support of the arts
7 in New York City. The city's preliminary FY 2014
8 budget allocates the Department of Cultural
9 Affairs \$92.8 million, a 1.3 percent reduction
10 from last years preliminary figures. We and
11 others CDF grantees have already been notified
12 that our FY '13 final payment has been subject to
13 an across the board cut. We urge this Committee
14 and the City Council to work with the Mayor's
15 office to increase, not decrease DCA funding for
16 FY 2014. At Exploring the Metropolis we bring
17 live composers and new music to NYC residents of
18 all ages. Currently, we administer the Con Edison
19 Composers' Residency now in it's fifth year which
20 pairs composers in need of workspace with cultural
21 and community facilities with underutilized space.
22 We provide stipends to the competitively chosen
23 composers in host facilities and each composer
24 presents one free public program in coordination
25 with the host facility. Last year, we

2 administered residencies at Flushing Town Hall, a
3 long time partner in this program. We're big fans
4 of Ellen Kodadek. As well as Turtle Bay Music
5 School, Bloomingdale School for Music and Brooklyn
6 Youth Chorus Academy. Hundreds of New Yorkers of
7 all ages enjoy these free programs and alumni of
8 our residency have gone on to win WNYC's Battle of
9 the Boroughs, ASCAP awards, grants from the
10 Jonathan Larson Foundation. Helen Sung, an
11 Elmhurst resident and recent resident composer at
12 Flushing Town Hall recently played for the NEA
13 Jazz Masters Awards at Dizzy's Coca Cola last,
14 this year. Our partners at Bloomingdale School of
15 Music commissioned their composers to write new
16 pieces for their students which were performed
17 last month at Carnegie Hall. The DCA funds this
18 residency and their support is crucial, vital, in
19 attracting other corporate and foundation dollars.
20 This year we are embarking on a major workspace
21 research initiative in Queens, assessing space
22 needs for performing artists and proposing policy
23 recommendations and pilot programs for these
24 vibrant and growing communities. We will be
25 releasing our data findings in a series of town

2 hall meetings throughout the borough in 2013 and
3 '14. We have asked the DCA to support this
4 effort. Again, we urge the Council and the Mayor
5 to increase, not decrease, this vital DCA funding
6 for FY 2014. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you
8 very much.

9 MR. JOHNSTON: Ten seconds left,
10 look at that.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Well
12 timed, well said and well timed. And lots of
13 Queens references in there so you know I
14 appreciated that. And now Christabel Guff, is it
15 Guff?

16 MS. GUFF: It is, yes. So, I'm
17 Christabel Guff from the Society for the
18 Architecture of the City and we're a small, all
19 volunteer, historic preservation advocacy group.
20 And our main mission is providing research on land
21 rights issues. So, we are constant users of both
22 branch and Central Research library. We wanted to
23 come here and go on the record objecting to the
24 horrible cuts which are being proposed by the
25 administration and we trust you to restore them

2 but we have to say, as so many others have, we
3 have to have a baseline budget for the libraries.
4 It's essential. Earlier, Mr. Marx spoke of branch
5 libraries as being embedded in their
6 neighborhoods. And although I disagree with some
7 of the policies he's advocating I think he really
8 had a point there. And that is why selling off
9 branch libraries is an idea whose time has not
10 come. We are appalled at the proposals to sell
11 library properties, that includes mid Manhattan
12 Library, SIBL, the Science Industry and Building
13 Business, Brooklyn Heights, and the Pacific Branch
14 in Brooklyn. And we absolutely reject the
15 explanations of need for this and we strongly
16 agree with Council Member James, who says we need
17 an independent assessment of some of these claims.
18 And we are working with Citizens Defending
19 Libraries and the Committee to Save the New York
20 Public Library. These capital plans are really
21 part of what you're hearing today in the sense
22 that running down the branches and not maintaining
23 them gives an excuse for closing them. Regarding
24 the 42nd Street Central Library Plan, which was
25 denounced by Ada Louise Huxtable in the Wall

2 Street Journal and Michael Kimmelman in the New
3 York Times. In our letter to the times, published
4 last February 7th, we wrote, it is unbelievable
5 that the people of New York City not only seem to
6 have no power to prevent the partial demolition of
7 our great library but are also actually being
8 forced to pay half the cost of its destruction.
9 Since \$150 million of city funds has been allotted
10 to a project so correctly described by Michael
11 Kimmelman as trashing a landmark. The library
12 plans to demolish the stacks with a fraction of
13 the book collection to be housed under Bryant
14 Park, the rest in a warehouse in New Jersey and
15 the space repurposed. The original design,
16 fabric, structure and purpose of a major part of
17 the building will be destroyed, rendering the
18 landmark a dysfunctional shell and a shadow of its
19 former self. So, please help us.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

21 [applause]

22 MR. ANTHONY BUSH: Thank you. This
23 is on?

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: It is.

25 MR. BUSH: Okay. My name is

2 Anthony Bush, as you know. I initially had a
3 question. I came here at the behest of Carolyn
4 McIntyre. Thank you very much. And I would
5 appreciate the opportunity. Can you address the
6 question now or should I wait 'til you answer it
7 later?

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Normally
9 you testify and we ask questions.

10 MR. BUSH: Yeah, okay, yeah.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So...

12 [laughter]

13 MR. BUSH: All right. This is not
14 the - - time for me to do it.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: That's
16 fine. So, why don't you make a statement and tell
17 us how you feel and then we can entertain
18 questions later.

19 MR. BUSH: Well, we've had more
20 than enough testimony on the issue of libraries.
21 Nobody needs to tell anyone that here. I don't
22 see the need of so much money, what do we need the
23 money for? What do we need to save \$50 or \$100
24 million for, to do what with? The libraries are
25 more important than the money. I would hope that

2 under Bloomberg, well, this is Bloomberg's last
3 term so I, so that's why we see more devastation
4 now 'cause he don't have to be reelected. I was
5 just reading in the Wall Street Journal yesterday,
6 I believe, that our, the homeless people is going
7 through the same problem with them. So, you know,
8 this, for him, is, this is really his character.
9 And I guess he was nice the first term too but it
10 would seem kind of simple and obvious the need of
11 libraries. I hope, in fact, that you're able to
12 either vote against him or override his veto,
13 supply the funds yourself, or do something to
14 maintain these libraries. That's basically all I
15 have to say. Can you, I mean, that process. What
16 is the process actually? Are you actually going
17 to vote against him, override his vetoes, supply
18 the funds from another source? What is actually
19 going to happen? And is there a chance this is
20 going to, we are going to be able to save the
21 libraries?

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Well, you
23 asked a lot of questions in that one question.
24 And I think, you know, no one Council Member does
25 it all or can allocate hundreds of millions of

2 dollars.

3 MR. BUSH: Right.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Is what
5 we're talking about. And a lot of the funding
6 that you're talking about was actually allocated
7 by the Mayor's office directly, which is their
8 prerogative. And so, I would say that nothing is
9 done until it's done. And you are here fighting
10 until the very end of this process, so, I
11 appreciate that a great deal. Someone who began
12 his career as an advocate and an activist and
13 still considers himself one, although now I'm an
14 elected official as well. So, it is, there's a
15 ways to go. There's still some things that have
16 to be done. And I know that myself and I'm sure
17 all of the others are listening and I read
18 everything I see about all of these issues. I
19 think I just got timed out. [laughter] And--

20 MR. BUSH: [interposing] We'll give
21 you more time.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And so,
23 normally we don't have a clock on the Chair of the
24 Committee but... So, that's a very short answer but
25 I'm happy to talk to you offline a little bit more

2 in detail. But, because we have one more panel to
3 go and I want to be respectful--

4 MR. BUSH: [interposing] Okay.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --of folks
6 who waited an awful long time. I want to say
7 thank you to all of you for coming here, for
8 testifying and just know that I'm very much
9 listening to every single thing you're saying.
10 Thank you very much.

11 MR. BUSH: Pleasure.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And
13 [applause] it does appear to be so. The last two
14 people to testify in this marathon hearing of our
15 Committee, if they are still here is Anthony
16 Donovan, Anthony Donovan is here. And Sonia
17 Collins, is Sonia Collins here? It appears Sonia
18 Collins is not here so Anthony, you will be the
19 very final speaker here today. So, I hope it's
20 really good and really profound.

21 MR. ANTHONY DONOVAN: Oh, damn. I
22 should have written some.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: That's all
24 right.

25 MR. DONOVAN: Thank you so much for

2 waiting. And I actually didn't come here on
3 behalf of any group or, I just found out about
4 this. I don't represent anyone except for I'm one
5 of many millions, not one of a million but one of
6 many millions of New Yorkers who owe such a debt
7 of gratitude to librarians and libraries. And
8 [applause] in my family history. I, and I just
9 wanted to share, I heard about this hearing and,
10 thank you very much for allowing an individual to
11 come. My great, my grandmother who was orphaned
12 at the age of ten was, had a brother who gave her
13 a potato and said, look, just cross the Brooklyn
14 Bridge and head to the library. And she did, and
15 the librarians took her under her wing, gave her
16 Dickens, and she became the most avid, only had a
17 fifth grade education, was the most well read
18 person I ever met in my life. And that's what
19 started the library system. My father, who grew
20 up with that influence of her knowledge, not
21 school knowledge but knowledge from, that was
22 given to her in the library, public library,
23 became a world historian. So, it's a great, great
24 debt we have to this system. I, myself, owe my
25 profession, which is caring for those who are

2 dying, I'm a nurse and was a manager of a
3 healthcare companies. My profession was chosen
4 because I was in a library and found a book on
5 death and dying. It changed my entire life. So,
6 I also, I, on 9/11 I worked a block from here.
7 That night, I was, all night I was at the site and
8 decided to do a documentary on what, on dealing
9 with global terrorism, the path that we did not
10 take. And I could not have done that documentary
11 without the public library, just would not have
12 happened. That documentary won best documentary
13 here in New York City in a film festival. But
14 none of this could have happened without the
15 public library. So these, especially midtown but
16 these are very inspiring, encouraging, beautiful
17 spaces and I'm so grateful that they're here. I'm
18 really grateful for all the librarians that have
19 helped me all these years and thank you so much
20 for putting time and effort. And I definitely
21 don't trust the real estate folks. I know we need
22 development here and responsible development in
23 New York City, I'm all for it. But I really
24 learned to distrust a lot of the things that have
25 been going on. So, God bless, thank you very much

2 for your time everyone. [applause]

3 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you
4 very much. And you don't have to thank us for
5 hanging around. This is our job. We are called
6 to do this and, in fact, it's an honor to be Chair
7 of the Committee and to Chair this with our Chair,
8 Vincent Gentile. And it is great to know that
9 government is here and can be accessed and you can
10 have that opportunity. You very much deserve that
11 so it's my honor and privilege to hear what
12 everyone has to say about these issues. And
13 hopefully coming out of this, the one thing we can
14 all agree on is the importance of libraries and
15 cultural and the absolute silliness in proposing
16 hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts to them
17 and to reaffirm our commitment to libraries across
18 the City of New York as well as our cultural
19 community. So, with that, I want to thank everyone
20 who came today, everyone who testified at our five
21 hour marathon hearing on Cultural and Libraries
22 and the preliminary budget. Thank you to Chair
23 Gentile. Thank you to our staff who have worked
24 very hard to make this possible. And I look
25 forward to working with all of you to strengthen

2 our city. With that, this hearing is adjourned.

3 [applause]

4 [background noise]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Tara Juhl 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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tara Juhl", written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Date 3/26/13