

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

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

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B E F O R E:

JAMES G. VAN BRAMER  
COSTA G. CONSTANTINIDES  
Chairperson(s)

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

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Good afternoon.

If everyone could take their seats we're about to begin. My name is Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer and I'm Chair of the Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations Committee joined by Costa Constantinides the Chair of the Select Committee on Libraries and Council Member Elizabeth Crowley also a member of our Committee. And with this gavel strike we are officially going to have our FY2015 preliminary budget hearings. Just so folks know we're having a three library system president and CEOs testify now. They'll be followed by the Cultural affairs, the acting cultural affairs commissioner Margaret Morton and then we will hear testimony from the public interested in speaking on libraries and cultural affairs and the Department of Cultural Affairs. And I'm going to have a opening statement and then so will my fellow Chair Constantinides and then we'll hear from the three presidents and CEOs. I want to welcome everyone to our preliminary budget hearing on this first budget hearing for Council Member Costa Constantinides as Chair of the Select

1  
2 Committee on Libraries so welcome to our fellow  
3 chair. As everyone knows our three public library  
4 systems, the Brooklyn New York and Queens systems  
5 are uniquely positioned to support the city and are  
6 crucial to every New Yorker. A national study  
7 recently found that libraries are the primary  
8 source of internet access for households earning  
9 less than 30 thousand dollars annually. And for 67  
10 percent of households earning less than 20 thousand  
11 dollars because they do not have a computer and/or  
12 internet service at home. This only further  
13 supports a notion that we all hold dear that our  
14 libraries are the lifeblood in so many communities  
15 particularly those communities in need and with  
16 little resources. While some folks believe that  
17 libraries might one day become extinct we know that  
18 libraries as community centers, as after school  
19 programs, as classes, English language learner  
20 havens, they are more important today than ever. We  
21 are here today to discuss the mayor's preliminary  
22 budget actions for the three library systems. In  
23 the November plan the budget dance ended we hope  
24 forever. And our three systems were fully restored  
25 and base lined for FY2015 and in the out years.

1  
2 This is a very, very welcome development. Every  
3 testimony for the last several years has been about  
4 draconian budget cuts, absolutely horrific proposed  
5 budget reductions that we have had to fight back  
6 and fight back and fight back. So it is great that  
7 we are restored and base lined. However it is very  
8 important to note that we have been base lined at a  
9 level that is still far below where we want and  
10 need to be. And that is the peak levels of 2008. We  
11 have an opportunity at this moment to visionary and  
12 renew our commitment to libraries. Every branch in  
13 the city of New York should be open at least six  
14 days a week, a full day, and people should have  
15 access to the critical resources regardless of the  
16 neighborhood's economic status. Thanks to the base  
17 line funding which we're grateful Mayor di Blasio  
18 has kept in the preliminary budget. And we  
19 sincerely hope will be kept in the executive budget  
20 libraries can now look beyond the year after year  
21 and midyear reductions and refocus on enhanced  
22 services in responding to the needs of New Yorkers.  
23 We look forward to working with the library systems  
24 and the administration to continue the conversation  
25 about further investments and how we can

1  
2 collaborate for even stronger libraries. It would  
3 be a shame if we do not take this opportunity to  
4 increase funding for our public libraries and not  
5 simply rest where we're sitting right now which is  
6 base line funding. So I know a great partner in  
7 that effort to increase library funding hours and  
8 days of service and programs is the select  
9 committee on libraries chair Costa Constantinides  
10 and I'd like him to say a few words.

11 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you  
12 Mr. Chair. Good afternoon. First I'd like to start  
13 by thanking Chairman Van Bramer for holding  
14 steadfast to commitment to vital library systems.  
15 He's really been a, a true leader throughout the  
16 city. Thank you. I am Costa Constantinides Chair of  
17 the Council's Select Committee on Libraries. Fiscal  
18 20, 2015 preliminary budget was a refreshing start  
19 to my first season as a council member. In the  
20 November plan the administration base lined funding  
21 for three library systems totaling 301 million  
22 dollars. In prior years the council is consistently  
23 disappointed by the budget that force libraries to  
24 make very difficult choices between reducing hours  
25 or, or freezing hires. This year it's different.

1  
2 Instead of wasting energy on the imminent budget  
3 dance, we put our shoes away and we can, it would  
4 start the conversation focused on how we can move  
5 the systems forward with funding that is  
6 sustainable. Library roles in our communities are  
7 crucial to the people they serve. The mission and  
8 the vision of the public library systems have  
9 changed. They have become community hubs for some  
10 of the neediest people. Libraries have managed to  
11 serve communities who need it the most with after  
12 school programs, workforce development resources  
13 and English language learner classes all while  
14 maintaining their roots as cultural capital and  
15 hard pressed communities. In their fiscal 2014  
16 adoption the administration and the council made  
17 libraries a priority by making a joint effort to  
18 restore funding. I am very excited to continue in  
19 this direction and get back to the real work by  
20 focusing on enhancements of services and programmed  
21 as our chair outlined earlier. We at the council  
22 along with the library systems in our communities  
23 are proud to be in a city that invests in one its  
24 most treasured resources and understands the  
25 importance of libraries. I understand the

1  
2 importance of libraries when I, I grew up in the  
3 Steinway branch in Astoria and now I'm very proud  
4 to see my little boy who's four and a half sitting  
5 in those same stacks you know... learning his, his  
6 love of reading there. In closing I would like to  
7 thank my staff and the committee staff for working  
8 to put this hearing together. We'll now hear  
9 testimony from the three systems.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
11 much Chair Constantinides and that was the first  
12 time it struck me that both of us grew up in  
13 Astoria reading at different branches in Astoria.  
14 Mine was the Broadway branch on Steinway street and  
15 Broadways so who knew that two boys from Astoria  
16 would grow up to chair the Libraries committee.

17 [applause]

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.  
19 Applause for Astoria clearly. Thank you. I want to  
20 recognize we're joined by Council Member Peter Koo  
21 and with that we will ask Linda Johnson, Tony Marx,  
22 and Tom Galante to join and begin the testimony.  
23 And perhaps Linda can begin.

24 [pause]

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: It's all  
3 downhill from there so...

4 LINDA JOHNSON: Good afternoon. I'm  
5 Linda Johnson, President and CEO of Brooklyn Public  
6 Library. Thank you to Speaker Melissa Mark  
7 Viverito, Chairman Geneva and Bramer and Costa  
8 Constantinides and the entire City Council for  
9 tirelessly advocating on behalf of New York City's  
10 libraries. We are very grateful that Mayor di  
11 Blasio has ended the budget dance, a dance that  
12 we're thrilled not to be invited to this year and  
13 base lined our funding. We cannot thank you enough  
14 for your leadership in making this possible. And  
15 I'm pleased to be here today to speak about the  
16 incredible demand for library services and the  
17 tremendous opportunity we have to increase access  
18 to our resources. I look forward to working with  
19 the city council and the administration to increase  
20 funding for Brooklyn Public Library to levels that  
21 will restore all the budget cuts experienced by the  
22 library over the last several years. Brooklyn  
23 Public Library's 60 libraries are critical  
24 community centers, gathering places for all  
25 Brooklynites. The library is the borough's only

1  
2 civic organization open to everyone with a presence  
3 in every neighborhood. Across Brooklyn we provide  
4 an array of resources such as free Wi-Fi and  
5 computers, early literacy programs, SAT classes,  
6 and resume and job search assistance. The library  
7 does much more than just loan books every day. Our  
8 programs and resources include the lives of  
9 thousands of Brooklynites. From recent immigrants  
10 to lifelong New Yorkers, infants to homebound older  
11 adults and adult literacy learners and, to Pulitzer  
12 prize winning authors. People of all ages and from  
13 all walks of life depend on our libraries. Our 60  
14 branches are among the city's most progressive  
15 educational institutions bridging the divide  
16 between the two New Yorks. They are the only places  
17 that offer such a wide variety of programming free  
18 of charge to all with a curiosity to enter our  
19 buildings. Over the last fiscal year our libraries  
20 served more than 10 million visitors, provided over  
21 38 thousand program sessions and answered more than  
22 3.5 million reference questions. During the same  
23 period our circulation of books, DVDs, e-books, and  
24 other materials was nearly 17.5 million. The use of  
25 our digital resources continues to rise. E-book

1 circulation was 70 percent higher than last year  
2 and Wi-Fi use was nearly twice what it was during  
3 the previous fiscal year. Recently we have focused  
4 on building our core services including children's  
5 programming, workforce development, adult learning,  
6 and access to technology, and launching programs to  
7 help us reach a wider audience through our outreach  
8 services department. I will next briefly describe a  
9 few of these initiatives. Brooklyn Public Library  
10 has long been a leader in children's programming.  
11 With the opening of the Brownsville Children's  
12 Library in 1914, now known as the Stone Avenue  
13 Library we were the first in the world to open a  
14 branch library devoted solely to children. Both the  
15 child's place for children with special needs and  
16 our award winning first five years programs are  
17 considered best practices. Last year over 86  
18 thousand people including more than 60 thousand  
19 children ages 12 and under signed up for summer  
20 reading at Brooklyn Public Library. Summer reading  
21 keeps children learning and reading during school  
22 vacation, supports the common core, and promotes  
23 improved student achievement. It also helps reduce  
24 the summer slide in reading proficiency especially  
25

1  
2 for at risk children. Additionally for us it  
3 enables us to enrich programming for the summer  
4 camp that we host, the Brooklyn Cultural Adventures  
5 Program which offers hands on experiences for  
6 children at the library and at five other treasured  
7 cultural institutions in the heart of Brooklyn.  
8 Thousands of students also depend on the library  
9 for educational assistance. Last fiscal year  
10 Brooklyn Public Library expanded its homework help  
11 volunteer program and created a new high school  
12 tutoring program. The after school homework help  
13 program which serves children in grades one through  
14 eight increased from 110 volunteers in 48 locations  
15 serving 17,600 patrons in fiscal year 2012 to 134  
16 volunteers in 54 locations serving 21,000 patient,  
17 patrons in fiscal year 2013. Brooklyn Public  
18 Library also placed 20 high school tutors at 50  
19 branches, 15 branches who assisted 2,400 students.  
20 To supplement the high school tutoring program  
21 between April and June Brooklyn Public Library  
22 conducted SAT and college preparation seminars at  
23 10 library locations. This fiscal year Brooklyn  
24 Public Library will expand the seminar to include  
25 from 20 to 25 branches. My library NYC created in

1  
2 partnership with New York Public Library, Queens  
3 Library and the New York Department of Education  
4 has further enabled us to enhance children's  
5 educational opportunities. The goal of my library  
6 NYC is to increase student and teacher access to  
7 public library books and, and to, and to remove  
8 common barriers to borrowing them. Over the past  
9 fiscal year the number of participating Brooklyn  
10 schools in this program has more than quadrupled  
11 from 34 schools in fiscal year 2013 to 139 in  
12 fiscal year 2014. Furthermore in the fall of 2013  
13 Brooklyn Public Library trained over 1,400 school  
14 librarians and teachers, distributed special  
15 library cards that allow fine free borrowing and  
16 delivered books directly to the schools among other  
17 benefits. As of the end of December 2013 almost 50  
18 thousand books and other Brooklyn Public Library  
19 materials had been circulated through MyLibraryNYC.  
20 The library is also committed to creating more  
21 inclusionary environments so that all Brooklynites  
22 can benefit from its services. In July 2013 the  
23 funding from the Charles H. Revson Foundation,  
24 Brooklyn Public Library created a new department of  
25 outreach services to plan and implement a strategy

1  
2 to reach out to Brooklyn's immigrant, older adult,  
3 and transitional populations including people  
4 experiencing homelessness and incarcerated and  
5 formerly incarcerated individuals. The department  
6 is forming partnerships with local community based  
7 organizations and city agencies that will help us  
8 reach wider audiences and provide new or expanded  
9 programming. This year the department will oversee  
10 the continued delivery of creative aging programs  
11 at several neighborhood branches as part of its  
12 effort to engage older Brooklynites and help combat  
13 the isolation that often afflicts this population.  
14 Last month in partnership with the Library of  
15 Congress, our Outreach Services Department, and the  
16 Brooklyn Collection launched the Veterans Oral  
17 History Project. Over the course of the project  
18 veterans will be invited to record their personal  
19 accounts of military combat from World War II to  
20 present conflicts. These recordings will be  
21 archived at a Brooklyn Public, at Brooklyn Public  
22 Library and the Library of Congress so that future  
23 generations may listen to and better understand the  
24 realities of war and the men and women who serve.  
25 Also in February Outreach Services launched a

1  
2 mobile library to operate weekly at several New  
3 York City Department of Corrections jails. These  
4 satellite libraries provide much needed education  
5 and recreational reading material for hundreds of  
6 incarcerated New Yorkers. Priority DOC population  
7 served by Brooklyn Public Library's book loan  
8 service include people detained in segregating  
9 housing units and incarcerated individuals with  
10 mental illness. Our libraries are also spaces that  
11 provide all Brooklynites with free access to  
12 computers, Wi-Fi and technology training. BPL  
13 continued its successful laptop loan program in  
14 2014 and will be expanding it in 2015. In addition  
15 to the eight branches in Bedford-Stuyvesant,  
16 Brownsville, and Bushwick that participated in the  
17 original program. Kings Highway, Sunset Park, and  
18 New Lots Libraries will be added. Patrons at these  
19 branches would be able to borrow laptops for use on  
20 site and to take part in technology and job  
21 preparation classes. Beginning last fall as part of  
22 a collaboration with Google Brooklyn Public Library  
23 also launched a tablet lending program at five  
24 branches. Additionally last year the library began  
25 a three year effort to increase broadband speeds at

1  
2 all branches. In January 2013 we also successfully  
3 opened the Shelby White and Leon Leevy Information  
4 Commons at, at the central library. The space  
5 includes IMAX PCs and a recording studio with an  
6 editing workstation for public use, laptops for use  
7 during classes as well. Since it first opened over  
8 10,000 unique wireless and devices have accessed  
9 the central library network. Its seven public  
10 meeting rooms have serve, have been reserved  
11 directly 46 hundred times by BPL card holders  
12 resulting in nearly 8,000 hours of usage by the  
13 public. Each month the info commons hosts over 100  
14 programs in the meeting rooms as well as in the  
15 large training labs. Examples of recent classes  
16 include intro to digital photography, computer  
17 topics for older adults, interviewing basics, and  
18 video editing. Additionally countless Brooklynites  
19 come to the library to improve their English  
20 language skills, find employment, and learn how to  
21 open new businesses. Last year BPL was thrilled to  
22 receive two workforce investment act grants from  
23 the New York State Education Department. The five  
24 year grants will fund the continuation of our pre-  
25 high school equivalency and English for speakers of

1  
2 other languages classes including the expansion of  
3 ESOL classes to, to three new locations. The grants  
4 will also help build the capacity of the program to  
5 offer better service to current participants, meet  
6 the more rigorous common core state standards,  
7 integrate technology training, and develop more  
8 extensive social support and workforce development  
9 services. More over last year we began offering  
10 business English conversation classes at three of  
11 our locations funded by the New York state's Adult  
12 Literacy Library Services Grant Program. The  
13 classes aim to help immigrants improve their  
14 English for the professional workforce, workplace,  
15 gain a greater understanding of American workplace  
16 culture and build their knowledge of resources in  
17 the library and throughout the city. The classes  
18 are designed to meet the needs of advanced level  
19 English language learners who are professionals  
20 with a university degree or higher or  
21 entrepreneurs. Workplace topics have included goal  
22 setting, elevator pitches, business emails,  
23 networking skills, interviewing and responding to  
24 job adds. In addition every class introduces  
25 students to useful phrases, vocabulary, and

1 cultural conventions in the American workplace.  
2  
3 Classes are offered as six week series, with seven  
4 week series per, with seven series per year at the  
5 Business and Career Library, Central Library, and  
6 Sunset Park Library. To date the program has  
7 already served immigrants from over 20 countries.  
8 The library is also a critical resources, resource  
9 for thousands of Brooklynites looking for  
10 employment. In a groundbreaking partnership with  
11 New York City's Department of Small Business  
12 Services in October 2011 we opened Workforcel  
13 Center, Workforcel Career Centers at Central and  
14 Sunset Park libraries. To date the Centers have  
15 referred over, over 19,000 New Yorkers to  
16 interviews and according to Workforcel Central  
17 Library's Career Center is the busiest co-loaded,  
18 co-located Workforcel Center in the city. Finally  
19 the library has helped bolster the boroughs economy  
20 by helping dozens of Brooklynites launch successful  
21 small businesses. Through the score program  
22 experienced business people meet one on one with  
23 participants to share their expertise. Additionally  
24 the library's Power Up Business Plan competition  
25 educates aspiring entrepreneurs about the

1 fundamentals of owning a business including how to  
2 write a business plan. The contestants with the  
3 best business plans receive up to 15,000 dollars in  
4 startup capital. Since Power Up started in 2013, in  
5 2003 over 3,000 teams have applied and more than  
6 700 business ideas have been generated. The winner  
7 of the very first Power Up competition went on to  
8 launch Bogota Latin Bistro in Park Slope and today  
9 they average 26 hundred customers per day. They  
10 have become emblems of success in the business  
11 community for their exemplary employee policies and  
12 generously support charitable and cultural  
13 institutions. The library is proud to help make  
14 important local businesses like Bogota Latin Bistro  
15 possible. Despite the great need for our services  
16 we have been hampered by reduced financial support  
17 from the City of New York. The mayor's preliminary  
18 budget proposes 83.6 million for Brooklyn Public  
19 Library in fiscal year 2015. This amount is equal  
20 to what was appropriated for Brooklyn Public  
21 Library in fiscal year 2014 and is unchanged from  
22 the budget adopted in June of 2013. City funding  
23 comprised approximately 85 percent of the library's  
24 over 98.3 million dollar operating budget in fiscal  
25

1  
2 year 2014 and will likely comprise a similar  
3 portion next year. Other sources of funding include  
4 New York State grants, private foundations and  
5 individual philanthropy. Although we would, we are  
6 very grateful that for the first time in seven  
7 years Brooklyn Public Library has a base line  
8 budget our discretionary funding is still 20  
9 percent below what it was in 2008. When inflation  
10 is also taken into account Brooklyn Public  
11 Library's funding levels are actually 26 below what  
12 they were in 2008. Between fiscal year 2009 and  
13 fiscal year 2013 our expense funding was reduced by  
14 approximately 15 million dollars. This decrease in  
15 funding prevented the library from hiring any new  
16 librarians with operating dollars during that  
17 period. Additionally the City of New York's capital  
18 support for Brooklyn Public Library has been  
19 minimal given the size, age, and condition of our  
20 physical plant. Brooklyn's neighborhood libraries  
21 are facing a crisis. Our branches are on average of  
22 58 years old and across the library system we face  
23 roughly 300 million dollars in estimated capital  
24 construction needs. Of this amount approximately 82  
25 million is needed for emergency infrastructure

1  
2 concerns including heating and cooling systems,  
3 roofs, windows, fire safety systems, and  
4 renovations to make the libraries ADA accessible.  
5 Given the current levels of capital funding  
6 Brooklyn Public Library is simply unable to make  
7 the basic infrastructure improvements that are  
8 critical to keep the doors open at all 60 of  
9 Brooklyn's libraries. Last summer 10 percent of our  
10 libraries were forced to close during heat waves  
11 because of inadequate air conditioning. This winter  
12 during the polar vortex numerous libraries have  
13 been closed for a day or more because of faulty  
14 boilers. Closures are simply unacceptable. One way  
15 that Brooklyn Public Library will begin to address  
16 this crisis is our project in Brooklyn Heights.  
17 Brooklyn Public Library is creating an innovative  
18 public/private partnership to replace the aging,  
19 poorly functioning Brooklyn Heights building with a  
20 spectacular new flagship library that will expand  
21 the existing neighborhood branch, eliminate the  
22 over nine million dollars in unmet maintenance  
23 needs in the current building and generate tens of  
24 millions of additional capital funds that we will  
25 use to repair buildings throughout the borough. By

1 taking advantage of the tremendous value of the  
2 library's real estate in Brooklyn Heights we can  
3 build a new library to serve a community that will  
4 be among the five largest libraries in Brooklyn  
5 while generating desperately needed capital dollars  
6 all at no cost to Brooklyn Public Library or the  
7 taxpayers. However even with the funding from the  
8 Brooklyn Height, from Brooklyn Heights we will  
9 still need additional capital support. This year we  
10 will aggressively request assistance from all  
11 levels of government with a particular emphasis on  
12 our new mayor and borough president to establish an  
13 82 million dollar emergency infrastructure fund.  
14 With this funding Brooklyn Public Library will  
15 replace aging air conditioners and boilers, ensure  
16 that all of our libraries have modern, fire, and  
17 life safety systems, repair leaking roofs, and  
18 begin make, to make all of our facilities fully  
19 accessible to all Brooklynites. Once we have  
20 achieved these basic goals we can focus on making  
21 the sorts of improvements that will create truly  
22 21<sup>st</sup> century libraries and ensure all Brooklynites  
23 have a warm, safe, and inviting neighborhood  
24 library that they can be proud of. Thank you for  
25

1 providing me with the opportunity to testify today.

2 With your continued support I'm confident that we  
3 can replace the funding that was lost over the past  
4 several years and return public library service to  
5 the levels that Brooklynites demand and deserve.

6 With increased funding we can provide more services  
7 to Brooklyn's children, help even more Brooklynites  
8 develop job skills and finding meaningful  
9 employment and broaden our efforts to close the  
10 digital divide. I'm pleased to answer any questions  
11 you may have.  
12

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Tony or Tom.

14 TOM GALANTE: I'll take it. Good  
15 afternoon. My name's Tom Galante. I'm the president  
16 and CEO of the Queens Library. I want to begin by  
17 thanking the City Council. The speeches earlier  
18 were right aligned with exactly in where we're at.  
19 So we're very much in the same place. I want to  
20 thank City Council Speaker Melissa Mark Viverito,  
21 Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer the Majority Leader  
22 and Chairman of the City Council Committee on  
23 Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International  
24 Intergroup relations. Council Member Costa  
25 Constantinides who's a great supporter of libraries

1  
2 who's chairing the subcommittee of libraries,  
3 Julissa Ferreras Chair of the Finance Committee,  
4 Mark Weprin our Chair Queens Delegation, and all  
5 the members that I see here today that I know are  
6 great supporters of libraries. And your leadership  
7 has supported public library service through the  
8 leanest times and will enable us to make enormous  
9 strides as we enter a new era in our city. I'm very  
10 optimistic you should know regarding this. I've  
11 seen the ups and downs of the economy and I'm  
12 really looking forward to the progress that we can  
13 make going forward. More than any other  
14 institution, public libraries are ideally  
15 positioned in every community throughout the city  
16 to help close the opportunity gap and enrich the  
17 lives of every New Yorker by providing access to a  
18 wide range of educational and informational  
19 services. The last few years have been challenging  
20 for everyone. During the great recession the  
21 executive budget proposed massive budget reductions  
22 every year time and time again you made libraries a  
23 priority here. Thanks to your support with enormous  
24 budget restorations made ad adoption each year by  
25 the City Council. You were able to provide strong

1  
2 community service despite all those challenges. We  
3 maintain five day a week service in every Queens  
4 Library location and protected those critical after  
5 school hours in every community for kids. It is a  
6 tribute to this body's hard work and dedication  
7 that school children have a place to get homework  
8 help, get on a computer, and advance their academic  
9 skills every week day in every Queens Community.  
10 That's a very, very important milestone. Now that  
11 the great recession is over let's move forward  
12 together to restore the access to library services  
13 that was lost for the nearly 2.3 million people in  
14 Queens. The current city operating budget is now 16  
15 million dollars or 17 percent less than it was when  
16 the great recession began. This loss of operating  
17 support caused the reduction of 255 jobs including  
18 adult, teen, and children, librarians, and clerks  
19 and custodians. Public service hours were reduced  
20 substantially with less than one-third of community  
21 libraries now open on Saturday and just two  
22 locations open on Sunday. Morning access and  
23 evening access were also cut back in every  
24 community. Our budget for new books and other  
25 library materials was reduced by 50 percent leading

1  
2 to long waits for books and far fewer resources  
3 available to the 40 thousand people who visit our  
4 libraries every day. Yet attendance at Queens  
5 Library programs remains sky high. We are now at an  
6 exciting crossroads. For the first time in seven  
7 years, for fiscal 2015 the preliminary budget  
8 proposed by the mayor keeps operating funding for  
9 public libraries stable next year. In addition for  
10 the first time in several years no mid-year budget  
11 reductions occurred this year. I can't stress  
12 enough how grateful we are to have reached the  
13 starting point that we're at as budget discussions  
14 begin for next year. The stabilization of city  
15 funding for library services makes an enormous  
16 difference in our ability to realistically plan and  
17 manage for the future. It also means we can begin  
18 our work together to restore what was lost during  
19 the great recession, to rebuild our workforce, add  
20 jobs, to restore our budget for new books, and also  
21 to expand library hours of operation for the  
22 public. Our goal is to be able to return our  
23 workforce to its prior levels hiring for all 255  
24 vacant positions, to start filling the shelves  
25 again, and to expand hours of service in the early

1 morning, into the evening, and on weekends even  
2 more. Your, your investment in adding jobs for  
3 children's librarians, for teen librarians, adult  
4 librarians, custodians, and clerical staff will be  
5 returned many times over as library doors open up  
6 earlier and more often and so many more people gain  
7 access to libraries and all of their critical  
8 resources. We believe as I know you do that the  
9 people of Queens deserve the best library service  
10 available and to access to those services when they  
11 need them. Unfortunately with the reductions in the  
12 operating funding during the great recession we now  
13 have fewer hours than Boston, Chicago, Huston, and  
14 Detroit yet Queens Library ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in program  
15 attendance per capita among the same group of  
16 libraries demonstrating the popularity, quality,  
17 and range of the programs that we offer. Just to  
18 point out for you quickly I mean we went through  
19 tough times on operating budget but at the same  
20 time we are able to expand our programs and the  
21 quality of service when we were open through public  
22 and private grant support and we were able to make  
23 a huge investment in capital infrastructure. So as  
24 we move out of this we could be bigger and better  
25

1 than ever before. So I'd like to touch on a few of  
2 the program areas with you now. Workforce and  
3 business support; workforce development training  
4 and jobs and business support emerged as critical  
5 library services during the recession. They will  
6 continue to be vital as the economy continues to  
7 evolve. We are focusing these skills and resources  
8 into Queens Library's job and business academy.  
9 Last year Queens Library welcomed more than 20,000  
10 attendees to job search and small business support  
11 programs. We recently launched an online experience  
12 called Job Map where customers sign up, take an  
13 evaluation of their skills, and are then pointed to  
14 specific library resources such as resume writing  
15 workshops or online learning opportunities. We have  
16 integrated a city Workforce Center inside our  
17 Queens Library at Far Rockaway to seamlessly  
18 prepare and connect qualified library customers  
19 with real job opportunities. On technology access;  
20 technology is so important in finding jobs and  
21 navigating the everyday world and it's going to  
22 grow in the coming years even more which makes it  
23 all the more vital that we reach people with  
24 limited access to digital devices and bridge that  
25

1 digital divide. Last year Queens Library provided  
2 nearly 3.3 million computer sessions on our 19  
3 hundred public access computers and thousands more  
4 through library Wi-Fi. Queens Library is also  
5 lending tablets in the rockaways where broadband  
6 internet access is alarmingly low. The library's  
7 proprietary interface makes these tablets easy to  
8 use even for the uninitiated. This innovation has  
9 just won the American Library Association's  
10 prestigious Library of the Future award in 2014.  
11 Educational enrichment for all ages; public  
12 libraries are a critical component of the city's  
13 education infrastructure offering after school  
14 enrichment, homework assistance, recreational  
15 programs, adult education, and support to parents  
16 and to youth often within walking distance of  
17 school or home. In Queens attendance for young  
18 adult programs doubled between 2002 to 2011. Last  
19 year attendance at all after school and out of  
20 school programming was nearly 450 thousand kids. We  
21 counted more than 267 thousand visits from young  
22 learners who received early literacy, numeracy, and  
23 stem literacy programs last year. Another 296  
24 thousand visitors enjoyed the collections and  
25

1  
2 museum quality learning exhibits at our children's  
3 Library Discovery Center that we opened in Jamaica.  
4 Three-fourths of parents who originally took part  
5 in our family literacy program improved their  
6 reading levels, eight percent obtained jobs, others  
7 earned their citizenship, and all got more involved  
8 in their children's reading activities which we all  
9 know is very important. Last year Queens Library  
10 provided English language learning or adult, ABE to  
11 79 hundred patrons. We are already the borough's  
12 largest provider of ESOL. In fact we're the second  
13 biggest in the city behind the Department of Ed and  
14 we're recognized internationally as a leading  
15 informal education provider for new residents.  
16 Queens library is provided free citizenship,  
17 naturalization, and bridge educational services to  
18 new immigrants for over 35 years helping thousands  
19 each year. Queens library is one of only six city  
20 based organizations chosen to help pilot the new  
21 online high school equivalency exam helping the  
22 state achieve a goal of 60 percent of all HSC tasks  
23 completed online by 2016. This is a major priority  
24 of ours here. I should just point out as we add  
25 days and hours it just means expansion of all the

1  
2 access to all these programs right. With the  
3 tremendous support of this body the commitments of  
4 individual council members, the state of New York,  
5 the mayor, and the borough president of Queens two-  
6 thirds of our community libraries have been  
7 modernized in the past five or six years to include  
8 self-service technology that makes checking in  
9 materials a smoother, more efficient task for  
10 everyone. There is still more to do including  
11 investments needed to protect and maintain  
12 libraries by replacing roofs and heating, heating  
13 and air conditioning systems. We seek your support  
14 in continuing to invest in our infrastructure and  
15 create, and maintain spaces that serve every  
16 community at the highest level. We are enormously  
17 proud of all of our community libraries. Their  
18 programs and their value they deliver for the  
19 community, libraries in Queens are the boroughs  
20 largest provider of free technology but you must  
21 also be able to come in and access it. Libraries in  
22 Queens are the borough's largest providers of free  
23 after school enrichment but children must be able  
24 to come into the library to take advantage of it on  
25 weekends too in every community. With the

1  
2 restoration of the operating budget we can again  
3 deliver more of these benefits to even more people  
4 in even more places. For example with the ability  
5 to hire more full time Children's teen librarians  
6 which is definitely a focus of ours we were permit  
7 more youngsters in the morning and more children  
8 after school to have access to assistance and  
9 engaging programs. Every single additional hour we  
10 are open means thousands of additional  
11 opportunities for the people to access information  
12 on the internet, to ask a question, to prepare to  
13 take the high school equivalency exam, or to attend  
14 a community program. Every dollar invested in  
15 libraries creates dozens of new learning  
16 opportunities every minute. Today we hope to begin  
17 the conversation about what more libraries can  
18 offer if funded at historic 2008 levels. We know  
19 that we can deliver extraordinary service to our  
20 customers by taking a strong decisive step this  
21 year towards greater access we can multiply the  
22 results. Public libraries have been and will  
23 continue to be the most democratic of institutions  
24 offering free educational services and resources to  
25 every New Yorker. Together through the worst of

1  
2 times we have continued to maintain minimum five  
3 day a week service in every community library and  
4 we all should be very proud of that. It was a lot  
5 of hard work. Now is the time to get back to six  
6 day a week and seven day a week service in every  
7 library throughout the borough. Last month we began  
8 unveiling our play book 2014, a blueprint for this  
9 year, it's a strategic plan that will update year  
10 by year. It focuses on four core areas; powerful  
11 people, powerful programs, powerful partners, and  
12 powerful places. I want you to know that once we  
13 can get past, get to the point of having that  
14 access that we all need we want to expand  
15 programming so all of these great programs that  
16 might be in five locations or 10 or 20 are  
17 available in every community. With these concepts  
18 as our guiding star and with you as our powerful  
19 partners we can work together toward our mutual  
20 goals to create new opportunity for all New Yorkers  
21 to enrich their lives, to help them obtain the  
22 skills and resources to shoot higher, achieve more,  
23 and succeed. Again we are incredibly grateful for  
24 your leadership and support. Thank you for the  
25 opportunity to testify today.

1  
2 TONY MARX: Good afternoon. I'm Tony  
3 Marx, president of the New York Public Library. And  
4 I'd like to also start by thanking Speaker Melissa  
5 Mark Viverito, Council Members Jimmy Van Bramer,  
6 Julissa Ferreras, Costa Constantinides, as well as  
7 the entire City Council for their strong support of  
8 the New York City Libraries. I appreciate the  
9 opportunity to testify today on the mayor's fy2015  
10 preliminary budget and the impact of the city's  
11 investment on libraries. And again to reiterate my  
12 colleagues how grateful for the end of the budget  
13 dance and the base lining, even if it's a base line  
14 at the 16 percent reduction that we've suffered  
15 over the last five years. Over the last two years I  
16 have come before this body to highlight the  
17 importance of libraries to this great city. And so  
18 it should come as no surprise that I will say here  
19 again that libraries are not only thriving they are  
20 more critical now than they have ever been. My  
21 colleagues and I can cite various statistics to  
22 make this point. Last year at the New York Public  
23 Library we hosted programs, 64 percent of which  
24 were targeted at children for 1.2 million  
25 attendees. This is 78 percent increase from fy2008.

1  
2 Let me repeat that. Despite 16 percent reduction in  
3 city funding our programs have gone up 78 percent.  
4 The last time, last year as well we circulated 25.5  
5 million items, a 30 percent increase from six years  
6 ago. And together more people visited the three New  
7 York City public library systems than all the  
8 professional sports teams and cultural institutions  
9 in this city combined. These numbers illustrate a  
10 simple fact. New Yorkers need and love their  
11 libraries and you all know that very well and have  
12 stalwart supporters. For the poor there is no  
13 alternative. For the immigrant there is no place  
14 that feels as safe and welcoming. For the student  
15 and faculty member there is no comparable treasure  
16 trove of knowledge and creative possibilities. For  
17 the scholar without a university the library is the  
18 only place to go for research and study. For the  
19 more than a quarter of New Yorkers without  
20 broadband at home the library is the only reliably  
21 free source of computers and internet access. Today  
22 you cannot even apply for a job without that access  
23 let alone be well read enough or informed enough to  
24 compete in the market place. The library is  
25 essential to suit so many New Yorkers; the aspiring

1 entrepreneur, the job seeker, the new parent, the  
2 researcher, the teenager, the senior. It remains a  
3 pivotal institution of our city. At our 88 branches  
4 and four research centers we cannot buy enough  
5 books or host enough programs and there is a line  
6 for every computer. And so I come before you today  
7 not to advocate for budget restoration, thank you  
8 for that. The mayor's proposed budget for libraries  
9 was base lined from the previous year, and again  
10 for that we couldn't be more grateful but this, and  
11 for this city council for its long time support and  
12 advocacy. I am here instead to say that with the  
13 right investment there is a tremendous future for  
14 libraries in this city as well as for the millions  
15 who use them. There is so much more we can and will  
16 do. To put it simply New York City is the capital  
17 of the information age. It brings that porous of  
18 information together with the most diverse  
19 population of experience anywhere in the world.  
20 That combination has always been going back to the  
21 founding of this city, the secret of our success  
22 and will be the secret of our success going forward  
23 at which the libraries are the bedrock of that  
24 information in brining that diversity together.  
25

1  
2 Since becoming president of New York Public Library  
3 over two years ago I've worked with my colleagues  
4 to show that indeed libraries can do more. We  
5 recently initiated a series of programs that offer  
6 vital services for New Yorkers. In 2014 we will  
7 offer 7,800 spots in our English language classes  
8 teaching English as well as citizenship to New  
9 York's immigrants, a fourfold increase over the  
10 last 18 months and we hope to eventually expand  
11 this program 10 fold. Our, this year our out of  
12 school program will serve 2,000 students with  
13 different educational models. One model supported  
14 by a 15 million dollar gift from the Helen Gurley  
15 Brown Trust is an intensive five year program that  
16 from eighth grade on aims to prepare and empower at  
17 risk New York City youth to attend college. We hope  
18 to double our capacity in all the OST programs next  
19 year and build from there. Our technology training  
20 program Tech Connect serves 80 thousand annual  
21 attendees, a two fold increase since 2012. To help  
22 pay for these programs the New York Public Library  
23 has raised 35 million dollars in private funds over  
24 the last two years. With further crucial support  
25 from the council we hope to expand each of these

1  
2 essential offerings to meet growing demand. And  
3 still we do more. We're fighting for greater access  
4 on new fronts. Last year we negotiated with the big  
5 five publishers to make their e-books available for  
6 library lending for the first time. We continue to  
7 enhance services at our research centers including  
8 electronic call slips to make ordering and tracking  
9 requests more efficient making over 800 thousand  
10 research items available through our digital  
11 collections program and putting our treasures on  
12 display for the public. Indeed we had over 16  
13 thousand visits to see the Declaration of  
14 Independence and the Bill of Rights when they were  
15 put on display just for a few days last summer.  
16 Opening a new, opening new spaces for scholars and  
17 researchers and adding new research staff. We've  
18 lunched innovative partnerships. Together the three  
19 systems and the Department of Education created as  
20 you've heard MyLibrariesNYC with a five million  
21 dollar support grant from city. Today providing  
22 books to more than 500 city schools, whatever the  
23 teachers or students need. We've sought out new  
24 efficiencies. Last year we joined Brooklyn Public  
25 Library to found book ops merging our book

1  
2 logistics operations to provide a better more  
3 seamless delivery system for our users. Not only do  
4 we collectively create two and a half million  
5 dollars in annual savings we now have the capacity  
6 to take on projects of this scale such as My  
7 Libraries NYC eventually to meet the needs of 1.2  
8 million students in the city. And we continue...  
9 [page flips] Sorry. ...to refresh our technology. In  
10 the past year we upgraded hardware, software,  
11 network equipment, Wi-Fi, and bandwidth across our  
12 system adding approximately 2,000 new desktops and  
13 860 new laptops including apple computers for the  
14 first time, and upgrading another 31 hundred  
15 desktops and 11 hundred laptops. Additionally with  
16 generous capital funding from our elected officials  
17 we've been able to maintain and improve many of our  
18 spaces. Over the last 12 years we completed over  
19 100 capital projects in our branches valued at 266  
20 million dollars. Thank you. Another 189 million are  
21 currently invested in ongoing capital projects  
22 across the New York Public Library. Thank you. This  
23 year alone we finished extensive renovations on two  
24 libraries; Stapleton and Staten Island and the  
25 Washington Heights branch in Manhattan as well as

1 opened the brand new Mariners Harbor Library in  
2 Staten Island. This year we plan to begin  
3 construction on a major renovation of Woodstock in  
4 the south Bronx. We have more libraries today at  
5 New York Public Library than we have ever had in  
6 our hundred year history. But all of this is only  
7 the beginning. In the digital age as access to  
8 information becomes more ubiquitous libraries must  
9 continue to evolve and shift from a passive to a  
10 more active model. Without question we are  
11 committed to providing access to books, computers,  
12 and quite space to all who need and enjoy them. But  
13 if we are to remain the essential institution of  
14 education for all we must reach further. We must  
15 constantly seek out and create new innovative ways  
16 to advance the knowledge of people in our  
17 communities and in turn to improve their wellbeing.  
18 We're all aware of the challenges facing this city.  
19 Only 26 percent of third through eighth graders  
20 meet the stet, state standards of English language  
21 arts according to new criteria. 26 percent of our  
22 children. 42 percent of New Yorkers lack an  
23 education beyond high school as the value of that  
24 degree continues to sharply decline by itself. And  
25

1  
2 27 percent, 27 percent do not have broadband access  
3 at home. To meet the needs of underprivileged kids,  
4 to offer opportunity for adults to learn, to  
5 empower our city's newest immigrants, to bridge the  
6 digital divide and ensure that the digital  
7 revolution does indeed democratize information we  
8 need our libraries. We need them to do more than  
9 they've ever done before. Already we are building  
10 on our progress. We are currently planning to do  
11 more to promote literacy and a love of reading in  
12 the early pre-k grades which is vital not only to  
13 positive educational and out, economic outcomes but  
14 also to the vibrancy and future of our society. We  
15 are working to test new ways to expand broadband  
16 access beyond the walls of the library and into our  
17 communities where it is sparse or in many  
18 neighborhoods completely absent. We are partnering  
19 with online education providers including Khan  
20 Academy and AACN [sp?] the search for ways to  
21 expand learning opportunities for children as well  
22 as adults. We are planning to add classes and  
23 coding especially in our poorer neighborhoods to  
24 help feed our fastest growing industry with the  
25 skills and the diversity it desperately needs. As I

1  
2 said we still have much work to do. All that we've  
3 accomplished and still plan to achieve we've done  
4 with consistently less city funding over the last  
5 six years despite the thanks for the valiant  
6 efforts of the city council. We're grateful that  
7 the mayor does not propose a reduction of our  
8 budget from the previous year. And again as I've  
9 said we're thankful to the city council for your  
10 vigorous support. But the recent reductions have  
11 taken a toll. Since FY08 New York Public Library's  
12 budget has been cut 11 separate times totaling 16  
13 percent. Our staffing levels are down by 473 FTEs  
14 which we've absorbed without Union layoffs but are  
15 still a body blow. The average New York Public  
16 Library currently operates at 46.8 hours per week,  
17 a miraculous feat on the part of our staff to  
18 maintain six day a week service which still  
19 insufficient for the working and families and  
20 students who need more hours in the evenings and on  
21 weekends. Even further we have 493 million dollars  
22 in capital needs across our system. This includes  
23 much needed renovation of our largest and most used  
24 branch the Mid-Manhattan for which we continue to  
25 evaluate options. For that larger project our goals

1 remain the same, to preserve our research  
2 collections to the best of our ability, to ensure  
3 that those collections are readily accessible on  
4 site at 42<sup>nd</sup> street, to increase public space for  
5 all New Yorkers to enjoy and to create a new  
6 exciting Mid-Manhattan library deserving of its  
7 users. So yes, given budget realities we have  
8 become more efficient but in the face of increased  
9 visits, program attendants, and circulation past  
10 cuts make maintaining the quality of our services  
11 and our spaces a constant challenge. However today  
12 I stand before the council in a unique position.  
13 This year we ask you to consider a new possibility,  
14 to invest further in the future of libraries and in  
15 the future of all New Yorkers. We ask that you  
16 offer us the ability to commit to more hours, more  
17 programs, and more materials, to invest in better  
18 technology, to add to our staff, to make the  
19 necessary critical repairs to our aging  
20 infrastructure. With more funding for operations in  
21 capital give us the opportunity to continue to  
22 innovate and build on our successes and raise even  
23 more private dollars towards our goals. Let us  
24 renew Andrew Carnegie's pact for the 21<sup>st</sup> century  
25

1  
2 to be a model for what libraries everywhere can and  
3 should be. Let us together help the city realize  
4 the vision of one New York. Once again thank you  
5 for your support and for this opportunity to  
6 testify. We all remain available to answer any  
7 questions you may have.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
9 much to all three of our library presidents and  
10 CEOs for your extensive testimony today. I want to  
11 recognize that we've been joined by several more  
12 council members; Council Members Lander, Council  
13 Member Barron, Council Member Levin, Council  
14 Member Miller, Council Member Rosenthal, and  
15 Council Member Cumbo. And I think that's everybody  
16 so far. And we, we are on a, a time clock so I  
17 won't get to ask all of my questions because lots  
18 of our colleagues have questions. But I do have to  
19 ask the central question to this preliminary budget  
20 hearing which is what do you need? What is the  
21 dollar number that each of you need to get to the  
22 place where you feel you need to be to provide  
23 optimal service i.e. those 2008 levels? Is there a  
24 number that you can all give us here today?

1  
2 LINDA JOHNSON: The, the three systems  
3 have worked collaboratively over the past year to  
4 develop that number. And the number that we're  
5 talking about is 65 million dollars and the  
6 objective is to have consistent six and seven day  
7 service across the board.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So 65 million.  
9 Did you want to break that up to the three systems  
10 or...

11 LINDA JOHNSON: It's 40, 30, 30.

12 TOM GALANTE: It's the same formula and  
13 what... So we are eager to increase our hours across  
14 the three systems to significantly increase our  
15 educational programs of all kinds of needs as we,  
16 to continue to innovate. And also our you know  
17 prepared and eager to continue to raise additional  
18 non-city funds in partnership with the city funds.  
19 And, and the 65 million dollar figure is simply a  
20 factual dollar figure that brings us if added to  
21 the current baseline for which we're grateful  
22 brings us back to roughly 2008 levels.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So 65 million  
24 dollars gets every single branch library open at  
25 least six days a week?

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LINDA JOHNSON: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And, and to  
some on seven days a week.

LINDA JOHNSON: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And in terms of  
staffing levels 65 million dollars would get each  
of the systems back to what? And how many more jobs  
would be brought back online, filled, created, at  
each of the systems?

TOM GALANTE: I know on my end it would  
be the 255 jobs would be back, the full amount that  
we have lost.

LINDA JOHNSON: I don't have a, a  
figure. We're down also 250 jobs largely through  
attrition that we've either encouraged or  
sustained. But we'd done a lot to, to operate more  
efficiently and so I don't have an exact figure  
with me.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: But is it safe  
to say that all 250 of those attrited jobs would be  
brought back and filled?

LINDA JOHNSON: No. I mean if, if I had  
the operating money to do additional programming  
and to the extent that it took labor which of

1  
2 course it does to provide those services then you  
3 know those would, that, that would involve hiring  
4 many more staff members than we currently have. I  
5 just can't guarantee a number.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: But if, if we,  
7 if we're trying to get back to the same level of  
8 service and tying the funding to the level of  
9 service obviously staff means service in, in, in  
10 libraries. So if, if 250 positions were attrited as  
11 a result to the cuts, if all of that was restored  
12 doesn't it make sense that you would restore all  
13 those positions... unless they're not necessary...

14 LINDA JOHNSON: I don't, I don't want to  
15 get, belabor it but it involves, it... involves  
16 training and staff development for existing  
17 employees whose jobs are changing as we become more  
18 focused on digital literacy. It certainly involves  
19 hiring more librarians. We've recently hired more  
20 children's librarians because that's a priority for  
21 us and every library should have a children's  
22 librarian. So it's just that at this moment I don't  
23 want to make a promise about exactly how many jobs.

24  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Well, look  
3 forward to continuing that conversation Linda.  
4 Tony.

5 TONY MARX: Mr. Chairman. So the  
6 estimate we have at the moment is a restoration of  
7 about 307 jobs, that's our current estimate. We're  
8 not waiting for all, all, in the meantime. So just  
9 this year our staffing level has gone up by only 10  
10 but for the first time it's gone up in I think six  
11 years. And we are currently recruiting for instance  
12 36 union positioning, positions. Again, we have not  
13 been in position to do that. We also are, we expect  
14 to or are now promoting roughly 20 of our union  
15 staff based on the fact that they earned masters of  
16 library science because not only... Yes, some of our  
17 operations have changed, some have become more  
18 efficient but we also are eager to work with our  
19 colleagues as they improve their skills we're  
20 increasing our tuition benefits to them and we want  
21 to reward them with promotions according to, to  
22 those enhanced skills.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So those 300  
24 positions roughly would be brought back?  
25

1  
2 TONY MARX: That is, that, that is  
3 correct. I will confess I would like to working  
4 with the city and with private donors and it will  
5 have to be a partnership be able to even further  
6 increase our educational programs and that of  
7 course requires, would require additional staffing.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you for  
9 that. So the, the, the goal before said a minimum  
10 65 million dollar increase in library funding city  
11 wide on top of the base line.

12 TOM GALANTE: You know I think you're  
13 looking at nearly a thousand jobs, something like  
14 that if you add it all up.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you. I...  
16 first of all want to ask about Tony the, your, your  
17 plan for the, the Central Library and, and what can  
18 you tell us in, in your most recent update and  
19 where your planning is, your thinking is. I don't  
20 know if you're ready to make any big announcements  
21 but I know you are undergoing a, a lengthy process.  
22 And obviously there are folks who are here who are  
23 very anxious to learn more about where you're  
24 headed.

1  
2 TONY MARX: Thank you Mr. Chairman. So  
3 let me, let me start the answer by just being clear  
4 about what we need to solve in the interest of all  
5 New Yorkers. We need to not only maintain but  
6 increase space and services to the research  
7 community. We need to, we heard concerns about  
8 keeping as many books on site at 42 street as there  
9 ever have been. We are working to find a solution  
10 towards that goal. We also, and we need to make  
11 sure that those books are preserved for the future,  
12 that the books are safe and that the building is  
13 safe so that we can not only meet needs today but  
14 continue to meet them for researchers, writers,  
15 anyone who is using the research collection for  
16 decades and generations to come. Second problem  
17 that we face at the center of our system, our most  
18 used circulating branch library the Mid-Manhattan  
19 half a million circulating books. People come from  
20 all over the city as I did growing up to use that  
21 collection. It is physically and mechanically  
22 failing. And we have learned that we cannot close a  
23 branch certainly the most used branch in order to  
24 repair it but we must do something not only to  
25 repair it but to make it an inspiring space for New

1  
2 Yorkers to come to and to use. Thirdly our main  
3 building at 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue arguably the  
4 most famous library building in the world is  
5 underutilized. Only 30 percent of it, of the space  
6 is open to the public. We have dozens of rooms that  
7 were built, majestic rooms built for the public  
8 that have been left either empty or filled with  
9 back office staff. We've recently moved back 250  
10 staff together across the street into a very  
11 affordable commercial space so that we can restore  
12 space to the public. We are continuing to examine  
13 as we've been requested by my colleagues here, by  
14 my friends in the public, to review every aspect of  
15 our planning, to have our architect continue to  
16 work towards a plan and to submit that for third  
17 party estimates, that is in the works. To look at  
18 alternatives to our plan that include for instance  
19 renovating the Mid-Manhattan library where it is  
20 and to get third party estimates on those costs to  
21 see if there's a way to avoid selling that asset  
22 again as people have asked us to explore. We are,  
23 so we're working with our librarians to envision  
24 the best program going forward, architects,  
25 financial analysis, we're taking our time because

1  
2 we have to get this right. We have to provide you  
3 and the public with answers to all those important  
4 questions that have been raised. That's the process  
5 we're in now. We hope in the months ahead to be  
6 able to provide that to you with our best sense of  
7 the plan going forward to make sure that we meet  
8 that set of crucial needs.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So I'm going to  
10 move onto my colleagues because there are a lot of  
11 questions. We are on a time clock and cultural  
12 affairs begins shortly and you know some of my  
13 Brooklyn colleagues have questions for Linda  
14 Johnson and others. So, but I, what I hear from you  
15 is that you are at least open to and are, are  
16 actively considering pursuing options that include  
17 not selling buildings and instead accomplishing  
18 your goal at the Schwartzman building in other  
19 ways.

20 TONY MARX: We are looking at all  
21 options. We've already changed the plans because of  
22 concerns and, and helpful criticism that we've  
23 heard. For instance by having already a plan for  
24 more books stay, keeping on site and we're  
25 continuing down that road.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I want to  
3 welcome our public advocate Tish James who has  
4 joined our hearing. I think we've acknowledged all  
5 the Council Members and we'll get to questions.  
6 Council Member Crowley followed by Lander, Levin,  
7 and Barron.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Pardon me  
9 Council Member Crowley I, I skipped our co-chair a  
10 major faux pas. So before we hear from the other  
11 Council Members my co-chair Costa Constantinides.

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you  
13 Mr. Chair. Just have a few quick questions. I know  
14 we're on a time constraint and I want to make sure  
15 all of my colleagues have the opportunity to speak.  
16 Just so what are the continuing struggles in  
17 relation to superstorm Sandy? How are they being  
18 dealt with and what sort of time table are we on to  
19 restore full library service in those communities.

20 TONY MARX: For Queens it's two fold, or  
21 I should say three fold. First there was the  
22 initial response that we had which was all about  
23 helping people through a very difficult time. Then  
24 there's been the long range we build and we've  
25 received over two million dollars in grants to help

1  
2 us basically provide job and workforce services for  
3 people to help them get back on their feet. We've  
4 partnered with Workforcel with the City's  
5 Department of Small Business Services. Also the  
6 Robin Hood Foundation has provided funding that's  
7 helped us out, down in Far Rockaway right now is  
8 providing services. So there's been an operating  
9 bill that we've done where we more than doubled our  
10 services down there to help people get their lives  
11 back and build, rebuild their jobs. On the  
12 infrastructure and in facilities we got our broad  
13 channel library opened up with DDC within about  
14 three months. That had the least amount of damage.  
15 We've got the Arverne Library opening up in a  
16 couple weeks. And we've got... that would have been  
17 three months ago if a furniture truck hadn't turned  
18 over in the Carolinas. It was that type of  
19 situation. Peninsula, that library, it's our  
20 biggest library down there that got the most  
21 damage. After about seven months of wrangling with  
22 FEMA as well as the city bit as to who would do the  
23 work FEMA stepped up, told us they would provide 90  
24 percent reimbursement. We then worked with the  
25 Councilman down there so that we're actually going

1  
2 to renovate the entire library, not just what FEMA,  
3 what the damages were from the storm. That'll be  
4 opening by the end of this calendar year. Seaside  
5 we got reopened. That had four feet of water in it  
6 throughout about six months ago, seven months ago  
7 because we were able to secure grants that allowed  
8 us to move on that immediately. And Far Rockaway  
9 has been really a hub of providing services down  
10 there.

11 LINDA JOHNSON: In the case of Brooklyn  
12 Public Library we had seven libraries that were  
13 severely damaged. Like Queens we opened many of  
14 them immediately although they weren't ready to  
15 function as libraries they did function as charging  
16 stations, as places where people could come to get  
17 food, where we did drives for clothing that  
18 displaced families needed, and actually where we  
19 set up offices for FEMA so that they could council  
20 residents who had been evicted or had to leave  
21 their homes about insurance issues. And so the  
22 libraries became places where families affected by  
23 the storms could get not only information but also  
24 just critical shelter and, and, and food and  
25 clothing. We have since the storm opened every

1  
2 single one of our libraries. The two that were  
3 closed the longest were Gerritsen Beach and Coney  
4 Island where there were, you know as much, there  
5 was as much as five feet of water in those  
6 libraries and they had to be completely, completely  
7 restored and they have been. And I would say that  
8 the silver lining to what was a really horrible  
9 cloud is that the libraries that were most  
10 defected, most devastated are back open,  
11 functioning, and actually far better, in far better  
12 shape, and far more attractive than they were  
13 before the storm.

14 TOM GALANTE: Due to geology our  
15 branches were not nearly as, as hit as Brooklyn and  
16 Queens. We had about 62 thousand dollars of costs  
17 in damages we incurred which we met and addressed  
18 very quickly. We did, I think as we all did learned  
19 that we need to prepare for these kinds of horrible  
20 eventualities. So for instance we are currently  
21 relocating our servers and IT systems to an offsite  
22 location and adding redundancy to them so that we  
23 can make sure that we don't lose that connection to  
24 the public in, in any such eventuality.

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Mr. Galante  
3 you talked earlier about getting FEMA funds them..  
4 how is the status of the FEMA money coming into the  
5 libraries.

6 TOM GALANTE: FEMA's funding has been  
7 fine. It's been good.

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Great. Very  
9 quickly just quickly transitioning... technology. You  
10 know I think you and I have had this conversation  
11 before. You know I represent Astoria, how is this,  
12 one of the most, more isolated NYCHA developments  
13 in Borough of Queens and their technology, their  
14 sort of access to internet numbers are only at 41  
15 percent which is 30 percent below the, the city  
16 average. So 59 percent of the people there are, do  
17 not have access to the internet in any way shape or  
18 form. In the libraries is an opportunity. The  
19 Astoria branch is not too far away. I know you had  
20 talked about the mobile libraries and bringing  
21 those into different places. I know you've  
22 established a satellite branch in the Queens Center  
23 Mall. I just want to get an update on sort of how  
24 that's going. Any sort of plans to move that  
25 forward and then to the overarching questions how

1  
2 can we, not to just, not to get away from our  
3 traditional libraries because I want to make sure  
4 we fund those, but getting the libraries out into  
5 the communities to meet the needs of those that  
6 maybe can't get to a branch you know every single  
7 day.

8 TOM GALANTE: The most exciting part of  
9 where we stand today with a budget that base lined  
10 for next year and a real opportunity to add the  
11 hours and days of service I would like, it would be  
12 wonderful to get that behind us, all of us so that  
13 we can then start talking more about how we can  
14 reach out and get into communities even more. So  
15 for example we have two large book busses that we  
16 have on order through city capital funding and  
17 they'll be in at about, I think it's about another  
18 five or six months that they'll be delivered. One  
19 of them is a mobile computer center so it's a big  
20 monster vehicle that's nothing but computers in it.  
21 So that would be a great way to reach out into  
22 communities and reach that area for example. But as  
23 we talked about I would love to be able to open up  
24 a satellite area right within the housing project.  
25 It would not be that expensive to do from a

1 building end I'm sure. I think we have that, I have  
2 a facility at Queensbridge, we also have one at  
3 Ravenswood. The staffing cost and so forth you know  
4 would be considerable but not something that we  
5 could definitely move past that. I mean so first  
6 it's get every library open six days a week and  
7 seven, and some at seven. But then we can start  
8 doing more outreach into the communities that we'd  
9 like to do. We're going to be in Queens Mall as you  
10 mentioned. We're able to obtain some free space  
11 there. So we're going to be operating out of there  
12 as well and a small area but we'll be able to mark  
13 it and, and really promote our services and our  
14 digital services. And then also we're going to be  
15 in the Queens Museum in about a year, a year and a  
16 half when they open that area. So it's part of an  
17 overall strategy that our community libraries will  
18 be the hub, the program centers, and program areas...  
19 really want to get out where people are more too  
20 may be the next phase.

21  
22 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Council  
23 Member Crowley.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you to  
25 both our chairs for your leadership. I want to also

1  
2 say that as a member of the cultural and libraries  
3 committee I am committed to expand services not  
4 only in the borough I represent in Queens but  
5 throughout the city. I know how important access to  
6 libraries is and if we could expand hours and  
7 services in this next budget that would be a win  
8 for all New Yorkers. I have a, a few questions. One  
9 is, I think is a quick answered question to all of  
10 the different library systems. How much have you  
11 raised this past year in private donations that  
12 you're using for expense? And how much have you  
13 raised that you're using towards capital? And now,  
14 you know and this is from individuals, from private  
15 corporations, or foundations. Absent city, federal,  
16 or state dollars.

17 TOM GALANTE: We'll be in the  
18 neighborhood it's typically around five million  
19 dollars of private grants, individuals,  
20 corporations, foundations... four to five million,  
21 some years are more some are less. In total though  
22 I have to just mention that public grants that we  
23 receive from the federal government like Linda  
24 mentioned the WIA Grants, Workforce Investment Act.  
25 There's a number of sources at the federal and

1  
2 state level that have been very, very helpful. So  
3 when you add it all up it's nearly 20 million  
4 dollars a year that we're able to bring in to help  
5 support, of noncity money to support operations.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Sorry is that  
7 in addition... federal... [crosstalk]

8 TOM GALANTE: Including... [crosstalk]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Are your, your...  
10 [crosstalk]

11 TOM GALANTE: ...it, it is about, about...  
12 [crosstalk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: ...budget's  
14 about... [crosstalk]

15 TOM GALANTE: ...20 million total...  
16 [crosstalk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: ...five million?

18 TOM GALANTE: ...of, of which five million  
19 comes from private sources.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And you use  
21 five million for capital or do you... [crosstalk]

22 TOM GALANTE: No that's... [crosstalk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: ...some of it...  
24 [crosstalk]

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TOM GALANTE: ...all operating. It's, it's rare, we try but it's rare that we'll see capital dollars come from private sources. They tend to like items that are visible immediate you know that they see the actual bang for the buck. The last I can think of Richman Hill we had a children's room redone there from a, an individual who was, who funded that. We've also got some great support but it's, it's programmatic for say the new Hunters Point Library... [crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: But the vast majority of your donations go into expense... [crosstalk]

TOM GALANTE: Straight into program like afterschool program. A lot of the programs that I spoke about, all of that is funded with noncity dollars.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: So then all of your capital projects are government capital projects?

TOM GALANTE: More or less yes, yes, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And how does that compare to the two other systems?

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LINDA JOHNSON: Brooklyn Public Library has raised money in the same vicinity as Queens. We raised this last year over four million dollars of private money which for Brooklyn is historically a significant improvement over the last three years we've, we've improved that number from 2.5 million up to over four million this year. And like Queens our money is largely going to operating dollar, operating, or expense, the expense side where we are, where we're, we're doing, hiring people through grants and, and providing programs through grant funded projects. I will say that there's an exception which is that the information comments that I spoke about in my statement was built with three million dollars of it in a private money.

TONY MARX: The New York Public Library has a different history and a different structure. Only half of our budget comes from the city roughly. The vast majority of the research library that serves the whole city and people from anywhere in the world comes from private sources. We, we raised in the last two years 180 million dollars of private donations and about 20 million dollars of state. So we brought in 200 million dollars which

1  
2 means my colleagues and I have to raise roughly two  
3 million dollars a week to, to make that work. And  
4 the New York Public Library has an endowment that  
5 is just gone over a billion dollars and we draw  
6 five percent rate from that towards the needs of  
7 the city.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I just want to  
9 remind colleagues because of the time crush we are  
10 on a clock... [crosstalk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Okay, I have a  
12 question for Queens. Just over the past couple of  
13 weeks after news broke about Mr. Galante, your  
14 salary and the additional work that you've done at  
15 Elmont school district, the extravagant patio  
16 impending FBI, DOI investigation. I understand  
17 there was a meeting of Queens Library trustees just  
18 a few nights ago where the Board voted to spend a  
19 significant amount of money on private attorneys  
20 and consultants, consultants to raise the libraries  
21 image through public relations and also to pay for  
22 a private attorney for yourself and for board  
23 members. What I would like to know is one, is it  
24 true? Was that voted on at the trustees meeting?  
25 And two, are we using city dollars, tax levy

1  
2 dollars to pay for private attorneys and for these  
3 PR firms to make the library look better?

4 TOM GALANTE: No, there was no vote on  
5 any private attorneys or anything of the like of  
6 what you just said... [crosstalk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Was there  
8 discus... [crosstalk]

9 TOM GALANTE: And there was a 30  
10 thousand dollar appropriation for a public  
11 relations firm which was part of an ongoing work  
12 that we're doing to promote the services we offer.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I, I just want  
14 to stress again we are having this hearing today on  
15 the expense and capital preliminary budget of the  
16 mayor and...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And the mayor's  
18 management report...

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...and we, we  
20 will at this point move on to Council Member  
21 Lander.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you Mr.  
23 Chair and our new select committee chair. It's  
24 great to be here not doing the budget dance that  
25 we've been doing in the past several years. But I

1  
2 for one, and I know you as well remain very  
3 concerned that we're not yet acting as the stewards  
4 that we want to be, that the vision that we have  
5 for the system, plan we have for what we'd like to  
6 see our libraries be and what we're willing to pay  
7 to have it. We're still far from it so I appreciate  
8 your great advocacy and the work that this  
9 committee has done and continues to do under your  
10 leadership. I'm going focus my questions on  
11 Brooklyn and on the capital issues which you spoke  
12 to and obviously the relationship between that and  
13 the Brooklyn Heights branch plan. I'm mindful of  
14 the capital needs you've discussed and both the  
15 negative and positive side have been distressed by  
16 the closures in summer and winter anxious of the  
17 fact that our cooling centers are not open because  
18 often many of them are libraries. But on the flip  
19 side thrilled with what the new Kensington branch  
20 has meant and how fantastic a new branch library,  
21 neighborhood branch library can be and what park  
22 slope looked like when it got reopened. And I, I  
23 want more of that. So we have to figure out how to  
24 do it. So you spoke about an 82 million dollars of  
25 emergency needs and a 300 million dollar total

1  
2 pool. Can you just go into a little more detail,  
3 how many branches is that in that 82 million? Like  
4 help us understand a little better the magnitude of  
5 this, of this capital need.

6 LINDA JOHNSON: What I'd like to do  
7 Councilman is to actually provide you with a list  
8 that shows you exactly how the 82 million dollars  
9 would be spent. Frankly it's an embarrassment and,  
10 and it's appalling that we need to come to this  
11 body to beg for money to have safe fire systems and  
12 to have ADA accessible buildings. I mean these are  
13 really, this is not a, a fund that's to build  
14 beautiful new children's libraries. I mean we would  
15 love that of course it's just difficult to call  
16 that an emergency when you're looking at boilers  
17 that don't work, with HVAC systems that as you  
18 point out can't actually provide spaces that when  
19 they're supposed to be providing big cooling spaces  
20 for the city in the summer. And we also have a  
21 problem with many roofs that need to fixed. Not  
22 only because of the patrons comfort but also  
23 because of the safety and the, and the wellbeing of  
24 the collections that are housed in those libraries.  
25 So these are very fundamental issues and I will get

1  
2 to all of the council a list of exactly how that 82  
3 million dollars would be expended. And the problem  
4 of course with the way we've been doing business is  
5 that we are dealing with these physical or physical  
6 plant issues when they are emergencies. And so we  
7 are actually not doing the preventative work we  
8 should be doing because we're constantly tackling  
9 and putting out fires. If we were in a better shape  
10 than we would be spending capital dollars to do  
11 maintenance work over periods of time and we  
12 wouldn't have closures and we would also be doing  
13 the work more economically.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So there's 82  
15 mill... can I have, thank you. There's 82 million  
16 just in these emergency repair needs and then  
17 another 200 plus million in other branch work that  
18 you've specifically identified beyond that that  
19 we'd be doing if we were just not going, going  
20 beyond emergency work to say state of good repair  
21 and some good new projects as well?

22 LINDA JOHNSON: Precisely we would be  
23 building out new children's spaces in every  
24 library. We'd be freshening up all of the branches  
25 so that they were inviting and appealing as you

1  
2 pointed out. The Kensington Library and the Park  
3 Slope Libraries are great examples of, of what some  
4 work can do that makes the libraries more appealing  
5 and inspiring right. We want people to come to the  
6 library to expand their horizons and to be inspired  
7 and to take advantage of all the great programs  
8 that we offer. We want it to be that go to place in  
9 the neighborhood so that it is the safe haven for  
10 kids after school, that it is the place where  
11 people searching for jobs feel comfortable working.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Now, so that's  
13 82 million emergency, 300 million total, what's  
14 been the average that you've gotten from the  
15 administration and the council for capital in  
16 recent years?

17 LINDA JOHNSON: The, the average number  
18 is 15 million dollars a, a year in capital money  
19 and...

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Administration  
21 and council combined?

22 LINDA JOHNSON: That's correct.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So that's a long  
24 way from getting us to 82 much less 300?

25 LINDA JOHNSON: That's correct.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: And I read this  
3 morning...

4 LINDA JOHNSON: And I actually think  
5 there's borough president money in there as well.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: In the 15. And I  
7 read this morning the center for urban future  
8 report that we have a 34 billion dollar capital gap  
9 all in citywide. So, and I know how difficult it is  
10 an individual council member to come up with enough  
11 resources to do it. So I mean in that context it  
12 seems to me that what you're proposing at Brooklyn  
13 Heights understood as both a challenge to us to  
14 come up with more public capital, to the  
15 administration to come up with more public capital,  
16 to us to come up with more, to the borough  
17 president to come up with more, but also for you to  
18 come up with creative solutions that don't diminish  
19 what, what the libraries are but help us get, solve  
20 this problem. It seems to me to be a sensible way  
21 to think about doing things. I mean I, I see, and  
22 it sounds like that would still leave a giant hole,  
23 you know we would still be very far from getting  
24 where we needed to be.

1  
2 LINDA JOHNSON: Yeah, because there are  
3 neighborhoods like Greenpoint, like Sunset Park  
4 where we are busting at the seams. Mr. Galante  
5 mentioned in his testimony you know if we had more  
6 spaces, if we had the libraries open for more hours  
7 we could provide that much more in the way of  
8 service and do that much good in the neighborhoods.  
9 Those two libraries I mentioned are just, Kings  
10 point as well. I, I mean King's Highway as well,  
11 just totally at capacity you know. And, and that's  
12 a good thing but we'd like to be able to build more  
13 spaces there.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So just two more  
15 quick questions Mr. Chairman and thank you for your  
16 indulgence. First as you see I've got people  
17 holding up signs saying don't sell off libraries at  
18 me. So I just want to make sure I understand the  
19 Brooklyn Heights proposal right. As I understand it  
20 you're not proposing to sell off the Brooklyn  
21 Heights library, you would sell the air rights but  
22 you would continue to own a branch on that same  
23 site, is that correct?

24 LINDA JOHNSON: Yes. So what we would do  
25 is we would sell the property. We would, as part of

1  
2 that sale get back a library on the ground floor in  
3 exactly the same place that the existing library  
4 exists and then the city would continue to own the  
5 space just the way it owns it today.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: The city would  
7 continue to own the library?

8 LINDA JOHNSON: Yes it would. It would  
9 be essentially a condominium within a larger mixed  
10 use facility. And so we would actually have a  
11 larger neighborhood library than we currently have  
12 today and we would have a state of the art library  
13 that was properly cooled, properly heated, that had  
14 the technology, and had spaces that were designed  
15 with technology in mind that had the right number  
16 of service points. And at the, and do all of that  
17 get out from under 10 million dollars or nine plus  
18 million dollars of capital need in that building at  
19 the same time be able to extract... and I think this  
20 is the most important point which you make as well...  
21 but take the proceeds from that sale and spend it  
22 in other neighborhoods which are so desperately in  
23 need.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So accurate  
25 signs might say don't sell off the air rights above

1  
2 a city library that will continue to exist in order  
3 to fund other library needs throughout the borough?

4 [background comments]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Okay. And then I  
6 have to ask just quickly about Pacific Street in  
7 that context because I think that's the other one  
8 that people mean. I'm satisfied that's not selling  
9 off the Brooklyn Heights Library. Obviously there  
10 was a plan that we had talked about to sell of the  
11 Pacific Street Library. The public advocate before  
12 she was public advocate intervened. And can you  
13 just let us know where that is today?

14 LINDA JOHNSON: That library is also in  
15 deplorable condition truly. And we need to figure  
16 out the solution. We need help from this body. We  
17 need help from the community. We need a partner in  
18 there. I'd be thrilled to be able to keep a  
19 neighborhood library in that building but... It's a  
20 beautiful Carnegie building frankly. It, it needs a  
21 partner that can help us restore it and, and  
22 because, because today it's not a library that  
23 should have, that should have people in and out of  
24 it frankly.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So I, I think  
3 the public advocate will follow up there. But you,  
4 you would work with us as part of a broader plan  
5 not to sell off that library but to keep a branch  
6 in it and to work together with Brooklyn Heights to  
7 make sure we get, bring public resources to the  
8 table as well as private to begin to meet the  
9 capital needs that you've outlined?

10 LINDA JOHNSON: Absolutely.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you very  
12 much. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
14 much Council Member Lander and I believe we've made  
15 the acting Cultural Affairs commissioner aware that  
16 we're obviously running late so... For those who are  
17 here for the cultural portion of this hearing we're  
18 going a little bit longer with libraries so  
19 apologies. But we have lots of members with  
20 questions. Council Member Barron.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you Mr.  
22 Chair, the co-chairs thank you for holding this  
23 hearing. To the panel thank you for coming. I just  
24 have two questions because I know we have other  
25 testimony and other hearings. You, for the New York

1  
2 Public Library you spoke about the research  
3 division and I know that that includes the  
4 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.  
5 What portion of the budget goes to that particular  
6 facility? And how are they going to be a part of  
7 the improvements that you're planning?

8 TONY MARX: Madam Council Member I will  
9 get you the, the, if you're asking what the  
10 operating budget allocation for the Schomburg is  
11 and therefore what a percentage is I'm going to  
12 have to get that to you. I'm, I'm embarrassed that  
13 I don't know that by heart.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Mm-hmm.

15 TONY MARX: What I can tell you is that  
16 the, the Schomburg is slated now and funded for a  
17 15 million dollar phase two renovation. We  
18 completed a renovation in that great facility. We  
19 now are moving towards a, the second phase which is  
20 even larger and we are prepare, we are engaging to  
21 find, some private funds to augment public funds to  
22 move that project along faster and we're working  
23 hard at that. We have a great leadership at the  
24 Schomburg; Colio [phonetic], Doctor Colio [sp?]  
25 Mohamad. Great colleagues there, it's a crown jewel

1  
2 of our system and we want it to be even stronger  
3 with an even better facility. We, we just got 750  
4 thousand dollars from the Ford Foundation for the  
5 moving image collection there which desperately  
6 needs preservation and it's great curator. We are  
7 in negotiations for acquisitions to add to the  
8 collection there. We've had some great hires and as  
9 to say investing 15 million at a minimum in the, in  
10 the next phase of fiscal renovation... [crosstalk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And what would  
12 be a part, what, that 15 million dollars when it's  
13 finished what will have been improved, what can we  
14 expect to see... [crosstalk]

15 TONY MARX: A lot of that is going to  
16 the public space, so the exhibition space, the  
17 reception area, a bookstore to serve the community  
18 but also to provide revenues to the Schomburg. So  
19 again, and additional public services space  
20 educational programs as well.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay thank you.  
22 And in terms of the Brooklyn Library thank you for  
23 meeting with me earlier in, in the year. How, how  
24 is the library reaching out to social service  
25 organizations in the community, CBOs in the

1  
2 community to expand the partnership to get them to  
3 know about what the resources are that the library  
4 has to partner with them on a regular ongoing  
5 basis. I know you had some programs we talked about  
6 at the new lots branch. So how, how are we doing  
7 that and how can we improve that?

8           LINDA JOHNSON: So we have, first of all  
9 part of my charge here at Brooklyn Public Library  
10 has in fact to be to partner with other community  
11 based organizations and we have really done quite a  
12 good job of it over the past few years. In the  
13 information comments that I spoke of we've got  
14 community organizations actually teaching programs  
15 in our training labs and that's just one example of  
16 the work we're doing. And with respect to some of  
17 our more challenged populations that we served and,  
18 and I, I spoke about this in my testimony but we've  
19 actually created a new department within the  
20 library, hired a wonderful person to run it, and  
21 the, and the mission of that particular department  
22 is to, to target the most challenges and  
23 populations those, those populations in transition  
24 that we serve. So that would include projects to  
25 help the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated.

1  
2 The new, new Americans, the immigrants who are  
3 learning English and, and need help finding work.  
4 And so this, this particular department is actually  
5 going out and creating relationships with other  
6 community based organizations with the hope of  
7 enhancing and improving the programs that we're  
8 delivering to these communities.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
11 much Council Member Barron. We want to hear from  
12 Council Member Steve Levin.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
14 much Chair Van Bramer and Chair Constantinides,  
15 thank you. I want to thank you all for, for your  
16 testimony as the council member that represents the  
17 Brooklyn Heights branch. Obviously I have serious  
18 concerns and issues as, as the RFP has gone out and  
19 as this process has, has inched forward. My, I  
20 guess I want to just kind of ask some broader  
21 questions. So why wasn't this plan ever, was this  
22 plan ever considered before, if we want to go back  
23 you know 15 years or so. BPL was suffering  
24 budgetary constraints and was you know had capital  
25 backlogs throughout the system, in need of capital

1  
2 money, this isn't, it didn't just spring upon us  
3 two years ago. Was this ever considered before and  
4 if it was, was it, why was it rejected then?

5 LINDA JOHNSON: I frankly don't know  
6 that it was ever considered before. It may not have  
7 been. I think part of it is that the value of real  
8 estate has increased in the, in this particular  
9 neighborhood. But I'm speculating and I really  
10 don't want to do that in this, in this context. You  
11 know this is an opportunity where we have a library  
12 that's not as good as the neighborhood deserves and  
13 we have an opportunity to extract a significant  
14 amount of value and spend it in neighborhoods where  
15 it's sorely needed. So it's a way to actually  
16 provide a state of the art library in a very  
17 literate community and to also improve library  
18 services throughout the borough.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right but it's,  
20 it's, it's a significant step to, to sell off, to  
21 sell public assets whether they be air rights or  
22 other public assets. It's, it's a significant step  
23 to take and you know could create precedent. I mean  
24 my one concern that I would have then is that does  
25 this then create precedent throughout the rest of

1  
2 the borough, anywhere that has, you know not every  
3 neighbor, neighborhood library branch has  
4 development rights over their library. But some of  
5 them do, some of them have you know maybe not 40  
6 million dollars' worth of development rights but  
7 maybe two million dollars of development rights  
8 and, at, at what point does this, would this stop?  
9 Is this... how does this not, how would this not set  
10 a precedent is what I'm asking.

11           LINDA JOHNSON: The practical answer is  
12 that you need to have enough value in the real  
13 estate in order to make a project of this magnitude  
14 make sense. And I don't believe that, that there  
15 are many of them as you point out. So just  
16 practically speaking this is a huge undertaking for  
17 us. So we're doing it not because this is a fun  
18 project but because we feel that the need exists  
19 and because it's such a good solution it's, it's  
20 sort of a number of factors coming together in a  
21 way that we can't ignore. And in terms of precedent  
22 I guess that actually, and I don't, I don't mean  
23 this in a flip or a glib way but that, that's  
24 actually what you are doing today is making sure  
25 that we are being prudent and that we are taking

1  
2 the right steps to, for the library and for the  
3 community and I expect that you and your successors  
4 will all continue to do that.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And then... thank  
6 you for that answer but... My last question is with  
7 regard to the business branch that is, that is in..  
8 First can you give me a status of, of where that is  
9 right now. And honestly up until this point I still  
10 have yet to hear a compelling reason why the  
11 business branch ought not be in downtown Brooklyn.  
12 It's, it makes sense for a number of reasons. One  
13 there's a lot of, of commerce going on and, and you  
14 know there's, there's this tech triangle thing  
15 going on where there's, you know we're really  
16 reinvesting in downtown Brooklyn. This is right on  
17 the edge of that triangle. And... so if this, if the,  
18 in both circumstances if, if the current branch  
19 were to stay intact as is there's space for the  
20 business branch to be there. If it were to be part  
21 of this development deal and it would be a brand  
22 new branch there would still, there could  
23 potentially be space for the business branch to be  
24 there. I just don't see why, why it's more  
25 compelling to have it at the central branch which

1  
2 is further away from the downtown area, further  
3 away from all the colleges. I mean there's Brooklyn  
4 colleges nearby but in downtown Brooklyn we have  
5 five or six colleges. We, NYU is expanding, we have  
6 City or we have Polly Tech. We have City Tech.  
7 There is Saint Francis and LIU and Saint Josephs  
8 and it, it makes sense to have that type of  
9 resource downtown not you know kind of out along  
10 the cultural corridor of Eastern Parkway. So I  
11 don't know what, if you could kind of speak to  
12 that.

13                   LINDA JOHNSON: So with all due respect  
14 the very reasons that you see the business and  
15 career library belonging in downtown Brooklyn we  
16 see as the very reasons why it should be in the  
17 middle of the borough. And I'll, I'll speak first  
18 to the, the compelling argument to move the, the  
19 business and career library into the central  
20 library. All the institutions that you mentioned  
21 are in today's world have at their fingertips  
22 spaces and technology to serve their students. And  
23 we are no longer providing the same kinds of  
24 services that we were when the business and career  
25 library was originally placed in downtown Brooklyn.

1  
2 Today the businesses in downtown Brooklyn have  
3 computers, and they have resources at their  
4 fingertips that really don't require people from,  
5 who are working there to come into the library to  
6 take advantage of. The people who are using the  
7 business and career library in Brooklyn heights,  
8 and we know this because we've done surveys and  
9 we've looked at the zip codes of the people who are  
10 using that library are actually coming from all  
11 over the borough. And they are budding  
12 entrepreneur, people who are interested in creating  
13 new opportunities for themselves. And they are  
14 coming in to use resources that they cannot find  
15 without the library because they're not enrolled in  
16 college or already employed in a large organization  
17 or a larger organization that has these kinds of  
18 resources. Or if they are they're doing this work  
19 outside of their job, outside of their regular work  
20 week. And so by looking at the individuals who are  
21 taking advantages of the programs like Power Up  
22 that I spoke of these are people who are coming  
23 from the middle of the borough and from further  
24 south. And we would like to make it more convenient  
25 for them. And the, the other thing is that the

1  
2 business and career library has a lot of physical  
3 resources, material that are stored underground in,  
4 in Brooklyn Heights. It's not efficient. It's not a  
5 good use of space downtown and so we are looking  
6 to, to take that away and to use the space more  
7 efficiently.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Nobody's saying  
9 that you can't store the material, if you need to  
10 store stuff that nobody, nobody ever accesses you  
11 could do that at the central branch. But having  
12 public access point being in downtown I think is,  
13 there's still compelling reason to do so.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Council Member  
15 Levin thank you very much. We're going to just keep  
16 trying to move on. Council Member Cumbo you are  
17 next.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Good afternoon. I  
19 want to thank our co-chairs very much for  
20 organizing today and I'm so happy to see so many of  
21 my friends in the audience today so this is really  
22 fantastic. Just wanted to ask you a question,  
23 putting my cultural hat on and looking at the  
24 budget and numbers. It appears that earned income,  
25 board contributions, private donations are

1  
2 relatively low compared to the amount of money that  
3 you receive in terms of city and state and  
4 foundational support. Can you talk a little bit  
5 about why that portion of your budget is at such a  
6 low level? And why is that structurally there are  
7 not more opportunities or you're looking at more  
8 opportunities? And is your board a giving board  
9 and, and what is that criteria for board giving in  
10 donations?

11 LINDA JOHNSON: Can I assume that you're  
12 asking me those questions?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Yes.

14 LINDA JOHNSON: Okay. So, so  
15 traditionally or historically private philanthropy  
16 in Brooklyn to the library has not been  
17 significant. You're absolutely correct. We've  
18 improved it a lot over the past few years and we've  
19 built a new department within the library, a very  
20 strong group of very talented people and I'm  
21 excited about, to improve the numbers further. The  
22 library as you know has a mission which is to  
23 provide services for free and so we do that. But we  
24 for example opened a passport office a little over,  
25 I guess almost two years ago now. And in gross

1  
2 revenue numbers we've brought in over 900 thousand  
3 dollars since that office opened which is an  
4 extraordinary thing for us. I think that giving in  
5 Brooklyn is not what it has been in Manhattan and  
6 that we have a much different type of institution  
7 than New York Public Library does and, and it's not  
8 really a fair comparison. We are solely, strictly a  
9 circulating library, a public library, not a  
10 research facility, and not a rare book collection.  
11 And, and I think that contributes to, to the  
12 numbers. I would also say that it's a challenge to  
13 raise money for libraries for the reason that there  
14 are many philanthropists who think that a dollar  
15 given to the library lets the city off from, from  
16 giving that money or, or from allocating tax money  
17 that they've already paid that should be going to  
18 the libraries. So, so there's some, some  
19 challenging arguments but there are also some  
20 wonderful people who either grew up in Brooklyn and  
21 are, have been successful and believe that the  
22 library has contributed greatly to that success or  
23 people who understand that in a city as complex as  
24 New York City with the kind of needs, digital needs

1  
2 that the city has, that libraries are certainly  
3 worthy of their, of their charitable contributions.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: To that, did you  
5 want to add to that also? I was curious in terms of  
6 how, how Queens is looking at that as well in terms  
7 of private giving because... Where I'm going with  
8 that really is that as we grow as a city and  
9 contributions in terms of the city's portion  
10 sometimes fluctuate often. And with the challenges  
11 that our libraries are facing structurally as well  
12 as programmatically I would, that, that we would  
13 start to move in toward direction that we would  
14 have to start selling off branches in order to  
15 compensate for deficits that other branches are  
16 having. And wouldn't it be more prudent to start to  
17 think about how can we ramp up our earned revenue  
18 opportunities, are there new earned revenue ways  
19 that we can start to structure? And I understand  
20 full well the challenges of private fundraising and  
21 the amount of time that that requires but wanted to  
22 see if that earned revenue and the ability to raise  
23 additional funding to match in some ways a higher  
24 portion of the city and state's contribution.

1  
2 TOM GALANTE: You know the last time  
3 that we were here I was very impressed with your  
4 background. So I think you understand the  
5 challenges that we face but also how important that  
6 goal is. Earned income, we have a goal of tripling  
7 that over the next few years. And that was  
8 established about three months ago. Our boards in,  
9 in Brooklyn and in Queens are appointed by elected  
10 officials. So it's community based people is what  
11 the focus is, not based on their giving capacity  
12 where at New York it's a self-perpetuating board  
13 that appoints people based upon a number of ways  
14 but one based on giving capacity. So that is a, a  
15 structural difference there. We're working towards  
16 a number of areas. We're looking at technology for  
17 example. And there's a lot of opportunity with  
18 technology that libraries build and libraries need.  
19 In New York we have three very talented systems  
20 that are doing very innovative things. So as an  
21 example about seven weeks ago I had 72 libraries  
22 interested in licensing software that we're  
23 building in Queens. So that was kind of a start. So  
24 I'm going to be meeting with more people next week.  
25 So there are ways there that I think we can take I

1  
2 think our innovation and our ingenuity that we have  
3 to deliver really great cloud based services,  
4 getting things into peoples' hands digitally. We  
5 just, we have a new app right now if anybody here  
6 wants to go and try it out go to an app store, type  
7 in Queens Library okay, download it. But it's a new  
8 app that we have, we're, we just have coming out  
9 this month. And I think there's opportunities there  
10 for earned income for libraries given we're in the  
11 information business, the technology business as  
12 well. That, that's there... and there's obviously the  
13 giving component. We have a separate board called  
14 our Queens Library foundation board and that board  
15 is built based on giving capacity. And part of our  
16 strategy over the next three years is to build that  
17 board out considerably which will open up context  
18 in capacity there too.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I just want to  
20 say I, I thank you very much because I do think  
21 that that'll be an important direction but also  
22 just wanted to note while the, the city's  
23 contributions seem to fluctuate but remain  
24 relatively flat it also seems that audience  
25 attendance had gone down dramatically in the last

1  
2 year. I don't know if that was touched upon but can  
3 you talk about why audience attendance did go down  
4 while the, the budget remained relatively flat. And  
5 I understand a flat budget means that that budget  
6 did go down in a sense because costs and expenses  
7 did rise. Can you talk a little bit about what that  
8 fluctuation in attendance was?

9           TOM GALANTE: For Queens I can do that.  
10 What we're up against is a book budget that's 50  
11 percent less than it was. So if you don't have as  
12 much product on the shelf that'll impact that.  
13 Program counts and program attendance continues to  
14 rise. So there's a shift going on here in people's  
15 needs which is more and more towards learning one  
16 on one or in a classroom or an individual basis.  
17 Also what we, where the challenges that all three  
18 of us face or really it's, it's an international  
19 issue is that with digital content.

20           COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Mm-hmm.

21           TOM GALANTE: It's an area that we need  
22 to be in that space and we need to be in the prints  
23 space. Something just came out in the last day or  
24 two on, there's a study on how books will be around  
25 forever, print books.

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I just, I just  
want to...

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...interject that  
if we could keep the questions and the answers as  
brief as possible...

TOM GALANTE: I will.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...so we can get  
to the cultural affairs portion and the public  
testimony. It's an important question, it's a great  
question...

TOM GALANTE: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...Council Member  
Cumbo.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you Chair.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: But if we  
could...

TOM GALANTE: So I just want to...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...be as brief  
as...

TOM GALANTE: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Noted.

1  
2 TOM GALANTE: So we need, we need to  
3 expand book budgets not decrease them so we have  
4 print and digital not one over the other.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Public, Public  
7 Advocate Tish James.

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So I'll try to  
9 begin with leading questions so it's a yes or no  
10 answer. So first of all is the libraries in being  
11 considered as part of this whole early pre-k, some  
12 of, using your space for early pre-k? Yes or no.

13 TOM GALANTE: Yes.

14 LINDA JOHNSON: Yes.

15 TONY MARX: Yes.

16 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Good, thank you  
17 for that. Are libraries possibly rethinking how  
18 libraries serve New Yorkers? Shouldn't we use this  
19 opportunity to connect libraries with emerging  
20 industries with new and innovative technologies in  
21 the City of New York? Libraries should no longer be  
22 quiet spaces but in fact places where people are  
23 taking advantage of emerging industries. Are we  
24 rethinking libraries as we know it?

25 [crosstalk]

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TOM GALANTE: Yes.

LINDA JOHNSON: Yes.

TONY MARX: Yes.

LINDA JOHNSON: Yes.

TONY MARX: Yes, absolutely yes.

TOM GALANTE: Absolutely yes.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay so now the difficult questions. First of all following up on Council Member Crowley's question with respect to the Queens and all of the articles that we've been reading about. Obviously I'm concerned about board governance and structure and so one of the proposals that the, our office has put forward, before the Queens board is, has the board moved forward with respect to our request to disclose conflict of interest, interest forms?

TOM GALANTE: That's something that is up for this coming board meeting.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. I appreciate that. With regards to Brooklyn the disposition of Brooklyn Heights Library would it require City Council approval yes or no?

LINDA JOHNSON: Yes.

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2 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay. In regards  
3 to the Brooklyn Heights Library there's two  
4 libraries in fact housed in that building. There's  
5 the Brooklyn Heights branch and there's the  
6 business branch correct?

7 LINDA JOHNSON: Yes.

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And is this  
9 under your proposed plan? Is the size and the space  
10 of the library, would it be greatly reduced?

11 LINDA JOHNSON: The size of the  
12 community branch, the, the Brooklyn Heights branch  
13 would actually be increased.

14 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: So both branches  
15 would be increased?

16 LINDA JOHNSON: No. The Brooklyn, the  
17 business and career library would be moved to the  
18 central library.

19 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And that would  
20 be increased.

21 LINDA JOHNSON: It would be in the, in  
22 the 300 thousand square foot facility some of  
23 which, yeah some space of which would be...

24 [crosstalk]

25 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And you...

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LINDA JOHNSON: ...dedicated.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And you would argue that it's better located in central Brooklyn as opposed to downtown Brooklyn which is a hub of innovation and technology?

LINDA JOHNSON: Yes.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay, I disagree with you but we can, I know that it's subject to the approval of the city council so I will defer to the city council. What is your plans for the Pacific Street library as was mentioned by Council Member Lander that I intervene as a city council member to preserve that historic library and I want to preserve for generations to come as a children's library? What is, what is the plan?

LINDA JOHNSON: At this moment we don't have a plan. But as I mentioned earlier we are in desperate need of some great ideas and some great partners to see if we can't do something to preserve the beautiful Carnegie library that it is. And we'd be happy to continue to house a neighborhood library there but it cannot continue to operate in the condition that exists today.

1  
2 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: On the Brooklyn  
3 Heights you're taking advantage of the air rights.  
4 Are you proposing to build luxury housing or is  
5 there any, are there, is there any affordable  
6 housing in any of that plan?

7 LINDA JOHNSON: Yes there's affordable  
8 housing in the plan. We have not selected a  
9 developer and therefore we do not have a final plan  
10 at this time.

11 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Because it's  
12 subject to the approval of the city council.

13 LINDA JOHNSON: No we haven't even  
14 gotten to the point where we are proposing to city  
15 council which developer we would like to move  
16 forward with. We still have a few steps to take.

17 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Do you have any  
18 that you're considering, like for instance perhaps  
19 Forest City Ratner, is they, is Forest City Ratner  
20 part of the plan?

21 LINDA JOHNSON: Part of, Forest City  
22 Ratner did not respond to the RFP... [crosstalk]

23 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Did not...

24 LINDA JOHNSON: ...and they are not part  
25 of the plan.

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PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Very much  
Public Advocate Tish James. A lot of questions and  
in time. Council Member Rosenthal.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Tough act to  
follow. Thank you chairs for holding this  
committee. Thank you all for testifying. My  
questions are, are short ones I promise. Just two  
President Marx actually. I was really impressed.  
You noted that you've lost 473 FTEs over a period  
of time which you've been able to absorb without  
union layoffs which is always appreciated. But  
what's been the impact. Because similarly it looks  
like your attendance have gone up and how have you  
been able to manage with that?

TONY MARX: So those are all great  
colleagues and, and filling amazing positions so  
that, we did not do that happily, easily. We did  
learn to do some things more efficiently like the,  
the Book Ops operation and other forms of  
cooperation across the two and three systems. We, I  
think our sense is we did reduce our hour, we  
didn't close any branches, in fact we have more  
branches than we've ever had. But we did reduce the

1  
2 average hours from a, a high of I think 52 to about  
3 47.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay.

5 TONY MARX: And that reduction of course  
6 affects people who need to, you can't get into the  
7 library if the door is locked. It was also the  
8 reductions were keeping us from increasing in the  
9 way that we have wanted to. And now are starting  
10 to, to significantly increase educational  
11 programming because it's not just a matter of  
12 coming in the door which is important and, and  
13 using our books and our space and our heating and  
14 our air conditioning and our computers etcetera,  
15 it's also the educational provision we can provide  
16 particularly to those New Yorkers who are most in  
17 need.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay and then  
19 just secondly as you continue to review, to  
20 evaluate your options at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street branch I  
21 just want to confirm that all the, the books will  
22 be maintained on site?

23 TONY MARX: So we, let me be clear we,  
24 in the main building..

25 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah.

1  
2 TONY MARX: ...we started this process  
3 with, I think it's pretty close to about four, 4.2  
4 million books. We have millions of other items none  
5 of which are moving. And we are trying to see if we  
6 can find a way to keep that number of books have  
7 capacity for that number of books on site. We're  
8 working towards that and making them preserves. So  
9 that right now for instance 85 percent of requests  
10 from the research collection are met within half an  
11 hour which is extraordinary. We'd like that to go  
12 up into the 90 percent, 92, 93 percent. We're  
13 working towards that. The Mid-Manhattan library  
14 across the street, our largest circulating  
15 collection roughly half a million books... Whatever  
16 we do to make sure that the Mid-Manhattan  
17 physically and mechanically works we have to make  
18 sure that we can maintain that level of collection.  
19 That collection changes all the time because it's a  
20 circulating collection.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay, I'll  
22 appreciate your, your updates as this moves along.

23 TONY MARX: Looking forward to working  
24 with you and all our colleagues here.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
3 much Council Member Rosenthal. That officially ends  
4 our questions but we've been kind of elusive  
5 questions and Council Member Crowley I know had one  
6 follow up so I'm going to... [crosstalk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I do appreciate  
8 your indulgence. Thank you to the Chair. Really Mr.  
9 Galante I would like for you to answer the question  
10 that I asked earlier. Mainly I understand, I heard  
11 that the executive board of the board of trustees  
12 has hired attorneys to pay for yourself and trustee  
13 members or whoever may need one in, within  
14 libraries. So I want to make sure that we're not  
15 using city dollars to pay for private attorneys  
16 when the city is investigating the library. So can  
17 you ensure the committee that our public dollars  
18 are not being used to hire public attorneys?

19 TOM GALANTE: Yes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Okay and, and  
21 in light of all that's been happening over the past  
22 couple weeks and the first hearing that we've had  
23 and the response to the questions I, I've still  
24 have not seen the overall capital budget. I want to  
25 see libraries capital budget. I want to understand

1  
2 better how much city dollars are going into the  
3 various different capital developments, how much  
4 are being managed by DDC, how much are being  
5 managed or bid out privately. And also earlier my  
6 first question, although I had to rush through it..  
7 evaluate your answers. We received a budget from  
8 libraries, you know your, which has your statement  
9 of support, your revenue, your expenses, your net  
10 assets. And from what I see, earlier I asked how  
11 much do you raise, privately you said five million.  
12 I see on the budget 440 thousand. I don't know if  
13 what I'm seeing is wrong but it seems significantly  
14 less than five million. I look over the years and  
15 we go back to 2005 when you were hired and it was  
16 1.368 million so..

17 TOM GALANTE: So... [crosstalk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Private  
19 donations are going down at the same time it seems  
20 that other library systems have significantly more.  
21 I ask this because when you, earlier when we had  
22 the hearing last month about how high your salary  
23 you compared it to other systems and it seems that  
24 other systems are raising significantly more from  
25 private donations... [crosstalk]

1  
2 TOM GALANTE: I can assure you that  
3 you're reading the financial statements wrong and  
4 the numbers I gave are correct...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Therefore I  
6 think it's...

7 TOM GALANTE: ...so...

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: ...important that  
9 we have another hearing before we authorize 80  
10 million or 90 million dollars to go into Queens  
11 Library that we know how your money is being spent  
12 and that we're working to make sure for the  
13 taxpayers of the city of New York that it's...

14 TOM GALANTE: Sure.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: ...being spent  
16 efficiently and, and that's the main goal. So I  
17 think that we need [crosstalk] to have another  
18 hearing.

19 TOM GALANTE: Sure.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I agree. Thank  
21 you... [crosstalk] Very much Council Member Crowley  
22 and I believe that is the end of this portion of  
23 our hearing. So I want to thank the three heads of  
24 our library systems for their testimony. And I  
25 truly hope this is the beginning of a moment where

1  
2 we will see increases in library funding. I do want  
3 to ask the, the, for the next person. You all are  
4 free to go. But for the next portion of our  
5 testimony we're going to hear from the Luke... the  
6 Presidents of Our Library locals Ilene Muller [sp?]  
7 from the Brooklyn President of local 1482, Val  
8 Cologne[sp?] who is president of local 1930, Jon  
9 Hyslop who is president of local 1321, and Cuthbert  
10 Dickerson who is president of local 374 for their  
11 testimony and then we will go to the cultural  
12 affairs portion of the hearing. Apologies to all of  
13 our friends in the cultural world.

14 [pause]

15 UNKNOWN FEMALE: [off mic] Please exit  
16 quietly.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Ilene why don't  
18 you kick us off?

19 ILENE MULLER: Thank you. Just to save  
20 time today we're going to, I am going to read a  
21 testimony from all of us. On behalf of the members  
22 of locals 1482, 1930, 374, and 1321 I thank the City  
23 Council Speaker, the Cultural Affairs Committee  
24 Chair, the Subcommittee on Library Chair as well as  
25 the Cultural Affairs Committee for holding this

1  
2 hearing today. The union members of the Brooklyn  
3 Public Library, the New York Public Library, the  
4 Queens Public Library I want to thank the mayor  
5 Bill di Blasio for providing a responsible budget  
6 for the libraries, a budget that does not force the  
7 library systems to waste valuable resources  
8 fighting for our very survival. This proposed  
9 budget is a positive first step towards ensuring  
10 New York City's library staff can provide the  
11 services our patrons deserve. We say that this is  
12 the first step because our public libraries need  
13 more funds. We are severely short staffed causing  
14 considerable stress throughout the three library  
15 systems. Below is a chart of the all three library  
16 systems that again...

17 UNKNOWN FEMALE: [off mic] Quiet please.

18 ILENE MULLER: ...and again for time I'd  
19 like to just read it as one. And the, the figures  
20 that I will be reading are figures for library  
21 union workers. In the year 2008 there was total of  
22 4,227 workers, union workers. In 2014 that number  
23 has dropped to 3,283, a drop of overall of 944  
24 members or 29 percent. Each system or each local  
25 has a different number percentage. The Brooklyn

1  
2 Public Library is at 24 percent reduction, New York  
3 Public Library is at 37 percent reduction. The New  
4 York Public Library cause a public employees is at  
5 eight percent and the Queens Borough Public Library  
6 is at 34 percent bringing us to an overall 29  
7 percent reduction in union workers. Most of our  
8 branches do not have the staff to provide the  
9 necessary services. We have staff members who spend  
10 part of their day travelling from branch to branch  
11 to ensure that it has proper coverage. We have  
12 staff who are performing multiple jobs. We cannot  
13 provide six day service at this time. Short  
14 staffing is placing a severe stress on the hard  
15 working children's and young adult librarians at  
16 the Brooklyn Public Library Central Library Wing.  
17 This location is open from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00,  
18 excuse me from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. for four days  
19 a week and another additional 28 hours over the  
20 other days making it a 70 hour week. And they  
21 provide for hundreds of young people and their  
22 caretakers coming in for school visits and regular  
23 programs on a daily basis. Providing this level of  
24 service is very difficult with this new norm  
25 staffing levels and that situations may be even

1 worse when staff members are absent because of  
2 illnesses or personal emergencies. It is, it is not  
3 uncommon for four staff members to cover a full 12  
4 hours of service in that location. In addition to  
5 the burdens placed on the staff the situation often  
6 results in cancelation of programs and other  
7 inconveniences to the public. The children and  
8 families of Brooklyn need and deserve the quality  
9 of library services that only increasing staffing  
10 can ensure. While at the New York Public Library  
11 has managed to continue doing some semi-balance of  
12 hiring the staggering staff reduction continues.  
13 The NYPO reduced their frontline workforce by 37  
14 percent and the situation is dire. The career  
15 section of the NYPL.org may look robust, robust  
16 however upon closer examining the jobs postings you  
17 will find that they are not for full time jobs,  
18 they are better needed in the front line staff but  
19 they're for interns for tutors and for other hourly  
20 rate employees. Morale is very low at the New York  
21 Public Library. The branches used to have a family  
22 oriented atmosphere but now the feeling is almost  
23 exist, not, does not exist. New York Public Library  
24 continues to push new initiatives and expand  
25

1  
2 services forcing staff to work multiple jobs. Staff  
3 are routinely cancelling or getting denied their  
4 vacation. Often staff are told to open up sites  
5 with just two staff members creating serious safety  
6 issues for themselves and for patrons. NYPL needs  
7 more staff so that they can provide the excellent  
8 services and have safe branches our patrons  
9 deserve. At the Queens Library one example of short  
10 staffing problems can be found at the South Hollis  
11 branch. Only three full time employees and one part  
12 time employee have staffed that branch for over  
13 three years. In addition to providing regular  
14 library services every day they are inundated with  
15 unruly teens. This branch has had a number of  
16 serious security issues including a recent shooting  
17 threat. The staff valiantly tries to maintain order  
18 and provide library service. A branch of size  
19 should be, should have seven full time public staff  
20 members including a security guard. To provide the  
21 services the public expects we need the city  
22 council and the mayor to increase our budget though  
23 not as a blank check without conditions. We are  
24 asking for more money that comes with more  
25 transparency, accountability, and control. If the

1  
2 libraries are receiving funding from the city we  
3 need accurate and thoroughly, and thorough reports  
4 on how the money is being spent and how major,  
5 major improvements are being made. We need periodic  
6 and constant documentation of how much money is  
7 spent on salaries and benefits by title, materials  
8 by material type, utilities, capital projects,  
9 basically everything the library use the city  
10 funding for. We need the city to provide more  
11 control over how the libraries spend these funds.  
12 May in to, Mayor di Blasio's budget is a welcome  
13 change from previous years budgets. Our members are  
14 encouraged that we are funding, we have a funding  
15 stability this year. However the library systems  
16 are severely understaffed. The union representing  
17 the workers of, at all three of the libraries are  
18 asking the City Council and the Mayor to provide us  
19 more funding that comes with more accountability  
20 and control. We are also asking the City Council  
21 and Mayor to pass Council Member Jimmy Van Bramen's  
22 [phonetic] Intro 114 for 2014 to base line library  
23 funding. Thank you. And again this is being  
24 submitted for Ilene Muller of Brooklyn Public  
25 Library Local 1482, Val Cologne President of the

1  
2 New York Public Library Guild Local 1930, Cuthbert  
3 Dickenson President of the Quasi-Public Employees  
4 Local 374 and John Hyslop President of the Queens  
5 Library Guild Local 370, 1321 I'm sorry. And we'd  
6 be happy to answer any questions you have. Thank  
7 you.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

9 Those are a lot of numbers to say in a row.

10 ILENE MULLER: Yes it is.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I wanted to ask  
12 you Ilene in particular I'm sure you, you're here  
13 for Linda Johnson's response to my question about  
14 hiring back attrited positions. And I was a little  
15 surprised to, to not get an answer that all of the  
16 staff positions would be filled. I'm wondering your  
17 reactions, your perspective.

18 ILENE MULLER: I, I as well. I'm very,  
19 very surprised that there was not a number given or  
20 a guarantee that we would, we'd be hiring back  
21 front line public service. That's definitely what  
22 is needed. I actually have a chart in front of me  
23 and I can tell you just very, very briefly over the  
24 last number of years we lost 86 librarians, 91  
25 clerical people, 29 special officers, 22

1  
2 custodians, and one person, maintainer who helps to  
3 keep the libraries on a, on a basis, you know the,  
4 the silly little things that have to be fixed that  
5 we don't have to call somebody in for. They, one  
6 person is gone from that as well. And we have 20  
7 libraries out of the 60 branches of library  
8 locations of the Brooklyn Public Library, 20 of  
9 those libraries do not have a custodian.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, I mean  
11 obviously 65 million dollars is, is not  
12 insignificant. Needless to say I certainly think we  
13 need to get there. And, and we will be pushing very  
14 hard but I think it's very important I, I'm  
15 guessing all four of you would agree that if we  
16 were able to get to 65 million dollars on a full,  
17 full restoration of where we were historically that  
18 that would need to include hiring back all of the  
19 staff that were lost through attrition or any other  
20 way. And, and I just, I, I feel pretty strongly  
21 about that and I'm guessing you agree.

22 ILENE MULLER: I certainly do.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I, I know that  
24 we have a few questions. First of course is our Co-

1  
2 Chair of the Select Committee on Libraries Costa-  
3 Constantinides.

4 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you  
5 Mr. Chair and, and first let me start off with  
6 echoing the you know Chairman Van Bramer knowing  
7 how important that 65 million dollars is and what  
8 it can bring to the families that are already in  
9 the library system that are working there so  
10 diligently and so hard and also those that, you  
11 have the opportunity to be part of the system. So I  
12 will be standing right for wrong [sic] following  
13 your great leadership. But just very quickly let's  
14 talk about staff development because I know that  
15 any rewarding career as you are, once you're hired  
16 this is very rewarding work. I know it, it, it has  
17 to be a calling because I see how hard every member  
18 of the staff the libraries work but how... cuts  
19 effective staff development and opportunities for  
20 growth?

21 ILENE MULLER: To me personally...

22 [crosstalk]

23 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...whoever  
24 wants to take it from the panel. I know you're sort  
25 of... charge there but...

1  
2 VAL COLOGNE: From New York Public I can  
3 tell you that the library has put a lot of  
4 initiatives for the staff to improve themselves and  
5 especially with an education. But the staff  
6 shortages... staff are not utilizing that really as  
7 much as they would like to. Simply because they're  
8 saying I can't leave the branch. There are only  
9 four of us and if I leave there's only three and if  
10 one person calls out there's only two. And if were  
11 on a two, two floor branch that means one of the  
12 floors has to be closed or has to be open but  
13 there's no staff upstairs or no qualified staff  
14 member monitoring that. And that's a security  
15 problem. Now a lot of our staff are really, they  
16 feel that, and they don't feel that say a  
17 children's room should be open without a qualified  
18 staff member present.

19 JON HYSLOP: Excuse me. I would echo  
20 what, what, what Val says. We, the library does  
21 have, has, has offered opportunities for people and  
22 I think many of our staff members are happy about  
23 that but they don't have the time and can get away  
24 from their branch because they're so short staffed.  
25 To do other, to do staff development, to go to

1  
2 classes to do things like that that would advance  
3 their careers. So we just don't have the staff.  
4 That's the problem to make that effort, for the  
5 staff to make that effort.

6 CUTHBERT DICKENSON: [off mic] I echo..  
7 [on mic] Oh sorry. Thank you. I echo the sentiments  
8 of my colleagues. You know the key is, is the same.  
9 We have to do more with less you know. And as you  
10 know we have not receive a raise in five years and  
11 having to do you know more with less kills morale,  
12 you know workplace morale. And so that's really..

13 ILENE MULLER: And I'd just like to add  
14 as well. When I'm a librarian I'm a librarian  
15 because I love being a librarian. But if you don't  
16 give any opportunity to be a librarian because I  
17 have to be the security guard or because I have to  
18 be the person who's, I'm monitoring what's going on  
19 in the bathroom or... you know, a million of other  
20 things that could be taking place in a branch  
21 you're not really allowing me to develop myself as  
22 a professional librarian. You know I, I want to  
23 take care of the collection we have in our  
24 buildings. I want to be part of ordering the books  
25 that my patrons are going to be using and so forth.

1  
2 So I, I feel that, that we don't really have the  
3 opportunity to do a lot of the things that we would  
4 like to do as a professional librarian.

5 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you  
6 for your testimony and turn it back over to Chair  
7 Van Bramer.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
9 much Ilene. After all these years I still love  
10 hearing you talk about your love of being a  
11 librarian. I just want to say that. I've heard you  
12 testify many, many times and it's always, always  
13 refreshing. I know that Council Member Crowley  
14 followed by Council Member Barron and then unless  
15 there are any more questions we will be moving onto  
16 cultural affairs. Apologies again to all the folks  
17 for Culturals. Council Member Crowley.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you  
19 Chairman. Good afternoon. I want to ask about how  
20 one system compares to the other in terms of  
21 layoffs. I hear the number of attrition lost  
22 between Brooklyn and Queens and... but how many have  
23 been laid off. I know that Queens had layoffs, did  
24 the other systems have layoffs?

1  
2 ILENE MULLER: No, not within the last  
3 number of years.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: So in 2010 when  
5 44 librarians were laid off from Queens there was  
6 no layoffs in Brooklyn and none in Manhattan?

7 ILENE MULLER: No.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Interesting. I  
9 just want to point out earlier on the hearing that  
10 we had a few weeks back we saw that each year  
11 salaries were increasing for management. This was  
12 in the Queens Library but unfortunately they  
13 actually laid off staff and they were the only  
14 system to do so when all the other systems were  
15 under the same type of stress. And this is not even  
16 looking at what they're doing contracting out. I  
17 wish I had more time to ask those questions because  
18 we found more information how they're contracting  
19 out with custodial staff. But I know that our  
20 Chairman's going to have more hearings on it so  
21 we'll work together to make sure that they start  
22 hiring up soon. Do you, do you believe that there  
23 intention is true that they're going to start  
24 hiring more frontline staff in the libraries and  
25 not be contracting out?

1  
2 JON HYSLOP: I, well, I'll, I'll respond  
3 to that. The union, the local 1321 is very  
4 concerned, has been very concerned for the past  
5 three years plus on the 44 people that got laid  
6 off. And I've spoken to many of them since then and  
7 they're suffering, and they've suffered from these  
8 layoffs. So we are, I thought the rolls with them  
9 and we hope that the Queens Library hires them  
10 back.

11 COUNCIL MEMBR CROWLEY: Is it part of  
12 your collective bargaining agreement? Do those  
13 employees have a protection that they get hired  
14 back?

15 JON HYSLOP: Well that's our problem. If  
16 the library decides to hire office associates  
17 which, office aids which these people were they  
18 have four years protection. And that four years is  
19 coming up in September 2014. They may, the library  
20 may not choose to hire office aids, office aids.  
21 Hopefully they do and if they do they get, they get  
22 first pick. I do believe if the library wants to  
23 have six and seven day service they must hire more  
24 staff. We could barely do five right now with the  
25 current staffing. As Val says there's two people

1  
2 opening branches and that's crazy. And that, that  
3 doesn't happen in Queens but it, it's close, three  
4 people. So I believe they will hire people, more  
5 people. But we do need that oversight and we do  
6 need those, that, that, that accountability and  
7 that transparency that the public advocate and our  
8 Borough President Melinda Katz has proposed for our  
9 board and hopefully they do the same thing for the  
10 other three systems.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Council Member  
12 Barron.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you Mr.  
14 Chair. Thank you for coming and providing this  
15 testimony. Part of your testimony says it is not  
16 uncommon for four staff members to cover a full 12  
17 hours of service. And you also talk about a branch  
18 of this size should have seven full time public  
19 service staff members including a security guard.  
20 Does the library system have a template which  
21 identifies which positions should be allocated to  
22 particular branches based on size, based on use,  
23 based on any kind of data that we can look at. How  
24 is that determination made as to the staffing that  
25 is provided at the particular branches?

1  
2 UNKNOWN MALE: At New York Public  
3 Library we used to have an annual memo that was  
4 distributed to all the branches. That memo  
5 allocated and said each branch and what their staff  
6 allocation was to be. And that was a committee that  
7 got together and determined based on how the  
8 demographics and the community was changing and the  
9 demands and the statistics. And that would say well  
10 this branch needs say a children's librarian, a  
11 young adult librarian, a reference librarian, two  
12 additional librarian, five clerks, and that  
13 disappeared. How the institution at NYPL does their  
14 you know figures no one knows.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So it's just  
16 arbitrary, it's capacious, it's somebody's whim  
17 and...

18 UNKNOWN MALE: We have no idea how they  
19 do it. It just happens the way they want to.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So they don't  
21 send the memo any longer?

22 UNKNOWN MALE: No. And no one on the  
23 staff... because staff members used to be on that  
24 committee, that committee no longer exists to my  
25 knowledge and there're no staff on it. It's all

1  
2 something is done at senior management level and  
3 they determine what the staffing allocation for any  
4 particular branch is. And...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

6 UNKNOWN MALE: And I do have copy of  
7 those memos.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Seems like it's  
9 a serious issue.

10 UNKNOWN MALE: Mm-hmm.

11 ILENE MULLER: Right. And at the  
12 Brooklyn Public Library again I don't, I don't have  
13 any chart like that, we did not do that. And I can  
14 say that the staffing allocation is done by the  
15 Office of Neighborhood Services. They are the ones  
16 who make the decisions but we don't have any input  
17 into that at all.

18 JON HYSLOP: Same with Queens. We used  
19 to have that kind of information but now we don't  
20 know how staff is allocated.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
23 much Council Member Barron and to our four great  
24 union local presidents. Thank you so much for your  
25 testimony and look forward to fighting with you

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both on the 65 million dollar restoration to libraries and my bill intro 114. So thank you all very much. And with that this concludes the Library portion of this hearing and we're going to take a two minute break because some of us haven't gotten up in three hours and then we're going to be right back with the acting cultural affairs commissioner and right after that we'll hear from the public who have signed up to testify on both Libraries and Culturals. Thank you.

[pause]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So if everyone would take their seats please. We're going to finally commence with the Cultural Affairs portion of our hearing. And Council Member Cumbo please join me up at the dais. And with all due apologies to the acting commissioner and to our cultural community which everyone knows I love dearly we'll now resume and hear from the acting Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs. And thank you so much Commissioner for being here and for being patient. And I look forward to your testimony. And then we'll hear from so many others who would like

1  
2 to testify still today. Thank you all and  
3 Commissioner.

4 COMMISSIONER MORTON: Thank you Chairman  
5 Van Bramer, members of the Committee and also to my  
6 colleagues, our colleagues in the field who are  
7 here and who have been here for many hours to be  
8 here and testify and participate and support each  
9 other. I'm here with my colleagues from the  
10 Department of Cultural Affairs including senior  
11 staff; Assistant Commissioner Cathy Hues, Assistant  
12 Commissioner Timothy Thayer, Assistant Commissioner  
13 Andrew Burmeister, the Director of Finance Phillip  
14 Ashow [sp?], our, our Council, our Deputy General  
15 Counsel and our Council Kristin Sacota [sp?], our  
16 Chief of Staff Shirley Leevy, last but not least,  
17 and Ryan Max who is our Acting Director of External  
18 Affairs and Communications, and Government  
19 Relations, and lots of things. And other  
20 colleagues. My name is Margaret Morton. I am  
21 currently the acting commissioner of the New York  
22 City Department of Cultural Affairs where I  
23 previously served as Deputy Commissioner and  
24 General Council before that. I'm pleased to present  
25 testimony regarding the mayor's fiscal year 2015

1 preliminary budget. As you know the Department has  
2 three primary funding areas; expense funding for  
3 cultural program activities, expense funding for  
4 operating support and energy subsidies for 33 city  
5 owned cultural institutions commonly called the  
6 CIG, and capital funding part of the city's four  
7 year capital budget. The department's expense  
8 budget also includes funding for the cultural after  
9 school adventures program or CASA which supports  
10 after school's arts programming at public schools  
11 throughout the five boroughs. The Department of  
12 Cultural Affairs started fiscal year 2014 with an  
13 adopted expense budget of 156.1 million. This  
14 figure included 113.7 million for the CIG, 32.2  
15 million for programs groups, and 5.1 million for  
16 CASA. Our fiscal 2014 budget has since been  
17 modified for technical adjustments including  
18 transfers of city council member items and is  
19 currently 156.4 million. Looking ahead to fiscal  
20 2015 Mayor di Blasio's proposed preliminary budget  
21 preserves the fiscal 2014 level of support to the  
22 field. At fiscal 2014 adoption the fiscal 2015 base  
23 line budget was 88.5 million. 60 million has been  
24 restored to the out year budget bringing the base  
25

1 line to 148.5 million. According to the forecast  
2 for fiscal 2015 programs groups would receive 28.4  
3 million through the cultural development fund, an  
4 increase of 14.3 million from the previous base of  
5 14.1 million. CIG's would receive 109.1 million, an  
6 increase of 39.7 million from the previous base of  
7 69.4. The fiscal 2015 forecast also includes 5.1  
8 million for CASA which reflects no change in  
9 funding for the program. Again these figures are  
10 consistent with the fiscal 2014 adopted budget  
11 excluding any one time initiatives or discretionary  
12 funding that might be added at adoption. With  
13 regard to the four year capital budget we continue  
14 to work with the city council and borough  
15 presidents in managing capital grants to arts and  
16 cultural organizations throughout the five  
17 boroughs. The current capital allocation is 822  
18 million for 343 capital projects at 192 cultural  
19 organizations over the next four years. This  
20 diverse portfolio includes essential infrastructure  
21 enhancements, accessibility upgrades, equipment  
22 purchases, renovations, and new construction. A few  
23 highlights of recent and upcoming projects include;  
24 the renovation of the Billy Holiday Theatre at the  
25

1 Bedford-Stuyvesant restoration corporation, an HVAC  
2 upgrade at Coney Island USA, a theatre upgrade for  
3 Flushing Town Hall, the creation of new studios and  
4 administrative facilities at the Carnegie Hall  
5 Complex, the renovation of the Staten Island Museum  
6 Snug Harbor Facility, renovations to the garden at  
7 the Noguchi Museum, the construction of a new  
8 visitor center for the Louis Armstrong House  
9 Museum, Renovations to the STREB Lab for Action  
10 Mechanics in Williamsburg, and the recent  
11 completion of a new visitor center at the  
12 Weeksville Heritage Center in Brooklyn. We are  
13 pleased to continue to implement energy efficient  
14 capital projects on city owned property. To date we  
15 have helped manage 43 million of PlaNYC funding  
16 dedicated to energy efficiency, retrofit projects  
17 for HVAC upgrades, lighting retrofits, occupancy  
18 sensors, and cooling towers at 22 members of the  
19 CIG. This year DCAS initiated the accelerated  
20 conservation and, and efficiency program called ACE  
21 with a goal of improving the city's energy and  
22 reducing its production of greenhouse gas  
23 emissions. DCAS has allocated 2.2 million that we  
24 are managing for work at four cultural  
25

1 institutions. Looking forward to fiscal 2015  
2 funding the application process is underway for  
3 program and capital funding. For the fiscal 2015  
4 cultural development fund we held 12 application  
5 seminars throughout the five boroughs from January  
6 through early February attended by 438  
7 representatives from 349 cultural organizations.  
8 Between the announcement of the application in  
9 December and the February deadline we feel that 459  
10 substantive calls from perspective applicants  
11 including those received through our application  
12 help line. Additionally on January 30<sup>th</sup> we met with  
13 City Council Representatives and briefed them on  
14 the CDF process and the council's role in it.  
15 Starting later this month and running through June  
16 we will convene approximately 20 panels to review  
17 applications. As you may know every panel includes  
18 a representative designated by the city council  
19 along with professionals from the cultural field.  
20 In addition to the 736 organizations that submitted  
21 a fiscal 2015 application online another 318 groups  
22 have commitments for fiscal 2015 as a result of  
23 their multiyear grant cycle. The total number of  
24 organizations participating is on par with last  
25

1  
2 year. In preparation for the fiscal 2015 capital  
3 allocation process we hosted two seminars in  
4 January for organizations planning to request funds  
5 which were attended by representatives from 121  
6 organizations. The deadline to apply for capital  
7 funding from the borough presidents was February  
8 27<sup>th</sup>. The deadline for city council and DCLA  
9 funding is April 9<sup>th</sup>. We are happy to offer a  
10 briefing to council members on the program as we  
11 did for the cultural development fund. To date 178  
12 capital allocations, applications have been  
13 submitted. There are number of sources that provide  
14 insight into the overall impact of the cultural  
15 sector. For example according to NYCN Company the  
16 City saw a record setting 26 million Cultural  
17 tourists in 2013. Almost half of the 54 million  
18 people who visited the city supporting 370 thousand  
19 jobs in the hospitality sector. This increase in  
20 cultural visitors is reflected in the attendance at  
21 the CIG institutions which is at an all-time high.  
22 In fiscal year 2013 total attendance reported at  
23 these 33 institutions was above 20 million visits  
24 for the second year in a row including nearly 4.5  
25 million free visits and 1.7 million school visits.

1  
2 The nonprofit cultural sector has more than eight  
3 billion in economic, economic impact on the city  
4 each year. So in addition to providing New Yorkers  
5 with access to unique cultural experiences arts  
6 group, groups continue to be critical to our city's  
7 economy as well. The department continues to manage  
8 many programs and initiatives to support and  
9 promote the cultural field. With federal funds  
10 under HUD's CDBG Program DCLA launched community  
11 arts leadership in September 2014. This program is  
12 designed to strengthen small community based arts  
13 organizations serving low income populations by  
14 developing skills and capacities of their leaders.  
15 Executive staff and board members from 16  
16 organizations, all of which have annual budgets  
17 under 350 thousand have been engaged in an  
18 intensive 12 month capacity building curriculum.  
19 The program will provide groups with a strategic  
20 operating framework, tools for developing a well-  
21 functioning and strategically recruited board, and  
22 approaches to budgeting that support fiscal  
23 responsibility and adherence The application for  
24 the Community Arts Leaderships fiscal 2015 program  
25 will be announced later this spring. Our agency

1  
2 continues to work very closely with OMB on a FEMA  
3 application for damages incurred during hurricane  
4 Sandy. The application covers facility and  
5 equipment damages for cultural organizations in  
6 affected areas of Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Staten  
7 Island. At the same time we are continuing our work  
8 to promote emergency preparedness for future  
9 disasters. We have formed a group of cultural  
10 service providers and key stake holders that  
11 convenes regularly to formalize a communication  
12 network that can be mobilized in case of emergency  
13 to ensure that information and other resources are  
14 broadcast widely and quickly to the field. We  
15 continue to manage the CASA program mentioned  
16 earlier in the testimony. For the fiscal 2014 cycle  
17 currently in process the city council designated 96  
18 arts and cultural groups to partner with 255  
19 schools across the city. Programs were invited in  
20 schools as early as October 2013 and represent a  
21 wide range of activities such as theatre classes  
22 from epic theatre ensemble for high school students  
23 at Bronx High School for writing and communication  
24 arts in Norwood, music theatre workshops from  
25 inside Broadway for elementary school students at

1 PS 113 in Flushing [sp?], environmental education  
2 workshops from Queens Botanical Garden for  
3 elementary school students at PS 24 in Flushing,  
4 and art lessons for the Queens Museum for the  
5 elementary school students at PS 84 in Astoria. As  
6 you may recall seniors partnering with artists city  
7 wide or SPARK is an initiative the agency  
8 developed in collaboration with the Department of  
9 the Aging that places artist and senior centers  
10 across the five boroughs. The program began as a  
11 pilot in 2009. And we've been able to expand the  
12 program thanks to initial support from the National  
13 Endowment for the Arts. In fiscal 2014 the program  
14 continues with 51 artist residencies at 50 senior  
15 centers with continued funding from the Department  
16 of, for the Aging. In addition to providing seniors  
17 with interactive arts activities SPARK artists  
18 produce public programs that are open to all New  
19 Yorkers. Many of these programs will take place  
20 throughout the Spring and we have encouraged the  
21 artists in senior centers to inform the city  
22 council of public events taking place in their  
23 districts. Materials for the Arts supports cultural  
24 organizations in public schools by providing free  
25

1  
2 materials for their programming needs. Housed in a  
3 35 thousand square foot warehouse in Long Island  
4 City MFTA is, is the largest provider of materials  
5 to our public schools. To date in fiscal 2014 MFTA  
6 has distributed donated materials to more than a  
7 thousand non-profit organizations and government  
8 agencies and 665 public schools. Last year MFTA  
9 collected nearly 1.2 million pounds of donations  
10 including office supplies, furniture, fabric, and  
11 props. With its nonprofit partner funds Materials  
12 for the Arts, the MFTA education center engaged  
13 over 18 thousand students through fieldtrips and in  
14 school residency, trained over 5,000 teachers and  
15 community based educators, and participated in  
16 eight in school residencies among other activities.  
17 Finally the MFTA's artist residency program  
18 warehouse gallery exhibitions in presence on social  
19 media all continue to promote the value of creative  
20 reuse as a sustainable way to encourage creative  
21 expression and arts education. Please visit  
22 [www.NYC.gov/mfta](http://www.NYC.gov/mfta) for more information. Alley Tab  
23 also joins us who is our, the executive director  
24 for MFTA. I forgot to mention that. Percent for Art  
25 is the city's permanent public art program which

1  
2 currently has 85 artists commissions currently in  
3 play. This includes two projects commissioned since  
4 the beginning of the year; a sculpture made of  
5 recycled wood by artist Cory Reinman [sp?] for PS  
6 11 in Queens, and a mural by artist Richo Dodson  
7 [sp?] at PSIS 511 in Brooklyn. Notably we are also  
8 working with the Department of Corrections for the  
9 first ever present commission at Rikers Island.

10 Over 300 permanent works of art have been  
11 commissioned since the program started in 1983. I  
12 encourage you to visit our website to access the  
13 digital initiatives developed in partnership with  
14 DoITT to honor the program's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary last  
15 year including a mobile friendly website that  
16 directs users to an online map, project directory,  
17 and Tumblr blog. Mayor di Blasio recently announced  
18 his plans to ensure that all middle school students  
19 have access to free after school programming  
20 coordinated through the Department of Youth and  
21 Community Development and the Department of  
22 Education, 190 million in new funding will be  
23 available to expand on the after school services  
24 conducted on site at schools. We are working with  
25 DYCD to ensure that arts and cultural organizations

1  
2 are well represented as nonprofit service providers  
3 in this program. To descend we will host  
4 information sessions for the field with DYCD in the  
5 coming weeks. Finally I'd like to remind you that  
6 April is national poetry month and April 24<sup>th</sup> is  
7 poem in your pocket day, a citywide celebration of  
8 literacy and poetry. As always the day will feature  
9 numerous spoken word and poetry programs across the  
10 five boroughs. I encourage all of you to carry a  
11 poem and share it with your colleagues, friends,  
12 families, and twitter followers. You can visit the  
13 event's Facebook page for more information about  
14 this annual celebration. Overall we have seen that  
15 our city's nonprofit cultural arts and providers  
16 continue to leverage the relatively stable support  
17 provided by the city and to find creative ways to  
18 sustain and expand access and affordability of arts  
19 programing for all New Yorkers. In closing I would  
20 like to thank Chairman Van Bramer for his  
21 leadership, committee members, and all your  
22 colleagues on the city council for your continued  
23 support. We look forward to working with you toward  
24 a budget that benefits all New Yorkers.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
3 much Commissioner and thank you for serving as the  
4 acting commissioner and for everything that you do  
5 for the department. While funding is relatively  
6 stable as, as you, you say there is still the need  
7 for more funding for the department and for the  
8 community that is out in the audience. So I realize  
9 it's, it's, it's not as easy as the libraries but  
10 where would you if you had to blue sky it, peg the  
11 need for funding. Because needless to say where  
12 we're at is not where we need to be. And in order  
13 to fully fund this incredibly vital and important  
14 sector that enriches everybody in the city we could  
15 do so much more. So maybe you can venture a thought  
16 on, on where we, where we could go, how we could  
17 use this base lining moment as a platform to fight  
18 for increases, meaningful increases in funding for  
19 our culturals.

20 COMMISSIONER MORTON: Well I think that  
21 the fact that the, the, the budget has remained  
22 fairly stable because of the base lining effort  
23 this Mayor's action of really preserving the base  
24 lining of the budget we are in a far, far better  
25 place starting out this budget year than we were a

1  
2 year ago which is a very good start and we are  
3 hopeful that the budget will remain where it is and  
4 either, either remain where it is or grow because  
5 we are starting at a very different place. I  
6 wouldn't venture to, to blue sky this early in the  
7 process because this is just sort of the first, the  
8 first step. But we are hopeful that again the, the  
9 action of base lining the out years where we were  
10 looking at 88.5 million literally at the beginning  
11 of fiscal 2014 that was with the 60 million that  
12 was restored it just puts us in a very, very  
13 different place starting this process and we're,  
14 we, we are hopeful.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So...

16 [pause]

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So I don't want  
18 to put you on the spot going forward because we, we  
19 obviously, there's some things we don't know about  
20 the department yet. But you can't speak to the  
21 historic funding high which was also in the '08/'09  
22 cycle correct?

23 COMMISSIONER MORTON: Is that once... is  
24 that what, what was that number? '08?

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah, at least  
3 156, 156 million.

4 COMMISSIONER MORTON: 156.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah. Well  
6 while you're, while you're doing that let me ask  
7 you this. While we're base lined the...

8 COMMISSIONER MORTON: Mm-hmm.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: There's still a  
10 7.6 million dollar decrease as a result of heat,  
11 light, and power adjustments to the... CIGs and then  
12 the inclusion of discretionary funding in the  
13 adopted budget. Can you go over that in some  
14 detail?

15 COMMISSIONER MORTON: Okay. The 7.6 we  
16 don't necessarily view it as a decrease. This is  
17 really the start of a cycle of looking at the  
18 energy. There is a survey that's actually happening  
19 now that DCAS conducts that looks at heat light and  
20 power going forward. And we expect that with the  
21 executive budget when there is a clear sense or a  
22 projection of what the heat, light, and power  
23 should be that there would be literally an  
24 adjustment as necessary at that time for heat,  
25 light, and power. So we don't necessarily view the

1  
2 7.6 that really represented last year's projection  
3 of cost to cover as a decrease but an adjustment  
4 shall we say.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Fair enough. I,  
6 I want to follow-up on that because not everyone  
7 may see quite the same way. But I know that Council  
8 Member Cumbo has to attend another very important  
9 meeting. And so I want to give her an opportunity  
10 to speak and ask questions before she has to go. So  
11 Council Member Cumbo.

12 COMMISSIONER MORTON: Okay.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you Chair.  
14 I wanted to get right into it because I know my  
15 time is limited. But wanted to talk about my  
16 understanding of the budget. I applaud the mayor  
17 for not only restoring the budget but bringing it  
18 to all-time highs. But at the same time how does  
19 that affect particularly the CIGs as contract labor  
20 negotiations are going on at this time where many  
21 of the CIGs feel a very deep hit in terms of that  
22 if I'm going in the right direction. And then on  
23 top of that how will the CIGs potentially be able  
24 to compensate for the perhaps retroactive pay or  
25 increases in contracts and those sorts of things.

1  
2 My concern is that this increase will not be  
3 adequately felt by the cultural institute groups  
4 who employ many of our labor members.

5 COMMISSIONER MORTON: They obviously,  
6 their, their planning goes through and, and they  
7 obviously can speak best to how they plan but  
8 there's, this is really a two-step process and they  
9 are looking now at a, you know 109.1 million which  
10 is higher than they were looking at last year at  
11 this time. They obviously plan ahead based on  
12 targeting and they're, they're more assured,  
13 they're, they're planning at a higher level of  
14 target than they, than they would have been. So as  
15 they look at their staffing, as they look at their  
16 programming in the year ahead they base it on a  
17 target that is somewhat more, it's stable with  
18 respect to last year. It's a, it's a nuance and  
19 they can obviously speak you know, speak more  
20 directly to how they're planning their staffing and  
21 their programming is impacted but they're looking  
22 at a more stable target shall we say.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Because I want to  
24 celebrate...

25 COMMISSIONER MORTON: Earlier...

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COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Right.

COMMISSIONER MORTON: Earlier stable target.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Because I want to celebrate but I want to make sure that that is being taken into account and so that our organizations aren't mis-planning in some way or celebrating a bit prematurely and that perhaps they need to be some expansions looked at in that way. Also wanted to ask you, they were questions that were given to me by community organizations that were very concerned about the 35 thousand dollar limit for capital expenditures so that for any capital item that you wanted to purchase or any type of capital expenditures that they would have to be at a minimum of 35 thousand dollars. And wanted to talk about that because for many not for profit organizations that want to make capital purchases in that way they're prohibited from doing that and they would have to use programmatic or fundraising events and so on and so forth, earned revenue in order to make those. Has there been any discussion with the Department of Cultural Affairs in that way?

1  
2 COMMISSIONER MORTON: I am not familiar  
3 with it. It sounds like it is a, it is a cap or a  
4 floor...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Mm-hmm.

6 COMMISSIONER MORTON: ...for, or a cap  
7 floor for eligibility to purchase equipment,...

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Mm-hmm.

9 COMMISSIONER MORTON: ...capital equipment  
10 which doesn't sound unusual to me. But we will, I  
11 will find out more about it, how it works, whether  
12 it's a change, it doesn't sound like it's a change.  
13 There has always been an amount that is a floor for  
14 the, the value of equipment that you can use  
15 capital dollars to invest in. And it literally  
16 tracks the state and finance bond rules. This is  
17 not necessarily sort of a, an arbitrary policy  
18 thing but it usually tracks...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Mm-hmm.

20 COMMISSIONER MORTON: ...the, the bond  
21 rules that are promulgated by their comptroller and  
22 subject to state law so...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I mentioned that...

24 COMMISSIONER MORTON: ...but we're happy...

25 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Mm-hmm.

1  
2 COMMISSIONER MORTON: ...to clarify it for  
3 you what the, what the requirement is and why.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: And just wanted  
5 to bring it out more something...

6 COMMISSIONER MORTON: Mm-hmm.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: ...to also look  
8 into because it also is something of great  
9 importance. I see that in your testimony and I  
10 don't see it right in front of me but if memory  
11 serves me correctly that 5.1 million will go for a  
12 CASA and is that a restoration of what CASA was  
13 receiving or does this mean that potentially more  
14 organizations will have an opportunity to  
15 participate in the CASA program?

16 COMMISSIONER MORTON: So that is  
17 comparable to the amount for CASA in the prior  
18 fiscal year.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER MORTON: So it was... and it  
21 was... that was base lined for CASA.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: The other  
23 question that I have which has always been very  
24 important to me is that through the, the  
25 programmatic division making sure that, and I have

1  
2 a suggestion for this but wanted to know if you've  
3 thought about this too, to make sure particularly  
4 in this new administration as we're talking about  
5 our discretionary funds making sure that funds are  
6 distributed equitable across the 51 districts. And  
7 I know that through the panel process that what  
8 happens is that communities that generally provide  
9 the best application of those that win. And those  
10 are often the organizations that have the most  
11 resources, the highest support, the highest of  
12 everything, take the lion's share of the  
13 programmatic resources. Have there been any  
14 discussions through the Department of Cultural  
15 Affairs on the programmatic side and certainly  
16 going into the capital side to make sure that  
17 resources are distributed equitably amongst the 51  
18 districts to make sure that all communities are  
19 feeling their cultural rights, and having cultural  
20 activity, and cultural programming right in their  
21 own specific neighborhood.

22 COMMISSIONER MORTON: Certainly the, the  
23 quality of applications with respect to attention  
24 to detail and fiscal issues and demonstration of  
25

1  
2 capacity and things like that are looked at, I will  
3 tell you, and looked at obviously by the panels..

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Mm-hmm.

5 COMMISSIONER MORTON: ...whether the, the,  
6 you know the best is very subjective. Maybe it's,  
7 there's a perception that larger organizations get  
8 a larger share of the resources but I, I can tell  
9 you that, that those programs are distributed from,  
10 from large to small to medium organizations. And we  
11 can, we can share, we'd love to share with you  
12 directly because... we do this each year with the  
13 Chairman. The breadth of organizations, the size,  
14 the, the genre that get funded. And I think you  
15 will see that there really is a broad breadth of  
16 organizations that ultimately receive CDF funding.  
17 I understand that different sized organizations  
18 receive funding but I want to make sure that those  
19 communities that are particularly the most  
20 underserved receive those resources. Because, for  
21 example when I was in the Bedford-Stuyvesant  
22 community where my institution that I found it  
23 previously was located, if I wanted to go see a  
24 lawyer about ULURP or if I wanted to go see an  
25 accountant to help me with my proposal I would have

1  
2 to go far or further. But in the Fort Greene where  
3 my institution relocated to those types of  
4 professionals were right across the street and in  
5 close proximity doing an application became so much  
6 easier in a community with more affluence. So what  
7 I would like to see would be a breakdown of  
8 understanding throughout the five boroughs where  
9 the majority or the lion share or the resources are  
10 being distributed throughout the city. And in  
11 addition my suggestion is that on, in the  
12 application process moving forward I believe that  
13 there's a rating system maybe, I forget what it is,  
14 a 10, a four, a one, or a zero or something like  
15 that that you get based on different criteria  
16 right. And I remember from serving on the panels I  
17 think that geography should become a part of that  
18 rating system so that if you're in a community  
19 that's underserved you would get potentially  
20 another ten points that potentially could make your  
21 proposal stronger that would weigh it in that way.  
22 So that is a suggestion in that way. The other one  
23 as well that I would like to see is with our  
24 capital resources and this is more a statement than  
25 a question. I want to in the administration moving

1 forward capital dollars are often matched by  
2 private dollars. And that has always been the  
3 equation that the city of New York has utilized in  
4 order to provide resources for capital projects and  
5 the match in that way. The challenge with that is,  
6 is that in underserved communities who are not able  
7 to put together the resources to do those types of  
8 matches to do a capital project often go  
9 underserved in that way or that those capital  
10 projects don't make it to their communities in the  
11 same meaningful way. So I would like to see if  
12 there could be an equation change in terms of what  
13 the match is particularly for communities that have  
14 been underserved that don't have big donors, that  
15 don't have big boards to make sure that resources  
16 come back to their communities in a very meaningful  
17 way through the capital process which is where the  
18 lion share...

19  
20 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay.

21 COMMISSIONER MORTON: ...of our city's  
22 budget comes from. Please.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: ...the other last  
24 first. I can say that we are, we are actually very

1  
2 mindful of organizations in underserved  
3 communities...

4 COMMISSIONER MORTON: Mm-hmm.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: ...that don't have  
6 the private leverage of large organization based on  
7 their budget, based on their boards. And we have  
8 actually I, there are a number of projects that  
9 we've managed in you know recent years where the  
10 city has contributed the majority of support to  
11 that project because of the investment in the  
12 community and, and again we'd love to review some  
13 of those projects with you. I could call them out  
14 now but...

15 COMMISSIONER MORTON: Mm-hmm.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I'm, I'm thinking  
17 of, of four.

18 COMMISSIONER MORTON: I know which ones  
19 you're thinking.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay. And, but  
21 there are, and there are more. So, so we'd love to  
22 really review with you directly just so that you  
23 see that the match is not something that we apply  
24 across the board because we could never apply a  
25 match to large...

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COMMISSIONER MORTON: Mm-hmm.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: ...well subsidized organizations that we do to small ones.

COMMISSIONER MORTON: And just wanted to add to those types of organizations that have received capital investment, I believe that moving forward that that was a great initiative and, and something that the city had to do and needed to do. But I think in addition to that there should also be a level of support, a special level of support for those organizations particularly on community based, culturally specific institutions that would need additional programmatic and expense funding to help those organizations and community based communities where they would have an opportunity to have a base line of funding. Because the challenge with it is that we've made great capital investments without the same level of expense investment. And the challenge will be what will be the future of those institutions if the city does not continue that level of investment to support those institutions. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you. ...look forward to following up with you.

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COMMISSIONER MORTON: Me too.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very much Council Member Cumbo. And we had a hearing last year where we had this very, very same conversation with the previous commissioner where I very, very adamantly said that expense needs to follow capital and there is a direct correlation. I wanted to follow up Commissioner with a question about the CASA initiative which has been base lined. And as a result have, have you started the process or, or will you wait for a formal appointment of a new commissioner in terms of how that process will unfold and obviously you know how it's operated in the past in terms of designation. Is that something you are...

COMMISSIONER MORTON: You know we, we expected to work with, work you on how this would be administered this year you know. I can start it and someone else may finish it and that's fine. But we, we certainly can't, can't wait. And we think it makes sense to, to start.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Right. I, I know that is something we'll definitely be in conversation about is, the entire city council has

1  
2 an interest in, in that particular issue. I know  
3 that Council Member Barron has a few questions. I  
4 want to ask her...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes, thank you  
6 Mr. Chair. Thank you for your testimony. I just  
7 have... First I wanted to say we all appreciate the  
8 arts and how important culture is to having a well-  
9 rounded person contribute to a community and  
10 especially young children growing up need to be  
11 exposed to the cultural history, the culture of the  
12 larger society as well and have that exposure. New  
13 York City is a cultural gold mine. And there's so  
14 many free activities. I know that as a classroom  
15 teacher at least once a month we were out and  
16 about. ...tried to get it twice in a month to go out  
17 and see what's in the city. But I just wanted to  
18 ask you, in your testimony you talk about the 318  
19 groups are in a multiyear grant cycle. And you say  
20 it looks as though the total number of  
21 organizations, organizations participating will be  
22 on par with last year. So how many groups were  
23 involved last year that we could anticipate would  
24 be added to this 318?

1  
2 COMMISSIONER MORTON: There were, so  
3 there were, this year there were 1,054  
4 applications. As you, as you noted 380 of those, 81  
5 of those our, the renewal, the, on the three year  
6 cycle. And we will get applications from them in  
7 the coming months. There were 119 new applicants in  
8 this fiscal year apparently of that number, there  
9 were 119 new applicants.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So how many are  
11 currently being funded? Last year how many did you  
12 fund...

13 COMMISSIONER MORTON: The last year  
14 let's see... about 885.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER MORTON: Currently, in  
17 this...

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Currently.

19 COMMISSIONER MORTON: ...in fiscal '14.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. And then  
21 one other question I had. The average. There are  
22 two types of grants that you give. One is for  
23 capital, one is for programs.

24 COMMISSIONER MORTON: Mm-hmm.  
25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: What's the break  
3 down between that? I know that you talked about. Is  
4 capital the 822 million that you talked about for  
5 the, is that the...

6 COMMISSIONER MORTON: Yes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So the balance...

8 COMMISSIONER MORTON: Yes, that's the  
9 capital... [crosstalk] Mm-hmm.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And what is the  
11 average? I know there's a range of grant amounts  
12 but what's the average.

13 COMMISSIONER MORTON: So the average for  
14 which for...

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: For the  
16 programs.

17 COMMISSIONER MORTON: Okay, for the city  
18 average for programs sort of is divided between  
19 budgets of less than 250 and budgets of greater  
20 than 250.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

22 COMMISSIONER MORTON: Okay. There's an  
23 average award this year that is 85 hundred dollars  
24 in this fiscal year.

25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And that's for  
3 above the 250 or below?

4 COMMISSIONER MORTON: That's for below.  
5 And for budgets of greater than 250 the average  
6 award is [cough] thousand 500.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: It's how much? I  
8 didn't...

9 COMMISSIONER MORTON: 40,500 dollars.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, great.  
11 Thank you so much. You're very informative.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
13 much Council Member Barron. And because we are so  
14 far behind I think we're going to abbreviate some  
15 of our questions. But I think it's fair to say that  
16 we will be back soon talking to DCA with a newly  
17 appointed commissioner and look forward to working  
18 with the Department this year to work towards very,  
19 very significant enhancements and funding for both  
20 cultural and the arts. And so with that I know this  
21 isn't necessarily what you intended to do today but  
22 thank you so much acting Commissioner for  
23 everything you've done today. And I do want to also  
24 say to all of our cultural friends that the next  
25

1 hearing culturals is going to go before libraries.

2 So...

3 [laughter]

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And now I do  
5 want to say because we are joined once again by our  
6 Select Committee on Libraries Chair Costa  
7 Constantinides. We're going to have one panel on  
8 culturals and then we have three or four on  
9 libraries. So we're going to do, we're going to  
10 excuse Commissioner right now and then ask for the  
11 cultural panel to come up and give very, very brief  
12 and meaningful testimony. Lynn Kelley from Snug  
13 Harbor representing the CIGs Lane Harwell [sp?]  
14 Dance NYC, David Johnson Exploring the Metropolis,  
15 and I literally did have to look further away every  
16 single time. Christabel or I think Christabel is  
17 with... that's right. I remember your name from  
18 previous hearings. So we'll have these three and  
19 then we will go... But Christabel you could be on the  
20 first panel on libraries after this. And Lynn as  
21 soon as you're ready feel free to go forward.

22 LYNN KELLEY: Thank you Council Member  
23 and thank you to the committee. Good afternoon  
24 everyone my name is Lynn Kelley. I'm the President  
25

1  
2 and CEO of Snug Harbor Cultural Center and  
3 Botanical Garden in Staten Island. And I'm pleased  
4 to be here on behalf of the Cultural Institutions  
5 Group today of which I am a Steering Committee  
6 member. I'm also pleased to be joined by many of my  
7 colleagues and not just the CIG but in the program  
8 groups here today. Many of the groups we work in,  
9 work with day in and day out and we want to express  
10 our continuing gratitude to the council for your  
11 unwavering support of culture in recent years. But  
12 in the interest of time what I'd like to leave you  
13 with today or leave an impression on you today is  
14 four key areas in which I think it's very important  
15 as you sit down and really start to think about the  
16 difficult decisions you may have to make in the  
17 future regarding budget and regarding culture,  
18 what's important in, for arts and culture in New  
19 York City. The first is that arts and culture is  
20 for everyone. There may not be a CIG in your  
21 particular district... in your case that's not the  
22 case but arts and culture is for all of New York.  
23 It is our, the jobs, the people that we hire, 9,000  
24 people, the attendees, the school children is in  
25 every single city council district. And it's the

1  
2 hard working New Yorkers who work there and who  
3 attend not just our organizations but the program  
4 groups as well. Restoring funding and keeping it  
5 whole has been a significant to our life as a  
6 cultural organization. We hope that that continues  
7 so we can continue to serve of this population. But  
8 a second important piece and you heard Commissioner  
9 Morton say this is the Economic Development. We are  
10 a critical component of that sector. And the  
11 numbers are worth saying because they're not  
12 insignificant. In addition to the 9,000 employees  
13 of the CIG we spend about 500 million dollars  
14 annually on purchased goods and services. And it's  
15 the small mom and pops in the neighborhoods. It's  
16 print houses, mailing shops, it's a lot of the soft  
17 good services that we purchase in our own  
18 neighborhoods. In Staten Island alone most our CIGs  
19 are purchasing powers about 2.2 million dollars, 70  
20 percent of which is spent on Staten Island. And I'm  
21 sure I'm just one borough that's representative  
22 some of the others. To me some of these figures are  
23 proof that investment and culture is a sound  
24 investment and it's a, a chief component of the  
25 city's economic diversity. And it's worthy of a

1  
2 consistent investment we hope from the city council  
3 and the administration as well. But the two areas  
4 that I, we think are most important and often  
5 unsaid in terms of our, what we bring to the city  
6 of New York... One is our commitment to supporting  
7 public education; museums, science centers, zoos,  
8 theatres, Botanical Gardens. We provide services  
9 and teacher training to over a million school  
10 teachers and children annually. If you think about  
11 it when you learn about looking at a painting and  
12 appreciating the beauty of a show or a piece of  
13 musical composition you're not just appreciating  
14 the beauty you're learning music, you're learning  
15 science, math, history, often another language. And  
16 it's these components of education that have often  
17 been lost in the school system to be quite honest.  
18 And we as cultural institutions are helping to  
19 bridge that gap and be able to provide critical  
20 arts education. And then lastly and very  
21 significantly cultural organizations are  
22 cornerstones in our communities. Culture and arts  
23 is community development. And it's really important  
24 that we stress that. We are a resource in our  
25 communities. We do serve underserved populations.

1  
2 Everything from programming and services for  
3 children of, individuals in foster care, juvenile  
4 justice systems, individual disabilities, seniors.  
5 And we do this not just through the culture we  
6 bring but also being defector recreation centers,  
7 senior centers, not, not just places for people to  
8 house after school programs but actually enrich the  
9 lives of many of the underserved communities. And  
10 in addition to that we all work together. If not  
11 for the support of free programming that Carnegie  
12 hall provides to Snug Harbor I'm not able to  
13 leverage that with Council Member Rose who's  
14 generously provided support to all access arts  
15 which I pass on to many Staten island small arts  
16 organizations to use my space. So it is a, a  
17 symbiotic community that is real community  
18 development in our neighborhoods. So we recognize  
19 that this budgeting process is tough. We don't envy  
20 the decisions that you're going to have to make in  
21 the future but we ask that when you think of the  
22 CIGs and you think of arts and culture for New York  
23 City you remember that A, it's for everyone, all 51  
24 districts of the City Council. B, it's significant  
25 economic impact and return to the city of New York.

1  
2 D, it's education through and through everything  
3 that we do. And lastly arts and culture and the  
4 CIGs are absolutely economic and community  
5 development for our neighborhoods. I thank you very  
6 much and I welcome any questions you may have.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
8 much Lynn. And I, I want to thank you. I know how  
9 busy you are in Staten Island and you've come here  
10 and spent a significant chunk of your day. So thank  
11 you for the testimony and thank you for everything  
12 you do...

13 LYNN KELLEY: ...pleasure.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...on behalf of  
15 the communities. So with that I will have Lane  
16 Harwell...

17 LANE HARWELL: Thank you Chairman Van  
18 Bramer. I'm here because I agree with the chairman.  
19 And on behalf of the organization I run Dance NYC  
20 and the dance community request consideration of an  
21 increase to the Department of Cultural Affairs  
22 budget for fiscal year 2015. Over prior years so  
23 the agency might include new groups in its funding  
24 portfolio and help currently funded groups scale up  
25 their delivery of public value. An increased

1 allocation to the department could help dance and  
2 culture better serve more New Yorkers in more of  
3 our geographies and contribute to more equitable  
4 New York. I bring you data. Findings from our State  
5 of NYC Dance 2013 based on the cultural data  
6 project show us the importance of city funding to  
7 eligible 501 C3 dance organizations. The city is  
8 the most substantial source of government funding  
9 accounting for 46 percent of the total allocation  
10 of government funds and helping to generate  
11 thousands of performances locally, millions of  
12 paying attendees, and 251 million in aggregate  
13 expenditures. Trend data over a two year period  
14 also indicate increase city investment of 23  
15 percent in the smallest groups. Those with budgets  
16 of less than 100 thousand dollars contributing to a  
17 strong start up culture and the future of the art  
18 form. I invite you to consider not only the hard  
19 data demonstrating healthy returns but also to  
20 listen and reflect on the multiple and alternative  
21 stories of why dance matters to New Yorkers in  
22 every city council district. To families lifted up  
23 in the wake of superstorm Sandy to small business  
24 owners whose lively hoods depend on our audiences.  
25

1  
2 As part of a new visibility campaign New Yorkers  
3 for Dance, Dance NYC has issued an open call for  
4 the filming of video statements on the role of  
5 dance in your districts which we look forward to  
6 sharing during this budget cycle. And we go join  
7 Lynn in Staten Island on March 26<sup>th</sup>. While I'm  
8 testifying today as an advocate for dance I  
9 recognize that the arts and culture work better as  
10 one and join my fellow advocates. I also recognize  
11 that you must weigh multiple funding priorities and  
12 offer a vision for the city where the arts and  
13 culture are not viewed in isolation but is  
14 reciprocally linked with society and where they can  
15 be included as solutions for other priority issues,  
16 for instance jobs in economic development, equality  
17 for all, safety, sustainability, and resilience.  
18 You may identify alternative sources of funding and  
19 resource privilege... for the... culture in addition to  
20 increasing the department's budget. In requesting  
21 increased investment I, I acknowledge and thank the  
22 new administration and city council for a  
23 preliminary budget that avoids the... budget dance, I  
24 don't love that word, of prior years. We are  
25 already better able to plan for the future and the

1  
2 team of Dance NYC and I look forward to working  
3 with you in supporting our activities.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you Lane.  
5 Even you disliked the budget dance.

6 [laughter]

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So thank you as  
8 always for your testimony and your amazing  
9 State of NYC Dance brochure. And we're next going  
10 to hear from David Johnston, Exploring the  
11 Metropolis.

12 DAVID JOHNSTON: Thank you Mr. Chairman.  
13 I am David Johnston, executive Director of  
14 exploring the metropolis. We focus on solving the  
15 work space needs of New York City's performing  
16 artists. We currently run two programs for the  
17 cultural community. The ETM Con Edison Composer's  
18 Residency which pairs selected composers needing  
19 long term work space with cultural facilities that  
20 have underused space. Last year over 500 New  
21 Yorkers attended these free programs that showcased  
22 the diversity and creativity of NYC based composers  
23 and their collaborators. Our second ongoing program  
24 as the Queens Workspace Initiative which is a two  
25 year project to analyze the space needs of Queens

1 performing artists and cultural facilities through  
2 surveys and focus groups with Queens artists and  
3 facilities and research into existing data sets  
4 like the cultural data project. We are analyzing  
5 the space needs in this borough and we hope to  
6 propose solutions that address affordability,  
7 accessibility and availability. We thank the City  
8 Council for your past support and we welcome the  
9 new members and members of this committee. And like  
10 Lane I would particularly like to thank the new  
11 administration at this time for ending the budget  
12 dance, for giving us a base line, and for proposing  
13 a DCA budget that is consistent with pervious  
14 financial plans. I'm, I'm very thankful about this  
15 and I hope this signals a new stability so that all  
16 of us can properly budget for the needs of the  
17 field and for our own organizations. These  
18 prospects are very encouraging but I urge the  
19 council and this committee to continue to look for  
20 ways to expand the support through the arts, for  
21 the arts through programs like 1% for Culture,  
22 through increasing the DCA budget. I was very happy  
23 to, to hear your question earlier asking now that  
24 we have base lined how can this become a spring  
25

1  
2 board into increased funding so that we're not  
3 still trying to catch up with the '08 levels. We  
4 thank this committee for making culture a priority  
5 and we hope that it continues to be a priority at  
6 all times. We look forward to working with our new  
7 council members, the new office of the speaker, and  
8 this committee. Thank you very much.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
10 much for your testimony. And you know that Culture  
11 and the Arts is a priority of mine. And I will be  
12 talking about it every day, all the time, every  
13 leadership meeting, every budget negotiating team  
14 meeting, and working with all of you to work with  
15 the administration so that we can enhance the  
16 programs and services that you provide. And I  
17 particularly love Lane where you talked about not  
18 viewing arts and culture in isolation. I was having  
19 a conversation with Karen Atlas just yesterday and  
20 we talked about this very, very same issue. So we  
21 will continue to make the case and I want to thank  
22 all of you and everyone here from, from the CIGs  
23 and the program groups. I have to shout out Sheila  
24 Lewandowski owned Chocolate Factory because she's a  
25 constituent and she's here, not testifying but I

1  
2 want to thank her for everything that she does in  
3 Queens on behalf of culture and the arts as well.  
4 And with that I will thank you all and look forward  
5 to working with you over the next few months on  
6 these very important issues. And with that we'll  
7 excuse the cultural panel and we will go to our  
8 friends in the library world. And Cristobel Gough,  
9 Veronica Kernant [sp?], and Carolyn Macintyre, and  
10 why don't we call up a fourth person, Lucy Cotieze  
11 [phonetic], is Lucy Cotein [sp?]? There's Lucy,  
12 alright. By the way the first panel and then there  
13 are two or three others. We are going to have a  
14 clock, it's a two minute clock and we will... ask you  
15 to adhere to that. Thank you very much.

16 [pause]

17 Should I start?

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yes you can go  
19 ahead. Thank you.

20 CHRISTABEL GOUGH: Thank you. I'm  
21 Cristobel Gough from the Society for the  
22 Architecture of the City. And I have to say we  
23 would like to offer qualified support for increased  
24 library funding. But recent events show that while  
25 increased funding is desperately needed so is more

1  
2 effective oversight of spending in both operating  
3 and capital budget decisions made by the trustees  
4 of our library systems. And I was happy to hear the  
5 union representatives saying something very  
6 similar. Capital expenditures and executive  
7 compensation at the Queens public Library attracted  
8 the attention of Juan Gonzalez in the daily news  
9 followed by your council oversight hearing.

10 Controller stringers proposed audit and I now hear  
11 a criminal investigation by the FBI. The  
12 controller's audit encompasses all three library  
13 systems and questionable fiscal policies and  
14 strikingly generous employment contracts are not  
15 confound to Queens. For instance according to IRS  
16 990 reports New York Public Library Trustees paid  
17 President Paul LeClerc 866 thousand dollars in  
18 2009, 1,408,000 dollars in 2010, and 802 thousand  
19 dollars in 2011. Although Anthony Marx became  
20 president on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 the start of the NYPL  
21 fiscal year and also received compensation for 177  
22 thousand. On the capital budget side serial  
23 protests from scholars, writers, and the reading  
24 public followed by litigation resulting in a  
25 temporary restraining order have slowed the

1  
2 progress of New York Public Library's central  
3 library plan and the immense... [alarm sounds] can't  
4 be true. I haven't been talking for three minutes.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I would ask in  
6 the interest of time to sum up the remainder of  
7 your testimony.

8 CHRISTABEL GOUGH: Okay, I'll sum up.  
9 There's been a huge amount of press against it. The  
10 trustees have hired a very expensive public  
11 relations firm from park side to counter mounting public  
12 outrage, the central library plan is now called the  
13 central library renovation although it's really the  
14 same thing. The capital funds allocated by Mayor  
15 Bloomberg for the Central Library Plan, originally  
16 150 million dollars should be reallocated and  
17 further reform should be considered. Thank you very  
18 much Mr. Chairman.

19 VERONICA KERNANT: I'll be in trouble  
20 again but I'll try. I'm Veronica Kernant... librarian  
21 and member of the Community to Save the New York  
22 Public Library. I thought it would be three  
23 minutes. Well it is great to hear about the good  
24 news about the budget, delighted. I want to talk a  
25 little bit about the capital budget and the central

1 library plan of course opposing the central library  
2 plan. I just want to call the library  
3 administration claims that the stacks in the  
4 current state are unworkable because they lack  
5 humidity and temperature control. And I want to set  
6 it right. The stacks were air conditioned in the  
7 80s and got sprinklers in the 90s. So it will be  
8 much simpler, cheaper, and better for everyone to  
9 have the AC and sprinklers repaired and let the  
10 world's best book delivery system continue to serve  
11 scholars from all over the world. Now I just want  
12 to bring about another little article which for  
13 12.4 million now the CLP's 350 million, 150 million  
14 in funding from the city. That is another  
15 Washington Heights Library because 12.4 million and  
16 for this it got new elevator, air conditioning,  
17 heating, ventilation, new furnishing, lots of  
18 computers, and it was a wonderful renovation for a  
19 neighborhood badly in need of it for 12.4 million  
20 dollars just put it, them on the scale. It is  
21 really inappropriate to sell off branch libraries  
22 at a time when more people than ever are without  
23 employment need retraining in these libraries. The  
24 midtown, Mid-Manhattan, and Civil serve almost two  
25

1  
2 million users in 2012. So we would like to ask you  
3 not to raise 142 million in, in essentially capital  
4 funds until there has been a proper independent  
5 evaluation and alternatives recommended are  
6 recommended... be to repair the, the stack, air  
7 conditioning and sprinklers and renovate Mid-  
8 Manhattan. So I just want to talk very briefly  
9 about the donor library. This, it was, it sold for  
10 67.4 million and both by the Baccarat Hotel where  
11 one... [crosstalk]

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Listen, if you  
13 could... [crosstalk] Miss, miss, I'm so sorry...

14 VERONICA KERNANT: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: If you could...  
16 very... in the interest... maybe sum up everything?

17 VERONICA KERNANT: Yes, I just want to  
18 say it...

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

20 VERONICA KERNANT: ...that we are  
21 concerned that the presence of the library in the  
22 building will it give the developer tax exemption  
23 is one question. And that is what is happening  
24 across the street from it at MoMA, where Museum  
25 Tower, MoMA's 260 condo unit hasn't paid taxes

1 since 1984 or 85 when it was built. And the city  
2 didn't benefit from it. So I am glad that  
3 controller Springer will audit the OSCI [sic]  
4 library systems if he will be most welcome. And I  
5 would also like to recommend audit of the Museum of  
6 Modern Art since it is also a cultural affairs  
7 committee meeting. Okay, that's all.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

10 VERONICA KERNANT: Thank you.

11 CAROLYN MACINTYRE: Is it time for me to  
12 start? Okay, I'm Carolyn Macintyre with Citizens  
13 Defending Libraries. We have over 16 thousand  
14 petition signatures and are working with two other  
15 groups to stop the sale of and exploitation of our  
16 public libraries. The thing that I think we need to  
17 see that's in common with everybody who's  
18 testifying right now is that we don't trust the  
19 library leadership. We don't trust the BPL  
20 leadership. We don't trust the NYPL leadership. So  
21 you as a city council are going to have to figure  
22 out how to bridge that breach of trust. And the  
23 more they push the selloff of libraries the less we  
24 trust them. Laurie Cumbo said that attendance and  
25 circulations have been going up every year until

1  
2 this last year. What nobody told you was that a  
3 picture which is worth a thousand words is that  
4 they're getting rid of books in all the libraries.  
5 We're finding this out not just in the libraries  
6 that they're targeting to sell off for real estate  
7 deals but it's happening in all the libraries. This  
8 is the children's section of the Brooklyn Heights  
9 Library. This is, these are empty shelves in  
10 another section of the Brooklyn Heights Library.  
11 This is shockingly the Mid-Manhattan library, the  
12 most well used library in the entire country. 1.4  
13 million people use this library a year. Then you  
14 might say well maybe that's because they say those  
15 buildings are dilapidated. No, it's happening in  
16 other libraries; Grand Army Plaza Library, empty  
17 bookshelves. So the reason why the attendance has  
18 gone down over the last year is because they are  
19 driving people away. Remove the books and there's  
20 no reason to go there. I have canvased and spoken  
21 with hundreds and thousands of library users coming  
22 in and out of Brooklyn Heights, coming in out of  
23 Pacific and Mid-Manhattan. And they're all saying  
24 the same thing. We don't trust the BPL leadership.  
25 We don't trust the NYPL leadership. And you need to

1  
2 take a look at either instituting a conflict of  
3 interest policy that prevents people who invested  
4 in hedge funds and concealed assets from being on  
5 these boards. Or, or, and/or putting moratorium on  
6 the selloff of public libraries. Then they will go  
7 away and find something else to exploit. Thank you.

8 [background comments, laughter]

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

10 LUCY COTEIN: Hi, my name's Lucy Cotein.

11 Thank you for your endurance here today.

12 [laughter]

13 LUCY COTEIN: The saying if you think  
14 education is expensive try ignorance, applies here.  
15 In New York City everyone uses the library. It is  
16 the most democratic of institutions that is used in  
17 a multitude of ways as we've been hearing all day.  
18 It serves as a place to educate all to keep  
19 children and teens safe after school, as a resource  
20 for the elderly who have no place else to go, a  
21 meeting place for girl scouts, a place to host  
22 reading groups, and so many other things that serve  
23 all people. As the usage went up over the last few  
24 years the budget went down enabling the library  
25 officials to cut staff hours into a, allow for

1  
2 libraries to fall apart and in disrepair. Now it is  
3 time for the new administration and this new  
4 progressive council to make amends and provide the  
5 budget that is needed to keep this amazing gesture  
6 of democracy our libraries in full repair without  
7 selling, closing, and shrinking any of them. It is  
8 a time, the time for this administration to remove  
9 our libraries from the clutches of the voracious  
10 real estate industry that has taken over the  
11 leadership of our libraries. Throw out the real  
12 estate moguls and hedge fund executives that now  
13 sit as trustees and throw out the library strategy  
14 group who only exist to sell libraries. Throw out  
15 the CEOs with their 400 thousand dollar salaries  
16 and two million dollar severance packages. Throw  
17 out the expensive lobbying and PR flack that now  
18 receive the money that should go to the salaries of  
19 credentialed librarians. Throw out the reckless  
20 mentality that has put real estate needs before the  
21 needs of all people. That is where our public money  
22 has gone. It is too late for that treasure of the  
23 library the Donnel but it is not too late for the  
24 rest of our libraries. It is time for the mean  
25 spirited environment that has existed in this city

1  
2 against the regular people for the last 12 years to  
3 cleansed. For what we get in return and the number  
4 of people served we pay a very small price for our  
5 libraries in the big scheme of things. Fund our  
6 libraries and all our, all of our public assets  
7 that serve all of the people. Once these jewels are  
8 gone there is no going back, they are gone forever.  
9 And I just wanted to say that the next generation  
10 of little Jimmys and little Costas...

11 [laughter]

12 LUCY COTEIN: ...should have the same  
13 opportunities in the same libraries to enhance  
14 their education so that they can become our future  
15 leaders. And one other point I wanted to make is  
16 that selling assets never delivers the results that  
17 were promised. It never has, it never will, those  
18 are lies and damned lies at that. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you all  
20 for your good testimony and for your activism in  
21 your community. Call the next panel; Michael Dedee  
22 White [sp?], Herriot Shallot [sp?], either one of  
23 you hear... Carla Lore [sp?], and Monica Straus.  
24 Alright. Thank you all for being here today. You  
25 can begin when ready and just as a reminder in the

1  
2 interest of time we are keeping to two minutes for  
3 testimony. Thank you.

4           MICHAEL WHITE: Michael White, Citizens  
5 Defending Libraries. Hello everybody. Alright the  
6 public wants its libraries. It's absolutely willing  
7 to pay for its libraries. Ask any of the community  
8 boards about their preferences. Any kind of poll is  
9 going to confirm it. You heard it here. Libraries  
10 cost little in the scheme of things. They're  
11 heavily used and they more than pay for themselves.  
12 The Bloomberg administration did something that is  
13 the opposite of what elected officials should do.  
14 It interposed itself between the people and the  
15 libraries they want deliberately underfunding them,  
16 acting in coordination with library administration  
17 officials. It imposed a program of self-  
18 cannibalizing sell offs and shrinkages. Why? Look  
19 at the deals that benefit real estate developers  
20 and not the public. It's wasteful to destroy and  
21 sell valuable libraries like the Donnell that can't  
22 be replaced. And that was sold for and as yet  
23 unexplained and uninvestigated pittance netting the  
24 NYPL less than 39 million dollars for a five story  
25 97 thousand square foot library when the pent house

1  
2 apartment of a 50 story building replacing it is on  
3 the market for 60 million. Some of the absurd  
4 schemes are easy diverting perhaps a half billion  
5 for the central library plan for which the  
6 taxpayers have to come up with another 150 million  
7 to waste. I'm going to jump ahead because I've only  
8 got two minutes. I opened the Sunday Times Magazine  
9 today. What did I see? On the front picture that I  
10 tweeted what does it say? It says that there are  
11 going to be more books in the luxury apartments  
12 that replace Donnell than in the NYPL libraries.  
13 These are pictures of full book shelves unlike the  
14 empty bookshelves that we have pictures up of all  
15 the libraries. This is unfair. This is the waste,  
16 the Donnell. Libraries are democracy. Books are not  
17 just for the wealthy.

18 HERRIOT SHALLOT: Okay, I'm Herriot  
19 Shallot. I worked in the New York Public Library  
20 for 42 years in branches and in the Mid-Manhattan  
21 at, in the main library. I received an email a  
22 couple of days ago from the city council with 35  
23 priorities that you want to look into for this  
24 year. Now I, I went to find in page and I did not  
25 find either the word library, librarian, or

1  
2 libraries in any of those priorities. Is that  
3 correct?

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I, I think  
5 regardless of what that document says I know that  
6 Council Member Constantinides and I will always  
7 prioritize libraries and I believe it is a priority  
8 of the city council.

9 HERRIOT SHALLOT: Okay, I, I didn't see  
10 it in the email that I received. And my question  
11 was going to be why. As far as the movie for  
12 Donnell which was ridiculous there was an article  
13 in the Local Queens paper about selling the parking  
14 lot of the Georgia Diner on Queens Boulevard for 20  
15 something million dollars which is not that much  
16 less than Donnell got which I couldn't believe.  
17 That Diner's going to stay there. This was just in  
18 the, in the paper from last week. Where are our  
19 priorities? Why did they get so little money for  
20 Donnell? What was the deal that was made with the  
21 real estate developers. That's something that  
22 should definitely be going, gone into as well as  
23 the fact that there are rumors, I don't know if  
24 they're true, that Marshall Rose, one of the  
25 trustees of the NYPL had either owned or had a

1  
2 portion of where the Long Island City part of  
3 processing is for Brooklynn and Queens now. And if  
4 that was the case I think that should definitely be  
5 looked into as well.

6 CARLA LORE: [off mic] I'm Carla Lore.  
7 I'm just a reader in mainly the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street  
8 Library. And City Council...

9 HERRIOT SHALLOT: Oh.

10 [mic moves]

11 CARLA LORE: Thank you.

12 HERRIOT SHALLOT: Have a mic.

13 CARLA LORE: ...city council Committee...

14 [mic switches on]

15 CARLA LORE: ...Chair, Co-Chair now James  
16 Van Bramer who patiently sat through five hours of  
17 testimony on September 30<sup>th</sup> of last year may have  
18 had the best solution to maintain economic  
19 stability in the libraries. If I understand him  
20 correctly he suggested a charge to the developers  
21 of two percent which would go toward libraries.  
22 That percentage system has worked well... and it  
23 might save the Mid-Manhattan library currently used  
24 by readers from all five boroughs. And/or one could  
25 float a bond. But don't destroy the interior of the

1  
2 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Library yet. In the clash between those  
3 who think libraries should be social centers versus  
4 the scholars who would just like a bit of quiet and  
5 to read a few books there does not seem to be any  
6 reason for immediate action. The projected  
7 152,500,000 dollars that Norman Foster and the  
8 builders might charge for the execution of the  
9 central plan might go instead to adding stories to  
10 Mid-Manhattan instead of selling it to squeeze the  
11 circulating library into the famous if unseen  
12 stacks at 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. 150 million is a lot to  
13 spend to sack the interior of the 42<sup>nd</sup> street  
14 library irretrievably in the matter of Penn Station  
15 or the completely destroyed Donnell branch on the  
16 theory that one might ship the books to and from  
17 New Jersey or go completely into literature.  
18 Mathews... needs 20, 250 thousand to 500 thousand  
19 supporters. Anyway, a very large number of New  
20 Yorkers have indicated their lack of enthusiasm for  
21 the central plan. Let the central plan wait for  
22 another generation like the mile high skyscraper of  
23 Frank Lloyd Right. Perhaps Anthony Marx and the  
24 other library directors can think of something more  
25 imaginative and less destructive ways to raise and

1  
2 allocate money for the libraries including the  
3 branch libraries. Okay.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Next.

5 MONICA STRAUS: I'm, whoops, I'm Monica  
6 Stause. I'm Secretary of the Committee to Save the  
7 New York Public Library. I'd like to begin with a  
8 quote. Indeed, and I quote, indeed the untold story  
9 of our time is the emerging crisis in nonprofit  
10 governance where boards embark on policies that go  
11 against and even imperil the mission of the  
12 institution they are charged to oversee and  
13 protect, end quote. This is a quote from a February  
14 24<sup>th</sup> article in the Wall Street Journal titled  
15 Clueless at the Corcoran in which Culture Editor  
16 Eric Gibson bemoans the diminishing of this DC  
17 gallery by the policies of its trustees. In this  
18 context he also cites the threat to the New York  
19 Public Library by its problematic 42<sup>nd</sup> Street  
20 renovation. And that's the new name. In the past  
21 year as a member of the Committee to Save the New  
22 York Public Library I have spent a lot of time  
23 puzzling over the purpose of the 350 million and  
24 probably counting renovation which at the moment is  
25 destined to include 150 million in taxpayer money

1 from the city council. In the simplest terms the  
2 intention of the plan is the eventual provision of  
3 at least seven million or more annual funding for a  
4 financially strapped 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Library. The cost  
5 of the plan would be covered by the sale of the two  
6 libraries Mid-Manhattan and Science and Business  
7 Library. They are to be squeezed into a space made  
8 available in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Library through the  
9 dismantling of the stacks and the dispersion of the  
10 research collection into several offsite storage  
11 spaces. After this huge upheaval and complicated  
12 construction project by a star British architect  
13 known for his cost overruns over several years the  
14 library will supposedly be financially well off  
15 enough to be able to count on seven million or  
16 thereabouts annually. Now should the plan go  
17 through the seven million will be supporting a much  
18 smaller Mid-Manhattan and Science and Business  
19 Library one-third the size of their existing space  
20 now and a research library that has been so  
21 compromised that it will no longer be in the league  
22 of other world class research institutions. One  
23 more sentence and this is my main point. In other  
24 words by voting for the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Renovation the  
25

1  
2 trustees are actually diminishing the capacities of  
3 three libraries far more drastically than the  
4 shortage of funds that was supposedly the plan's  
5 Raison d'etre to begin with. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Alright. Thank  
7 you all for your good testimony and for you know  
8 waiting for what was a very long time today.  
9 Alright, next panel to be called. It's going to be  
10 a little bit of a larger panel. It's our last panel  
11 of the day. We have Mr. Jacob Morris CM Ply? Pile,  
12 My apologies. Constantinides I know how difficult  
13 it is to... get your name mispronounced, Charles  
14 Narvon Warren? Okay, Mariam Berkley, Okay, Ms.  
15 Berkley thank you, Regina Carp, okay wonderful, and  
16 Chris Cobb [sp?].

17 [background comments]

18 MARIAM BERKLEY: Shall I go ahead.  
19 Alright. Thank you very much Chairman Van Bramer  
20 for again holding this excellent hearing and Co-  
21 chairman Constantinides for coming now and members  
22 of the City Council. New York City must return to  
23 funding it's public institutions on behalf of the  
24 people who live here and pay taxes for those  
25 institutions and on behalf of those highly

1  
2 qualified former employees who have been let go  
3 from these institutions. I think oh, also besides  
4 libraries of the municipal archives, whose staff  
5 has been cut to nearly one-quarter of what it was  
6 25 years ago and whose records and ability to serve  
7 the people of our great city suffer from other  
8 cuts. The corporate model is not applicable to  
9 public institutions unless we wish to follow as we  
10 see to in so many of our underfunded public  
11 cultural institutions the example and path of late  
12 ancient Rome like lemmings over the cliff. So to  
13 the public libraries of our city their funding has  
14 been cut drastically and ruthlessly during the past  
15 two administrations which concomitant rises in  
16 unemployment of highly qualified and dedicated  
17 librarians including reference librarians,  
18 catalogers, and curators. Instead we have a public  
19 library system run by a board of so called trustees  
20 who hire at the cost of those now absent qualified  
21 librarians expensive public relations managers,  
22 manipulators as administrators thereby crippling a  
23 once vital public library system essential to the  
24 people of our great city. What is astonishing now  
25 is that the simple alternative of directing the

1  
2 taxpayers 150 million dollars to rebuilding within  
3 the shell of the Arnold Constable building, the  
4 Mid-Manhattan Library as a state of our circulation  
5 and general reference library with the all built  
6 in, with all the built in internet power needed for  
7 the foreseeable future and then some has apparently  
8 been discarded by the board. This despite the  
9 architectural contest held, judged, and won at  
10 considerable expense in 1999 the board has  
11 discarded these perfectly feasible plans in favor  
12 of destroying a formerly great world renowned  
13 research library which has always been in deep  
14 reality a people's library, a place where anyone  
15 from any stratum in the city could better his or  
16 her education and/or fulfill his or her most  
17 sophisticated research needs. A rentable tower,  
18 even a green tower could be built above the six or  
19 seven stories needed for the state of the art  
20 library. It could also retain the easily visible,  
21 inviting and easily accessible ground floor  
22 entrance to the Mid-Manhattan Library as well as  
23 housing Cybil. This would serve the people of the  
24 city's needs and provide steady income for the  
25 crucial research library among other things. It

1  
2 would also save our city's face internationally.

3 Thank you.

4                   CHRIS COBB: Hello, My name is Chris  
5 Cobb. I'm an arts and culture writer. And I'm also  
6 a amateur New York Historian now. I'm coming before  
7 you because I'm from California and I wanted to say  
8 when I first moved here to New York about five  
9 years ago one of the very first things I did is I  
10 went to the public library in Midtown, I got a  
11 library card because I saw that as a measure of my  
12 New Yorker-ness.

13                   [laughter]

14                   CHRIS COBB: I though now I'm part of  
15 New York because I have an NYPL library card. And  
16 shortly thereafter when I was conducting various  
17 kinds of research you know I found that I could go  
18 into the rare books room or rare archives room and  
19 they would just show me extraordinary treasures  
20 because the access to those materials is vital. And  
21 it's seen as vital here in New York and that's  
22 something that makes the library really great. I'd  
23 also like to add that what a shock it would be if  
24 we learned that the, that the Bibliothèques in  
25 Paris was being sold off to make a condo complex or

1  
2 what if we heard that the, in England they decided  
3 the British Museum you know it's been there and,  
4 maybe it could be repurposed into like a swimming  
5 pool or some kind of...

6 [laughter]

7 CHRIS COBB: ...high rise office building  
8 for international tourists who want to come down  
9 there. You know actually London right now is  
10 suffering from a plague of real estate on  
11 destruction. A lot of extremely wealthy hedge fund  
12 investors and other real estate speculators have  
13 emptied a lot of the, residents, resident home,  
14 homes, and apartments all around downtown London  
15 because they tend to use them as vacation spots.  
16 When they're not there there's nobody there. In  
17 addition to that I'd also like to point to the fact  
18 that this isn't an isolate incident, that this is  
19 part of a much larger pattern. It's a kind of broad  
20 attack on culture in general and you just need to  
21 look at museums that are de-accessioning all of  
22 their multi-million dollar paintings. And you have  
23 to wonder why is this going on and ultimately you  
24 just have to kind of do it. What is called, you  
25 follow the money.

[laughter]

REGINA CARP: Regina Carp. I was just thinking and as I sat here today really applauding all the people that spoke before me, that 70 years ago I dipped my pen into an inkwell to get my first library card. All you needed, you didn't need any identification. All you needed was to be able to write your name. And if you wrote your name you got a library card. A memorable event in my life. I'm the widow of writer, author who worked with actually Robert Carrow at the writer's room, the Allen room of the library for over 20 years. And speaking to members even now days about the expansion right is from the writers room they're all horrified by this. And to think that they would have to... some of them would be in New Jersey, you put in a request, it would come God knows when. But my, so today my local branch really does reflect those photographs. I can, I, I end up having to buy books. Yes, you can get any book. It's in there somewhere in the system. They can get it for you, it takes X amount of time. Then you're sort of... you know you're reading something and you have to fit into that time slot but the shelves are empty. And

1  
2 this is the West side Saint Agnes branch and I hear  
3 this from people all over the city, not just me.  
4 That's all.

5 JACOB MORRIS: My name's Jacob Morris.  
6 You remember Chairman Van Bramer when I testified  
7 in March of 2012 and I brought up the interesting  
8 idea that, that the city council should commission  
9 an economic impact study of the libraries. I, I  
10 know you remember that. That was brought up because  
11 you know they were going to sale the research  
12 library for science, industry, and business. And I  
13 saw its proximity to silicon alley and jobs  
14 generation is not an accident. And since I was, and  
15 have been working on developing a science center  
16 for the South Bronx that had been one of my  
17 arguments; that science centers have a positive  
18 economic impact on our economy. And then it, it hit  
19 me while I was sitting in the room that, that  
20 libraries could very possibly, and as it turns out  
21 other states and municipalities have found that on  
22 the average circulating libraries are returned four  
23 and a half dollars for every dollar spent in  
24 operating expenses. I'm going to propose four  
25 pieces of legislation for the City Council to

1  
2 consider, for you guys to introduce. Resolution  
3 number one would be to amend the state constitution  
4 to make our public libraries, access to our public  
5 libraries a constitutional right, that would be  
6 article 11 of the state constitution. You'd have to  
7 do a resolution because obviously that would have  
8 to happen in Albany. Resolution number two would  
9 be... and this is shocking to me, the trustees have  
10 been... [alarm sounds] I, may I finish this...

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah, if you  
12 just...

13 JACOB MORRIS: ...Chairman?

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...interest of  
15 time...

16 JACOB MORRIS: Yeah.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...just sum up..

18 JACOB MORRIS: I, I'll be very succinct.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

20 JACOB MORRIS: So this resolution  
21 basically would hold that our libraries are  
22 administered as a public trust. Our public  
23 libraries area public trust. Currently there is a  
24 very strict legal definition of what is a public  
25 trust. And that's parks and public waterways. Our

1  
2 library, our public libraries are not considered a  
3 public trust legislatively. That needs to change  
4 because if anything is a public trust it's our  
5 libraries. The definition and the use of libraries  
6 and their role in our society has absolutely  
7 evolved and through the 19<sup>th</sup> century into our  
8 current society libraries play a huge role in self-  
9 motivated learning which is only, it's critical to  
10 the health of our society. And number three and  
11 last I'm going to ask you to please do an intro, a  
12 piece of legislation that would commission a real  
13 economic impact study of the libraries. Chairman I  
14 understand you've introduced a bill calling for  
15 base line funding. If here in New York City we do  
16 an economic impact study that shows that our  
17 libraries make our economy substantial multiples of  
18 money and return on investment without that support  
19 the passage of the legislation you proposed from  
20 multi-year base line funding I ask you and I thank  
21 you.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Usually we ask  
23 the questions. But I'll, I'll take it. First of all  
24 I just want to say thank you on behalf of my co-  
25 chair, to all of you, and, and Mr. Morris I, I

1  
2 would like to first of all say thank you to you and  
3 Ms. Lore who I think referenced my legislation as  
4 well, for referencing it. And I think all, I would  
5 like to thank, and I, as you do I think that, that  
6 all of the evidence of the value of libraries  
7 would, would make it so overwhelmingly obvious that  
8 we should pass this legislation and base line  
9 library funding. If, but it were so... but, but I, I,  
10 I definitely think those were very, very strong  
11 suggestions and, and quantifying the value of  
12 libraries is really impossible of course right. I  
13 mean you, you can, you can attempt to quantify it  
14 and it's great right but the testimony by your,  
15 your seat right there forget your, Carp right, Mrs.  
16 Carp? Yes, spoke to it because you, 70 years ago  
17 you remember signing... that first library card. As  
18 do I, I want you to know.

19 REGINA CARP: [off mic] I mean the main  
20 branch of the Public Library in Brooklyn... was open  
21 seven days a week...

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Sure, right.  
23 But the point I was going to make and then we, we  
24 do have one more speaker, actually someone who's  
25 just signed up to speak on libraries is you cannot

1  
2 place a dollar value on that moment that you had 70  
3 years ago using the ink well to sign up for your  
4 library card just like I remember signing up for my  
5 first library card with my mother and my sister at  
6 the Broadway branch in Astoria which is on the, on  
7 the cusp of both of our districts. And that memory  
8 stays with you forever right? There's, we can try  
9 and quantify the value of libraries and we should,  
10 and there have been lots of efforts to do so but,  
11 but we can never adequately quantify it because  
12 it's actually in our hearts. And, and that is, is  
13 the real value of libraries. So I, I want to say...

14 REGINA CARP: [off mic] Just one more  
15 thing. I was an art teacher at New, in New York  
16 City and the first original art I ever saw in my  
17 life was a, sort of a cat sculptured... and it's  
18 still there... at the children's branch is around the  
19 corner...

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Sure.

21 REGINA CAPRP: And it was the first  
22 actual original artwork that I saw in my life was  
23 this cat that was on the checkout...

24 [laughter]

1  
2 REGINA CARP: ...on the way out of the  
3 library. And I went there a year ago and there is  
4 that beautiful sort of art deco cat.

5 [laughter]

6 REGINA CARP: And you know it sort of  
7 inspired me to become an art teacher...

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Sure. There are  
9 a million great stories like that.

10 UNKNOWN MALE: That's what it's all  
11 about.

12 [laughter]

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I think we're  
14 going to have the last speaker of the day Christian  
15 Zabriskie so you all are excused and Christian  
16 Zabriskie will be the last speaker. And I just want  
17 to say thank you to everyone. We've sat through a  
18 number of hearings together now so I feel like I  
19 know some of you. And I want to thank you for your  
20 advocacy and I really, really enjoy your testimony  
21 and, and your passion about your libraries. And I  
22 also believe quite frankly that the fact that Tony  
23 Marx said some of the things that he said today  
24 about they're evaluating other plans, other  
25 options, that is a direct result though of your

1  
2 advocacy right. I mean, we might not be in that  
3 place but for your work. ...it's the power of grass  
4 roots organizing that, that speaks to that. So I  
5 just want to say thank you. Even if we don't agree  
6 on everything we agree on a lot more than we  
7 disagree on. But I love your passion for libraries  
8 and, and now the finale, the grand finale Christian  
9 Zabriskie you'll be the final speaker today. Put  
10 your mic on the, red light has to...

11 CHRISTIAN ZABRISKIE: Oh, there we go.  
12 Alright sorry folks I apologize for the dramatic  
13 entry and being the wrap up closer. I just came  
14 from the airport so... First off I'd like to thank  
15 the City Council members for, for allowing me to  
16 speak today, for the opportunity to testify. My  
17 name is Christian Zabriskie and I am the Executive  
18 Director of Urban Librarians Unite. I'm also a  
19 working public librarian here in New York City. As  
20 you all know the last five years have been a  
21 challenge for our libraries in terms of funding.  
22 The city council has always helped to keep the  
23 wolves from the door and ensure that libraries are  
24 open at least five days a week providing vital  
25 services to our patrons. Thank you for that. Staff

1  
2 have responded by working harder, being more  
3 productive, and generally fighting to make sure  
4 that they can serve as many people as possible with  
5 the time and resources that are available to us.  
6 With the base lining of last year's operating  
7 budget we have an unprecedented opportunity to  
8 expand services back to where they were in 2008 and  
9 using what librarians have learned all over, all  
10 over the city in the last few years to take these  
11 libraries even farther. Libraries are uniquely  
12 positioned to reach New Yorkers in every  
13 neighborhood and in every, every demographic. We  
14 need practical working solutions to the budgetary  
15 issues we face, particularly a means of addressing  
16 the ongoing and crippling issues with the capital  
17 budget. Discussions of individual buildings,  
18 architectural features, and executive compensation  
19 are distractions from the real problem at hand  
20 which is the difficult work of fixing years of  
21 damage to our operational budget and decades of  
22 neglect in the capital budget. Libraries are  
23 leaner, library staff are working harder and  
24 smarter, and the three New York City libraries  
25 continue to be leaders both in the library world

1  
2 and in the public sector of New York City and New  
3 York State. At the same time there are literally  
4 hundreds of jobs which are being unfilled due to  
5 budget constraints. Buildings are in grievous  
6 disrepair, book budgets have been slashed, all of  
7 which makes it much harder for us to serve our  
8 public. We thank you for all that you have done for  
9 libraries and are asking you to invest in our  
10 institutions. We can promise you an excellent rate  
11 of return. And thank you for your time tonight I  
12 appreciate it. And if you are interested in the  
13 cost benefit analysis on libraries in New York City  
14 I would very strongly recommend that you take a  
15 look at the branches of opportunity report from the  
16 Center for the Urban Future. Thank you for your  
17 time. Center for an Urban Future. It's called  
18 Branches of Opportunity. It was a report  
19 commissioned by the Revson foundation about a year  
20 or so ago and it's really illuminating about this.  
21 Thank you very much

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
23 much Christian and thank you for mentioning the  
24 Revson Report which was amazing. And, and a  
25 terrific job. So I want to thank my co-chair Costa,

1  
2 Costa Constantinides, Council Member and Chair of  
3 Select Committee on Libraries for being here. I  
4 also want to thank our, our staff member Tai Mia  
5 who has been here the entire time and put all of  
6 this work together with...

7 [applause]

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...Nora Yiaya  
9 [sp?] from our finance division who's specifically  
10 assigned to Libraries and Culturals. So a few folks  
11 mentioned that I attend and sit through all of  
12 these hearings and through the entire duration but  
13 so do our staff so they deserve much more credit  
14 for that. So thank you.

15 [applause]

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And, and with  
17 that this concludes this preliminary budget hearing  
18 on Culturals and Libraries for the FY 2015 budget.  
19 Thank you all very, very much.

20 [gavel]

21  
22  
23  
24  
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date           April 6, 2014