

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

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May 27, 2015
Start: 10:49 a.m.
Recess: 11:10 a.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E:
BRAD S. LANDER
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Inez E. Dickens
Daniel R. Garodnick
Ydanis A. Rodriguez
Margaret S. Chin
Deborah L. Rose
Jumaane D. Williams
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.
Mark Levine
Vincent M. Ignizio
The Speaker (Council
Member Mark-Viverito)
David G. Greenfield
Ruben Wills
James Vacca
Daniel Dromm
Elizabeth S. Crowley

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

Dr. Ramanathan Raju
President and CEO
NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation

Karen Redlener
Executive Director
Community Pediatric Programs

Executive Director
Children's Health Fund

Dr. Rosa Gil
President and CEO
Comunilife

Stanley Richards
Nominee
Board of Corrections

William Aguado
Nominee
Taxi and Limousine Commission

Patricia Machir
Executive Director
Futures and Options

2 [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Good morning and
4 welcome to the New York City Council's Committee on
5 Rules, Privileges and Elections, which is resuming
6 from a recess. My name is Brad Lander; I am honored
7 to chair this committee. We're joined this morning
8 by Committee Members Margaret Chin from Manhattan,
9 Jumaane Williams from Brooklyn, Inez Dickens from
10 Manhattan, Dan Garodnick from Manhattan, Debi Rose
11 from Staten Island, Ydanis Rodriguez from Manhattan,
12 as well as several other additional Council Members
13 who are joining us this morning, Council Member Liz
14 Crowley, who chairs our Committee on Fire and
15 Criminal Justice, which has oversight of the
16 Department of Corrections; I think... I don't know if I
17 said Council Member Mark Levine is a member of the
18 Committee, as well as Council Member Danny Dromm, who
19 was the putter-forward of the nomination for Stanley
20 Richards, and we're all -- putter-forward, that's an
21 official term in the Charter, the putter-forward, and
22 Council Member Ruben Wills from Queens, welcome to
23 all of you.

24 We're also joined by six wonderful
25 nominees who we got to have a long conversation with;

2 we are resuming what was a three-hour public hearing
3 yesterday, so welcome to Dr. Ramanathan Raju, Dr.
4 Rosa Gil and Karen Redlener, who are being nominated
5 to the New York City Board of Health; William Aguado
6 being nominated to Taxi and Limousine Commission;
7 Stanley Richards being proposed by the Council for
8 the Board of Corrections and Patricia Machir being
9 proposed by the Council to the New York City Youth
10 Board.

11 I will just read the formal letters of
12 introduction, but then I wanna let people know; we
13 had said that members who weren't available yesterday
14 and who had additional questions, that we would
15 reopen any of these public hearings, and if anyone
16 has an additional question or wants to make a
17 statement, we'll make room to do that.

18 I will tell you that I thought
19 yesterday's hearing was genuinely inspiring and that
20 our conversations about social determinants of health
21 and confronting inequality through and thinking about
22 the health systems and what they can and can't do on
23 their own and in combination with other systems; our
24 conversation with Stanley Richards about opportunity
25 and redemption and what's possible in the city if we

2 think about it in some different ways of what we need
3 to be doing at Rikers; with Council Member Dromm and
4 The Speaker; our conversation with Mr. Aguado about
5 how the TLC can relate to communities and his
6 community experience, and our conversation with
7 Patricia Machir about creating opportunities for
8 young people and working with some of the smaller
9 community organizations were really good, so would I
10 encourage anyone who's watching this morning to go
11 look at yesterday's hearing and you'll see that we've
12 got an inspiring and very impressive set of nominees.

13 That said, let me dispense with a couple
14 of quick pieces of business and then if anyone has
15 questions or comments, and then we'll proceed to a
16 vote.

17 I see we've also been joined by Council
18 Member Jimmy Vacca from the Bronx and someone else...
19 and Council Member Rafael Espinal from Brooklyn,
20 who's a member of the Rules Committee. Also like to
21 acknowledge Counsel to the Committee, Jason Otano and
22 our great staff -- Chuck Davis, Director of
23 Investigations, as well as Deandra Johnson and Diana
24 Arriaga from the Council's Investigative Unit.

2 In letters date May 11, 2015, Mayor de
3 Blasio formally submitted to the Council the names of
4 Dr. Ramanathan Raju, Karen Redlener and Rosa Gil for
5 advice and consent for nomination for their
6 appointment to the New York City Board of Health; if
7 the Council gives its advice and consent, Dr. Raju,
8 resident of Staten Island, will fill a vacancy and
9 serve the remainder of six-year term that expires on
10 May 31, 2018; Ms. Redlener, a resident of Manhattan,
11 will fill a vacancy and serve the remainder of a six-
12 year term that expires on May 31, 2020, and Dr. Gil,
13 a resident of Manhattan, will fill a vacancy and
14 serve the remainder of a six-year term that expires
15 on May 31, 2020.

16 The Mayor also submitted William Aguado's
17 name for the Council's advice and consent concerning
18 his nomination for appointment to the New York City
19 Taxi and Limousine Commission; if the Council gives
20 its advice and consent, William Aguado, a Bronx
21 resident, will fill a vacancy and serve the remainder
22 of a seven-year term that expires on January 31,
23 2022.

24 The Council will consider Stanley
25 Richards for appointment to the Board of Corrections;

2 if the Council votes to make this appointment,
3 Stanley Richards, a resident of the Bronx, will
4 replace Alexander Rovi and be eligible to serve the
5 remainder of a six-year term expiring on October 12,
6 2020.

7 And finally, the Council will consider
8 Patricia Machir for recommendation for appointment to
9 the Youth Board; if the Council votes to make this
10 recommendation and the candidate subsequently
11 appointed by the Mayor, Patricia Machir will be
12 eligible to serve on the New York City Youth Board
13 for an undefined term.

14 So with that, let me open it up to any of
15 my colleagues who have either questions for any of
16 the -- can we simultaneously reopen all of the
17 hearings that we recessed yesterday -- so questions
18 or comments from any member or non-member of the
19 Committee; we're now open for comment; we'll begin
20 with Council Member Vacca, followed by Council Member
21 Crowley.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Thank you,
23 Mr. Chair and I certainly wanted to comment on the
24 nominees we have today; Ms. Gil and I have had
25

2 wonderful communications and I'm so honored that
3 you've agreed again to serve our city.

4 And I thank all the others, but I really
5 wanted to single out as well Bill Aguado; Bill Aguado
6 has been a voice in the Bronx in the arts for many,
7 many years, Bronx Council of the Arts; he's an
8 institution in our borough, and I wanted to make
9 sure, even though I'm not on the Committee, I wanted
10 to make sure that a Bronx Council Member was here to
11 indicate that we're supportive of you; we put you on
12 the Taxi and Limousine Commission because of your
13 integrity and your record of service, and I would
14 hope that the Committee members here will vote in
15 favor of your nomination. I was pleased to support
16 you from the inception and even mentioned the idea to
17 you, I remember, at a botanical gardens function; I
18 said, "Oh my god, you'd be great for the Taxi and
19 Limousine Commission," and I remember your response,
20 "Jimmy, what do you think?" So, although that's my
21 paraphrasing, of course; not yours. But Bill, I wish
22 you the best and I urge the members to vote yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you, Council
24 Member Vacca. Council Member Crowley.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you,
3 Mr. Chairman. Good morning. I am Council Member
4 Elizabeth Crowley; I also have the privilege of
5 chairing the Fire and Criminal Justice Committee here
6 at the Council. I wanted to be here to congratulate
7 Stanley Richards on the good work that he's done in
8 his career and for being interested in wanting to
9 serve our city in the capacity of a member of the
10 Board of Corrections. I support him in his efforts
11 and I know we'll have a chance to vote on that as a
12 body later today, but I wanted to wish him well and I
13 look forward to our good work together.

14 Mr. Richards was incarcerated himself and
15 made the most of that; he educated himself and
16 started to believe in his future and his work with
17 The Fortune Society since leaving prison he has
18 helped countless individuals to believe in themselves
19 and to achieve a better life. So I thank you,
20 Mr. Richards, and I look forward to our good work
21 together.

22 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you, Council
23 Member Crowley. I'm pleased that we've been joined
24 by our Speaker, Melissa Mark-Viverito and I have
25 prevailed upon Council Member Dromm to briefly

2 reprise some of his remarks from yesterday at our
3 longer hearing.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you,
5 Mr. Chair and again, it is so great to have brought
6 the name of Stanley Richards to the attention of our
7 Speaker for support for this nomination to the Board
8 of Corrections.

9 Stanley and I have known each other about
10 four years now, when a friend of mine who was
11 previously incarcerated went to The Fortune Society
12 and I've seen the magic that The Fortune Society has
13 done with folks and that magic in many ways is
14 orchestrated by the work of Stanley Richards. We're
15 fortunate also today to be joined by the founder of
16 The Fortune Society, David Rothenberg, who is here in
17 the back -- David, give us a wave back there as well
18 -- who had the idea and the concept that formerly
19 incarcerated individuals could reform their lives and
20 turn their lives around and make themselves
21 productive taxpayers, as David Likes to say, in
22 society as well. We've been joined by my friend
23 Robert as well, who is a client at The Fortune
24 Society at this point.

2 And I'm very proud of all of them and I
3 really look forward to the work that Stanley is going
4 to be able to do and to the perspective that Stanley
5 is going to bring to the Board of Corrections,
6 because I really do believe that the philosophy of
7 The Fortune Society, in particular of unconditional
8 love, of giving people second, third, fourth chances,
9 whatever it is that they need to be supported in
10 their efforts to re-enter society as productive
11 citizens is ultimately what has been successful with
12 those who have been formerly incarcerated.

13 And I also believe that Stanley Richards
14 believes, as many of us in the Council do, that there
15 are preventative measures that we should be taking to
16 ensure that many of our youth that are mentally ill;
17 are substance abusers don't actually have to wind up
18 on Rikers Island and I believe that Stanley is also
19 in line with our Speaker's philosophy, as she has
20 expressed, about helping individuals who are on
21 Rikers Island achieve bail, because the majority of
22 the people who are on Rikers Island are in fact
23 people who are not convicted of any crime yet and
24 simply are there because they cannot afford bail and
25 so many of the ideas and suggestions that have been

2 put out there, especially in light of the federal
3 investigation into what's happening on Rikers Island,
4 the expose in the New York Times, are issues that
5 Stanley is well aware of and I am confident that he
6 will tackle these issues in a very fair, professional
7 and thorough way and in a way which would be in line
8 with the majority of thinking of the members of New
9 York City Council, so I am very proud to support
10 Stanley; I really thank our Speaker, because I do not
11 believe that under any other administration this
12 would have happened; having a formerly incarcerated
13 person who actually has gone through Rikers Island
14 and knows the system is going to be able to lend a
15 perspective to the Board of Corrections that has not
16 been given before, and I thank our Speaker and I
17 thank our Chair for giving me this time and for
18 really making sure that this nomination went through
19 in a timely and productive way. Thank you very, very
20 much.

21 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you, Council
22 Member Dromm for those remarks and for your
23 leadership on this issue in this Council and the
24 prior Council and in bringing Mr. Richards to our
25 attention.

2 One technical thing I wanna do with
3 Mr. Richards, which I did with the three nominees for
4 the Board of Health yesterday; we just ask in this
5 Committee that where someone has Conflicts of
6 Interest Board guidance related to other work that
7 they do that they acknowledge it for the record; in
8 Mr. Richards' case it's related specifically to his
9 work as a Senior Executive at The Fortune Society,
10 which has contracts with the City; if you could just
11 briefly describe and acknowledge that letter and
12 confirm that you'll be abiding by its guidance.

13 STANLEY RICHARDS: Yes. Good morning
14 everyone. I did receive a waiver from the Conflict
15 of Interest Board identifying a potential conflict
16 that they said I can't be involved in in my role on
17 the Board and at Fortune Society, and that is that I
18 won't be involved in any contract negotiations
19 between the department and Fortune Society. JoAnne
20 Page, our President and CEO will take those
21 responsibilities. I will oversee the senior
22 director, which is three levels removed from the work
23 that's going on on Rikers, and I will also recuse
24 myself of any voting matters that come before the
25 Board that involve The Fortune Society. Other than

2 that, I can serve fully and wholly and look forward
3 to serving and partnering with the Council to fulfill
4 my role on the Board of Corrections.

5 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very much
6 for that and for folks who weren't here yesterday,
7 the three Board of Health nominees who have come also
8 by long, professional service and history into work,
9 that they had to seek COIB guidance for made similar
10 affirmations yesterday as part of their testimony.

11 Madame Speaker, do you...

12 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: I'll be brief,
13 'cause I know a lot has been said; I just wanna
14 congratulate all of those that are being nominated
15 and that will be voted on today. A lot of important
16 work that gets done through the Board of Health and
17 obviously through the Board of Corrections and the
18 TLC and some of the nominees I've known for some
19 time, Bill Aguado I've known for many years and
20 Dr. Gil as well. So congratulations to all of you,
21 look forward to your partnership. Mr. Richards,
22 obviously, congratulations to you as well; we look
23 forward to the partnership and really addressing
24 important issues that you each will be representing
25 on behalf of the City of New York, either the Mayor

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2 or representing this Council, and I look forward to
3 that engagement. So thank you for the Committee
4 hearing, Mr. Chair and thank you for your commitment
5 to the work ahead; look forward to it.

6 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you, Madame
7 Speaker. Do any other members have questions for or
8 comments about these nominees before we proceed to a
9 vote? We've been joined as well by Council Member
10 Dan Garodnick from Manhattan, a member of this
11 committee. Welcome.

12 Okay. With that I will close the public
13 hearing on all six of these nominees for these four
14 different boards [gavel] and we will proceed to ask
15 the clerk to call the roll on the vote.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,
17 Committee Clerk, roll call vote Committee on Rules.
18 Chair Lander.

19 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: I vote aye on all.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: Dickens.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you.

22 Chair, permission to explain my vote?

23 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Absolutely.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: I wanna
25 congratulate all of the candidates, but I wanna give

2 special mention to Dr. Raju for the opening of the
3 new dental clinic and to my Speaker and to the City
4 Council for the support that was given to Harlem
5 Hospital for the opening of a brand new dental clinic
6 and I wanted to give special mention to him. I also
7 wanna mention Karen Redlener and the Children's
8 Health Fund for the phenomenal program that they have
9 also in my district. And Mr. Richards, special
10 mention for you, because you are taking additional
11 time to give to the citizens of this great city to
12 help save our future, which is our youth. I think
13 that you will be a role model per excellence, because
14 they can identify with you and you can identify with
15 them, and so I wanted to say thank you for being
16 willing -- and I wanna thank Council Member Dromm for
17 nominating you. I thank you, and I vote aye on all.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: Garodnick.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK:

20 Congratulations. Aye.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: Rodriguez.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Aye.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: Chin.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Permission to
25 explain my vote, Chair.

2 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Granted.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I'm really proud to
4 vote aye on all and I wanted to thank all of the
5 nominees and I really look forward to the changes
6 that you're gonna bring about, whether it's through
7 the Board of Health, definitely the Department of
8 Corrections and Rikers Island, Stanley, I really look
9 forward to your expertise and your commitment to
10 really help us improve that system, and as my
11 colleague said, to really offer an opportunity and
12 future for our youth. And the other nominee, thank
13 you so much for your commitment to our youth and also
14 to the Taxi and Limousine Commission. I vote aye on
15 all. Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Rose.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Permission to
18 explain my vote, please.

19 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Yes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you. I just
21 wanna say that it is really a pleasure today to vote
22 for all of the nominees today; you are more than
23 qualified, your expertise in your fields have been
24 noted long before you sat before this Council group.
25 And I wanna say to Dr. Raju, you know, thank you for

2 what you are doing with HHC, especially since Staten
3 Island doesn't have a HHC; you've been very helpful
4 to our other hospital system. And I think it's
5 really a pleasure to take a historic vote on Stanley
6 Richards today; this is the first and I hope that
7 it's not the last. So with that I vote aye on all
8 and recognize this august body.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK: Espinal.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: I proudly vote
11 aye and congrats to all.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: Williams.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Can I be
14 excused to explain my vote?

15 [laughter, background comments]

16 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Denied.

17 [laughter]

18 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Alright, I guess
19 I'll go ahead this one time.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you very
21 much, so sweet of you.

22 I do wanna congratulate all of the
23 nominees as well; I too wanted to give a special
24 congrats to Mr. Richards; very exciting and excited
25 about your nomination; in this discussion of black

2 lives matter and the police report reform, I think
3 it's important that we look at many different systems
4 that are going on in these communities and of course,
5 Board of Corrections is an important one. I think
6 when we go through these systems and put together
7 programs we very rarely use the affected people in
8 that discussion; we do it in youth programs where we
9 don't include young people and we do it with criminal
10 justice programs where we don't include the people
11 who are going through the system, so I think it's
12 very exciting that you're there. I wanna thank Danny
13 Dromm for your appointment and unfortunately, your
14 story is seen as an anomaly and you deserve all the
15 accolades you get, but we of course know that is not
16 an anomaly; anyone given the proper circumstances can
17 and will achieve. So congratulations again; thank
18 you for your story and thank you for being who you
19 are. I vote aye on all.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: Levine.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Permission to
22 briefly explain my vote?

23 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Absolutely.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you.

2 Well I'm so impressed by all of our six
3 nominees and just wanna mention I'm happy to have
4 personal connections to two of you, Karen Redlener,
5 who, in addition to running a great nonprofit, lives
6 in my district, and Stanley Richards, who spends most
7 of his life in my district at The Castle and is a
8 source of constant inspiration for me every time I
9 have the pleasure of visiting and seeing you in
10 action. Congrats to all of you; proudly vote aye.
11 Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: Ignizio.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Yes.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK: Speaker Mark-Viverito.

15 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: I vote aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of 11 in the
17 affirmative, 0 in the negative; no abstentions, all
18 items have been adopted.

19 [background comments]

20 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: We have a couple
21 members.. [background comments] Everyone voted.

22 Alright, we will not hold the vote open for the zero
23 members of the Committee who have not voted, and I'm
24 pleased to adjourn this hearing. Congratulations to
25 all our nominees.

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 June 5, 2015