

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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December 18, 2008  
Start: 1:00pm  
Recess: 1:33pm

HELD AT: Committee Room  
City Hall

B E F O R E: DAVID I. WEPRIN  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Joel Rivera  
Diana Reyna  
Maria Baez  
Gale A. Brewer  
Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.  
Bill de Blasio  
Lewis A. Fidler  
James F. Gennaro  
Alan J. Gerson  
Eric N. Gioia  
Robert Jackson  
G. Oliver Koppell  
Michael E. McMahon

## A P P E A R A N C E S

## COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Helen Sears  
Peter F. Vallone, Jr.  
Albert Vann  
David Yassky  
Vincent J. Gentile  
Vincent Ignizio  
James S. Oddo  
Letitia James  
Michael C. Nelson

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

Jeremy Waldrup  
Assistant Commissioner  
Department of Small Business Services

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Sergeant-at-  
3 Arms, are you ready?

4 [Pause]

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Good afternoon  
6 and welcome to today's Finance Committee hearing.  
7 My name is David Weprin. I chair the Committee.  
8 Today the Finance Committee will vote on eight  
9 items. Let me introduce our colleague that are  
10 here and someone can count if we have a quorum.  
11 Gale Brewer, from Manhattan; our Majority Leader,  
12 Joel Rivera from the Bronx; Council Member Peter  
13 Vallone, Jr., from Queens; Council Member Helen  
14 Sears, from Queens; Council Member Jim Gennaro,  
15 from Queens; Council Member Alan Gerson, from  
16 Manhattan; Council Member Oliver Koppell, from the  
17 Bronx; and Council Member Albert Vann, from  
18 Brooklyn. I think we're close. We will vote on  
19 eight items, three budget modifications, one  
20 transparency resolution, one local law  
21 establishing the Fulton Street BID in Council  
22 Member Tish James's district, and a local law  
23 increasing the hotel tax, a local law enacting the  
24 mid-year property tax increase and raising the  
25 assessed valuation threshold for the frequency of

1 when owners pay their property tax bills, and a  
2 property tax fixing resolution reflecting the mid-  
3 year property tax increase. Let's start first  
4 with the three budget modifications. The first  
5 budget modification is an expense modification.  
6 The first budget modification is an expense  
7 modification, MN-1, which is just a technical  
8 modification. This modification effectuates  
9 changes among agencies consistent with Local Law  
10 35 of 2008, which transferred jurisdiction over  
11 the Environmental Control Boards from DEP to the  
12 Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings.  
13 This modification effectuates those changes by  
14 transferring the unit of appropriation allocation,  
15 as I mentioned, from DEP to OATH. The net effect  
16 of this modification is a negative fiscal  
17 implication. The next budget modification is a  
18 revenue modification, MN-2, which reflects 296.4  
19 million in new revenue. These new revenue result  
20 from an increase of 576 million in property tax  
21 revenue by rescinding the 70% property tax rate  
22 reduction and an increase of 5.1 million in  
23 miscellaneous revenues. These increases are  
24 offset by a reduction of 284.7 million in  
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1  
2 economically sensitive tax revenue. The \$296.4  
3 million will be used for the City's debt service  
4 and placed in the budget stabilization account.  
5 The next modification is a capital modification.  
6 This modification reflects a transfer of funds  
7 between various agencies to reallocate City  
8 Council appropriation in the Fiscal Year 09  
9 capital budget. The net effect of this  
10 modification is zero. The next item on our agenda  
11 is a transparency resolution. This resolution  
12 approves the new designation and changes in the  
13 designation of certain organizations to receive  
14 funding in the Fiscal 2009 expense budget. As  
15 with all transparency resolutions, potential  
16 conflicts should be disclosed using the disclosure  
17 forms provided to you by Noran Camp or other  
18 members of the General Counsel's Office. Please  
19 review the disclosure forms and return them to  
20 Noran Camp when completed. Next we will vote on  
21 proposed Intro 879-A. This bill increases the tax  
22 imposed upon the occupancy of hotel rooms from a  
23 rate of 5% of the daily rent of each room to  
24 5.875%. This new rate would go into effect on  
25 March 1st, 2009. This increase would be in effect

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2 until November 30th, 2011. Beginning on and after  
3 December 1st, 2011, the hotel tax would revert  
4 back to 5%. Next we will vote on Intro 887, which  
5 authorizes the raising of additional revenue by  
6 fixing additional real property tax rates. This  
7 bill also increases the assessed value threshold  
8 that determines whether property taxes are due on  
9 a quarterly or semi-annual basis, and enacts a  
10 one-time extension of the grace period for  
11 quarterly tax payers from January 15th to January  
12 30th, 2009 to help ease the burden on quarterly  
13 taxpayers that resulted from the late enactment of  
14 the tax rate increase. The bill increases the  
15 threshold from 80,000 to 250,000, capturing over  
16 90% of Class 1 homeowners and co-op and condo  
17 owners in New York City. Also on our agenda is a  
18 property tax fixing resolution which will reflect  
19 the mid-year property tax increases and the  
20 addition of new revenues resulting from such  
21 increase. Then finally we will vote on the Fulton  
22 Street BID. On November 15th, 2008, this  
23 Committee had its first public hearing on Intro  
24 842, which is the local law to establish the  
25 Fulton Street BID. By law, the Committee must

1  
2 wait at least 30 days after its public hearing on  
3 the BID before it can again consider and possibly  
4 vote to approve legislation to establish the BID.  
5 The 30-day period after the public hearing serves  
6 as an objection period which gives the property  
7 owner affected by this BID a chance to formally  
8 object to its creation. When considering Intro  
9 842, the Committee must answer the following four  
10 questions. One, were all notices of hearings for  
11 all hearings required to be held published and  
12 mailed as so required? Two, does all real  
13 property within the district boundaries benefit  
14 from the establishment of the district, except as  
15 otherwise provided by the law? Three, is all real  
16 property benefited by the district included within  
17 the district? Four is the establishment of the  
18 district within the best interests of the public.  
19 If the Committee finds it in the affirmative on  
20 these four questions, and the number of objections  
21 required to prevent the creation of such districts  
22 are not filed, then the legislation can be  
23 adopted. Shortly we'll hear from the Department  
24 of Small Business Services to hear whether the  
25 requisite number of objections have been received.



1  
2 We have representatives from Council Finance to  
3 answer any questions you have regarding the budget  
4 modifications, transparency resolution, hotel tax,  
5 mid-year property tax bill or the property tax  
6 fixing resolution. We will also hear from the  
7 administration if they so desire, if you so  
8 desire. Jeremy Waldrup of the Department of Small  
9 Business Services, I understand, is here to answer  
10 questions and testify if necessary on the Fulton  
11 Street BID. I'd also just like to add that even  
12 though we're not voting on certain items, there  
13 are certain items that were part of an overall  
14 agreement that was negotiated with the City  
15 Council that results in us going forward today on  
16 these items that we're voting on. Included in  
17 that is about \$20 million in restorations, to  
18 custodial services, to CUNY, to ACS, to DSS, to  
19 DFTA, to Community Boards, to HPD. And in  
20 addition to this there's an agreement that the  
21 property tax rebate checks of \$400, which were  
22 voted on and authorized last year but have not  
23 been sent out will be sent out before the end of  
24 the month. That is all part of the overall  
25 agreement. Before we hear from the Department of

1  
2 Small Business Services-- I see Commissioner  
3 Waldrup in the audience, I'd like to give Council  
4 Member Tish James an opportunity, if she desires,  
5 to make a statement on the proposed Fulton street  
6 BID.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: The proposed  
8 Fulton Street BID is within the boundaries of  
9 Community Board 2, and is covered by several  
10 precincts and several sanitation districts. Don't  
11 yawn, Al Vann. The District zoning plays an  
12 important role in any future development plans  
13 along Fulton Street. The Fulton Street basically  
14 it's a, I like this word, pulsating community  
15 encircling approximately 371 properties. A Fulton  
16 Street business employs between one to five  
17 people. The business ownership in the Fulton  
18 Street BID is concentrated primarily on  
19 independent businesses with a few regional chains.  
20 The District includes approximately 206 small  
21 retail businesses, including some clothing  
22 boutiques, multi-cultural eateries, Laundromats,  
23 hair salons, recreational services, a lounge, a  
24 dentist, restaurants, etcetera. We are  
25 anticipating a bank soon, and we are also

1  
2 anticipating the major redevelopment of 470  
3 Vanderbilt, which will serve as an anchor at  
4 Fulton Street. I enthusiastically support this  
5 BID and would urge all of my colleagues to do the  
6 same. And it's my understanding that there are no  
7 objections to this bid. There were nine  
8 objections filed, but they were invalidated and  
9 overwhelmingly the businesses on Fulton Street  
10 support this BID and I urge your support of the  
11 same. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. I think  
13 you made Assistant Commissioner Jeremy Waldrup's  
14 job a lot easier now, even though we'll have him  
15 come up. We've also been joined by some more  
16 colleagues. In addition to Council Member James  
17 we have our Minority Leader, Councilman Jim Oddo  
18 from Staten Island and Brooklyn. We have Council  
19 Member Lou Fidler from Brooklyn. We have Council  
20 Member Vincent Ignizio, from Staten Island;  
21 Council Member Vincent Gentile, from Brooklyn.  
22 And I think I got everybody else. If I missed  
23 anybody, let me know. Assistant Commissioner  
24 Jeremy Waldrup.

25 JEREMY WALDRUP: Good afternoon,

1 Mr. Chairman and Members of the Finance Committee.  
2 Again, I'm Jeremy Waldrup, an Assistant  
3 Commissioner at the Department of Small Business  
4 Services. As required by BID law, the Fulton  
5 Street BID Steering Committee mailed the summary  
6 of the City Council resolution to each owner of  
7 real property within the proposed district at the  
8 address shown on the latest City Assessment roll,  
9 or to such other persons as registered with the  
10 City to receive tax bills concerning real property  
11 within the district and to tenants of each  
12 building within the proposed district. In  
13 addition, SBS arranged for the required  
14 publication of a copy of the summary of the  
15 resolutions in the City record. We are pleased to  
16 report on the results of the objections filed with  
17 the City Clerk against the establishment of the  
18 proposed Fulton Street BID. At the conclusion of  
19 the objection period at 5:00 p.m. on December  
20 12th, in taking in to consideration any objections  
21 postmarked by that date, no valid objections were  
22 filed with the City Clerk. The total assessed  
23 value of real property within the District is  
24 \$37,200,389, and the total number of properties is  
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1  
2 271, which are held by 310 property owners. Our  
3 review concludes that the level of objection filed  
4 in terms of either the number of property owners  
5 or percentage of assessed evaluation is within the  
6 acceptable threshold needed to advance the bill  
7 for favorable consideration by the full City  
8 Council. The Department of Small Business  
9 Services supports the establishment of the Fulton  
10 Street BID. In our judgment the BID will improve  
11 business conditions and quality of life in the  
12 Clinton Hill and Fort Greene area, making it a  
13 good place to live, work and visit and lay the  
14 groundwork for further neighborhood development  
15 activities in Brooklyn. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

17 Any questions for Mr. Waldrup?

18 [Pause]

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

20 Any questions for the Finance Staff on any of the  
21 items that we're going to be voting on? Council  
22 Member Koppell?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Are we  
24 voting on any of the so-called restorations that  
25 were negotiated with the Mayor?

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: No. I

actually made that statement a little earlier,  
that it's part of an overall agreement, but there  
was actually no vote because the administration  
has the ability to do PEGs mid year without going  
back to the Council; however there is a negotiated  
agreement on the restorations on the 20 million.  
And Preston Niblack and the Finance staff have the  
details if you need the actual details. But it's  
about 20 million in restoration. There's also--  
we're also not voting on the property tax rebate,  
which there is an agreement that it will be sent  
out by the end of the month.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: What is  
happening in this memorandum that we have here  
that comes from, I guess from the staff and from  
you, Mr. Chairman, with respect to the listing of  
different appropriations? What is that  
reflecting?

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well a lot of  
it is moving around from agency to agency. You  
may recall this is the first opportunity we have  
to do a budget modification since budget adoption.  
And there were a number of errors, mistakes,

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2 agencies that should have been in other agencies,  
3 difficulties involving other agencies, some monies  
4 moved around to another agency. But they're  
5 generally not a revenue effect. It's a net zero  
6 effect, but they're certainly moving around both  
7 on the capital and expense side.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: So these--  
9 none of these items here including there's monies--  
10 - borough president, it says here president,  
11 borough of Manhattan, and then it has items to  
12 community colleges and so on. None of that  
13 reflects any programmatic shift in this document  
14 or in our budget?

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I've been told  
16 there's no change in additional revenue. It's  
17 just a question of moving around items from one  
18 area-- it could be from PS to OTPS or something  
19 along those lines. But the net effect is not a  
20 revenue effect.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Okay.  
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Council Member  
24 Gerson?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: Just a

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quick follow up. These technical adjustments as you--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing]

I like that term.

COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Are these the, in effect, do these take the place of what frequently are the first quarterly adjustments that..

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I'm sorry?

COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: Are these in effect, do these incorporate in effect the first quarterly adjustment since our last or the last?

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes. They reflect the difference--

COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON:

[Interposing] That we never got to? I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes. They do reflect the tax revenue that was not recorded exactly the same way because it was guesstimated when we-- at budget adoption.

COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: All right. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well I'm



1  
2 talking about the additional item. What we're  
3 doing is we're actually moving money into a  
4 stabilization fund, which is going to be carried  
5 over to next year's budget. But I'm talking about  
6 the actual budget items themselves are revenue  
7 neutral. Council Member Brewer?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: In your  
9 statement, I know that we're not voting on this,  
10 but you mentioned Community Boards. And maybe,  
11 even though I've been to all the briefings, I  
12 think you gave us some good news, which is that as  
13 part of, not the vote, but the handshake or MOU,  
14 can you just be specific as to the fact I guess in  
15 this year's budget at least they will not be cut  
16 in the way that the Mayor suggested? Do you have  
17 any of that information?

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes. 295,000  
19 will be a full restoration, and that is a  
20 negotiated agreement with the administration. You  
21 can tell the Community Boards that because of the  
22 City Council negotiations with the administration  
23 that money should be fully restored.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you  
25 very much.

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CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Council Member James?

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Could you outline any other further restorations, sir?

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Sure. Okay. \$4,135,000 restoration to custodial services in the Department of Education; in CUNY, \$2.5 million university-wide initiative restoration; in CUNY \$2,623,000 for community colleges, which is a full restoration; under ACS, \$3,763,000 restoration for increased Level 1 Supervisor caseloads; on the Department of Social Services, \$2,020,000 restoration to employment services re-estimate; \$1,300,000 restoration for transfer scatter site two clients to Hasser [phonetic] Case Management; under Department of Social Services also, \$998,000 restoration to job center reorganization and consolidation; under DFTA \$424,000 restoration to the Elder Abuse Prevention Program; under Community Boards, \$295,000 restoration, which I believe is a full restoration; under HPD, \$300,000 for Greenpoint Williamsburg reduction; and under DYCD restoration in the City Council Discretionary Funding, which was a 2.5% reduction; under HPD

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2 \$146,000 in Council add on-- reduction is being  
3 restored; and under Department of Education,  
4 \$250,000 earmarked for FIT for the Peter Vallone  
5 Scholarship will be restored.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Dental  
7 Clinics weren't restored?

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: That's not on  
9 this list.

10 [Pause]

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: That's a 2010  
12 cut. We're only dealing with 2009 cuts. Preston  
13 Niblack will have an entire list for every Council  
14 Member by the Stated Meeting. Any further  
15 questions? Seeing none, we're going to couple all  
16 eight items. Call the roll.

17 WILLIAM MARTIN: Council Member  
18 Weprin.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Aye on all.

20 WILLIAM MARTIN: Rivera.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I vote Aye.

22 WILLIAM MARTIN: Brewer.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I vote Aye.

24 I know it's a difficult, challenging year for  
25 everyone and I am glad that there are restorations

1  
2 and I hope that we will find other savings and  
3 efficiencies and be able to retain these important  
4 services. Thank you.

5 WILLIAM MARTIN: Comrie.

6 [Pause]

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You want to  
8 speak now? Sure. You want to explain your vote?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Yes, I'd  
10 like to explain my vote. I just want to say that  
11 this is not, this is a difficult vote for many  
12 reasons. My district clearly has-- my district  
13 that needs the services, that needs police, that  
14 needs to deal with the rising foreclosures and  
15 AIDS that is prevailing in my district needs to  
16 have City services, and this is why I'm taking the  
17 vote at this time, knowing that I think the City  
18 has not done enough to do the administrative cuts  
19 necessary, knowing that we have a lot of other  
20 options that we need to put on the table to make  
21 sure that the City steps up and meets its entire  
22 obligation. The issue of knowing that our entire  
23 nation is in a financial crisis that's  
24 unprecedented, we're on the precipice of probably  
25 a worldwide recession, requires us as a City to

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2 take some responsible steps to try to save  
3 ourselves during this difficult time. We have, as  
4 a City, and since we've been elected, been not  
5 afraid to take steps to make sure that the City's  
6 coffers are kept whole, that we can make sure that  
7 the City has the ability to maintain police, to  
8 maintain fire and to maintain City services. And  
9 I think that that's critical, and it's the  
10 overriding reason why I'm voting yes on all  
11 issues. But I am here today to say that we are  
12 going to need to do much more to push the City to  
13 ensure that they are stepping up to do a lot more  
14 in terms of service cuts that are not affecting  
15 the individuals, that are not affecting the  
16 quality of life in the City, and it will make sure  
17 that we have adequate police, fire and social  
18 service protection for the people that need it the  
19 most. Aye on all.

20 WILLIAM MARTIN: de Blasio.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DE BLASIO: I just  
22 want to amplify Council Member Comrie's points. I  
23 agree. No one is happy today, but it is the right  
24 thing to do to support this. I vote aye on all.

25 WILLIAM MARTIN: Fidler.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I vote Aye  
3 on all, with the exception of Intro 887 and the  
4 pre-considered property tax resolution, on which I  
5 vote no.

6 WILLIAM MARTIN: Gennaro.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GENNARO: I vote no  
8 on Intro 887, and no on the pre-considered  
9 property tax fixing Reso, and I vote yes on all  
10 other items.

11 WILLIAM MARTIN: Gerson.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: May I be  
13 excused briefly to explain my vote?

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes, you may.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: I just want  
16 to associate myself with all of the comments by  
17 our distinguished Council Member Leroy Comrie.  
18 And I just want to add and underscore one critical  
19 item missing from the restorations, and that is  
20 the restoration needed to proceed with the full,  
21 originally planned class of incoming police cadets  
22 to sustain our police strength. The commitment  
23 made by the administration has been a class of 250  
24 in January and a minimum, a minimum class of 250  
25 in July at the start of the next fiscal year.

1  
2 What we need to do as a City, as a Council,  
3 everything we can to come up, as Council Member  
4 Comrie pointed out, with additional creative  
5 sources of revenue and additional efficiencies to  
6 assure that come July that number is brought back  
7 up to 1,000. As Council Member Vallone, the Chair  
8 of our Public Safety Committee has repeatedly  
9 pointed out, we are, and as we all know, we are  
10 experiencing spikes in crime across the board  
11 throughout this City. To deny that, to mask that  
12 in statistics, would be like acting as ostriches  
13 burying our heads in the sand. We will endanger  
14 this City and ultimately cost the City more in  
15 fiscal resources if we do not assure that our  
16 police department is brought up to the originally  
17 planned strength, which is less than where it had  
18 been itself even years ago. So with that caveat,  
19 for reasons of immediate fiscal prudence, I will  
20 vote Aye on all.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,  
22 Council Member. I neglected to mention the  
23 limited class that we are restoring, 250 out of  
24 the 1,000, of a class that was supposed to be  
25 eliminated in January as part of this overall

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2 agreement, and also the class in '10 under the  
3 additional PEGs was slated to be eliminated, and  
4 we're guaranteeing that there will be a class in  
5 '10 at a minimum of 250. We're hoping that during  
6 budget negotiations that number will be  
7 significantly higher. Thank you.

8 WILLIAM MARTIN: Gioia.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GIOIA: [off mic]

10 WILLIAM MARTIN: Jackson.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: I vote Aye  
12 on all.

13 WILLIAM MARTIN: Koppell.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Aye on  
15 all.

16 WILLIAM MARTIN: McMahon.

17 [Pause]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MCMAHON: Okay. Is  
19 this the House resolution number? First let me  
20 just, if I just can explain my vote very briefly.  
21 Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank you and the  
22 incredible staff here of the Finance Committee.  
23 It's been a great seven years serving under your  
24 leadership, and great work has been done. So I  
25 just want to thank you for your leadership. And



1  
2 the staff here at Finance are really professional  
3 and great people to work with, and I thank you for  
4 all their help. I vote yes on the BID and no on--

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing]  
6 There are eight items, eight coupled items.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MCMAHON: I vote Aye  
8 on No except Yes on Many.

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You just have  
10 to push a button in Washington, right?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MCMAHON: That's the  
12 way you say it in Washington. 879-A, No. 887,  
13 No, and the tax-fixing resolution, No; and Aye on  
14 all others.

15 WILLIAM MARTIN: Sears.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: Aye.

17 WILLIAM MARTIN: Vallone.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: May I be  
19 excused for a brief moment, Mr. Chair? Mr. Chair,  
20 may I be excused to explain my vote?

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes, you want  
22 to explain your vote, Council Member?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I just  
24 want to briefly say that I understand what this  
25 Committee is doing so I'm not going to rant and

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2 rave or anything, but I cannot support a budget  
3 that raises taxes and slashes out police force as  
4 deeply as this budget does. We're saving 250 out  
5 of a class that should have been 1,200 in January  
6 and the same in July. When Police Commissioner  
7 Kelly testified a few weeks ago at my Public  
8 Safety hearing, he talked about the devastating  
9 effects of just the elimination of the first  
10 class, not even the second class. With the  
11 elimination of the second class we will for the  
12 first time be under 33,000 police officers when it  
13 hits its low, and that is just not something that  
14 I can countenance. Our number one priority is to  
15 protect the safety of the public. We're not doing  
16 that with this budget, so I'm going to vote  
17 against pre-considered property tax fixing Reso;  
18 against 887; against 879-A and Aye on the rest.

19 WILLIAM MARTIN: Vann.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: May I be  
21 excused for an inquiry? We are essentially  
22 repealing the decrease that we made in the  
23 property tax, I guess two years ago?

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Exactly.

25 Actually the decrease was scheduled to be

1  
2 eliminated effective July 1st. All we're doing is  
3 moving it up six months.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Six months.

5 Okay. Does this preclude the introduction of any  
6 new or additional property taxes by taking this  
7 action?

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: No, no. And  
9 actually as part of the agreement, let me state  
10 that the agreement is that the administration will  
11 not come back to us for an additional property tax  
12 increase in 2010 budget. So by voting today for  
13 the 7%, you're basically assuring that there will  
14 be no additional tax increase brought back to us  
15 in June.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Point of  
17 information, Mr. Chairman?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: I think I  
19 have the Chair. I waive.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: I'm just  
21 asking for a point of information. The scheduling  
22 comment, I think, isn't an accurate one. There  
23 was no schedule for the property tax increase, the  
24 decrease to go away and just increase on its own.  
25 Still it would require our action. The Mayor can

1  
2 put it in any budget that he wants, but as I still  
3 recall this side of City Hall is what dictates  
4 that policy. So there is no schedule. There is  
5 no sunset provision. This will go up if we  
6 decided to do that in the next budget year. So I  
7 just wanted to point out that that's an inaccurate  
8 statement that it would just go up on its own.  
9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well no, as  
11 part of the Mayor's financial plan to go up.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: I  
13 appreciate that, Mr. Chairman. I'm just trying to  
14 make the point that we, the Council, set the  
15 requirements for funding here, not the Mayor.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Now we  
17 cleared that up, in my confused state, I vote Aye  
18 on all.

19 WILLIAM MARTIN: Gentile.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I vote no  
21 on Intro 887 and the pre-considered tax fixing  
22 resolution accompanying it, and Aye on all the  
23 rest.

24 WILLIAM MARTIN: Ignizio.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Obviously

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2 I'd like to briefly explain my vote. I think that  
3 which is before us, I think is the wrong way to go  
4 for the City, because nonetheless, despite what  
5 anybody is telling you here, this City will run a  
6 surplus this year, somewhere in the neighborhood  
7 of a half a billion dollars; that's excluding the  
8 7% property tax increase. And the comments that  
9 were made vis-à-vis the foreclosure problem in  
10 this City, this only exasperates the foreclosure  
11 in the City because perhaps with the increases,  
12 now it's too much, we can't do it. So, I think  
13 it's the wrong way to go on that end as well. In  
14 terms of the police presence, those who want to  
15 hang themselves up on, well we received, we got  
16 things back from the administration, well the  
17 police class is woefully inadequate, and for the  
18 fact that we only got 250 members I think is an  
19 indictment on behalf of what we did here and what  
20 the Mayor sees going forward in terms of crime  
21 reduction in this City. We will pay the price as  
22 we always will. It's my belief that in the end of  
23 the day, this increase, the surplus we were seeing  
24 in 2010, going into 2010 will be well over a half  
25 a billion dollars. I don't believe we need to

1  
2 take these draconian increases in property tax  
3 right now. I've said it before, I'll say it  
4 again, it's the wrong way to go because you can  
5 never tax yourself out of an economic downturn. I  
6 thought we've learned our lesson. I don't believe  
7 we have in this body. So I respectfully vote no  
8 on 879-A and 887 and the pre-considered tax fixing  
9 resolution. Thank you.

10 WILLIAM MARTIN: Oddo.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: I vote no on  
12 879-A, 887 and the association tax fixing  
13 resolution and yes on all others.

14 WILLIAM MARTIN: Gioia.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GIOIA: Thank you.  
16 I agree with Council Member Ignizio. I was just  
17 telling Council Member Brewer that yesterday I  
18 spoke with a mom who we've been working with for  
19 the past few months to avoid foreclosure on her  
20 home. She called yesterday because she doesn't  
21 have enough money for gifts for Christmas for her  
22 kids, so we put her in touch with Catholic  
23 Charities. But I'm afraid that a raise in the  
24 property tax at this time, in this economy, will  
25 push more and more New York families into

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2 foreclosure, losing the only asset that they have.  
3 I'm afraid that you have many people in this town  
4 who have homes that might be worth half a million  
5 or three-quarters of a million dollars, but  
6 actually have no wealth because they bought their  
7 house 30 or 40 years ago; they're watching the  
8 assessments go through the rough as their wages  
9 stay stagnant and some have even lost their jobs.  
10 And so for that reason, I vote no on Intro 887 and  
11 the pre-considered property tax resolution that  
12 accompanies it, and vote yes on all others. Thank  
13 you.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right.  
15 There are a number of members that are in the  
16 building that are going to be coming up, so I'm  
17 going to keep the roll open for a half hour. Oh  
18 wait. Well we have another member. Council  
19 Member Baez, we have eight votes coupled. How do  
20 you vote?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BAEZ: Aye.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Baez votes  
23 Aye.

24 WILLIAM MARTIN: Current vote on  
25 the Committee on Finance, all items are adopted by

1  
2 a vote of 19 in the affirmative, zero in the  
3 negative and no abstentions, with the exception of  
4 Intro 879, which is adopted by a vote of 15 in the  
5 affirmative, 4 in the negative, no abstentions;  
6 and introduction 887 and pre-considered resolution  
7 regarding property tax is adopted--

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing]  
9 Please sign the Committee Reports--

10 WILLIAM MARTIN: [Interposing] 11  
11 in the affirmative, 8 in the negative and no  
12 abstentions.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I'm going to  
14 keep the roll open for a half hour. Other than  
15 that, we're adjourned.

16 [Pause]

17 WILLIAM MARTIN: Council Member  
18 Yassky.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER YASSKY: I vote Aye.

20 [Pause]

21 COUNSEL: Council Member Reyna?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: I vote No on  
23 the property tax, Yes on the hotel tax, and yes on  
24 the transparency resolution.

25 COUNSEL: Wait. We have eight



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items. Let me just show you.

[Pause]

COUNSEL: Council Member Reyna.


COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: I vote no on Intro 887, with accompanying pre-considered resolution 1741, and yes on all the rest.

COUNSEL: The vote now stands at 21 in the affirmative; zero in the negative, zero abstentions, with the exception of Intro 887 now stands at 12 in the affirmative, 9 in the negative. Council Member Reyna?

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: This meeting is adjourned.

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature  \_\_\_\_\_

Date December 30, 2008 \_\_\_\_\_