

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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April 9, 2019
Start: 11:18 a.m.
Recess: 11:28 a.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: KAREN KOSLOWITZ
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Adrienne E. Adams
Margaret S. Chin
Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.
Vanessa L. Gibson
Corey D. Johnson
Rory I. Lancman
Steven Matteo
Ritchie J. Torres
Mark Treyger

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

2 [sound check] [pause]

3 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Alright, this
4 [gavel] meeting is now open, the Rules Committee
5 meeting is open. Good morning and thank you for
6 attending this hearing of the Committee on Rules,
7 Privileges and Elections. My name is Karen
8 Koslowitz, and I am honored to chair this committee.
9 Before we begin, I would like to introduce Rules
10 Committee Council Members and other members who have
11 joined us today. I will start by introducing the
12 Rules Committee members. First, we are very pleased
13 to be joined—the Speaker will be here in a few
14 minutes. Council Member Adrienne Adams, Council
15 Member Margaret Chin, Council Member Rafael Espinal,
16 Council Member Vanessa Gibson, Council Member Mark
17 Treyger. Did I leave anybody out? No. Okay. I
18 would also like to acknowledge Rules--and Council
19 Member Matteo has just joined us. I would also—I
20 would also like to acknowledge Rules Committee
21 Counsel Elizabeth Guzman and our Chief Compliance
22 Officer Chuck Davis. Today the Rules Committee will
23 consider a resolution to recommend to the Council
24 body certain proposed changes to the Rules of the
25 Council. The Proposed changes include adding a rule

2 concerning procurement procedures to Chapter 2 and
3 amending existing-existing Rule 6.00. Chapter 2 will
4 be amended to add Rule 2.45, which will allow our
5 Speaker to issue Council procurement procedures for
6 Council Members and employees to ensure cost savings,
7 avoid conflicts of interest and promote economic and
8 equal employment opportunities in the procurement
9 process. Consistent with New York City policy, this
10 rule would apply to the procurement of good services
11 in construction by the Council and paid for out of
12 the City Treasury or out of monies under the control
13 or assessed or collected by the city. Chapter VI
14 will be amended to modify Rule 6.00 by removing the
15 outdate requirement that papers be submitted in
16 quadruplet-quadruplicate--[laughter] now that papers
17 are submitted electronically rendering the rule
18 obsolete. The resolution will also recommend certain
19 changes to Chapter 7 of the Rules of the Counsel,
20 which governs committees. The proposed changes
21 include altering the composition of the Committee on
22 Immigration, which would be comprised of Chair Carlos
23 Menchaca and Council Members Dromm, Miller, Holden
24 and Eugene. The creation of a new standing
25 committee, which would be titled the Committee on

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2 Resilience and Waterfronts. Council Member Brannan
3 would step down as Chair of the Committee on
4 Contracts and chair this new standing committee.
5 Council Member Ben Kallos would fill the Contract
6 Chair vacancy, and serve as chair of the Committee on
7 Contracts. Finally, concerning Chapter 2, the
8 Committee on Women would be retitled the Committee on
9 Women and Gender Equity. The resolution also
10 recommends modifications to Chapter 11 of the Rules
11 of the Council, which governs land use and are set
12 forth in the Preconsidered Reso--Resolution
13 distributed and in front of us we have pages to the
14 Committee, additions and changes. Now, I will open
15 the floor to the public. [pause] Open it to the
16 Council Members, and I have no comments? [background
17 comments] Okay, we'll now take the vote.

18 CLERK: William Martin, Committee Clerk.
19 Roll call vote Committee on Rules, Privileges and
20 Elections on Preconsidered Resolution, Chair
21 Koslowitz.

22 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: I vote aye.

23 CLERK: Matteo.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: No,

25 CLERK: Gibson.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [off mic] I vote
3 aye.

4 CLERK: Chin.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [off mic] I vote
6 aye.

7 CLERK: Espinal.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Permission to
9 explain my vote.

10 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: [pause] Yes.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Yes, thank you,
12 Chair. I'm voting aye on all of these changes made
13 to all the committees, but obviously there's--there's
14 one change in here that has stirred up a lot of
15 controversy over the past few weeks, and just on
16 behalf of Kalman Yeger being with the Immigration
17 Committee, I just want to say I've known Kalman for
18 many years. He's a hard worker, someone very
19 dedicated to his district and someone I've known to
20 be very serious and only really cares about working
21 on behalf of all New Yorkers, but there were some
22 comments made that I found to be a little troublesome
23 because of the fact that--of its potential to stir up
24 a lot of division within our own city, and I think
25 it's important that we as Council Members be very

2 careful what we say whether it be in private or in
3 public like Twitter, but with that said, again he is
4 someone that I've known to be very dedicated to the
5 district, to the city to work on behalf of all New
6 Yorkers but I vote aye on all these changes.

7 CLERK: Treyger.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Permission to
9 explain my vote.

10 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Permission
11 granted.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you,
13 Chair. I have known Kalman Yeger for many years, and
14 do not believe him to be a hateful person. While my
15 colleague may have believed that his Tweets were glib
16 or idle, we have heard from many Palestinian New
17 Yorkers about the hurt and harm his comments have
18 caused them and their children. In 2019, we need to
19 understand and appreciate that our words on social
20 media constitute official communications and will be
21 weighed as such. As a proud Jew, as someone whose
22 parents fled their home in the Soviet Union because
23 they were persecuted because they were Jews, as
24 someone whose family suffered for their identity, as
25 someone who knows the struggle of my people to find a

2 homeland, I cannot accept comments that dispossess
3 thousands of new Yorkers of their identity. There
4 are those who will attempt to frame today's vote as a
5 litmus test of one's commitment to Israel and the
6 Jewish people. There are those who will view my vote
7 as a betrayal. I reject this binary. It is possible
8 to embrace Israel without negating the identities of
9 Palestinians or denigrating their desire for a
10 homeland. It is possible to advocate for Israel
11 without engaging in rancor or enmity, and indeed our
12 coalition is strengthened when we exercise empathy
13 and resist extremism. Ultimately, as elected
14 officials our legacies are defined by our impact not
15 our intentions. The impact of my colleagues still
16 considered comments has been clear. I respect the
17 deliberations of the Speaker's leadership team and I
18 vote yes.

19 CLERK: Adams.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Permission to
21 explain my vote?

22 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: I, too, have know
24 Kalman Yeger for a while, and consider him a friend.
25 However, when we took the oath as Council Members, we

2 took that oath to protect not just our constituents,
3 but to protect all New Yorkers. It is with a heavy
4 heart that I, too, will aye on all because of the
5 responsibility that comes with being a member of the
6 New York City Council. I vote aye on all.

7 CLERK: By a vote of 6 in the
8 affirmative, 1 in the negative and no abstentions,
9 the item has been adopted by the Committee.

10 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Okay, and we are
11 going to hold this committee meeting open for 20
12 minutes. [background comments/pause]

13 CLERK: Continuation roll call, Committee
14 on Rules, Speaker Johnson.

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I vote aye. [pause]

16 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: The Rules
17 Committee is adjourned. [gavel]

18 CLERK: [off mic] No, the final vote.

19 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Hm?

20 CLERK: Final vote, Committee on Rules,
21 the item has been adopted by the Committee 7 in the
22 affirmative, 1 in the negative and no abstentions.

23 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Alright, this
24 committee is adjourned. [gavel]

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 24, 2019