

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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MARCH 12, 2021  
Start: 1:01 P.M.  
Recess: 4:08 P.M.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 2)

B E F O R E: ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL, CHAIRPERSON

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

GREGORY RUSS, NYCHA Chair and CEO

VITO MUSTACIUOLO, General Manager and  
Chief Operating Officer

ANNIKA LESCOTT, Executive Vice-President  
of Finance and Chief Financial Officer

STEVEN LOVCI, Executive Vice-President  
of Capital Projects

VERNICE TILLERY, NYCHA resident

SAUNDREA COLEMAN, NYCHA resident

LAKEESHA TAYLOR, NYCHA resident

DAMION SAMUELS, Senior Director Youth  
Services and Community Engagement at  
Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center

LAYMAN LEE, Acting Director of  
Neighborhood Safety Initiatives and  
Projects in Center for Core Initiatives

SGT. HOPE: Sergeants begin your recordings please.

SGT. LEONARDO: PC recording is underway.

SGT. LUGO: Recording and the cloud is up.

SGT. HOPE: Sgt. Polite you may begin with your opening statement.

SGT. POLITE: Thank you. Good afternoon and welcome to the remote hearing on Preliminary Budget on Public, on Public Housing. Will Council Members and staff please turn on their video at this time? Once again, will Council Members and staff please turn on your video at this time? Thank you. To minimize disruptions, please place all cellphones and electronics to vibrate. You may send your testimony to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Again that is [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Chair, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Good afternoon and thank you all for attending today's hearing on the New York City's Housing Authority's Fiscal 2022 Preliminary Budget and 5-year Operating and Capital Plans for 2021 to 2025. I am Council

Member Alicka Ampry-Samuel and I am the Chair of the Council's Committee on Public Housing. I would like to acknowledge that I am joined today by Council Member Ayala, Council Member Diaz, Sr. and Council Member Rosenthal. Exactly one year ago today, the Council's Committee on Public Housing held its Budget Hearing on the Fiscal 2021 Budget in person at City Hall and it was the very last Budget Hearing to be held at City Hall as the City began to shut down less than 48 hours later. In fact, I wasn't even present for the hearing, my colleague, Council Member Vanessa Gibson Chaired on my behalf. My son was exposed and we were in precautionary isolation at the time. It's hard to believe how much has changed since last March and how much the COVID-19 pandemic has up-ended our personal lives, normal routines and finances. Even more concerning is that these impacts have not been felt equally citywide. Certain communities and neighborhoods are struggling now more than ever. Across NYCHA's Developments through May of last year and estimated 1,200 residents passed away due to complications from confirmed and probable cases related to COVID and an estimated 7,800 residents tested positive for COVID. These figures only

provide a snapshot of the beginning months of the pandemic and are likely much larger. On top of these health-related concerns, during this past year and estimated 36,000 NYCHA households have submitted interim re-certification requests citing with hardship and the need to lower their monthly rent payments. The road to post-COVID recovery is long and we must use every tool at our disposal to ensure that residents struggling to pay rent are not further crushed by this pandemic. It appears that the tide may be turning soon though and that some much needed relief is on the way. In January, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced the opening of three vaccination clinics in NYCHA Developments providing on-site vaccinations for residents 65 and older. In addition, the state opened 5 sites for eligible NYCHA residents to also receive vaccinations. Last year, the CARES Act, commonly referred as the First Stimulus Act provided some much needed Federal Operating Support for NYCHA's Public Housing and Section 8 Programs and the American Recovery Act of 2021 signed by President Biden yesterday, will hopefully or could offer some much needed resources and funding support for NYCHA's ongoing

recovery efforts by way of vouchers. Yesterday's Bill will provide a much needed infusion of \$6 billion dollars to New York City but it doesn't necessarily address the critical needs of NYCHA at this very moment. Last month, I had the opportunity to meet with Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer and he informed me that the second reconciliation process will directly address infrastructure and we are actively working with the majority leader's office on the needs of NYCHA residents and to ensure that NYCHA is at the forefront of everyone's mind. Additionally, we have a new Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. The Honorable Secretary Marsha Fudge. Prior to her time in Congress, Ms. Fudge was a Mayor and she is no stranger to budgetary constraints, racism, the affordability crisis in major cities, homelessness and the dangers of projecting false impressions over driving meaningful policy. While we anticipate great things to come from our government partners, NYCHA cannot solely rely on its government partners to provide a plan to move forward. In July of 2020, they announced the blueprint for change plan and outlined a set of ideas and strategies to re-organize the authority and

secure the capital financing required to stabilize and improve physical conditions across their entire portfolio. This is the first ever comprehensive plan for every property and every building in NYCHA's portfolio. But residents continue to have considerable hesitation. While the blueprint for change's plan is bold and comprehensive, it still relies on funding resources available at the federal level and requires state action and approval. Prior administrations have introduced answers and plans that were never seen through to completion.

Residents are not interested in the blueprint while they still have unanswered questions and incomplete projects from the previous plans and the previous administrations. At today's hearing, we hope to gain a clearer sense of how NYCHA's five year adopted operation, Operating and Capital Plans for 2021 to 2025 addressed the very needs and challenges currently confronting the authorities. We are also able to learn about NYCHA's compliance with the pillars outlined in the HUD Administrative Agreement with respect to the remediation of lead paint hazards, molds, pest infestations, inspections, heating and elevators. At the City level, the

administration has allocated \$3 billion in City Capital Funds in Fiscal Years 2021 to 2025 for roofs, heating systems and other critical building system improvement across the pillar areas of the administrative agreement and at the State level another \$450 million is expected to supplement this work. But most importantly I look forward to hearing from NYCHA about how all of this translates to improved services and the quality of life for its residents. So with that being said, I'll end my opening statement and after NYCHA, we will hear from members of the public. I will now turn it over to our Committee Counsel to go over some procedural items.

AUDREY SON, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I am Audrey Son, Counsel to the Committee on Public Housing. Before we begin, I would like to remind everyone that you will be on mute until you are called on to testify at which point you will be unmuted by the host. Please be aware that there may be a delay in muting and unmuting. I will call on panelists to testify. Please listen for your name to be called as I announce. During the hearing, if Council Members would like to ask a question, please use the Zoom Raise Hand Function and I will call on

you in order. We will limit Council Member questions to five minutes. We will now hear from the New York City Housing Authority, which is represented by Gregory Russ, Chair and CEO, Vito Mustaciuolo, General Manager and Chief Operating Officer, Annika Lescott, Executive Vice-President of Finance and Chief Financial Officer and Steven Lovci, Executive Vice-President of Capital Projects. I will now administer the oath. I will call on each of you individually for a response. Please raise your right hands. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth before this Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member questions?

AUDREY SON, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Gregory Russ?

GREGORY RUSS: I do.

AUDREY SON, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Vito Mustaciuolo?

VITO MUSTACIUOLO: I do.

AUDREY SON, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Annika Lescott?

ANNIKA LESCOTT: I do.

AUDREY SON, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And Steven Lovci?

STEVEN LOVCI: I do.

AUDREY SON, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. You may begin when ready.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Oh wait, one quick second before you get started. I also want to recognize Council Member Gjonaj, Council Member Menchaca and Council Member and Council Member Van Bramer who have also joined with us.

GREGORY RUSS: Thank you and, um, good afternoon everyone. It's, uh, very good to see all of you and Chair I do remember that hearing very well and I look forward to a time I hope this year when we are back in the room together and able to talk over our issues and mutual concerns. So, Chair Alicka Ampry-Samuel, members of the Committee on Public Housing. Other distinguished members of the City Council, NYCHA residents, members of the public, good afternoon, my name is Greg Russ. I am NYCHA's Chair and CEO. I am pleased to be joined by the general manager and Chief Operating Officer Vito Mustaciuolo, Executive Vice-President of Finance and CFO, Annika Lescott and our Executive Vice-President of Capital Projects, Steve Lovci and other members of the NYCHA team. Thank you for the opportunity to

present the authority's adopted budget which was approved by the Board of Directors in December 2020 and to discuss our mission to transform this agency and our resident zones. It has been a year of unprecedented adversity for our City, our Nation and the World and our budget reflects the difficulties that we face. Although we are changing the structure of NYCHA, uh, we are compelled to change the structure of NYCHA our aging and deteriorating structures also need the change and as yet the funding simply isn't there to do that. Despite these challenges we are making some progress with critical work to improve the way NYCHA operates and to bring our buildings the investment that they desperately need. We need top to bottom renovations; however, and that follows through on a number of our initiatives including efforts to impacted red and proposed initiatives under the blueprint. Before we go in to details about the 2021 Budget, I'd like to talk a little bit about COVID and how that has impacted all New Yorkers including NYCHA. NYCHA has been following the guidance from federal, state and local experts to ensure there are policies and procedures or thorough and responsive and aligned to that

advice. This includes health and safety measures and protective gear for staff, significant adjustments to work-order guidance, increased communications and outreach efforts and the simplification of the rent hardship process. The Chair mentioned this in her opening remarks and we are very happy to have been able to provide this. The hardship policy is a powerful safety bough for families who lost work or income due to COVID and is a core feature of stabilizing the families and NYCHA for that matter. That's because the rent for public housing will be 30% of adjusted income and can be adjusted during the year or the very things that happened during the COVID pandemic. As of the end of February, NYCHA estimates that we decreased rent for approximately 51,000 families in public housing and another 4,400 in the section 8 program. This does result; however, in a decrease of revenue for the agency, about \$89 million last year, \$66 million of which we estimate is attributable to the COVID-19 impact. It should be noted that rent revenue is about 1/3 of our budget and large reductions mean significantly less money to repair and preserve our buildings. At the same time, the coronavirus had significant impact on our

expenses. We saw an increase of around \$88 million, um, for all kinds of things, protective gear, equipment, sanitation. So, that is a swing of approximately \$154 million when we take those two things together. I will come back to this and we will talk a little bit about some of the ways that impacted us, impacted the agency. In addition to dealing with COVID we continued to move forward with the HUD agreement requirement and the authority's transformation plan and both of these make additional demands on NYCHA. These are major undertakings and they drive the work that we are doing to improve our organization, the delivery of services and the compliance required under that document impacts directly the quality of life but they are costly and they come without additional or dedicated federal funding. HUD and the southern district formerly concurred with our transformation plan this past Monday, March 8<sup>th</sup>. The plan envisions a potential, uh, organization and operational changes to improve customer service and responsiveness to conditions at the property and ensure that large projects are completed in a timely manner, promoting accountability at the property level and creating

metrics to make that accountability measureable. Its initiatives will enable us to manage our properties better and use the funding we have to improve the quality of life for our residents. It is vital to the success of this plan that we invest in this institutional change. The 2021 Budget focused on these values and included key additions to properties including additional skilled trades and support for what we are calling a neighborhood model, which is NYCHA effort to create smaller, property management portfolios and bring more decision making and resources to the development. In addition, they'll be other business process changes such as the streamline annual review process for residents. The 2021 Budget includes approximately \$19 million to support this transition. The transformation plan is based on ideas and feedback that we've received from residents and staff through virtual town halls, emails, social media, phone calls and other engagement sessions that took place through 2019 and 2020. In addition the plan was made public for pu-, available for public comment in the month of December. We will continue to engage our stakeholders and partners to incorporate feedback as

we bring the planned strategies to life. The next steps for us include an implementation period and development of specific implementation steps. We hope to have part one of that done by September 20, 2021 and part two by June of 2022. The implementation plans will guide the NYCHA restructuring and be, bring a more responsive and effective organization. Some of the operational improvements that are already underway include a shift to the neighborhood model. The plan also includes ideas for streamlining NYCHAs management structure, looking at improving and revising the alternative work schedules, improving productivity through technology, enhancing resident partnerships and expanding resident opportunities and empower employees through learning and development. While we transform our organization, we also need to transform our buildings into acceptable and improved conditions. Our decades old buildings are in a very deteriorated condition. In fact, they need approximately \$40 billion to bring them to a state of good repair. This is an overwhelming figure, it's enormous in fact. And it increases at the rate of about \$1 billion a year. As part of the transformation plan

for example, we took a look at if the buildings were not repaired, how much staff would we need to just to try and stay even. We've estimated we would have to hire an additional 2,800 staff at an annual cost of \$200 million to address work orders associated with this under these conditions and driven by things like failing building systems. It would be impossible to keep up with the demand of our aging deteriorating buildings at the current funding levels for operations. Capital needs are chewing through the federal, state and City funding. These sources combined at present levels can never meet the needs. If we think about NYCHA total need it is 20 times the total national appropriation from Congress. So, for example, for each apartment per month we receive an average of \$538 in tenant rent, \$513 in operating subsidy and the support from the City about \$129 per unit per month about \$1181 in total but that apartment costs us \$1423 to operate. That's a deficit of \$242 per apartment per month, roughly \$46 million across the entire portfolio. In order to balance our budget, we have to move money across our funds to support the operation and the demands that the buildings are plac-, placing on the operating budget.

In addition to spending more than we receive for basic operation and maintenance, we are also committed, committing larger amounts of scarce funding to attack the major issues that result from our old buildings and we continue to address compliance as a result of that. Since 2018, we have increased our annual operating budget by \$121 million to address lead, mold, heat, elevators, pests and waste and HUD inspections. These are part of our obligations under the HUD agreement. To meet the demands of the buildings, we've hired additional staff and of course that comes with additional costs. There is approximately the allocation of about 1,500 employees in the 2021 budget for the areas that I mentioned and this compares to about 1000 in 2018. Overall, we are allocating more funds to combat these issues than we did just a few years ago. For example, about \$44 million for instance to address lead compared to about \$12 million in 2018, \$16 million on mold compared to \$0 in 2018 and \$36 million on pests and waste versus \$3 million in 2018. These expenses have yielded some progress. We've created a waste management department and are training approximately 720 staff on integrated pest

management approaches. We've completed about 91,000 visual lead paint assessments and more the 62,000 XRF apartment inspections, over 30,000 remediations of paint deficiencies and more than 1,300 apartment abatements. I want to pause for a minute, just to point out how important this XRF apartment inspection testing is. When we are finished, we will have done 134,000 units and we have identified more clearly than in NYCHAs history where the lead is, what the lead elements are in these apartments. So, it's going to be very important both for a compliance under the HUD agreement and for Capital planning. We are also launching mold and leak prioritization initiatives and we've installed roof fans, over 2,200 roof fans in 76 developments. We are resolving 98% of elevator no service conditions within 18 hours and we are restoring heat outages faster, about 7.3 hours this year, compared to 7.5 hours last year, exceeding the 12 hour requirement and we are decreasing outages by about 34% over that same period of time. I must stress; however, that mold, lead, elevator, heating systems failures aren't Capital issues, they're symptomatics of buildings that have to received requirement investment and if

we don't bring the buildings this kind of investment through pact or blueprints or other means these issues will continue to plague us. We expect to spend substantially over the next several years to continue to address all the major areas of the HUD agreement. For example, we expect it will cost a minimum of \$1.1 billion to abate the lead paint across the portfolio. I mentioned the XRF testing, that's going to cost around \$101 million to reach those 134,000 apartments. We estimate that the interim control protocols around lead cost around \$234 million annually. These are necessary expenditures and a top priority but as I mentioned, we are not receiving additional Federal Funding for this work. We are incredibly grateful for the City's investment of at least \$2.2 billion over the next decade, this part of the HUD agreement and we've also signed our agreement for the state funds, the \$450 million to help replace elevators, upgrade heating systems at our developments. I described the true cost of doing business and it's not sustainable for a bottom line or for our residents. Again, what we need to do, what we must do is bring our residents the home they deserve by creating the capital to

invest in, in our properties. So, let's take a look at the Budget outlook. Our Budget outlook stresses the need to take creative approaches to ensure the longevity of Public Housing in New York. We have, um, large numbers and tough numbers. We have \$4.06 billion in operating revenues and about \$4.08 billion in operating expenses projected for 2021. We anticipated a small deficit of around \$25 million and we are very hopeful that we will be able to close this gap as the Federal Funding picture becomes clearer through this year. NYCHA receives 2/3 of its operating revenues from federal sources. This year we expect to receive \$985 million in Federal Operating subsidy, \$601 million in Federal Capital Funds, approximately \$9,900 per apartment annually. The 2021 assumes a pro-ration factor of 97%. Let me explain what that means because this is one aspect of public housing that is important to realize. Each year there is a formula that produces the annual subsidy number for the entire country. Congress never or often does not appropriate to the number that the formula produces. So, our estimate this year is we are going to get \$0.97 on the dollar. For NYCHA that is \$30 million less than what we are

eligible for. We also expect to receive about \$248 million in City Operating Funds. We expect to collect about \$1 billion in rent but the numbers around rent are declining in general. In 2020, we collected \$977 million, that's \$89 million less than what we collected in 2019. Part of that in fact was due to COVID. We expect to receive about \$1.3 billion for Section 8 vouchers and associated administrative fees. The Section 8 program is well managed, designated by HUD as a high performer despite the fact that we are underfunded by HUDs formula. This means that we have a contract with HUD for 104,000 vouchers but under the current funding protocols we receive money for 86,000. That's roughly 83% of the 104,000 vouchers we are eligible for and we continue to press Congress to fund the voucher program in full. The \$4.08 billion in Operating Expenses includes \$1.2 billion in Section 8 payments to landlords plus \$1.4 billion in salaries and fringe, \$612 million in contracts, \$513 million in utilities and \$330 million in other expenses such as supplies and equipment. A significant portion of our expenses are fixed such as the utilities and employee benefits. Because of the condition of our

buildings being in the state of disrepair that they are, we must take more from our Capital Fund to maintain our operating. In the 2021 Budget, we had to use 35%, this is a permitted transaction of our annual Capital Grant to sustain our basic operations and support the increase that's require by the pillar areas and typically we've only had to move about 15% to 25% of our Capital Funding, um, in these areas. I think we've handed out, um, slides, um, to the membership, um, that convey some of this and I'd like to take a moment to refer to those. Um, if you have the Power Point in front of you. The first slide, um, is the five-year sources and uses. So, for 2021, we are showing all the rental and revenue sources and other operating sources. We see rental, operating subsidy, Section 8 subsidies, the City Funds, the Capital Transfer that I had mentioned, we also had to make a small withdrawal from our reserves. We also used funds that are available to us from the PACT pro and RAD proceeds and other revenues to get to that \$4.058 number. The expenses including a head count a proposed of 11,811 individuals including the salaries, the fringe, the funds for overtime. The 5-year projections are shown

as well and we will have to deal with each one of those as the Budget year unfolds. We are hopeful that the change in Administration will help us there, uh, in Washington as we go through the year. So, the first chart shows the small \$25 million deficit. By way of comment HUD is beginning to send out the final formula numbers for the Operating subsidy and we are hopeful that they are going to take in to account the reduction in Federal, um, the loss of income from rent that we experienced. The second slide is a pie chart which shows the allocation across the various programs to the properties, to operations that support property services, central office and the leased housing programs. There are conveyed through the pie chart, about 57% is allocated directly to the properties and operations, 31% to the leased housing program and about 12% to central office. The final slide that we made available is our budgeted head count showing that since, um, 2018 for example, we had a head count of 10,684; '21 shows us at 11,811. And we have broken this down by general functional area, property, property services, central office and leased housing and this material is provided for us to review today if you have questions

on it. What about Capital Investments? NCHYA's Capital Budget comprises Federal Funding from HUD, FEMA, for the Sander Recovery and Resiliency Efforts, City Funding and State Funding. We are going to receive about \$601 million in Federal Capital Funds this year. Our 2021 Budget allocates Capital Funding for building facades, windows, building systems, heat plants and elevators and interior renovations. For the year 2025, we plan to replace 319 boilers, 281 elevators at an estimated cost of \$2.1 billion. Since 2019, we've replaced 43 boilers but looking beyond 2025, we still have 103 boilers and 921 elevators to replace throughout the portfolio. With the Federal Capital Funding that we receive, it's far from what we need to address the \$40 billion in Capital need. In fact, I would say that with the, with the expansion of the capital need that I mentioned earlier, the \$601 million helps but we are not getting ahold of that number at large. We are spending about \$77 million a month on Capital Projects. There is more than a billion dollars' worth of construction work, but that is in the context of the \$40 billion worth of investment. That's why we need to act on an investment strategy and we need to

act on it soon. Due to the pandemic the City instituted a 6-month funding moratorium on City funded Capital Projects. That impacted about 230 projects that were on hold. We were however able to shift a substantial portion of those, um, to Federal Funding to keep some work going and since the moratorium was lifted in November 2020 we've been working with OMB and the Controller's Office to assess and restart the projects. As of the end of 2020, we have completed about \$2.2 billion of Sandy Recovery, provided residents with new roofs and electrical systems, boilers, exterior lights, cameras and the flood production and that has generated about 933 Section 3 jobs. We expect to complete the work at 25 developments by the end of this year and get 95% of the Sandy work completed by the end of 2022 and close out all Sandy work by the end of 2023. We also have used HUDs Energy Performance Contracting Program to replace boilers and modernize heating systems and this is spending Capital dollars up front based on the savings we receive when we make these improvements. Last year we had an investment of \$300 million in over 70 developments through the Energy Performance Contracts. Since 2014, we've also

invested about \$200 million in cameras and security measures and another \$100 million in exterior lighting. Mayor de Blasio committed an unprecedented level of resource to the authority about \$6.4 billion so far, \$1.3 billion roofs, \$200 million on boilers, and to date we've replaced over 200 roofs benefiting nearly 47,000 house-, residents. We also have our permanent affordability commitment, together packed and considering the age and the massive needs of our buildings at \$40 billion that I keep referring to. Our PACT preservation is trying to take a bite out of that. This is comprehensive repairs and upgrades targeted to 62,000 apartments by the year 2028. Doing this while safeguarding residents' rights and protections. I can't emphasize that enough. This program does focus on doing that in addition to bringing the capital in. So to date we've done about 9,500 apartments that have been converted through the program. That's about 50 developments and that represents about \$1.8 billion in Capital Improvement. PACT renovations include new kitchens and bathrooms, upgraded building systems such as elevators and boilers. Improved grounds and common areas and that includes new playgrounds and security system.

Another 12,000 apartment at 35 additional sites are slated to begin comprehensive repairs and upgrades by the end of this year. The way forward for us is two-fold. We must make changes to NYCHA's Organizational and Operating, um, processes. This must happen in 10 of the Major Capital Investments so that we can truly transform the institution and our buildings. These two paths support each other and will help turn the tide with respect to the immense cost that we have now with continually playing catchup for repairs due to the building conditions. Together with PACT, our blueprint for change, which includes the housing preservation trust plus the transformation plan. We think that over time we can begin to really making a dent in the physical needs and change the systems and services that we must change in order to keep, keep, um resident satisfaction and also begin our compliance. So, um, the blueprint as, uh, many of you know would include transferring developments from HUD Section 9 to Section 8. We're doing this to access, um, the additional funding in the Section 8 program. This is a 100% public process. NYCHA continues to own the land and the buildings NYCHA staff continue to manage and maintain the properties.

Residents maintain their full rights and protections and in the process we can create jobs and training opportunities. We need to provide residents with wholesale systemic improvement, not piecemeal fixes. Its bene helpful to get the money that we've received for the various building components but I'll be very clear. We must look at the building as a whole entity. We must invest in all the work, raise as much money to do as much repair in each property, each building. We cannot wait for Washington to do this. We are hopeful with the new Administration as the Chair mentioned in her opening remarks but we need your support too to make sure that the Authority will be able to serve generations of New Yorkers to come. So, that's an overview of Capital Budget operating so thank you for listening through this and we are happy to answer questions and look forward to keeping you updated as these plans evolve and improve. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Thank you Chair Russ. Thank you for that, that opening. Um, we, we're going through a lot as a City and the purpose of this Budget hearing is to you know clearly get a sense of, where NYCHA stands, uh, with his

your Operating Size, your Operating Budget as well as the Capital. Um but I want to start, with, um, just putting this all in to context because the City of New York, the Agency's, NYCHA they are struggling. They are struggling financially, they are struggling, but at the same time New Yorkers are struggling. Your residents are struggling and we keep hearing about the, uh, how it is difficult to pay rent, um, and you talked about this in your, in your, um, testimony. So I just want to start there. During the COVID-19 pandemic, from March 2020 to January 2021, NYCHA reports that about 56,600 households have submitted interim re-certification requests to decrease their monthly rent pay due to a reduction in income or a complete loss of income. And that about 36,000 of these requests were associated with rent hardship. It is NYCHA's estimate that about 36,000 households or about 10% of all of the residents are experiencing a rent hardship directly due to the pandemic. Is this, is this an accurate number and an accurate accounting.

GREGORY RUSS: Uh, yeah, just let me be clear that the 36,000 households represents about 22% of the occupied households not individual residents.

Um, and they've had an interim re-certification approved for a change. And, uh, those who are, almost all exclusively decrease is due to loss of income. As of the end of January we've had about 28,000 annual re-certs that also resulted in a rent decrease and in the voucher program we've processed about 11,400 reductions. So, interims, annuals and the voucher program there is a substantial number of our families that have benefited from the rent formula and from, uh, the hardship program overall.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: So, how much of, so how much of the requests that were submitted were actually approved? How much were approved?

GREGORY RUSS: So, um, of the interim requests we received, we declined about 35%, about 13,700. Some of these were withdrawn by the tenant, some were unfounded, some were duplicate requests and some were so close to the annual re-certification that we processed that in lieu of the interim re-cert.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: OK. OK. Do you still have a vacancy rate of less than 1%, right now?

GREGORY RUSS: Um, I believe we do but let me ask the general manager if that number, is, is, is accurate?

VITO MUSTACIUOLO: Sir, I believe it is as well but we are confirming that number right now. We certainly have seen overall a lower vacancy rate, um, since the beginning of the pandemic but if you could just give us a minute and we'll confirm that number?

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: OK. OK. And you went from a 94%, um, collection rate rent to what?

GREGORY RUSS: As of January our rent collection is around 80.4% and we estimate that we had about \$66 million in lost tenant revenue due to the pandemic. Um, so, there is a significant shift.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: OK. And that revenue, um, that you do receive from the residents of NYCHA is what percentage again of your overall revenue?

GREGORY RUSS: Um, is Annika on? Could she just respond to that please? Thank you.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Sure, um, this is Annika Lescott.

GREGORY RUSS: Sorry Annika.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: That's OK. Um.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Alicka, Annika.

GREGORY RUSS: Yeah, I, I like you folks very much. And so.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Thank you, um, Chair to answer your question, our tenant rent is about 1/3 of our overall Budget.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: OK. OK. And going back to the, um, re-certification request that were declined you said 35%. Um, can you give me just some common reasons why those were declined?

GREGORY RUSS: Some were duplicate requests and some we actually processed through the annual re-certification. Um, some with withdrawn by the tenant and some were determined to be unfounded. So, those are circumstances where we couldn't, uh, validate the request.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: OK. So, I'm looking right now just at the um, um, the cumulative rent collection rate chart and just looking at the fact that every single month there's

been a decline. Um, and so are you anticipating a continued decline in the rent collection. Because this is a significant drop when you. Look (cross-talk).

GREGORY RUSS: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: When you compare 2020 with 2019?

GREGORY RUSS: Yes. So, um, our observation is that two things are happening. We continue to see the, uh, and you know we've discussed this and you mentioned it in your opening remarks. The impact on our families is significant and if we could call it the COVID economy I think it falls disproportionately on our residents. I just, I just think that's a fact. I think the kinds of work that they have, um, is sensitive to what's happened through COVID, so on that part, um, until the economy comes back and maybe there's more openings I do think we are going to see rent reductions, occur. Secondly, I think this rent reduction was actually occurring due, not to this degree but prior to COVID as well. And I think some of that results from the conditions that our families are in. So, I think those two things together are driving, um, this

reduction in rental income, uh, and I, I believe it's likely to continue, certainly for the COVID impact through a good part of this year, uh and maybe for the whole year. I do think the economy has been very, very rough for our families, especially those that work in service, for example, service industries and part-time jobs. Um, that kind of thing. I, I think it's been just devastating. So, um, I expect our rents are going to be low and we are hopeful that, that HUD makes some adjustments for that in their operating fund formula. We, we are waiting to hear and we are hopeful that Washington recognizes that over the long term, I think some of what's in the recent bill that passed will help our families, but, um, I do think that we're, we're going to continue with the low rent.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: OK. I also want to recognize our Majority Leader, Laurie Cumbo who is also joining us. Thank you for being here. Um, so, along those same lines, because we know that it has been difficult and challenging for our residents which is why they put in a request for a, a rent reduction but in addition to that you also mentioned that some of the de-, the decrease is also

related to the conditions of the buildings and the fact that maybe residents are just not paying rent because they are, they feel they are not being provided a certain service. Um, have you at all, has NYCHA filed evictions against residents in 2020?

GREGORY RUSS: Not for rent payment. I mean we are prohibited from that. I do think we've had some terminations related to health or safety and um, I'm going to ask the general manager if he could, um, give us a few numbers on that.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: So first, I would like to know how many eviction proceedings were, um, you know pushed forward?

VITO MUSTACIUOLO: In 2020, for those reasons I think about 417.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Any, for any reason, how many eviction, um, proceedings have you filed for 2020?

VITO MUSTACIUOLO: 417.

GREGORY RUSS: That's correct.

VITO MUSTACIUOLO: Is that good fe... Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. And now then, can you break down the whys?

GREGORY RUSS: Yeah. Uh, these were for safety, healthy, quality of life or behavioral issues that, that created a safety hazard in some way. These were, these were not related to rent.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. Now we will have some follow up just on the side.

GREGORY RUSS: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Because you know, there are issues where, you know, we've heard from residences that they were being evicted and it is not at all due to safety, health and quality of life but that is the terminology you know that is stated to, to central but not necessarily what's actually happening on the ground with the relationships between residents and you know, possibly property managers. I just want to be able to dig a little deeper into the over.

GREGORY RUSS: Sure. Uh, we could, we could, um, talk about that offline and give you the information that we have on those cases.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. We've also been joined by Council Member Salamanca. Okay, moving on. The coronavirus aid relief in economic securities act known as CARES signed in to

law in March 2020, provided approximately \$12 billion nationally to HUD for community development and housing programs. Can NYCHA provide details on how much federal stimulus money it has received through which programs and how the funding is being utilized and are there restrictions on guidelines for the spending of these funds?

GREGORY RUSS: So, NYCHA received approximately \$150 million in CARES Act and that included an additional \$37 million for Section 8 Administrative Fees. Um, I'm going to let Annika kind of give you the flavor for that and what that was used for and how we, we're spending that money and what the expenditure requirements around that were.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Sure. Thank you Chair. So, as the Chair mentioned, NYCHA received \$150 million of CARES Act Public Housing Operating Funds and \$37 million in CARES Act Section 8 Administrative Fees. Those flexible funds can be used to support COVID response effort and our normal program expenses. The deadline has been updated so that all funds must be spent by December 31, 2021. Through 2020 year end NYCHA has spent \$120 million of our

CARES Act Public Housing Funds on eligible operating expenses and close to \$3 million in CARES Act Section 8 Funds. We anticipate that we will meet the year end expenditure deadline.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Anni-, Annika, what's Eligible Operating Expenses? Like, I just want you to tell me what you spent the money on that's all.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Sure, so in terms of eligible operating expenses, the funds can be used for anything that you could use your normal Federal Public Housing Operating Funds for. So in NYCHAs case, we used \$120 million to support or utilities actually and that was helpful to us because we were seeing a reduction in rent and so these CARES Act Funds helped us to bridge that gap.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: And what else?

ANNIKA LESCOTT: That's the full amount \$120 million.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Yeah, so utilities is all you?

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Yeah, correct. Um and just to give you some context. So, we had \$88

million of COVID expenses in general across NYCHA and we spent that money on, um, COVID safety measures, protective equipment and staffing. So, when we are thinking about the full breath of what it has cost us to respond to the COVID pandemic its \$88 million. In addition, we had \$66 million in rent collection loses as a result of the pandemic which were not covered by any Federal source.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. What will be the potential impact of the most recent one? The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 that was signed yesterday? Um, to NYCHA Programs and budget and I know that, you know, when I was just reviewing the Bill itself last night, it was looking at the Emergency vouchers and just trying to find out what if anything is opposed from there.

GREGORY RUSS: Chair, that's a great questions, we've been combing through it as well. Um, I mean significant piece of Legislation individually, um, much, much needed benefits. When we looked at what we have coming on the housing side, there is a \$5 billion nationally in a temporary housing vouchers. Um, we're not sure Congress gave the HUD secretary a lot of discretion in distributing

this money. If it's done similar to what's happened in the past, we could estimate possibly receiving another \$300 million in voucher funding. But they're some caveats here that we should be aware of.

First, these are temporary vouchers. Funds will be available on a limited bases. They are targeted in other words there are specific groups, homeless, recently homeless, at risk, victims of domestic violence, I mean these are all worthwhile but they are targeted and there are, um, um, kind of a sliding scale in terms of the availability that is, uh, the Bill allows for funding to be used through 2030 but if a voucher is terminated after September 2023 you cannot reissue. So, um, we don't have a number yet, um, I think, uh, Congress gave HUD 60 days to come up with a formula so as soon as we have a number and we know the impact we can talk about it. Um and also, uh, one thing I want to point out is we did not get any increase in operating subsidy and nor was there any Capital although a Capital potential exists in some future Legislation.

VITO MUSTACIUOLO: Chair, if I may, I just want to go back to two questions that were asked. So, we confirm the vacancy rate is 1.3%. And

so that is the correct number and I just want to just clarify earlier when we were talking about, I believe the question to the Chair was how many eviction proceeding, um, did we commence. Uh, I just wanted to clarify that the 417, um, number that Chair Russ provided, that's how many termination of tenancy actions we commenced, not evictions. There is a vast difference. Those are administrative proceedings that could potentially lead to an eviction proceeding Housing Court.

GREG RUSS: Ah, thank you Vito. Thank you. Thank you for clarifying.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: That is helpful. Um, how many did make it to Housing Court? Do you know?

VITO MUSTACIUOLO: I don't be-, we are going to confirm that but I don't believe any were brought to Housing Court for eviction at this point in time.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Thank you. Um, just a quick follow up and um, and after this question I'm going to stop here and allow my colleagues to ask questions. Um, going back to your COVID related expenditures, can you just break down

on the spending on your family leave, um pay outs as well as the paid sick leave? Because I'm just trying to comb through and I know, your.

GREGORY RUSS: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL:

Operating off of some different things but I, just looking over your charts, um, how much of your expenditures were actually related to having to pay for sick leave and family leave?

GREGORY RUSS: Annika did you have the opportunity to, can you provide that?

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Um, we will get right back to you with that number.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. Alright. Thank you. I am going to stop there Audrey.

AUDREY SON, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uh, thank you. I will now call on Council Members to ask questions in the order that they used the Zoom Raise Hand Function. Council Members please keep your questions to five minutes including responses. If here is a second round of questioning, Council Member questions will be limited to two minutes. Um, Sargent at arms will keep a timer and let you know

when your time up, your time is up. We will begin with Council Member Rosenthal followed by Council Member Salamanca.

SGT. BIONDO: Time starts now.

HELEN ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much. Great to see you Chair Russ and General Manager Mustaciuolo. Yes. Uh, thank you Chair Ampry-Samuel, uh, for holding this hearing. I don't quite know how to ask this question so try to think broadly, um, when I ask it. I'm wondering if since you've come on board Chair Russ and General Manager Mustaciuolo, since you've come on board have you been able to do any sort of deep dive analysis that were, that showed you that there were inefficiencies or showed you that something funky in procurement, um, something funky in stocking levels, you know, um, anything where you saw there might be opportunity for savings within the budget because of whatever reason, does that make sense, my question?

GREGORY RUSS: Yes, um, in fact we have. Um, part of the, the, um, um, reorganization that we had to do or will be doing, um, um, with the HUD agreement involves looking at these various business processes. It involves looking at the steps we are

taking. I had a presentation a few weeks ago for example on A Streamlined Approach to Re-Certifications.

HELEN ROSENTHAL: Yeah.

GREGORY RUSS: Uh, that's an enormously time consuming and painful process. If you talk to any resident, they, they, you know, and that's on the table for, um, sort of re-figuring the steps and trying to make it, um, less staff intensive and most resident.

HELEN ROSENTHAL: Let me, um, just jump in with that example. It sounds like a good one. I only have five minutes so forgive me for interrupting.

GREGORY RUSS: Okay.

HELEN ROSENTHAL: Um, that's a great example. So you identified that but you haven't implemented it yet but it's on the table to be implemented, very exciting. What are the road blocks that make it difficult to implement that streamlining idea?

GREGORY RUSS: So, I think we have implemented part of this grew out of the Rent Hardship. Um, HUD gave us waivers on specific

administrative things that we could, um, change. And, um, the idea sort of came out of the COVID waivers that HUD provided and we have a list of, in fact, on Vito's team, there is a wonderful person, she's a great technician, uh, who has a whole list of things we are going to change and, um, I think part of the problem for us is that we've had an embedded structure and approach for such a long time. It's just releasing ourselves to, to make those changes. But we are, we are in the process of making them. I don't know Vito if you wanted to add, uh, anything on the Re-Cert process to the Council Member's question?

VITO MUSTACIUOLO: Yeah, Greg, I, look the only, let me just add a very broad comment which is but my philosophy government has always been that there is always room for improvement. And when you stop making improvement you should leave government or you should not continue to serve. Um, it's been a challenge on a lot fronts, um, since I've been here at the authority. I think we have made a lot of progress. I think Chair Russ gave one example. I think another great example is the, um, um, looking at our existing contracts with the unions and how we can improve on the level of service that we

deliver to residents. This continuing, we've had some great dialogue with the unions and that will continue but I think these are some great examples but certainly the agreement holds us to a higher standard, so, so there is always room for improvement and I think that we can go through the areas when it comes to the level of service, the delivery service, um, when it comes to procurement. These are all issues that we are very focused on.

HELEN ROSENTHAL: I think.

VITO MUSTACIUOLO: It won't happen overnight.

HELEN ROSENTHAL: Yeah, no, for sure and I have 30 seconds left. So, Chair Ampry-Samuel, I would love a follow up meeting with the folks who are working on this with NYCHA to see what they've implemented, what they are thinking about implementing and sort of thing about the hurdles. I'd love an overview presentation of that if possible and lastly, I will just say that.

SGT. BIONDO: Time has expired.

HELEN ROSENTHAL: Yeah, okay. I'm, I'm done. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: You said lastly, are you, could you go forward if you want to.

HELEN ROSENTHAL: We're 7-1/2 years into the De Blasio Administration and it's just a tiny bit painful to hear you know we have some good ideas going forward. But Vito, you've been a minute and same with you Chair Russ but 7-1/2 years in. I was hoping that we would have been able to make a little more progress, but I appreciate you, that's it. Thank you Chair.

GREGORY RUSS: Thank you Council Member.

AUDREY SON, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Council Member Salamanca.

SGT. BIONDO: Time starts now.

RAFAEL SALAMANCA: Um, yes, thank you, um, thank you Chair. Um, just to go in line with what Council Member Rosenthal was saying. Um, Vito I know that you just got there, at least a year and a half or 2 years, Mr. Russ, you as well, but not your team. Not, not the permanent Government what we call was there. So, um, my question is back in Fiscal Year I would say '17-'18, I had secured \$3 million for Capital Dollars for \_\_\_ Houses. And I

believe there was improvement for security. What has had with those \$3 million that I was able to secure for NYCHA?

GREGORY RUSS: So I'm goi-, yeah, thank you Council Member, it's good to see you by the way.

RAFAEL SALAMANCA: Yes, I'm sorry. It's good to see you too.

GREGORY RUSS: Yeah, no, it's okay. Um, um, I'm going to ask Steven on the Capital side if he can give you an update.

STEVEN LOVCI: Thank you Member, um, Council Member. And I, you know we talk about a lot about the commitment rate and last year at this, um, I'm sorry.

RAFAEL SALAMANCA: I have five minutes the time is going down.

STEVEN LOVCI: Can you hear me now?

RAFAEL SALAMANCA: I can hear you. Yes. If you can just answer my question. What is going on with the \$3 million that I gave to houses on Fiscal year, um, between '17 and '18?

STEVEN LOVCI: Um, our t-, I will get back to you. I don't know that particular.

RAFAEL SALAMANCA: How can you not know it, you are in charge of Capital Projects? And you are here at this hearing to talk about the Budget. See, Chair Russ. This is a problem with some of these agencies, they come unprepared knowing that we are going to ask these questions. You know, especially we are here for a Budget hearing. You should be prepared to know that Councilman Salamanca allocated \$3 million and every year I ask the same question and every year I'm told we are going to get back to you.

STEVEN LOVCI: I mean, yes, and we have last year at this point in time I had said that we were going to get control of the Council Members spending, um, because every year we've been doing better and better on our spending rates. We've hired an individual who has been reaching out and has reached out to almost all of the Council Members. Um, what we're doing is we've been, uh, focused on those projects and we focused a group on those projects of the Council Members in order to move them forward. I know that this year in terms of the security, and I'm, pulling up the document right now in our program, that was planned for completion in 2024 and it's currently in design. There was he moratorium

that impacted all of our City Council funded projects for over a six month period of time and this one was impacted by that.

RAFAEL SALAMANCA: So I allocate, I allocate, I allocated money, \$3 million Fiscal year '17-'18 to you guys and you are telling me that this won't be completed until 2024. This is what discourages Council Members from wanting to allocate Capital Funding because it's just going to sit there. I'm going to move on to my next question. Thank you. Um, I, I have a question about the alternative, the AWS, the Alternative Work Schedule. This morning my, my, one of my NYCHA Presidents Danny Barber was mopping and cleaning his buildings, um, because there was no one there to do the job. And it's my understanding that Tuesday through Sunday there is no full-staff. That your staffing is staggered and there are three shifts and there are major issues with the way shifting is done, um, staffing is done. Um, I was wondering Chair Russ and Vito if you guys can explain to me, why, why my, my President, um, from this NYCHA development feels like he has to clean because NYCHA staff are not doing it?

VITO MUSTACIUOLO: Sure. Thank you Council Member. Um, the Alternative Work Schedule was ground breaking really for the housing authority. We had not seen a change in work schedules, um, contractually in over 50 years. And I, um, am the first to say, that, that we've had some real challenges with the implementation, right, and, um, like most changes of that magnitude it takes time to perfect. All right and we are looking at it in a number of different ways. We are looking at, at, um, did we take the right approach with the work schedules that we, um, proposed. All right and we are actually looking, um, at some developments to see where we can do a pilot. Um, to see where we can make improvements. Did we have the right level of supervision, right? And you know the answer is, no we did not but all of these, um, changes that we need to make come with a big dollar amount. Um, so we are trying to be mindful of working within a limited budget. Um, but the bottom line is, is still really to improve services.

SGT. BIONDO: Time expired.

RAFAEL SALAMANCA: All right. I want to continue having these conversations, um, with you,

Chair Russ and you Vito, because my, uh, Danny Borry shouldn't have to be mopping his buildings. That should be something that we have paid staff to do, um, and I think it's unacceptable. Thank you Madam Chair for the opportunity to ask questions.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Council Member Salamanca, are, is all your questions, because I see, we don't have a lot of Council Members with questions and I just want to make sure that you've been able to.

RAFAEL SALAMANCA: Yeah, at the, at the moment I'm good. Thank you. Thank you.

AUDREY SON, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will now take questions from Council Member Ayala, followed by Majorit-, Majority Leader Cumbo.

SGT. BIONDO: Time starts now.

DIANA AYALA: Hi. Good afternoon everyone. Um, considering that we only have five minutes I'm going to ask my questions and then I'll just wait for the response. But, um, one, I would love to know a little bit more about what the actual Budget is for COVID related cleaning, specifically in senior buildings. I was at a senior building the other day and I will tell you that it was filthy. It

looked like it hadn't been cleaned in months. That was at Corsi Houses, just for the record. Um, Mitchell Houses, Mount Haven Houses, Millbrook Houses, all disgusting. Mitchell Houses happens to have a senior building on site as well, but really, just beyond dirty. Um, they have been spraying the buildings, however, I don't see the logic of spraying for COVID and yet the conditions being what they are, like, those who don't fit for me. Um, so that's one. Secondly, we've had a multitude of shootings in my district, specifically, as I can only speak for myself but this is the list of shootings since last July to now. There is well over 50 at this point. I would love to know if there are any resources being, um, allocated by NYCHA to address the public safety of the residents, specifically the broken lights and cameras in the immediate. And then three, a lot of my buildings seem to be transitioning over to PACT. Um, I find out about it through residents, never through NYCHA which is a problem for me. But for the buildings that are transitioning, I have one building in particular, 335 East 111<sup>th</sup> Street that didn't have access to mailboxes for well over 6 months in the middle of COVID. That meant that people that live in

that building didn't have access to, um, their food stamp recertification packages, Medicaid recertification packages. Um, things that were essential to their survival throughout the pandemic. The post office would hold your mail for a certain amount of time and then after that they will no longer hold it. We kept calling and calling and they kept telling us they were waiting for a vendor, they were waiting for a vendor when in fact what I really thing was happening was that NYCHA was waiting for the transition to actually occur so that the new management company could remediate that. I would have appreciated it if at least somebody would have said that to me as opposed to continuing to tell us that somebody is going to get to it, somebody was going to get to it because we were in the middle of a pandemic. It's hard enough not having access to your mail on a regular basis but in the middle of a pandemic in a community of color. One of the communities that it most highly impacted that people don't have access to information that can potentially be a lifeline to a specific service. To me, is, has this. There's no way to justify that, so I would love to know why it is that these project was, are

being held, um, and in cases like this, like why, because it made no sense to me. I only have five minutes so start. I know it's a lot. Yeah I did.

GREGORY RUSS: Okay, I'm sorry. It took me a minute get unmuted.

DIANA AYALA: Yes.

GREGORY RUSS: I'm going to start with, uh, uh, the cleaning because I think it follows on from that prior council member's question. Um, here's where we want to drill down to. At some point I want to have a cleaning schedule for every building that tells you the number of times hallways are going to be done, stairwells, common areas. Um, there used to be cleaning schedules like this. We will reinstitute them. Um, this is part of the revamp of the AWS system that we're going to be looking at because once those schedules are established, I want to publish them so that anybody who comes in the property or in the building can see when someone is supposed to be doing that work. And then we can measure and make sure that that cleaning is occurring against that schedule. Because the fundamental caretaker cleaning is different from the COVID cleaning. We spent about \$36 million on COVID

cleaning which is all touchpoint, um, cleaning and this issue that you are describing continues to come up over and over and we have to fix it. And we are committed to doing so. But it's going to require that we take, um, each property. We are going to take each building and have that schedule in that structure. Um, once that's done and we test and verify, um, I'd like to roll that out to the entire system and that includes the labor hours required to make sure that hallway is clean, the stairwells are clean and the supervisory or quality check time as well. Because what you described is not acceptable and we need to make a remedy. We need to remedy that and it's obvious when you go into buildings when it's been done or not been done. Um, the second thing I would say, um, um, let me jump to your rad.

SGT. BIONDO: Time expired.

GREGORY RUSS: I'm so-, if I could.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Before you jump to the rad.

GREGORY RUSS: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: I kind of want to hone in on the cleaning of the buildings.

GREGORY RUSS: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: And the reason why is because you know, I, look, I actually was going to have a question about that. Because last year there was an announcement of a cleaning schedule with the vendors. Right? And so, we actually want to know what happened with that process with the vendors and the, and the amount of money that was allocated for that as well as what's happening with the, you know overall cleaning of the buildings. And this is a great ti-, opportunity to explain what's happening with the staffing because that went back to my first quest-, my previous question around how much money was paid out for sick leave and, um, family leave to kind of get at you know what is your staffing like right now anyway because of COVID. And so, um, I would like for you to expound a little bit more on.

GREGORY RUSS: Okay, I'm gonna, I'm gonna flip over to Vito, um, to give some detail on that. Uh.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: And I just want you to know I quoted you. You said, "I want to have a cleaning schedule." And it made me cringe a little bit Greg because I want you to have a

cleaning schedule, not that you want to have a cleaning schedule.

GREGORY RUSS: Yeah, no. I, I, I...

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: I was like what the hell is he talking about?

GREGORY RUSS: I'm sorry Chair. I, I, um, I want to be able to go in a building and know when someone is supposed to be doing the halls, the stairwells, the common areas, the windows. That's the goal and if I want to know it, who should want to know it better than the residents that live there? And I want that to be shared with them so that they can see that that work is getting done or not. Because if it's not done we have an issue. So, let me go to Vito though for your follow up question.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Oh my bad, I thought that existed. I actually thought that existed.

GREGORY RUSS: They are around, that means some sites are doing them. And, and they are, they are there, they are, there are schedules. Some of them go back years and years. But we do not have consistency and repeatability and that's the part that is a struggle.

VITO MUSTACIUOLO: So, if I could just, briefly add. So, I, I think there is a big difference between, the, uh, the disinfecting that we started during, at the beginning of the COVID, um, pandemic and then we continue to perform. Which we do. We had a schedule that was posted on our website and cleaning services. All right so we started as you know, um, just weeks, weeks after the pandemic first started with a disinfecting schedule where we were disinfecting non-senior buildings three times a week, senior buildings of five times a week. The changes that have been made by the guidance issued by the state and the federal government. Um, have moved us from that schedule to we are not disinfecting buildings once a day all buildings. Whether it be a senior building or a family building and we are disinfecting the high touch point areas. Um, mainly in the lobbies so it is all the control buttons in the lobbies, the mail boxes, the doors so we have changed that, that process based on a change in guidance issued, um, primarily by the state. Uh, what we are talking about also here to is the difference between the daily cleaning. And I agree with Chair Russ and with both of the Council members.

Um, we need to improve. All right. But part of that is also to kind of set a level playing field for our staff. All right our buildings have not been maintained in decades and what we have found is just by putting more caretakers into the buildings to mop over existing years and years of dirt is not helpful. So we, we've done this in a few buildings. It's been extremely successful is we are coming in first to strip the floors, uh, to provide a new coating of wax and it allows really the caretaker to have a better surface, an easier surface for them to maintain. All right because when they are going in there just to mop over again years and years of, of dirt. It's always going to look dirty and it will never been 100% clean. And as soon as we are at the point of where we can start to have and as the chair said, some developments to it. We need to be consistent in how we approach this and by putting that, that mopping schedule, the cleaning schedule on our website, will hold us accountable to that.

DIANA AYALA: Well, I just wanna, I just wanna reiterate, you know because I know, and I know you, I know. Listen, I've, I've had this issue and I know that we have years and years of embedded dirt

and that's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about like filthy like I dropped soda and walked all over it. Like coffee you know was spilled. You know I've gone and I'm happy to do with you if you want, any day of the week, any, any time I will cancel what I'm doing and walk you there but I have been to, um, some buildings at Mitchell Houses where the cob webs on top of the residential doors are like this and you have humongous spiders that have been living there and breded there, and have been. I mean they're adults now. Um, so it's not, you know just a matter and I, and I've been to and I defriended it because in the beginning of COVID I was at some of my senior buildings and I accidentally walked up on the cleaning crew and they were like touch all of the high touch areas and they were very through. You could smell the cleanliness. You could smell the bleach. That's not happening anymore. They are coming and they are spraying and they are going. Even the elevators like, when I walk into the buildings I have to have a pen or something to, to touch the elevator button, which I normally wouldn't even care because I walk around with me, you know, sanitizer all the time but I won't even touch them

because they are that disgusting and so that tells me and specifically in the senior buildings, is really to me, is bothersome because these are already frail, you know individuals that are living in these buildings and these conditions and it, it is not only does it say we don't care about you but, but it is unsanitary and unhealthy in, in the middle of a pandemic, so, um, I, you know. So, it could be more than mopping the floor. The floors are filthy but so are the elevators and everywhere else.

VITO MUSTACIUOLO: So, Council Member and just to kind of give a quick preview and we can obviously meet and talk about this in more detail. You know, I think with the Chair, what we were really talking about is, um, we're aware we're going but then so. Both consistency as well as accountability. All right and by creating a schedule where, um, you have, uh, caretakers who are assigned to buildings, so you know that individual is responsible for the upkeep and the cleaning of that building and we could start to hold, um, staff accountable, make sure that we have the right resources.

DIANA AYALA: When, when, are you rolling this out? By when would this new system be up?

VITO MUSTACIUOLO: Yeah, this is part of the transformation plan. Um, and if the Chair could talk more broadly about the Transformation Plan. But, you know, what we are looking to do here is to kind of, to pilot this, we've already done a pilot on part of the Transformation Plan, of, in Queens where we focused on, on work orders and sequencing of jobs and it was extremely successful. We saw some really great results from that. We're looking to do something similar with the AWS caretaker's work schedule, um, in a few developments. We can announce that shortly. We're still kind of working out some of the details of that. Um, and I just want to let you know too, I, I walked through a development, one of your developments this week, um, with Chief Barrer (SP?) and the NYPD with the TA leaders, um, and look we are going to start to do more of these where we are going to walk hand in hand with the TA leaders. With the, um, with NYPD. It was extremely. Um, it was an eye opener. It was enlightening and then we are better than the TA leadership and the TAs who accompanied us to point out where we need to improve.

GREGORY RUSS: And if I, if I could, um, so, in order to, in order to get to this issue there is going to be a work group that's going to have, once we have the pilot sites. The TAs from those sites, we want to get a representative from CCOP. I want residents on this group. That group is going to begin to develop, um, the schedule that I talked about. This is a deconstruction of AWS in a manner of speaker and then the reconstruction is, how should this building be treated? You know, how can, um, we deal with, um, with what you see? So, that's, that is going to happen. That is the first working group of the re-organization that's going to become actively up in the next few weeks. Because the residents have given us a lot of feedback. Um, a lot of important feedback on how often things should happen and, and let's capture that. So, so that's one thing. So, Vito's walk through and your security question, um, we're going to this property based budget and, you know, I know when I say that it's like ah, it's some administrative thing and I, and I get that but the budget. The difference is, there is going to be resources that are controlled at that level. Too much of our decision making is too

far from where the issue is. So, we want to, um, be able to put. If you're walking around on a, a tour and you see a broken light, you should know that you've got the resource to fix it and get it done and um, we are also thinking of attaching to each property a small capital fund for things like extraordinary maintenance and things like that so that the property resources are there. I don't have this all stood up yet, it's going to take us some time but that is where we want to move to, and, uh, I hope with the, the schedule and the discipline of it we can get to the cleaning issue and with the resources we can get to some of these persistent security issues like lighting, um, for example. Um, so that's a.

DIANA AYALA: I just want to remind.

And I don't mean to beat a dead horse but these are the people have died in your development in the last month, seven months. And, I think that we, obviously you know police play a role in this; however, I have never been to a shooting response where I've seen a single person. Well, I'm not, I'm going, I'm lying there, I have seen Vito from time to time on certain circumstances so I will take that but for the most

part whenever you have shootings in public housing, NYCHA is the last person to respond. Um, unless it happened in an apartment. It's like, it's almost as if the entity is completely removed from the situation and you are the landlord and these are your residents and you are responsible for ensuring not only the quality of life but their public safety and broken doors and we've said this a million times and I know, and I'm sure that we are not able to rectify broken doors, broken lights, you know the fact that we are funding and paying for security cameras that often times are also broken and then nobody is coming back and saying hey council member, we don't have the resources but maybe if you can help us out with this budget so that we can have, you know operational funds to maintain these cameras, that conversation has never happened, um, because again this was not NYCHA idea, right. NYCHA didn't state to us we need cameras in our developments. We imposed that on the, on the agency and I, and I, it feels almost like a resentment like they are they, you know they work, they work or they don't work, they don't. But again, I will remind you that these are people's lives and you know, I am really

concerned about that. I'm concerned about the fact that we continue to rely on NYPD, you know to deal with the public safety of the residents and that, no point is someone from NYCHA going, saying, you know what, maybe we need the social, you know the social services department needs to go to this apartment because this family is obviously in trouble and we want to help them before somebody in that apartment get killed or kills somebody else. You know, that is a problem for me. that is a problem for me because it's not, it's not an isolated incident for me and I, you know, it's not isolated, it happens to me every single day. Yesterday I had a double shooting and then shots rang out at the same time just a few blocks from there. Every single day this is happening in my community. It doesn't happen, you know in most communities but it happens in some of those, um, Chair Samuels will tell you that she shares the same experience, Council Member Salamanca will tell you that he shares the same experiences. The only thing that we have in common sir is that we are black and brown and that we represent those people. That's not okay. Like, it's, it's, horrible that we live this way and the fact that we

don't have somebody to knock on that door really bothers me because it says to me well this is not our issue this is a police matter and you know quite frankly I, I know that the police has a role to play in these situations but not all of the time. We should not be using the police department in that way because we could really solve a lot of these problems before they get to that point. So, I just really want to bring that up and then maybe if you could just answer because I know I'm sure my colleagues have a lot of questions and I've taken up way to too much of, you know, of the time today but the issue with the repairs at the buildings that are transitioning, um, because that issue with that mailbox really has bothered me.

GREGORY RUSS: Um, we are responsible to the building changes over and I, we've repeated that over and over, that should not. We are not saying let's hold off until it goes red. I don't believe, that is, that's not right. We have responsibility to do it until that is changed over to the development team. On the case you described, the development team did come in and address the mailbox issue. Um, so, that's on us. We should not have. We can't and

I've repeated this over and over, we can't be sitting here saying oh it's going to go rad I'm not going to do something. And if I find out about it or Vito finds out about it, we will take action, um, because that is not how we are supposed to operate. After it's closed and there, the formal transition has taken place, okay. That's different and even then there are things that we want to do to make sure that the team is following up on certain compliance requirements.

DIANA AYALA: Well, I'll let you know my interactions were not with management they were with intergov. I have submitted and I have the emails, the many exchanges regarding this specific building and the issue with the mailboxes and I was being assured you know repeatedly by intergov that we were waiting for a vendor when in fact, no vendor ever came and the issue was only, you know addressed once the transition occurred. Immediately after the transition occurred, new mailboxes miraculously appeared. I'm excited for those residents but it really hurts me to the core to know that in the midst of one of the most trying times in people's lives that the most vulnerable people didn't even have

access to mail that could have potentially had, you know, documentation that they needed to, to maintain you know, their, their SNAP benefits, their Medicaid. Things they needed in the middle of this pandemic and the fact that was not taken seriously enough I think needs to be looked at and so I guess, I, you know, wanted to bring that to your attention.

GREGORY RUSS: Sure. Thank you.

DIANA AYALA: Thank you. Thank you Madam Chair for the time.

VITO MUSTACIUOLO: Chair, could I please, um, ask that someone unmute Annika for us. She just wants to give an update on an earlier question.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Great. Thank you Vito.  
Um, so.

VITO MUSTACIUOLO: Thanks.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: So, Chair Ampry-Samuels, I just wanted to follow up on your question about the paid, um, sick leave and expanded family leave. So, I want to let you know that NYCHA spent \$6.8 million on paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19 and the number of employees that were impacted is 2,147. Um, also wanted to note for you that during the

coronavirus pandemic we also hired temporary front-line staff in the form of seasonal workers and per diem workers to supplement our caretakers at the properties and that cost us \$12.3 million. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: So is that part of the eligible operating cost?

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Excuse me?

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Is part of the eligible operating costs when I asked the question related to the money that came from the Cares Act?

ANNIKA LESCOTT: No, we did not spend Cares Act funding on that. Um, I maintain that we spent the \$120 million on the utilities that helped us to supplement all the coronavirus responses. At the time that the funds were given to us we were told that they had to be spent by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 or else they would have to be remitted to Treasury. So there was a big push at the time to spend down all of the funds as quickly as we could on operating expenses so that we could free up our normal operating dollars to just respond to coronavirus costs as they come in.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: But that would have been an eligible expenses if you had not had the time constraint?

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Correct. Correct.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: All right. Thank you.

AUDREY SON, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and I'll take questions from Majority Leader Cumbo.

SGT. BIONDO: Time starts now.

MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE CUMBO: Thank you, um, thank you Chair Ampry-Samuel for holding this hearing and I thank all of NYCHA for being on this call at this time. I want to, um, I want to piggyback on what, uh, Council Member Salamanca was discussing in terms of the capital improvements. So, myself I'm also equally concerned about, as a Council Member who is term limited and I have 9 months to go, it's been very difficult for us to gain an understanding and, um, and to the Commissioner we've spoken about this in terms of really prioritizing the projects that Council Members have put forward. Um, particularly those that are leaving because once we leave there is going to be new members who are not going to understand

the, I guess the pain and agony and the fight that we've been involved in to get these projects funded and to have some level of support for them.

Essentially Council Member Salamanca asked where is that money. I too would like to know where is that money that we've allocated. How is it being treated? How is the money rolling over? How is it? And I know that they said work had stopped during the pandemic but a lot of the work that you described was in design and so even during a pandemic I'm confused as how in the in design phase couldn't still be ushered through the timeline and the pipeline to completion because in design work I would imagine could still take place during a pandemic. Could we talk about that? And could we talk about, I guess specifically the projects in my district but also in general. It seems like a lot of these projects that we've allocated maybe six/seven years ago are still not going to happen.

GREGORY RUSS: So, um, we can go ahead and get an update from Steven on this. Um, and here's what I would like to offer too. Um, I would like to do a briefing on this so you can see what we are seeing when the money is set aside and the steps

that come to us with the, with the funding. Um, we're committed to better project management, there's no doubt. But I also want to make sure that we convey to you what, what the process is and what we have to do to begin. In some cases, property projects identified wind up costing more, so we need to provide supplemental funds for that. But let's have that conversation so we could talk about how this thing works or in this case, what, what contributed to the kinds of delays that, you're call out to us today. So, I'm going to live Steve give us an update on the status of all the Council number, the aggregate numbers and then commit to be in a conversation with you about what these issues really look like.

MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE CUMBO: Uh-huh.

STEVEN LOVCI: Council Member, thank you very much for that question. Um, I think last year at this point in time was my first budget hearing and I had mentioned that I was going to hire a liaison. We were going to hire a liaison, um, to help move the City Council funded projects and I'm pleased to say that we do have that person on board. Um, he's reached out I believe every Council Members office

that has projects with NYCHA and I believe it is making a difference. Um, you know he started in August and we were able to repurpose over 13 projects that were stuck. Um, or get additional funding to them. That's more than we did the previous year and as we look at our commitment rates over the last few years, um, we've actually increased our commitment rates year after year after year. I know that that doesn't answer your specific question on your project, um, but what I would like to say is that we are trying different things to make sure that we can move these ahead. Um, and focus on them. The question in regard to the funding moratorium. Um, the funding moratorium actually was broad reaching. It was all city funds that came into capital and so that meant all projects if it was in planning, if it was in design, if it was in procurement, budgeting as well as construction, all of those were put on hold because we could not and cannot pay, um, professionals architects and engineers to continue those projects. I would, I'm happy to say that of the 212, more than 212 projects that we did, um, put on hold all of them have been restarted and we are

moving forward on the processes in either hired or already.

SGT. BIONDO: Time expired.

STEVEN LOVCI: Back on board, those that were in procurement have already started to move through the process and a those projects that were in construction immediately started up again.

MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE CUMBO: Let me ask you a question. Are you familiar with, um, the basketball player from, I believe the New York Nicks, Taj Gibson?

STEVEN LOVCI: Yes.

MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE CUMBO: So, Taj Gibson did a basketball court in my district in Ingersoll and it seems to have happened in almost record timing. Um, and in fact, not only were they done in record time, it, it seems they are probably the most beautiful basketball courts I've ever seen in my life anywhere, either in the NBA, professional, wherever, the Barclay's arena. These are really beautiful basketball courts, and there's something really very powerful about it because not only was it done quickly and effectively, um, but it was also really inspiring for the young people and

the community to see these beautiful basketball courts, um, within their community and it did something very magical for the neighborhood I mean, there are all these, there are all these capital improvements that need to be made but them seeing that they have a basketball court and of course the magic of Taj Gibson coming back and doing it, um, helps, but these are the types of projects that I have in the pipeline to get done that have been stalled indefinitely. Now, Taj Gibson's foundation is more than open to the idea of partnering with NYCHA and the city to do these types of projects of basketball courts and other improvements. I know he did an ice skating rink in NYCHA I believe over one of the basketball courts. I wasn't able to go but I feel like these public/private partnerships could be really instrumental in trying to move forward these projects. What is it about that particular project that he was able to move that so quickly, an NBA basketball player, from an outside entity coming within NYCHA to do a project like that? How is he able to move that forward so expeditiously and quickly and the agency itself is not?

STEVEN LOVCI: Well, um, I'm really glad that that happened. Um, I've actually, we've worked on a couple of different ways of procuring projects with outside individuals very similar to that. Um, we are doing one with the DAS office on 15 courts where the funding is outside of NYCHA, um, yet we are doing the project management for it and it's been really rewarding. Not, um, in addition to the residents getting these beautiful basketball courts, um, we've been doing a connected communities which is something that I'm very proud of that we are moving into stakeholder engagement. Um, I've been on some of the calls, the design of the basketball courts have all been created by the residents in buildings on all of these 15 courts. The colors have all been chosen and it is really empowering to see all of these children who are part of that community making the choices. I would like a track to go around the outside of the basketball court. I'd like the colors to be green rather than blue and they are the ones who are making the decisions on these. So, we've done this, we did also with Montefiore on a, on a playground for adult fitness. And we are doing more and more of these. Um, in addition to that, I want to

get back to what you said about the residents being part of this. This has been the quintessential thing that we've been doing recently. We created a, uh, a standard procedure in which we have stakeholder engagement and that's not just stakeholder engagement that is across the board. So that's with the development staff so that they know and understand the projects that we are doing. It's with the resident TAs but also the residents so that way they are helping us make the decisions on a lot of different projects that we are doing within the development and it is also part of getting council members and other funding individuals to know where their projects are and that is one of the reasons why we hired the liaison so that way we can have that interaction and I think there is more and more opportunities for this so that way we can move those projects forward. To answer your specific question about the difference between a public private partnership and, and just moving projects through, um, it has a lot to do with the funding. And I know Council Member Rosenthal and I have talked about this a little bit and I would like to get, I want to do more, um, mainly because I think some of you have

heard, when we were doing the City Plus Heating Plant Program, we did a flow chart on the public procurement process and I lovingly refer to it as the unflowy flow chart but we went in and we took a day here and a day here and a week here and a few days here and we were able to get enough out of that to increase that heating plant program by 3-months in the procurement process. And so, I know it is just a day and a day but it means a lot in terms of these overall projects and that's what we have been doing day in and day out on all of these projects. Particularly, on our entire portfolio but now we are focusing on the council member funded projects as well as others to make sure that we can pull out each and every day to make sure that the projects get done quicker.

GREGORY RUSS: And Council Member to your, I'm sorry to your.

MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE CUMBO: Uh-huh.

GREGORY RUSS: Specific question. This was, um, this was private funding with a different contracting. And, um, I do think your idea merits us really looking at how we do this process and what we're able to do. Uh, that, when we, we have a public

responsibility obviously when we're spending public funds and there is procurement roles that come with those but in the particular example of a court this was really done, um, sort of in a complimentary way using different sources of money and I think that's why it could move so fast as opposed to running through a typical procurement process. Um, I'm also interested in figuring out how we could double down on that and take advantage of it in some way, um, that would benefit the youth or others at those sites. But when you remove or step back from some of the procurement requirements, it does release the time. It speeds everything up.

MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE CUMBO: Well, I would just say to that, you have a proven track record and example of it in Taj Gibson. You have a willing participant who wants to do well more of these in terms of the entire city.

GREGORY RUSS: Yeah.

MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE CUMBO: And you also have someone in Taj Gibson who has the access and the ability and the desire and the willingness to partner with other members of the NBA to also leverage their resources to do a similar type of

project. So, just, I mean this, it's, it's a small thing but it's a huge thing.

GREGORY RUSS: No, it's gigantic.

MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE CUMBO: It inspires the youth and they see these individuals and it provides something for them to do during those summer months when crime and other things are up because we, their ability to do things have been suppressed by dilapidated playgrounds, dilapidated basketball courts and then, you know, so the issues that Council Member Ayala was speaking of, um, are very much tied to the outlets and resources that our young people have. I know when Commissioner Bratton was our commissioner, he spoke often about the broken windows theory and somehow the broken windows theory got placed upon people in terms of if you see people congregating or if you see people, um, loitering or smoking or peeing in public, he associated that with a broken window when in actuality it was the broken window we were talking about and not the people.

GREGORY RUSS: Right.

MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE CUMBO: So, you see areas that are unclean, if you see broken windows, if you see garbage, if you dilapidated playgrounds those

are the things that provide a breeding ground and a space for violence to occur. When they are energized with these beautiful basketball courts and energy and things like that, it really changes the environment and how people see themselves. I mean, and we know it, if you were to walk into my house, you would probably throw your McDonalds bag on the floor and go sit down because these is toys and mess and everywhere but it if was a pristine apartment you would feel funny about even sitting down.

GREGORY RUSS: Yeah.

MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE CUMBO: So, it's, it's that type of, it's that type of energy that we've got to turn around.

GREGORY RUSS: I, I really like your example, uh, in terms of how this works because I do think one of the things that has happened to us is when you don't see any investment, when you don't see the new thing or you don't see, even something that's in good repair, you begin to wonder about where you are and who you are.

MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE CUMBO: Uh-huh.

GREGORY RUSS: That environment has an impact on you and I, and I think that, we could ,

I'd love to sit down or take some time because to the extent that we have playgrounds or playground equipment or basketball courts that we could, um, make this investment bigger. Um, with the help of folks like, the NBA players. We could figure out how to do that I think. And.

MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE CUMBO: Well I would definitely like to work with you on that.

GREGORY RUSS: I would love to because um, one thing that I will say is that, that it is painful often to see how we , we have thought of some of this or at least the steps that have been laid out for us that we have to follow on, on certain spending. I'm n to saying these came from a bad place. They came from a place of trying to balance out, um, how government should work but if somebody could do this at our properties to a larger scale. In a targeted way, why can't we support that? In other words why can't we provide the staffing that's already budgeted and we don't have to procure anything.

MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE CUMBO: Right.

GREGORY RUSS: You know we could do up, or we could do, or we have a designer that's already

under contract that could work with the folks that want to make the donation, um, and the contribution and we can design, we can design ourselves to their private funding these are, these are things that would keep us from sort of having to step into any kind of procurement quicksand. Use the private money appropriately, the public money appropriately and get the thing built.

MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE CUMBO: There you go.

GREGORY RUSS: So let's, let's talk about that because I think there's ways we could, um, put those together in a neat way and I'd love to explore that with you.

MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE CUMBO: And I just want to close with something Chair Ampry-Samuel you've been too generous with your time, I appreciate it. Um, this is directed towards the finance portion of this but not. It's a separate but it's also very important and this might have been covered before I got on the Zoom. Um, has there been any communication on the federal, state or city level in terms of coordinating efforts to get our homebound or shut-in or seniors or individuals that have disabilities, um

the vaccine? Has there been a plan orchestrated or put in place to make sure that those that are homebound are getting the vaccine and have some sort of, I guess visiting nurse program or some sort of thing, a large issue that many of my seniors have which is so unfortunate is that because many of our NYCHA residents are not elevator, do not have elevator, um, capacity and they've never been able to be moved to another apartment, some seniors just can't leave their homes. So, it's, has there been any plan or navigation or design to make sure that those that are homebound are getting the vaccine?

GREGORY RUSS: I, I don't have, um, an, we are working on this, I know that because it's come up in our discussions, um, with the state, city and the Health Department.

MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE CUMBO: Uh-huh.

GREGORY RUSS: So, um, it is, um, um, we are going to check on it but I think what, the answer is we've recognized this as an issue. We've got a layout as we begin to rule out more and more vaccine options that this takes care of because I agree with you. Um, we are talking to community based organizations and others, about being able to connect

to that person. Once we have this, once we have this figured out with the City we could share it with you but it has come up in the planning discussions. I think if I describe sort of the vaccine process, we had this initial it's getting more routine and systemized and beginning to fan out to get to these hard to reach folks that you describe and, um, we will have something I hope shortly that could get to your issue, in collaboration with the partners.

MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE CUMBO: Um from having these hearings for the last seven years I know that mustering up a whole bunch of angry eloquence does not move the needle any faster than sedated quiet and calm voice. So, I'll just say in my sedated calm quiet voice that something as serious as the vaccine process for those that are homebound needs to be something that is at the forefront of this entire administration from the top down and I mean federal down to city so the fact that it's still in conversation mode versus we're almost done with vaccinating all of our homebound seniors, like that's where we should be, um, is really bringing up another egregious issues in the part of how we've handled the pandemic. So, this particular response

is not what I had anticipated in asking the question. I would have assumed that at this stage that this would be something that would have been more expeditiously handled so, with the way that this pandemic has hit black and brown communities and all the issues that we're talking about in terms of the amount of people that have died during the pandemic, our seniors, that has to be at the forefront. Um, of how we handle the pandemic. It would be my advisement because it's not happening that after this call, this is put in to fast forward motion about how we handle this. So, I'll stop there. Um, and I, I think that from what we've heard today there are a lot of great things happening at NYCHA but you all have to figure out a way for that to be felt and communicated and understood by the elected but way more importantly by the people that live in NYCHA. Because these are great, we've hired a monitor, we've hired a liaison, we've hired a this, but the frustration level is still the same so we have to figure out how to change what you say is happening to people feeling it on the ground and I'll end there.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: And thank you so much Majority Leader, um, and just so

you know like your questions were spot on. And they needed to be asked and answered. So, thank you so much. Um, we've also been joined by Council Member Vanessa Gibson. I do have some follow up from the Majority Leader's questions. So Steve you mentioned that there were 13 projects that were moving forward. Um, that is 13 projects out of how many? And the questions I actually want to get on the record is how many city-funded capital projects were halted across NYCHA's portfolio and how long and how was NYCHA prioritizing the city capital projects this Fiscal year. So, I just really wanted to know how to prioritize.

GREGORY RUSS: Uh, just quickly. I, there were 212 that were placed on hold.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay.

GREGORY RUSS: And 157 are now active. Um, the rest are either 31 have been completed, 13 have to be repurposed and, uh, we have some that are on hold because they, uh, for a variety of other reasons but we could get you a breakdown against that 212. Uh, and I.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay, I do want a breakdown on the 212 and is that City or is that all projects?

GREGORY RUSS: No, I believe that is, I believe if, my staff correct me if I'm wrong. I believe that is, uh, city projects.

STEVE LOVCI: Priority projects.

GREGORY RUSS: Okay. Thanks Steve.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay.

GREGORY RUSS: So those are, those are the city, um, right on to the city discussions we've been having.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay and with the city, the 212 what's the total cost for those projects?

GREGORY RUSS: That I do not have. I don't know if Steve has that or not but I could, we could provide that to you.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Not cost but the total funding that has been allocated for that?

GREGORY RUSS: Yeah, yeah, right. No, no, uh, I don't have that on the sheet at the moment but we could have that for you.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay.

And along those same lines, u, there is another follow up, um, well, you know what, I'll, I'll pause there for my colleague. Do you have another question? Because I know you have to be off by three.

HELEN ROSENTHAL: That is very kind of you Chair Ampry-Samuel.

SGT. BIONDO: Time starts now.

HELEN ROSENTHAL: Thank you. And this is really fast. Um, you know I did have one of those sit down meetings with, um, Steve, I'm not going to pronounce your last name right, Lovci? Okay, and um, and we had two actually and, um, and they were not satisfactory meetings. But, I'm just going to focus on one piece that I found questionable. There were two projects that I had put in the budget, like in past years, um, that where the buildings are now under RAD Pact and so I was told therefore I can't fund these projects anymore because the Rad Pact will just take over everything. Um, you know I don't know how to respond to that because like one of the projects is from, I think 2017 where, um, I wanted to have cameras up in an open area, um, has a

playground in it, seating area for elders and the PSA had asked me many years ago to fund cameras and I did and now here is the moment of execution and you know no wonder they all look at me funny, they think I never did it and I never followed up with them and I didn't care what they said to me, where it is completely the opposite. And, just help me, help me, what, what do I say to them? How is, it really doesn't make any of us look good and crime continues without any cameras, um, to help the PSA.

SGT. BIONDO: Time expired.

STEVE LOVCI: Um, thank you very much, um, Council Member Rosenthal. We work, um, because of the funding issues associated to the city funds, but we work with the developers and in order to get some of these projects to move forward under their portfolio there is sometimes depending on the construction time if we can do it before the Rad deal is done but, um, but again, I, I recognize the frustration, the fact that those developments got a lot more, um, you know in terms of the Rad portfolio they get an opportunity to really get a comprehensive modernization that hopefully provides for the

residents and we can work with our partners to make sure.

GREGORY RUSS: So.

HELEN ROSENTHAL: Yeah, so. You know it's really hard for me to hear this answer, um, Chair Russ, you want to step in here.

GREGORY RUSS: I, I, first of all I want to understand. This is, these are my questions, based on your question. Um, if it went Rad what difference does it make as to whether we are spending the money pre or post? Under the Rad arrangement NYCHA still owns the property. We are leasing it to this development entity. So, my first question is, is there something that we can't see related to how this came to us that precluded us from putting this in? And secondly, I don't see why this can't be part of any transaction to make sure that the money gets spent rather, pardon me, whether it is right before closing or right after closing? And, and, to me its capital funding and if I'm the Rad developer and you've put in half a million dollars for, for lighting. Um, we could adjust that deal and say here's half a million dollars. Now, if there is some restriction somewhere in the city process, I'd like

to find that out. But here's what I can commit to do Council Member. I'll take this back to the Rad Real Estate team and find out if there is some-, something I'm not seeing here. Because, honestly it's capital, it's all green and it should all spend.

HELEN ROSENTHAL: I appreciate it very much.

GREGORY RUSS: No, I, I, and if I'm missing something I'll be glad to come back and tell you what it is I'm missing because I just don't, I would say okay the developer said they were going to put \$1 million in, there is \$500,000 in city money now we will mix that together and they use that \$500,000 somewhere else. They could do some other improvement. Maybe it's not as simple as I'm making it but let me find out why, it, it couldn't, you know and I'll make sure that we have a note and I'll circle back. Okay?

HELEN ROSENTHAL: Yeah, Chair Russ, you should know that the reason what you just said is helpful is because it's honest. It's an honest response you know? That does sound curious. So, you could, I really appreciate you and would love you to

circle back, um, yeah, and Chair thank you for letting me slip in there, I appreciate you.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: You're welcome. Um, okay. So, I have another series of questions related to last years, well, related to what we decided on with the Mayor and the City Council. As part of a budget agreement reached between the Mayor and the City Council, the Fiscal 20-21 adopted budget re-directs approximately \$537 millions from the New York Police Department's Capital Budget to NYCHA to expand broadband in to community centers. These investments were, you know, there was a lot said in the media, and, um, you know our residents were really looking forward to figuring out how that was going to be applied to the developments. So, um, have you had any further conversations or discussions with the administration related to this re-allocation of funding?

GREGORY RUSS: I, um, Chair, I um, I do not know where that stands. Um, I don't know if Vito or Annika. Go ahead Annika.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: And let me just go before Annika to, um.

GREGORY RUSS: Yeah, go ahead, please.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: So the Fiscal 20-21 adopted budget redirected \$87 million in capital funds from the NYPD to go to DO IT to, DO IT to extend new internet service options to New Yorkers, 200,000 NYCHA residents and the initiative would extend service to 84 NYCHA developments and in total would be \$157 million in invested for broadband expansion and, um, and then there was \$22 million in directed capital funding for the renovation of three currently vacant community centers, in Monroe Houses in the Bronx, Sheep Shed Bay Houses in Brooklyn and Wagner in Manhattan and additionally a fourth NYCHA community center located at Ocean Bay Houses in Queens.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Thank you Council Member. Um, I just want to start with your first question about the broadband. Um, the broadband is a city wide project so it is not being managed by NYCHA and that funding is not in our budget. Um, I understand that they are running and RFP process, um, but that is as much as we know about that at this stage. Um, on the city, um, I think you mentioned the three community centers, Monroe, Sheep Shed Bay, Wagner, I believe the funding located to each

at Monroe it's \$5.7 million, Sheep Shed Bay it's \$322,000 and at Wagner Houses it's \$15 million. Um, so none of these projects are in construction yet but they are in our pipeline of projects.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay, and what about, um, I see here there was another \$428 million, the remaining from the \$537, um directed to the parks department?

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Correct. That's the Parks Department, that's not with NYCHA.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay, but is it for?

Um, I believe there is \$87 million for additional scope and relocation and there is a remaining \$250 million that's uncommitted is my understanding.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: But those funds are not with NYCHA.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: So, going back to the broadband, although the funds are not with NYCHA is DO IT. The fact that it says service to 84 NYCHA developments it's kind of interested that they would actually have listed here

a number of developments and not have ongoing conversations with and just a communication with NYCHA because how would the city just come up with which developments should be, you know, should receive this, this initiative if not having a conversation with NYCHA?

ANNIKA LESCOTT: So, my understanding is that, um, we've been having or have had in the past conversations with city hall regarding the projects but we can follow up and get you more specifics in regards to where those projects are with NYCHA.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. Okay. And, and you know Majority Leader, I'm not sure if you just heard the question but clearly we are in the middle of these budget conversations and we're talking about, you know, shifting and reallocating funding from one agency to, in particular we are talking about NYPD and we were also just talking about, Council Member Ayala mentioned like work that's being done in NYPD in safety and security and different things. This will be another year and how do we not know, you know, what's happening with the funding, so I just wanted to highlight that point. Um, okay. So, going back to

the Rad discussion. I know Council Member Ayala opened up the discussion around Rad, but another major problem that NYCHA is pursuing to, is pursuing to in order to stabilize and improve physical conditions within the portfolio is the rental assistance demonstration or permanent affordable, affordability commitment together, Rad Pact program. The program is to convert the funding stream of an estimated 62,000 units of public housing from section 9 to section 8. To date, how many units have been converted under the program? Across how many bundles and developments and how much funding and resources have these conversions brought in to address the issues at NYCHA?

GREGORY RUSS: So, we're, um, hitting around, um 9,500 units converted. Um, with this program and, um, we were also I think approaching about \$1.8 billion in investment through, through this program and that's, that's, um, there are additional closings that are scheduled this year and I can't remember the number Council Member, so, let me see if I can, um, we have another bundle, two more bundles of unit that we want to do this year and I think let me, let me get you specific because I

don't want to misspeak on the number of properties but 9,500 and \$1.8 is what we've got so far plus what's coming this year.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: So, I'm going to use the figure, the last figure we heard. How have the conversions decreased NYCHAs total estimated capital need which was \$31.8 billion before. S if you mentioned the \$8 billion in investments, what can you just talk us through what does that \$8 billion in investments actually mean compared to the \$31.8 billion in capital repair needs for the portfolio itself.

GREGORY RUSS: Well, its \$1.8 billion in capital raised for those sites. So, u, um, it's not \$8 billion it's \$1.8, if I, I didn't want to misspeak there, but its \$1, \$1.8 billion for 9500, um, um, units. And um, you know our, our, um, uh, in thinking about the whole portfolio we want to keep those 62,000 units they, the, the blue print covers around \$25 billion, 62,000 would cover the balance. We are looking to do about another 11,800 this year, in '21, um, so that would be another chunk of unit and another raise. I don't have the estimated capital raise for that yet. But we could provide that and

that includes another 35 properties so, that's certainly going to take us over \$2 billion in capital but I don't have those numbers yet and they actually won't be final until we have the closing and know how much financing we've raised against that, but it will make a dent, you know, we are anticipating that the 62,000 will make a dent in it but that still leads us with the 110 and the 25 that we need to raise there.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Are there any COVID related impacts to the pace of the conversions planned for this year?

GREGORY RUSS: Um, I think there have been. I think we've slowed down in part. I can't give you specifics as to which, but I think it has slowed us down. We actually had hoped to close one bundle last year. It didn't close and we moved it to this year and I think a lot of that is around, uh, just dealing with the logistics of trying to do things during COVID.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. In the Fiscal 20-21 adopted budget last year June the City Council allocated \$16.1 million in discretionary capital funding to NYCHA to fund the construction of 51 projects. In developments undergoing Rad

conversions should the City Council continue to provide funding for those projects? And what is the level of coordination between NYCHA and Council Members in deciding what projects if any should be funded at Rad developments?

GREGORY RUSS: Um, if there, um, if you've identified what the project is for, I don't see why that can't be taken into the planning whether it's Rad or us.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: The reason I asked that question is because the whole point of having the Rad conversions is to be able to get the capital that is needed for the entire development with this new public/private.

GREGORY RUSS: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL:  
Partnership itself.

GREGORY RUSS: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: And so if the City Council with very limited funds are allocated funding to these developments, that's funding that could be allocated to developments that are not going through conversions and we don't know what's actually happening to be able to assist them,

and so, you would, you know, I was under the impression that with the Rad conversions that would be you know that particular conversion would address all of the capital needs.

GREGORY RUSS: It should and, uh, I think that's a Council decision in a way, I mean if we know. If we can show you that that work is going to get done, then that would free a different choice for sure. So, um.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Understood Council decision if it makes sense to not fund the project, but it would just be good to have that conversation to kind of know what's, what's happening with the projects.

GREGORY RUSS: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Um, does NYCHA have any data on the number of evictions to date that have occurred in developments that have been converted through Rad?

GREGORY RUSS: Um, we do and I, I, don't have that, it's 65 I think. Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: I heard that number before so it's the same number?

GREGORY RUSS: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Keep in mind that some of the Rad developers have actually, um, forgiven all delinquencies when they've taken over the property and, uh, and started over with residents. And there were no evictions in 2020 and out of that, that's against the 65 evictions is out of 9,500 and 17 households that I mentioned earlier.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. So going to the HUD at the allied agreement investments. The 20-21 adopted plan includes about 279,000 to address the main pillars of the HUD administrative agreement which requires NYCHA to remediate living conditions in relation to lead paint hazards, mold, pest infestations, inspections, heating and elevators. Can NYCHA provide the total amount of dollars, operating and capital spent on these pillar areas since the January 2019 administrative agreement was signed?

GREGORY RUSS: Sure, I'm going to ask Annika if she could respond to that.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Great, thank you for the question. Um, as the chair mentioned in his testimony from 2018 to 2021 we increased the

departmental operating budget in the pillar areas by \$121 million. In terms of actual expenditures from January 2019 to December 2020, we spent \$433 million in operating funds and \$318 million in capital funds across the pillar areas.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: How any additional staff positions including temporary staff and how much overtime was paid in 2020 to complete repairs and remediation work in relation to the pillars?

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Sure, that's another great question so as of March 11, 2021, there are 3,528 full time staff across the pillar departments and 99 staff as part of temporary resources for the pillar departments. And in terms of your question on overtime, um, NYCHA has spent \$155 million on overtime in 2020, unfortunately, our overtime codes are not specific to pillar areas, but I can tell you that \$32 million of the overtime or about 20% was spent on caretakers, \$17 million was spent was on plumbers, \$16 million on maintenance workers, \$14 million on elevator mechanics, \$12 million on painters and \$64 million across various other titles.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay.

What is the contract value of third party vendors to complete repairs and remediation work in relation to the pillars?

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Sure, so, um, the 2020 contract budget across the pillar areas is \$138 million. \$52 million is in the departmental budget for the pillar areas and \$86 million is for heating and elevator repairs at the properties.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay.

So I'm looking at the HUD FDEY, uh, graph that mentions the, the funding from 2018 versus the funding for 2021.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: And, um, just looking at the, the 2018, its \$12 million, for 2021 there is an estimated \$44 million. How, um, do the total amount of investments in the pillar areas compare to the total capital need in each area. Because I'm looking at, you know what was spent in 2018, I'm looking at the investments for 2021 but what's the overall for each pillar area?

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Great, so are you talking in terms of operating capital or everything?

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Um, this graph is in reference everything. The records you actually provided us.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Yeah so that graph is strictly the operating funds but we do have the capital funds for you as well.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. So, breakdown the operating then break down the capital.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Sure. So, um, the graft that you have in front of you is for the operating, um, expenditures in 2021 and that's specifically in our operating budget. So for lead, there is \$44 million, mold \$16 million, pests and waste \$36 million, elevators \$85 million, heat \$74 million and the other pillar areas including EH&S, I'm sorry. Environmental Health and Safety, quality assurance and compliance, that's \$21 million. All told \$277 million in operating funds for the pillar department's budgets. In terms of capital for mold \$33 million, lead \$85 million, pest and waste \$15 million, elevators \$201 million, heat \$628 million and in the other small areas of compliance H&S and QA there is no funding so all total in capital it is

\$961 million allocated in 2021 for those areas. When you think about sort of your broader question I believe on context for what it would take for our entire portfolio to treat these areas, we estimate that amount to be around \$28.6 billion. So when you think about the \$28.6 billion in capital needs and the \$961 million that we are allocating for just one year we are barely scratching the surface.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. Okay. Moving to compliant for a change. During the summer months of the COVID-19 pandemic in July 2020 NYCHA announced the blueprint for change plan which outlined a set of ideas and strategies to reorganize the authority and secure the capital financing required to stabilize and improve physical conditions at 300 developments. Can you provide an update on how many residents have been engaged after the release of the plans and can you provide some clarity on the timing of this announcement and why it was released during the pandemic?

GREGORY RUSS: So, um, we didn't anticipate the pandemic clearly, entire belief that we can't wait. Um, we understand that this is not ideal and, um, and we understand that we've all had

to kind of pivot with this and we decided to go ahead because we are talking a round long lead times even if we get, even if this set of ideas comes together we have trust legislation that has to be passed. Even if we got that we still have to negotiated with HUD in terms of the tenant protecting vouchers. Even if we got both of those things we still actually have to do the darn thing. So, our feeling is that we have to put something on the table to at least begin a conversation. So, since that time, um, we have met with 193 of the 206 active tenant association presidents and this has come in a variety of ways, everything from one on one to small groups to property specific sessions and I hope to meet with the remaining tenant associations, 100% in March and April. We've been doing weekly town halls with residents since December there've been 12 and we've touched over 2000 attendees. We are continuing those and we started development specific town halls. We've been meeting with the CCOP on a weekly basis and part of those weekly meetings include a review of the blueprint and particularly we are going line by line through the proposed legislation responding to their concerns on perhaps language and what that

means. And we are also going to continue or ramp up our physical outreach because we know a lot of people do not have access. We've done, um, one rent insert, we're doing another, we're doing flyers and we are going to be preparing a more detailed mainly to residents in the coming weeks. So, this has been, um, since, um, since last year. A few strong effort to share the ideas and stress that this is a path that we've identified that we believe could raise the money and from the feedback we are getting everything from what does this part of the thing mean, what, what about my rights, how are you preserving these? We are beginning to hone in on changes to the legislative language, I've already mentioned and making sure that we secure the properties. One of the ideas of interest, there have been two that I thought I would share today. One of them is creating a family protections contract. We put that in the materials early on but lately it's come up a number of times in the, in the small development and the town halls. We're a family that lives in a property that might go through the blueprint, we would execute a contract that states the rights and protections so forth. The other thing that's come up

is I don't know if I have a name for it, um, Chair, except for like a resident technical advisor.

Somebody who would work with the families that might be involved with us in this transition and provide a variety of advice, anything from working with our architects and engineers to come up with say a successful construction schedule or design to providing technical advice on documents or validating things. So, we actually had the, um, the resident group on Staten Island ask about that and we said we'd be very open to that. So, these conversations are yielding I think some both the engagement level is intense but it's also yielding some ideas that we believe we can incorporate into the program. The second key component of the plan relies on the use of tenant protection vouchers which would require federal action to prove how likely or how feasible is it that all, 110,000 units would be eligible for the vouchers or for HUD section 18 Disposition Program.

GREGORY RUSS: So, um, in thinking about this, um, starting in last August we began technical conversations with HUD and the prior administration, they've continued in this administration. I think the easiest way to think about this is that we'd be

bundling groups of properties for the blueprint. So, we wouldn't be putting the demand for all 110 on the table at the same time. They would be sequencing these and that we'd probably have groups of 10,000 to 12,000 and in the context of the federal appropriations we think that's doable. That would mean that HUD and Congress would have to provide some additional vouchers each year but they wouldn't have to provide the full 110,000 all at once and we could spread that out over several physical years. That, we think increases the likelihood that we could get them. Um, I will say, um, HUD has, as the technical level, this is you know the new secretary hasn't weighed in on any of this year but they, we have exchanged ideas on schedules or numbers of vouchers of the demand for vouchers and I think what I'm hopeful for is with the new administration, uh, that actually translates into an appropriation request but I don't have any indication yet but they have had really interesting conversation with them on how long this would take and how we would schedule those vouchers out.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: So

you know again when I, I opened up, um with my

statement, I mentioned um, you know the conversations that I've had with Senator Chuck Schumer, um our majority leader in the US senate and you know he mentioned the fact that they're at the second round the infrastructure from the four public housing authorities and that, you know again NYCHA will receive a considerable amount. So, if, NYCHA is to receive a considerable amount, let's say \$30 billion in funding from the federal government in the second round, would there still be a need to have this conversation of converting 110,000 units to Section 8?

GREGORY RUSS: So, I think the capital would be great. Um, but we have a couple of things to think about. First is, the numbers that are being used are based on HUDs physical needs, assessment and there are certain components that are not counted in the physical needs assessment. For example, I can replace a door but I can't create a new entryway. So, one is simply a fix as is. One is actually making the building a much better place. So, a lot is going to depend on if we get the capital and the infrastructure, um, um, how much it is and what they are basing that number on and we actually are in

conversations, you know about that kind of thing. The second thing is the one thing about the trust that we tried to.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL:

Conversation with? With?

GREGORY RUSS: HUD and federal, and our elected as well about these numbers. So, that's, and there are two bills. Um, I know that Congress woman Velasquez's bill was introduced in the Senate but there is a second bill from Congress woman Waters and the formulas are different and I don't. I can't say in to that but I can tell you that will have to be reconciled in some way and we will just have to see how that work out. Um, but, um the second thing is the procurement. We, we, we would need, um, the model that's in the trust bill was called best value. And the reason it's called best value is we wanted to try to move away, um, from a low bid and we wanted to try to, um, incorporate into our thinking, um, things like Steve is doing now with Design Build but also construct. We wanted a menu of choices and that relief I think would still be needed; however, we get the money whether we get it from Washington or we, or we leverage it. And the last piece of this is while

the capital is certainly going an enormous way, the one thing about migrating the program is they pay more that there is no talk of increasing the operating subsidy formula. There is no talk of, of changing the formula factors, in fact Congress hasn't done that for 12 or 15 years and the only reason I mention that is if you think about it in some of the numbers we shared with you in the testimony, um, that operating subsidy is subject to cuts and pro-rations routinely. Even today, when we are talking about 97, 97 cents on the dollar. That does not happen on the voucher side. That the only that comes in that additional subsidy over the long term does have the potential to put the property in a much better financial footing, um, with grant funds related to capital even more so. Now, I'm not saying that's the only reason to make a migration like this but there are things about it that simply providing the capital doesn't solve for, it solves for a lot clearly. But, um, um, the voucher program doesn't get cut the way we've been cut and it's also a, it's a, it's a more rich form of subsidy for us.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL:

You know what would be helpful. Um, just for the residents who are listening?

GREGORY RUSS: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL:

To, for you to be able to, us, simplify it a little more, um.

GREGORY RUSS: Yeah, I, ap-, we have tried.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL:

When you convert the unit. Um.

GREGORY RUSS: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL:

To section 8. How much rent is charged for that unit? And how much will that new landlord receive? Um, for that particular unit?

GREGORY RUSS: So, in the, in the trusts model we've been using the average income produced in public housing that's rent, capital share of the unit, and subsidy, that is about \$1250. If we migrate that same unit to a tenant protection voucher that is attached to the apartment, it generates \$1,900 in income. \$650 per unit per month more. So, we actually show, show the resident that and in

addition, in the trust model, NYCHA, trust contracts back to NYCHA so we don't have a private landlord in that model. No private entity at all in fact, it's the two public agencies. So, that, that additional money would come in and be there for the benefit of, of a trust and help us, uh, in the long run and the rents are the same, 30% of monthly adjusted income, in public housing it's the same as the voucher program. We, we spent a lot of time talking about this when we do the, um, um, when we do the presentations and we've done the one on one meetings because residents ask a lot of questions about rent so we are very clear there, the rent that they are paying now the same formula and the additional money that comes in, this additional subsidy that's where, that's where we unlock the, the, um, capital potential.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay and the reason why I wanted to just highlight that is because that's what we hear all the time. Um, you know what's the point of converting to, from section 9 to section 8, um, why don't government just give that money directly to, um, the section 9 program so that it can go directly to the P&Js.

And so, um, but it's just not. That's not the formula that currently exists. That's not how they allocate funding and.

GREGORY RUSS: That's, that's right.

Um, now and, and I think, uh, there's an appetite there to do some capital grant nationally for public housing and we've been supporting that. I mean we have not, uh, we've worked with the public housing industry. We've sent two or three letters now indicating the need to do something about the capital backlog. Uh, so, we're not, I don't want to give the impression we're diminishing this. This is really powerful if it happens. But we do think even with the capital funding we get we'd have to do some type of borrowing to supplement that. At some point.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay.

All right and, um, and last. And the process is related to the property based budgeting. Um, NYCHA recently implemented a bottom up property based budgeting approach which now allows property managers to submit requests for additional supplies, contracts, equipment and other supplies and materials in discretionary accounts they manage. Property managers control 20% of the property budget for day

to day expenses. The remaining 80% is managed separately for utilities, payroll, property insurance and other expenses. Does this property based budgeting approach apply to all developments and did all property managers submit budget requests for 2021? And were they approved or not?

GREGORY RUSS: Chair, we, have, we have our CFO here so, I'm going to let her speak to this.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Great. Thank you I am happy to report that the answer to all of your questions is yes. So, yes the property based budgeting approach applies to all of our properties. Yes, all of our property managers submitted their requests for inclusion in the 2021 budget and yes, all of the property managers' requests were approved and they are included in the materials that you see in front of you. The work that we've done, um, last year in terms of putting together the budget with the property managers is the first for NYCHA. So, we started in September by training our property managers and their staff to think about how they spend their funds the accounts that they control and just basic budget concepts. What are revenues? What are expenditures? What are surpluses? We know that

our property managers come to this work with varying levels of knowledge with regard to the budget and so we also had one on one sessions with them to go through their specific property budgets and the materials in great detail. After that, each of the property managers submitted their request. It went up through the chain and they were ultimately improved for inclusion in the budget. So, that resulted in an additional \$16 million in equipment, supplies, contracts and other small, um, contract and supply budgets for our property managers and the \$16 million is on top of all the money they already receive.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Thank you so much. Just for, just for clarification, um, Annika you mentioned going back to the \$120 million with the.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Right. Um, can you explain, um, uh, some residents pay utility bills. Some residents pay electricity bills.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Can you just kind of go over which developments actually

have to pay for utilities and, um, and because there was funding for NYCHA, related to utilities was there any funding, um, avail-, made available for the resident that have to pay utilities.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: So, that's a great question. Um, you are correct in saying that some of our residents pay utilities. When they do, they receive a utility allowance and that utility allowance is published and is updated by NYCHA generally speaking on an annual basis and your utility allowance can be for electricity, or gas and it's done on a monthly basis so it's taken off from your rent and its really based on the number of units, I'm sorry bedrooms in your unit. So, just to give you an example, um, if you are in a one bedroom and you pay electricity your monthly utility allowance would be \$53. If you were paying, um, ConEd Cooking gas, that would be \$25, um, National Grid Gas would be \$24 and we have that schedule and if course as you would imagine the dollar amounts go up as you have greater numbers of bedrooms. I could recite for you the list of developments that pay their own utilities but it is a very long list and I'm happy to provide it to you if you'd like.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Just give me an example.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Sure. Um, sure, I can, I can name a couple Bedstuy, Rehab Phase I, Belmont Center, Barry Street, Boyson Ave, Bushwick II, Campbell's Plaza, Claremont, Crown Heights Rehab, East 165<sup>th</sup> Street. I have the list in, um, in alphabetically orders and I have entries all the way down to West Tremont Group.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: So, using Crown Heights Rehab as an example, right?

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: So, what you're saying is the resident will receive a utility bill, right? And they are expected to pay that utility bill; however the cost of that utility bill is taken out of their monthly rent payment so you, so they're not really paying for the utilities they are but it is more of a, reimbursement, like a reimbursement you think?

ANNIKA LESCOTT: So, yea-, yes and no, um, I don't want to mislead you so I can't say for certain that, you know Jane Smith, in Crown Heights who gets a utility bill for her electricity for

\$60 in her one bedroom apartment is going to receive \$60 from NYCHA. Um, she's going to receive the \$53 electricity utility allowance, um, as provided in the schedule for a one bedroom apartment. So, it might not be 1 for 1 and we can perhaps do some analysis, um, to see where the charges might differ but it's a little difficult because I don't have residents utility bills to know the difference between the two.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Uh-huh, and the reason why I'm bringing it out, you know, because clearly if NYCHA is being reimbursed, right? Of if NYCHA is able to receive, um, um, funding resources from the federal government because of COVID related to utilities and then we know that residents are in their homes for an extended period of time now, because of COVID was there an adjustment made to, um, you know, um, what their monthly rent would be to reflect that particular, um, you know, like an added increase because of COVID.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: So, what I would say to that is NYCHA already, outside of COVID, um, our utility expenses when we are talking about the formula are included. So it's your project expense, everything that it takes for NYCHA to run the

building, um, and that includes our expenses as an authority, utilities and the like so it's not something new so to speak or that is different from how HUD would normally do things and for the residents that pay their own utilities, they already receive that utility allowance, um, and if you are a resident who is not paying your utilities and NYCHA pays them for you there is no difference to you. If that makes sense.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: I'm looking at my Chief of Staff like does that make sense to us?

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Do, okay, so let's take a step back. If you are Jane Doe and you are in Crown Heights and you pay your utilities, you get your bill, NYCHA reimburses you based on the schedule. We have rules that we have to following in terms of reasonable co-, reasonable consumption by HUD so we can't make it \$100 even though we'd love to. Um, so we are really bound by that to treat all of our residents fairly based on the number of bedrooms. So, if you are Jane Doe and your bill is \$100 for your one bedroom, but Cathy Smith's bill is \$150 we can't really make that adjustment. Um, we

have to use the reasonable consumption basis that HUD requires of us. So, that's how that would work. You would get your \$53, um, utility allowance off of your bill, off of your rent. If you are a NYCHA resident who does not pay utilities and NYCHA pays them for you, um, you don't see any change, um, regardless if you used Cares Act money to pay our utility bills or if we use our regular federal operating funds to pay the utility bills, there is no difference to you. The lights are still coming on and the bills are still being paid from their perspective.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay the reason why I, I am still a little confused is because I was talking about COVID specific, you know related expenses and again we know that the expenses increased because of COVID in the units that have to pay.

GREGORY RUSS: Uh.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: And bec-, uh, but, but the formula is the same pre-recovery time.

GREGORY RUSS: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: So my question is related to that.

GREGORY RUSS: So, um, to Annika's point, HUD says this is how you calculate a reasonable utility allowance and that has not changed as part of the formula funding that, that goes in to the subsidy that we get, because when we apply those utility allowances HUD, HUD is measuring that in the subsidy calculation, um, and um, and that's why they are adjusted annually but they have not been adjusted, uh, uh or we have not received any guidance from HUD on adjusting them for COVID.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: But Greg, we could take a proactive look to look at our utility that comes in.

GREGORY RUSS: We could, we could, we could do that, I mean, uh.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: And see what's appropriate.

GREGORY RUSS: Yeah, we, I, I think we would certainly be permitted to do that in fact, uh, we have a lot of issues with HUD when they calculate the operating subsidy formula because they are making choices, there's, there's factors Chair that they use that apply across the country and some of them breakdown when you come to our market. And you know

we've pointed this out to them, uh, to, to do that but, um, we'd be glad to take a look at that to see if there's any room for doing something like that.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Well, I'm just trying to also figure out, so going back to that \$120 million, right?

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Yeah.

GREGORY RUSS: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL:  
Utilities.

GREGORY RUSS: Right. Go ahead.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Putting that in context to what we're talking about, right?

GREGORY RUSS: So, I'm going to try this and Annika you, you come up behind me if I mess it up.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Please.

GREGORY RUSS: So, um, the um, that money came to NYCHA for expenses but that would not impact the utility allowance that the family gets. It would help us cover a cost, there's no question but it's not going to, it's not going to come around and impact that, that individual family with their utility allowance. It's not, it's not how it came to

us. It really just came to us to cover like an operating cost for protective gear. We're not, they're not connected in the way we got the money.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay and I was just trying to figure out if they could be connecting. I was trying to figure out if there was a way to be able to provide an additional subsidy to residents of NYCHA who have to pay utilities.

GREGORY RUSS: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: At least, an increase in utilities because of their, you know, now being home, um, all day as opposed to.

GREGORY RUSS: Right.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: And.

ANNIKA LESCOTT: Yes, we can, yeah we can commit to looking at our utility allowance schedule again and making updates. We can commit to that.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. All right. Um, so that for me. Just want to double check. Yeah, so, I'm going back and forth because my phone died y'all.

GREGORY RUSS: Oh.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Oh, another question. In regards to your, um, work order

backlog, how are you managing your work order repairs during COVID?

GREGORY RUSS: Um, I'm going to ask, um, the general manager to give us, a quick COVID work order, um, update.

VITO MUSTACIUOLO: Sure. So, we, um, never stopped, um, making repairs, during the height of the pandemic. We, we were adjusting, um, as we were getting information from, again the healthcare experts as to how long we should be in apartments for. Um, but we never stopped immediately hazardous conditions such as water leaks, lead based paint hazards or mold conditions. Um so we always had staff that were responding to that, um, but we were mindful of the fact that staff as well as residents had serious concerns or reservations about people working in their apartments. We have continued to monitor the guidelines that are being issued on a daily basis. We have adjusted our work order guidance accordingly and we started to open up the types of work orders using severity codes as a guide. So, we are being more inclusive. Are we back to where we were pre-COVID? No we're not. We're not there

yet. All right but we are certainly working towards that goal.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay well thank you so much. Um, Audrey, I'm actually. I've completed my questions, for NYCHA. So thank you. That was, that is it for the questions that I have for NYCHA and we clearly have a lot of follow up. Um, we thank you so much, um, and we know that you will stick around to hear from the public.

AUDREY SON, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much. We will now turn to testimony from the members of the public. I would like to remind everyone that we will be calling individuals one by one to testify, once your name is called, a member of our staff will unmute you and the Sergeant at Arms will set the timer and announce that you may begin. Your testimony will be set to two minutes. I would now like to welcome, Vernice Tillery to testify followed by Layman Lee.

SGT. BIONDO: Time starts now.

VERNICE TILLERY: Good afternoon. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak before this City Council Members and Chairman Russ. My name is Vernice Tillery and I am a parent of a 15-year-old in

a wheelchair and we live in Ross Rehab, LLC and this, we've lived here for all of his life, 15-years. But this building does not, is not wheelchair accessible. So, that's what my question is. And we live in Manhattan in District 6 one of Rosenthal's District. So I'd like to speak about the lack of accessibility for my son and there are other seniors in the building that could benefit from a ramp as well. So, Chairman Russ I see in the final PHA for 2021 no funding for Ross Rehab and I've spoken on countless occasions to many managers. We've had a few in the last four or five years about the need and the feasibility of a ramp to this building. I believe we made attempt to get funding from a City Council person, from the Manhattan Borough President so that a ramp of some sort, temporary or permanent could be added to this building and I'd like to know if you could address this problem. Cause it affects our quality of life. It also affects.

SGT. BIONDO: Time expired.

VERNICE TILLERY: Himself in the world.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay, Ms. Tillery what, you know what I would like to do as Chair of the Committee is, um, have a follow up

meeting with you, the leaders in your development as well as NYCHA and the elected so we can discuss what is happening.

VERNICE TILLERY: We would appreciate that. We can make some kind of forward motion because getting in and out of this building is becoming more and more difficult as he gets older and heavier. So, thank you so much for the opportunity. I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: I'll make sure that my staff follow up with you and, and NYCHA and the elected officials.

VERNICE TILLERY: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay, um, before we go to, to Layman I just want to point out that we have other NYCHA residents that are here. I know I see LaKeesha Taylor, Saundrea Coleman so I just wanted to make sure that we are hearing from our residents first. I'm not sure of the order, um, Audrey but I just wanted to highlight that.

AUDREY SON, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. Thanks very much Chair. We will now hear from Saundrea Coleman followed by LaKeesha Taylor.

SGT. BIONDO: Time starts now.

SAUNDREA COLEMAN: Okay, um, greeting all. Um, my name is Saundrea I. Coleman, I am a current resident is Isaac Houses and I'm a former municipality employee. I supervise payroll for the NYPD. I am also the co-founder of the homes Isaac Coalition. The conditions of NYCHA are just horrific. They are massive environments with issues that are making residents sick and are not being remediated. Mold, mildew, infestation, lack of repairs and crumbling infrastructure must be addressed now. The City's Public Housing Authority has an obligation to preserve our homes and not to pass on their responsibility to privatization schemes. The City, state and federal government must invest immediately into our homes, stakeholders of public housing has seen the decline over the years and it has exacerbated when the white flight took place decades ago. There is a great number of blacks and Hispanics that call NYCHA home, the disinvestment is systemic. The lack of care is systemic. The patchwork repairs are systemic. The lack of heat and hot water is systemic. The inoperable elevators especially the newer ones is systemic, the investigation that residents have subjected to live

with is systemic. Our babies being poisoned with lead poisoning is systemic. My friend is Farmer's houses has resided in two apartments contaminated with lead. There is no accountability, nor prosecutions being brought forth. When these type of failures and neglect arises, the cloak of immunity allows this willful neglect to continue. I am asking the City Council to work closely with stakeholder not just resident council presidents but also residents like myself so we can receiver relief from our hazardous living situations as well as hold those accountable for settings that we are living in which is not our will. This is not a third world country although our developments appear that we reside in one. NYCHA is slowly killing residents and/or has stricken them with chronic upper respiratory.

SGT. BIONDO: Time expired.

SAUNDREA COLEMAN: Conditions. I'm almost, criminality has to be held accountable. These circumstances are not new, they are chronic, systemic and has gone forth administration after administration. I urge that a better commission is formed and signed as fault as well as the mismanagement of funding. NYCHA re-, residents of

NYCHA deserve renovatement for the suffering that they have been doing over the years. Lastly, abolished qualified immunity, we the people must see better governance and humane living conditions for every public housing tenant. Thank you for hearing my testimony.

AUDREY SON, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will now hear from LaKeesha Taylor followed by Damion Samuels.

SGT. BIONDO: Time starts now.

LAKEESHA TAYLOR: Okay. Alright. My name is LaKeesha Taylor. I am speaking today as a co-founder of the Isaac Coalition. Coalition was found to combat the public housing crisis that has plagued all of NYCHA campuses and to fight for adequate funding and timely repairs for all of NYCHA residents. Thank you for listening to my testimony today. My main point is that, um, is a cautionary to Committee Members. If the City decides to give money to NYCHA then NYCHA needs to be a good steward of such funds. NYCHA has not been a good steward in the recent past and present which is why I am asking why is NYCHA seeking funding to repair a 6-year old elevator. NYCHA previously received money from the

City Government to buy 10, 10 elevators. Yet their maintenance schedule is so poor that the disrepair to a 6-year-old elevator is far beyond what it should be. As we know, living in NYCHA is not easy. We here at Homes Towers thought it was going to get easier five years ago when we finally got brand new out of the box like Christmas present elevators. Unfortunately, the new elevators have brought more than nothing but the same, just worse. During the two year construction I lost my job because of the consistent outages of the elevators. I am also sharing, um, my living experience because of the repeated elevator failures. It was torture walking up 25 flights with a toddler and all the belongings that come with having a toddler. Three years later, the new elevators have not made.

SGT. BIONDO: Time expired.

LAKEESHA TAYLOR: Have not made the situation any better. Sorry, I'm going to have to go on. We barely go a week without one breaking down. Even NYCHAs own repair report shows how it includes all of the outages that have happened, so, they show that our elevators break down five times since February. It is I've attached this report so that

you can see it within my testimony. My toddler, now six thinks that he should stomp his foot to make the elevator go if it pauses for too long. Then, then let's not forgot if we actually get stuck. The times when the elevators doors have not closed fast enough or even if we, um, the elevators are unlevelled on floors. How about when the elevators just skip a floor all together? The physical, the physical disrepair shows the lack of respect NYCHA has for its residents. There is hardly any notifications beforehand when the elevators are being, um, planned maintenance work to get done. This makes residents late for work or appointments. I would also like to point out the lack of safety in our development. The doors are constantly broken or constantly and easily broken. There are times when the elevators have been broken for days. The intercom systems don't work. When residents talk to management they, I'm sorry, this is a mistake. Oh. They love to tell you that you are the only one that has called in. It is an excuse, after excuse, after excuse, much like what I've heard here when, Mr. Russ. I'm sorry. I've been hearing this same thing for years and it is unacceptable. With COVID people are stuck in their

homes and now there are homeless people outside your doors, roaming the halls or sleeping in your stairwell. NYCHA is moving full steam ahead with this blueprint for change but we can't get constant extermination plan to stop roaches or rat infestation and this doesn't feel right. I am personally, and, I am personally on my third NYCHA sink and cabinet in five years. But the cabinet is already, already breaking off. I have loose tiles that are on, that are about to fall. They don't meet the walls. They go all in different directions and I feel like I'm on a carnival ride. This is all, they are already popping up and it is very unsafe. I feel like if I sweep the crumbs are falling inside. So for someone who is almost disabled, this is unacceptable. NYCHA now I realize I felt like it was me, but I realize it is the floor. This is what is going on and we need to find a better solution. Thank you.

AUDREY SON, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next we will.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: One second Audrey. Just for the record, Ms. Coleman's testimony was emailed, so we will have that for the record and Ms. Taylor did you send us your testimony?

LAKEESHA TAYLOR: I believe I did.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay, okay. I just want to make sure. And I want to, um, okay. Thank you. I just want to make sure that I have it. I have Ms. Coleman's, but I want to make sure that I have yours too Ms. Taylor.

LAKEESHA TAYLOR: Yes.

AUDREY SON, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thanks very much. Next we will hear from Damion Samuels followed by Layman Lee.

SGT. BIONDO: Time starts now.

DAMION SAMUELS: Good afternoon. My name is Damion Samuels. I'm the senior director for youth services and community engagement at the Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center. I'm in Cutaway. Um, I'm pleased that you are allowing me to follow up Saundra and LaKeesha who are the founders of the Homes Coalition and we work very closely with this and so while we did not coordinate our presentations beforehand I think that you will hear that we have identified very similar issues. Um, and so again, thank you to Chair Ampry-Samuel for your leadership and hosting this forum. I am going to focus in my time on needs within the Isaacs Houses, Homes Towers

including repairs. Um, communication strategies for residents, um, and representation and solicitation to community voice. Um, and so to be blunt and short there was a famous infamous article in the New York Post in 2018 that outlined, identified in Isaacs Houses, Homes Towers as one of the 13 worst public housing developments in the nation. As you know in 2019, residents including those just mentioned took action, um, via a suit to force NYCHA to begin to meet some of their responsibilities and this is critically important. Um, the mission of the Isaac center is to promote reliance and self-dignity and it is really hard to have self-dignity when you feel like you're not able to have a clean and safe home to come home to. The very basics that all of us would require of our landlord but somehow NYCHA again is not being able to, to meet the mark. Our development, as you heard, there are busted elevators constantly, there are broken heat and water systems. There are rat infestations and often the challenge of getting NYCHA staff to respond immediately is, um, is pretty arduous. So one of the things that we are calling for today is the establishment of community liaisons. These would be NYCHA residents hired to

help us to resolve some of these issues. To work with  
TAs. Um.

SGT. BIONDO: Time expired.

DAMION SAMUELS: There are about 57  
sites citywide, um, and so we believe a \$5 million  
expenditure to provide for two community liaisons per  
site would go a long way in helping the resident have  
a voice. And my last point as I know my time is  
expired. Um, it is critically important that  
residents have a voice, particularly when we are  
rolling out the blueprint for change, when there are  
in fill projects that are scheduled to come on. Now,  
more than ever our residents need a pipeline to  
communicate with NYCHA leaders who are making  
decisions that are going to so dramatically affect  
their life. So thank you very much for your time, I  
appreciate it.

AUDREY SON, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank  
you. Next we will hear from Layman lee.

SGT. BIONDO: Time starts now. Layman  
it appears that you have no audio.

LAYMAN LEE: Good afternoon Chair Ampry-  
Samuel and City Council Members, Majority Leader  
Cumbo and residents of NYCHA. My name is Layman Lee

and I am the acting director of Neighborhood Safety Initiatives and Projects in the Center for Core Innovation. We work to build resident power and address issues of safety in public housing in some of New York's most historically under resourced neighborhoods, funding for neighborhoods that undermap for which neighborhood safety initiatives is the key implementation partner is due to sunset in June 2022. We hope for the Council to support the continuation of these services to the communities that we serve in public housing. Last year the global pandemic highlighted the stark racial inequities in our cities. It is worth noting that 14 out of 15 map developments are designated as being on the hardest hit neighborhoods list. Because neighborhoods bring together residents living in public housing who are invested in their communities and are neighborhood connectors that neighborhood resident teams were crucial in developing an emergency response and mutual aid relief that was launched within a month of the governor's announcement to pause. We launched a widely accessible needs assessment, a resident led essential goods delivery service, a referral system connecting

residents to agency and local supports and a virtual community resiliency training series that was and continues to be available to all NYCHA residents. From April to June of 2020, the needs assessment allowed us to understand the needs of NYCHA residents through 11,400 unique surveys conducted across 17 developments across the City. Through mobilization of Neighborhood stat resident teams and creating mutual aid networks approximately 10,000 COVID relief packages included food, drinking water, PPE, personal hygiene products and cleaning supplies and other essential goods were delivered to 7000 households or approximately 45,000 NYCHA residents in three months. In short, neighborhood stat and neighborhood safety initiatives work with residents to support new approaches and create opportunities for real life ideas for community, safety and well-being. The senator asks the council to urge the administration to fully fund and baseline the Neighborhood Stat Program within the Mayor's Action Plan to ensure that this important program continues.

SGT. BIONDO: Time expires.

LAYMAN LEE: With continued partnership.

Thank you very much.

AUDREY SON, COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. This concludes the public testimony. If we have inadvertently missed anyone that has registered to testify today and has yet to be called, please use the Zoom Raise Hand Function now and you will be called to testify now. Seeing no hands raised. I will now turn it back over to Chair Ampry-Samuel for closing remarks.

CHAIRPERSON ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: Thank you so much. Um, so I want to just. So, first thank you everyone for your testimony today. Thank you so much um to the NYCHA team for coming in and providing us with the information. We clearly know that there is so much that we need to advocate for and demand, um, on behalf of our residents. The, the striking number, the alarming number of the rent collection, um, drop rate right now is concerning and you know we really do have to figure out what do we do to move forward? And so, um, I'm just calling our city government, our state government and our federal government to all step in and, and really work with the residents on figuring out a way to provide the resources that we truly need but at the same time, um, making sure that NYCHA that they are doing what

they are supposed to be doing as far as managing the funding that is receive and how you prioritize the, um, the projects and the funds that you receive. Um, with that being said, I also want to, um, remind everyone that I want to follow up with Ms. Tillery from Wise Tower after this and I also want to just briefly recognize, I did receive text messages from other resident leaders, Lafayette Gardens sent me a notice during our hearing that I was not able to see but Lafayette Gardens is questioning the \$250,000 that was received for safety renovations and to the playgrounds that NYCHA was not able to claim the funds and there is a question about whether that funding is still available. Um, so I want to have follow up for Lafayette Gardens related to that comment. Um, also from Ingersoll, um, Ingersoll has been without a property manager for the past month, since February 20<sup>th</sup> and they have limited NYCHA staff and repairs continue to be an issue. And I know you mentioned the property management budgets that was sent out. And so if there is a property manager that is not at Ingersoll and um, a need for more staffing there, I would like to have a follow up related to what's happening at Ingersoll.

And lastly, um, I received notice from Atlantic Terminal, um, mirroring the same concerns that Lakeesha Taylor mentioned around the elevators. And so, and the funding needed for elevators and elevator repairs. Um, so and the funding needed for elevators and elevator repairs. Um, so Lafayette Gardens, Ingersoll and Atlantic terminal. And, with that being said, okay. So that will conclude our preliminary budget hearing on public housing for Friday, March 12, 2021 and I thank everyone for being here today and this hearing is now adjourned. (gavel pounding) And thank you, thank you to, um, Sarah from Finance Division, thank you to Audrey, Ricky, Jose and to my staff. Thank you.

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 10, 2021