

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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October 19, 2023
Start: 9:46 a.m.
Recess: 9:52 a.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Alexa Avilés, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Diana Ayala
Charles Barron
Carmen N. De La Rosa
Darlene Mealy
Chi A. Ossé
Lincoln Restler
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
Pierina Ana Sanchez

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Julie Won

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning. This is a
3 microphone check for the Committee on Public Housing.
4 Today's date is October 19, 2023. Located in the
5 Chambers, recording done by Pedro Lugo.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning and
7 welcome to the New York City Council vote of the
8 Committee on Public Housing.

9 At this time, can everybody please
10 silence your cell phones.

11 At this time and going forward, no one is
12 to approach the dais.

13 Chair, we are ready to begin.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [GAVEL] This meeting
15 is coming to order. Good morning, everyone, and
16 welcome to this hearing of the Committee on Public
17 Housing. I am Council Member Alexa Avilés, the Chair
18 of the New York City Committee on Public Housing.

19 I'd like to thank you all for attending
20 this meeting to vote on Resolution 68 sponsored by
21 Council Member Ari Kagan, which calls on the New York
22 State Legislature and the United States Department of
23 Urban Development to increase NYCHA accountability by
24 auditing the responsiveness of the New York City
25 Housing Authority managers to tenants.

2 We are joined by my Colleagues, Council
3 Member Barron, Council Member Mealy, Council Member
4 Kagan, Council Member Ossé, Council Member Restler,
5 and Council Member De La Rosa.

6 Throughout my time as Chair of this
7 Committee, I have been focused on improving NYCHA's
8 service and their responsiveness to NYCHA residents.
9 During that time, I've seen improvements from NYCHA,
10 but it is not enough. I believe every member of NYCHA
11 from the CEO to property management staff has the
12 responsibility to be clear and open with residents
13 and to resolve issues. All levels of government from
14 federal to state to our Committee here must work with
15 NYCHA to get the funding they need while also
16 continually pushing for better services, more
17 transparency and accountability. Accountability is
18 critical. No one is exempt from it. No city, state,
19 or federal agency is exempt from accountability.

20 I would like to thank my Staff along with
21 Public Housing Committee Staff for all their work on
22 this Resolution.

23 Before we turn it over, I would like to
24 turn it over to Council Member Kagan for remarks.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER KAGAN: Thank you very
3 much, Chair. Good morning. I believe today is a
4 historical day. For decades, tenants at NYCHA
5 developments all over the City of New York have
6 complained about mold, non-working elevators, lack of
7 heat and hot water, and roach and mice infestation to
8 no avail. Sometimes excuses were different, no money,
9 disinvestment, etc., but very often it was just
10 simple ignorance, just their complaints, phone calls,
11 e-mails were completely ignored. Nobody often didn't
12 even come to inspect the apartments after complaints,
13 and it's happening still today all over New York
14 City. I'm talking about more than 550,000 New Yorkers
15 who deserve respect, attention from NYCHA, in fact,
16 from everyone. Though the New York City Council has
17 limited authority on this, but today we're making an
18 important first step into the right direction, making
19 NYCHA accountable. This is NYCHA accountability act.
20 This is a resolution asking the New York State
21 Legislature and Federal HUD to start auditing NYCHA
22 property managers' responsiveness to tenants'
23 complaints. Time for excuses is over. Someone has to
24 act. Someone has to check apartments. Someone has to
25 visit. It shouldn't take Council Member Ari Kagan

2 year of begging NYCHA Chair Greg Russ to visit Coney
3 Island apartments. I was almost begging him to visit
4 apartments, not to sit in some kind of glass house
5 somewhere else. Today, I'm very grateful to Speaker
6 Adrienne Adams, to Chair Alexa Avilés, to my Staff,
7 especially Budget and Legislative Director Ather
8 Tirmizi, the Staff of Public Housing Committee, to
9 all my Colleagues who are supporting this resolution,
10 and I hope that everyone will support this
11 commonsense first step to make NYCHA accountable for
12 ignoring tenants' complaints. Thank you so much.

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you, Council
14 Member Kagan.

15 With that, I will turn it over to the
16 Clerk to call the roll.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Good
18 morning. William Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll call
19 vote Committee on Public Housing. Resolution 68.
20 Chair Avilés.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Aye.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN:
23 Salamanca.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Aye.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
3 you. Ayala.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Aye.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
6 you. Barron.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Aye.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: De La
9 Rosa.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Aye.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Mealy.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: May I explain my
13 vote, Chair?

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yes.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I want to thank my
16 Colleague, Ari Kagan, for this commonsense
17 legislation. This is NYCHA accountability act. To not
18 have anyone check after they say they have fixed
19 anything, a leak, a pipe, and no one goes back to see
20 if it's done, and without the constituent knowing or
21 NYCHA, no one says anything. They just close out this
22 ticket so I'm glad, I hope this really lets NYCHA
23 know that we will be watching, the City is watching,
24 and NYCHA residents deserve and demand respect to
25 make sure they live in decent housing, and I proudly

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2 vote aye on this legislation. Thank you, my
3 Colleague, Ari Kagan, great legislation. Thank you,
4 Chair.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Ossé.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: I vote aye.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Restler.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I vote aye and
9 congrats to Council Member Kagan.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Sanchez.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Aye.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
13 you. Won.

14 With a vote of nine in the affirmative,
15 zero in the negative, and no abstentions, item has
16 been adopted by the Committee.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [GAVEL] This meeting
18 is adjourned.

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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 October 26, 2023