

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY IN GOVERNMENT

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September 19, 2008

Start: 10:15am

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HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
GALE A. BREWER
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Bill de Blasio
Letitia James
G. Oliver Koppell

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

Paul Cosgrave
Commissioner
Department of Information Technology and
Telecommunications, DoITT and New York City CIO

2 YVETTE MOLINA: Testing. Today's
3 date is September 19, 2008. This is a Committee
4 hearing Technology in Government and it's recorded
5 by Yvette Molina.

6 CHAIRPERSON GALE A. BREWER: Good
7 morning. I'm Gale Brewer, City Council member and
8 Chair of this City Council Committee on
9 Technology. I'm shortly joined here by great
10 staff. I'll introduce them in a minute but I
11 first want to certainly welcome Commissioner Paul
12 Cosgrave from DoITT. And then just do a quick
13 overview as to what we're going to be talking
14 about today.

15 We are going to be talking about
16 Intro No. 54. The background of this, and we'll
17 talk about the Intro in a minute, is that in
18 October '98 then Mayor Guiliani signed Executive
19 Order No. 43. It created the Technology Steering
20 Committee and required it to adopt a New York City
21 Information Technology Strategy that would be
22 reviewed annually. It also directed the
23 Technology Steering Committee to approve the
24 annual technology plans of all Mayoral agencies.

25 To be honest with you, I don't

1
2 think much came of it. To the credit of Mayor
3 Bloomberg in 2006, he signed Executive Order 93,
4 which eliminated the requirement for an annual
5 review. However, this particular administration,
6 this particular Commissioner and certainly
7 previous Commissioner Gino Mancini have done a
8 great deal more. Most recently, 2008, PlanIT, P-
9 L-A-N-I-T was the New York City technology plan
10 and I'm sure we'll hear about that from
11 Commissioner Cosgrave.

12 Obviously there's a great value of
13 technology plans. They allow formal and informal
14 oversight bodies to understand where and how this
15 city is going to spend its money on technology and
16 telecommunications. We are obviously facing
17 challenges in terms of fiscal constraints in 2008.
18 I've always understood that technology isn't
19 necessarily a cost savings but you never know.
20 And see if hopefully we'll have some discussions
21 about that today.

22 Certainly it is a good planning
23 tool. It promotes collaboration and knowledge
24 sharing amongst stakeholders to realize
25 substantial cost savings some times. And

1
2 certainly does improve government service
3 delivery.

4 At the state level, Governor Pataki
5 signed an Executive Order 117 in 2002 establishing
6 the position of Chief Information Officer. This
7 officer, CIO, has a responsibility of overseeing,
8 directing and coordinating the establishment of
9 information technology policies, protocols and
10 standards for state government. Most recently
11 under the current Democratic administration
12 started by Governor Spitzer and continued by
13 Governor Paterson, the state has released a New
14 York State Information Technology Strategic Plan.
15 It's laid out goals and strategies about how that
16 will be accomplished.

17 Commissioner Cosgrave is on the
18 primary committee and I'm on some kind of action
19 committee. We're not quite sure exactly which
20 committees are doing what but it's a very
21 ambitious effort on the state level. I commend
22 the Governor for carrying it forward. And we will
23 talk, perhaps today, about how we can work
24 collaboratively.

25 This particular Intro No. 54 amends

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2 Chapter 48 of the City Charter by adding a new
3 section, 1075. It requires that no later than
4 April 1st of each year DoITT shall produce and
5 transmit to the Council and the Mayor an
6 information strategy report. It mandates that
7 DoITT publish the annual technology plans of
8 agencies as an annual addendum to this report.

9 Section 2 of Intro. 74 amends
10 Chapter 49 of the City Charter by adding a new
11 section that requires the head of each city agency
12 to submit an annual technology to DoITT no later
13 than February 1st of each year.

14 I certainly think this is an
15 administration that has a wonderful respect for
16 technology and it is using not for technology's
17 sake but to improve the strategy and to improve
18 City government in general. One never knows what
19 happens in the future, which is one reason for
20 Intro No. 54. Also I will say some times during
21 the budget meetings we often have Commissioners
22 who are talking about technology but not in a way
23 that is comprehensive but the City as a whole.
24 DoITT does it but it would be good to have the
25 agencies have some kind of planning device that

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2 could be, perhaps, better understood by the
3 public.

4 So with that, I want to thank Jeff
5 Baker for his work on this particular hearing
6 today. And I want to welcome Commissioner
7 Cosgrave of DoITT. Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER PAUL COSGRAVE: Thank
9 you Chair Brewer. My name's Paul Cosgrave, the
10 Commissioner for the Department of Information
11 Technology and Telecommunications. And I also
12 serve as the City's CIO. Thank you for the
13 opportunity to attest today regarding the proposed
14 City Council Introduction number 54.

15 If enacted, this legislation as you
16 just said, would required DoITT to produce an
17 annual technology strategy and Mayoral agencies to
18 submit yearly technology plans to DoITT for
19 publication as an addendum to that strategy.
20 While we agree that the City of New York requires
21 a comprehensive plan for the efficient
22 implementation of large scale technology projects,
23 we applaud the Council, this Committee in
24 particular its Chair, for recognizing this.

25 Introduction 54 would needlessly

1
2 duplicate the considerable efforts already
3 underway by this administration. Building n the
4 City's IT accomplishments during the Bloomberg
5 administration and create a strategic approach to
6 planning technology initiatives going forward.

7 Last November, as I believe you
8 know, we unveiled PlanIT, better government
9 through customer service. Now DoITT work with
10 over 130 participants from nearly 40 city agencies
11 since late 2006, PlanIT is the City's first ever
12 technology strategies coordinates in an effective
13 way, in an efficient way citywide implementation.

14 With an overarching theme of
15 customer service, the plan contained 23 strategic
16 technology initiatives across the City's six
17 mission areas. One economic development and
18 sustainability, two public safety, three social
19 services, four education, five community service
20 for the city and six city infrastructure. As well
21 as two mission support areas, citywide
22 administration and legal affairs.

23 PlanIT also introduces nine
24 foundational technology programs ensuring the IT
25 infrastructure is in place to implement the plan's

1
2 23 strategic initiatives. These foundational
3 projects include consolidating and integrating the
4 City's data centers, launching the New York City
5 wireless network, creating citywide information
6 securities policies and standards and
7 strengthening the City's back up and recovering
8 capabilities.

9 The idea behind the strategy was
10 simple: to make technology planning and deployment
11 an integral part of the way the City delivers
12 services. Accordingly, from the City's public
13 facing functions to its back end support systems,
14 PlanIT tends to transform New York City government
15 through the innovative use of technology, making
16 the City more accessible, transparent and
17 accountable as a result.

18 So in doing so we strive to improve
19 customer service by providing information services
20 when and how desired and eliminating the need for
21 constituents to understand how city agencies are
22 organized. To our customers, New York City's
23 residents, businesses, employees and visitors, the
24 City should be viewed as a single provider of
25 services regardless of how customers access those

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2 services where they are actually delivered.

3 The City's average development
4 technology strategy date back nearly two years and
5 since my appointment as Commissioner, key DoITT
6 staff and I met with Mayor Bloomberg and the
7 Deputy Mayors to establish this City's primary
8 business goals through the end of 2009.

9 The project team then conducted
10 interviews and surveys of executive level
11 representatives from across the city, which set
12 the framework for successive workshops attended by
13 Commissioners, senior agency staff and agency CIOs
14 alike. After this came the development of the
15 citywide IT vision, IT operating principles, IT
16 imperatives and the criteria needed to ensure that
17 the City's technology projects are aligned with
18 the administration's goals and objectives.

19 Once conceived, integral to the
20 development of PlanIT was the establishment of the
21 improved IT government structures supported.

22 Accordingly as you have already identified in
23 December 2006, Mayor Bloomberg signed Executive
24 Order 98, reconstituting the Technology Steering
25 Committee as the designated decision making

1
2 authority for setting and overseeing the strategic
3 direction of technology citywide.

4 With respect to Introduction 54,
5 the City's landscape in terms of coordinating IT
6 planning and deployment has changed significantly
7 since this bill was last introduced in February
8 2006 and since we last testified on it as when it
9 was then Introduction 17, which is nearly four
10 years ago. I'm quite confident the plan we have
11 today reflects that reality. The technology
12 implementation in the City of New York is
13 developed in accordance with the City's business
14 strategy and no longer as an after thought.

15 Just as importantly, the process we
16 followed in developing the City's strategy
17 including cross and agency collaboration,
18 stakeholder feedback and executive level support
19 to align technology deployment. The City's
20 critical business needs has allowed us to
21 successfully embed the planning and practice of
22 successful long term IT implementation into the
23 common practice of City operations.

24 Therefore, while we do not support
25 Introduction 54 in its current draft we would be

2 agreeable to discussing with the Council the way
3 in which the gains realized to the implementation
4 of PlanIT may be ensured for successive
5 administrations. The 21 century regularly updated
6 and collaboratively developed IT plans. This is
7 essential to the City's future as plans for its
8 roads, bridges, trees, schools, et cetera.

9 So it's our hope that the work done
10 in implementing successful technology projects
11 over the past six and a half years and our
12 strategy to complete those operatives over the
13 next 467 days to transform City government to the
14 extent that those improvements will continue to
15 benefit New Yorkers for generations to come and we
16 look forward to working with you in that regard.
17 Thank you very much for having me.

18 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very
19 much. As usual, you have excellent testimony
20 that's both informative and collaborative. I
21 guess one of my questions is you produce this
22 terrific plan in November and I just didn't know
23 as an example of perhaps a need for updating. Is
24 there any part of it that's obsolete or do you
25 think that it continues to represent and reflect

1
2 the technology strategy of the City? In other
3 words, how do you for instance internally, keep
4 your plans up to date?

5 MR. COSGRAVE: The plan is based on
6 an overall business plan that exists for this
7 City. PlanIT, which was the IT component of what
8 needed to be done followed after PlaNYC if you
9 recall, since that was published in April of last
10 year. So to the extent that PlaNYC is still very
11 much in place and what we're acting against, what
12 we are, then we're doing the same thing.

13 Where things change though, of
14 course, we take modifications. A good example of
15 that but maybe that one everyone wants to talk
16 about is congestion pricing. Since congestion
17 pricing was in the original PlaNYC and obviously
18 was not passed by the legislature, then we didn't
19 need to go forward and do what we were planning on
20 doing on the technology side as it related to that
21 initiative. So we have updated the plan to take
22 into consideration changes of that nature.

23 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: When you lay
24 out some of the initiatives, how do you reference
25 some specific goals in order to be able to

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2 accomplish them? I know you talk about Business
3 Express. We talked about congestion pricing,
4 neighborhood economic development. Certainly I
5 know you've done a lot of work on building payment
6 and collections; that's been very successful. So
7 how do you either track and/or let the public know
8 where some of the goals and how they're
9 accomplished?

10 Because I think the public is very
11 interested in what you're doing also. In other
12 words not only as customers, and you expressed in
13 your testimony that people should feel like it's a
14 seamless government. I think you're doing that.
15 But I think the public also wants to know what's
16 being accomplished.

17 MR. COSGRAVE: Okay. I think
18 there's two questions. Let me first address how
19 we organize this. We are putting in place what we
20 are referring to as portfolio managers. This is a
21 senior IT person at the Deputy Associate
22 Commissioner level who is aligned with each of the
23 Deputy Mayors. That person is working with all
24 the key individuals in those various, let's call
25 them domains, if you will for a moment to organize

1
2 and constantly keep track of the priorities in
3 those areas.

4 So in addition to the strategic
5 initiatives that you have identified here in the
6 plan for each of those six major areas, there are
7 other high priority projects that come up from
8 time to time and hose are accorded. But the
9 portfolio manager's role is to work with each of
10 the Deputy Mayors that are staffed and the various
11 folks in the agencies that report into those
12 groups to make sure that the plan stays active.

13 In terms of reporting, we have done
14 some reporting that has primarily been internal
15 that I use with the Deputy Mayors and the
16 Commissioners. We have been discussing how we're
17 going to make that information public, although we
18 have not done that yet. When we do come to the
19 final agreement about that, we will be posting
20 that on the web site.

21 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. How
22 does that fit into the MMR? Obviously that was
23 released this week, if at all. I haven't read the
24 MMR, the one that just came out in the last two
25 days so... I should know this but is that

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2 something is--technology is obviously part of it
3 but it is maybe when you figure out how you're
4 going to release the internal material could be
5 part of the MMR. Because it's changing much more
6 rapidly than the number of housing units, the
7 number of potholes, the number of rat sightings
8 and so on.

9 MR. COSGRAVE: Both the MMR and the
10 citywide performance reporting or CPR process that
11 is the online process now that we use within the
12 City as well as being published on a regular basis
13 every month on the internet. They follow the same
14 Mayoral theme concept that we're using here in the
15 strategic plan. So the focus groups around
16 economic development, public safety, health and
17 human services. It's exactly the same focus
18 group. Both the MMR and the strategic plan are
19 tied back to the same strategic goals within each
20 of those domain areas.

21 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: So that's
22 always counted, okay. How do we work with the
23 state, if at all? There's a state CIO. I don't
24 know if there is some discussion, if they are
25 figuring out ways of submitting reports to their

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2 CIO, the state agencies. I don't know if there
3 is any collaboration. Obviously the paper
4 anywhere there was a recent challenge in terms of
5 some of their contracts for looking at public
6 safety issues, which you don't have as a problem.

7 MR. COSGRAVE: We do coordinate
8 with the State on many different efforts. I'll
9 start with some of the foundational IT ones that
10 I'm most directly involved in and then I'll refer
11 to some others that I'm aware of that other
12 agencies are doing the coordination on.

13 On the foundational IT side a very
14 good example would be wireless services. As you
15 were referring to, the State's having some
16 challenges with its statewide wireless system. We
17 are actually working very aggressively right now,
18 both with the state and actually with the FCC to
19 come up with an approach that will aid the State
20 in what they are coming up with as a contingency
21 plan in the event that the vendor does not address
22 the issues that the State's brought forth to the
23 vendor.

24 So we're in a very coordinated
25 effort right now. In fact, I was down in

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2 Washington yesterday with the State CIO working
3 this issue. And I'll be in Albany on Monday
4 working this issue. So we're very coordinated on
5 those kind of issues.

6 Another example where we're
7 coordinated would be data center recovery. We
8 have a need for additional data centers capacity
9 for disaster recovery purposes, as does the State.
10 So we're looking at some cooperative efforts in
11 that regard where we could actually perhaps create
12 an environment that would satisfy both our needs.
13 So there's a number of efforts like that that are
14 ongoing between ourselves and the state.

15 On the non-technical side, if you
16 will, more on the business side there is an
17 increased working effort in health and human
18 services areas. Where as you know services are
19 very closely linked between the state and the
20 city. So the new portfolio manager who's
21 coordinating across all of our health and human
22 services agencies is working very closely with his
23 counterpart at the state level as well on health
24 and human services.

25 There are similar examples like

2 that that are taking place in public safety and
3 other domain areas as well.

4 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: You may not
5 know this but do they actually submit materials on
6 a regular basis that would be complement to what
7 we might consider doing here? Or is that
8 something that is not shared with DoITT?

9 MR. COSGRAVE: There is a
10 technology plan that the State produced very
11 similar in concept to the one we did. It was
12 done, actually I believe under the Pataki
13 administration. I can not comment on how it's
14 been updated in the last two years. But we were a
15 very active part of it. It was at the tail end of
16 the Pataki administration when it was developed
17 and we were a very active participant in that.

18 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. I know
19 you talked about the Technology Steering Committee
20 and I know it's got lots of activity. How often
21 does it meet and how does that filter in to your
22 plans? In other words, I know you mentioned that
23 there's somebody working affiliate aligned with
24 the Deputy Mayors. Is that person part of the
25 Steering Committee or maybe they represent their

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2 Commissioner on the Steering Committee? How...?

3 MR. COSGRAVE: So the structure of
4 the Technology Steering Committee is my direct
5 boss, Deputy Mayor Leiber chairs it. And the
6 other Deputy Mayors are represented either by
7 themselves or if they decide to send a
8 representative. So each Deputy Mayor that has an
9 active operations portfolio is represented on
10 that. In that respect then, our portfolio
11 managers are coordinating with their staff folks
12 and then if there's issues that need to get
13 brought up to the Steering Committee level, they
14 will get brought up.

15 But most of the issues we try to
16 resolve just between the portfolio manager and the
17 particular Deputy Mayor staff. So it's only the
18 cross issues where we may have an issue that is
19 crossing both the domain area, like public safety
20 and the enterprise approach. So our
21 responsibility for enterprise architecture
22 approach that addresses technology across all the
23 areas where there is some difference, we would
24 bring it to the Technology Steering Committee. So
25 in terms of your question as to how often they

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2 meet, it's as required to resolve these types of
3 issues.

4 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. We've
5 been joined very fortunately by Council Member
6 Koppell from the Bronx so if you have any
7 questions Council Member. Okay. All right. If
8 you have any questions let us know.

9 The other question I have is on the
10 budget issues. I think I've always heard for the
11 last seven years as Chair of this Committee that
12 technology does not necessarily save money because
13 there's obviously an upfront cost, there's an
14 ongoing cost, certainly tons of updates.

15 So we are facing, I'm sure that in
16 any future budget modifications of next year's
17 FY10, I think we can all look forward, is the
18 wrong word but we will all have to deal with
19 challenges fiscally. In that this is something
20 that I think the public thinks that technology
21 saves money.

22 I was just wondering either as part
23 of the Technology Committee, part of the agency,
24 how are you thinking, if at all there are any
25 potential cost savings? Or how we should perhaps

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2 think different about some of the strategy that
3 could use technology in some way, shape or form to
4 save money? It's never been my experience that
5 there is a lot of wiggle room here.

6 MR. COSGRAVE: In terms of the
7 question of can technology save money. What we
8 did was we put in place as part of the revision or
9 the revival, if you will, of the Technology
10 Steering Committee, some subcommittees that report
11 up to the Technology Steering Committee.

12 One is a portfolio management
13 advisory committee, which is chaired both by DoITT
14 and co-chaired by OMB. That committee meets
15 regularly on a bi-weekly basis and is actively
16 looking at any new efforts that are coming
17 forward. They've designed a whole process where
18 any new project has to put forth a document in
19 addition to just the capital request.

20 But a document that explains in
21 fairly straightforward terms, what the benefit is
22 of that project, in some cases, as a way to
23 justify the request for the funding. So every
24 major project throughout the City is now going
25 through this process.

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2 In some cases, if it's a public
3 safety initiative, for example we're talking about
4 improving response times such as what we've
5 accomplished with the use of automatic vehicle
6 locator technology in the Fire Department with
7 their ambulances, et cetera. That's the
8 justification. The justification is we're saving
9 lives. So in those cases they're being done on
10 that basis.

11 In the other cases certainly with
12 the whole creation of 3-1-1, the justification of
13 3-1-1 was improved customer service. Now it's
14 happening, though interestingly, is we continue to
15 have volume increases in 3-1-1 every year. 2007
16 volume increased about 15% over 2006. So up until
17 this point in time, we've been able to adequately
18 increase the staff in 3-1-1 to continue to support
19 that increased call volume.

20 But with the financial situation
21 that we now face, that's not going to be the case
22 any more. In fact, in the last budget session, we
23 actually reduced the heads in 3-1-1. So I have no
24 choice now but to try to continue to grow 3-1-1
25 services but to do it with less. So our strategy

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2 there is to move more of the 3-1-1 service on to
3 the internet if we can and get more people
4 comfortable with using the internet to get the--

5 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [interposing]
6 Sort of like the airlines. You call, you pay \$25
7 if you don't do it online--

8 MR. COSGRAVE: [interposing] I'm
9 not charging \$25.

10 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Don't be like
11 them; it's horrible. I'm in the middle of the
12 road and I'm trying to make a... I don't have a
13 computer with me. Go ahead, I'm sorry.

14 MR. COSGRAVE: As you know, we
15 don't charge for any service like that. But what
16 we do do in terms of an incentive is to try to
17 make it easier for people. So if we can make it
18 easier they don't have to wait in a queue to get
19 their answer; they can just go online and get it
20 quicker.

21 As long as it's easy to find and
22 that's been the challenge with the internet
23 because the internet content is very much been
24 aligned by agency. So what we now are doing is
25 restructuring the content of the internet so it's

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2 just like 3-1-1 where you don't have to know the
3 agency to get to the answer. That's a big move
4 we're doing right now. There's an investment in
5 that, there's a capital request on that. But at
6 the end of the day it should allow us to run 3-1-1
7 more efficiently.

8 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Are there any
9 other examples of agencies? I think one of the
10 reasons that we're pushing for plan, we can talk
11 more specifically about it is, there was the
12 hearing some maybe even before you started as
13 Commissioner with ACS. The question is how does
14 one communicate from the field?

15 I think in general field
16 communication is a challenge. There are dead
17 spots, technology changes, communication and
18 people have hard jobs; maybe it works, maybe it
19 doesn't. I guess my question is, in the field or
20 any other agencies, are there ways in which some
21 of these capital requests or other requests find
22 their way towards either savings or something
23 that's equivalent to 3-1-1 with a different way of
24 doing it that's better for the customer, the work
25 and New York.

2 MR. COSGRAVE: Absolutely. This is
3 a NYCwin to a large extent, it's all about the
4 citywide wireless network. So we use ACS as an
5 example because they've been fairly aggressive in
6 terms of getting handheld devices that they can
7 use on NYCwin. But many agencies in terms of
8 their previous approach to address the problem
9 that you just eluded to, would contract with the
10 carriers, Verizon, whomever, to get services.

11 They might have to pay as much as
12 \$100 a month just to have a contract so that they
13 could have a data card in their computer or
14 whatever. With NYCwin we eliminate that whole
15 need. So essentially we're now providing that
16 service, that carrier service to all the agencies
17 and in effect it's a free service to them.

18 So because we're able to put the
19 NYCwin infrastructure in place and justify it on
20 the basis of public safety in these, we're able to
21 let the agencies ride the back bone for free, in
22 fact. And clearly it helps them in terms of
23 reducing their telecom costs.

24 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Council Member
25 Koppell, did you have a question? Push your

1
2 button.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER G. OLIVER KOPPELL:

4 I apologize for not being here before but I'm also
5 a member of the Education Committee next door.
6 However, and I'm going to have to go back there in
7 a little while. But I did read your statement,
8 Commissioner, and I also read the resolution
9 that's a subject of the hearing. And I glance
10 somewhat cursorily through the plan that was
11 submitted, dated 2008 and it completely eludes me
12 or escapes me why you're opposed to this
13 resolution.

14 The resolution, in essence,
15 requires the City to have a technology plan,
16 requires each agency to look at its efforts as far
17 as technology is concerned and integrate that with
18 a plan, present it and then allow the public to
19 look at it. It seems to me that's totally
20 consistent with everything you're doing. So I am,
21 as I say, completely at a loss to understand why
22 you oppose this resolution, except maybe that it's
23 proposed by the Council. Maybe you can enlighten
24 me.

25 Before you do that, let me ask you

1
2 this. Recently the administration issued, I think
3 it was called Management Evaluation, I forgot the
4 exact title, just in the last few days. Right?

5 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Mayor's
6 Management Report.

7 MR. KOPPELL: Management Report.

8 MR. COSGRAVE: The MMR, yes.

9 MR. KOPPELL: Does that include
10 reports over the technology implementation of the
11 various agencies? Is that looked at with respect
12 to each agency in that matter, the report?

13 MR. COSGRAVE: It's looked at from
14 the perspective of the outcomes so to the extent
15 that an agency is being tracked on their
16 improvement of performing a customer service,
17 let's say. The outcome of how that service is
18 improved is reported upon, not precisely whether
19 they completed the project that was being done.
20 So it's done from more of an outcomes perspective;
21 more people being served, our potholes being fixed
22 quicker. Whatever the issue might be, that's the
23 tracking.

24 In terms of actual technology
25 project tracking, we're implementing processes in

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2 the city to do that. So every one of those
3 initiatives that's in that strategic plan, the 23
4 business oriented initiatives plus the 9
5 foundation initiatives, we have very rigorous
6 processes in place now that track and report on
7 the progress of those initiatives.

8 MR. KOPPELL: Why would it be
9 objectionable to once a year report to the public,
10 which is what the resolution calls for?

11 MR. COSGRAVE: We conceptually
12 agree on the resolution in principle so I stated
13 that in the testimony. We believe it's very
14 important going forward that future
15 administrations continue the progress that's been
16 made in this area so we don't have a problem with
17 that. I think what I would take exception to are
18 a couple of things.

19 First of all the success of this
20 plan, the reason we've been able to do it
21 successfully really addresses two issues that the
22 resolution itself, I think, fails to address. One
23 is that to have a successful IT plan, it has to
24 follow a overall business strategy or an overall
25 philosophy of how you want to run the government.

1
2 So in the case of PlanIT, which we published, it
3 was published last November. It followed PlaNYC,
4 which was published earlier in the year. So it's
5 very critical that you have this connection.

6 Many of the initiatives, for
7 example, that we have in PlanIT around creating
8 data centers and things of that sort follow right
9 from the direction that was provided in the
10 Mayor's plan. So it's important that you have
11 that connection first of all. An IT plan by
12 itself isn't going to accomplish anything if it
13 isn't following on an overall policy vision of how
14 you want to operate this city.

15 The second point is that we really
16 try to take away this notion that agencies,
17 individual agencies, are off doing their own
18 planning and that this document is going to be
19 accumulation of what the agencies did. So we came
20 up with this concept of these six domains, public
21 safety, education, et cetera. And focused our
22 emphasis in the plan around those six domains.

23 So the way the process worked is
24 the agencies that would fold up to those different
25 domains, they all got together, made their

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2 proposals about what they thought was important.
3 And then there was this process put to place in
4 each domain led by someone from City Hall and the
5 Deputy Mayor's staff to coordinate and prioritize
6 the initiatives within those processes. So we
7 wanted to break down this concept of just rolling
8 up individual agencies and make it more of a top
9 down effort to make it consistent with the Mayor's
10 strategic direction.

11 We don't have the sense that the
12 way the initiative is currently structured
13 necessarily follows that. It comes more from just
14 submit your plans from the agencies and we don't
15 think that's the right way to do it.

16 Then the third issue, which is just
17 a practical issue; with 467 days left in the
18 administration we're focused on implementing
19 what's in there. We'll discuss whatever kind of
20 public reporting you want on the progress; that's
21 not an issue. But the issue is to go and start a
22 new plan right now that in this case involves over
23 100 different people from 50 different agencies.

24 That's just not practical for the
25 administration where we are at this stage in the

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2 administration. So the idea of doing something
3 along what you're proposing, future
4 administrations is what we're saying makes some
5 sense. But we would alter the way you're doing it
6 so it just isn't a roll up of agencies.

7 MR. KOPPELL: But I don't think the
8 Chair or any members of the Committee would have
9 any objection to changing the wording. I think
10 the idea is that there be - and you did it in 2008
11 obviously - but that there be an annual review,
12 which ought to prompt agency action. Now if
13 agencies are supposed to work together the way you
14 said where it's a group of agencies working
15 together, this doesn't preclude that in the least.

16 As I understand it from reading the
17 background material, there was an annual
18 requirement, which was repealed for whatever
19 reason. Because there was an annual requirement
20 under Mayor Guiliani, I gather, and that was
21 repealed.

22 I think having an annual
23 requirement is fine. If you want the wording to
24 be changed, I'm sure the Chair will entertain
25 that. But not only doesn't it seem to be sensible

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2 to object to this, it seems entirely contrary to
3 your own testimony, which is that you want to move
4 ahead in a comprehensive way with technology
5 implementation. So I don't need a response to
6 that, Madam Chair, I think that there's no reason
7 we shouldn't proceed with this.

8 I think we should ask the
9 Commissioner for his assistance if he thinks the
10 language doesn't reflect the way they're doing it.
11 But I think it's a good idea and I think
12 particularly because you mentioned--I have
13 confidence in Mayor Bloomberg, who has made his
14 great fortune that we read about in the papers
15 today from technology, is committed to technology.
16 It would be strange if he weren't.

17 But we don't know who's going to be
18 the Mayor. And you point out that much of this is
19 for future administrations, whether it be
20 Bloomberg if my bill passes and he gets elected or
21 not. It makes eminent sense and I think we should
22 proceed with it.

23 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very
24 much. I think just picking up on that example
25 with the NYCwin was very successful. More

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2 agencies will come online, will be my guess. But
3 that will be an example, you will have a goal,
4 timelines, technology strategies, could be
5 reported. And I guess that would be an example
6 where the Council and the public can be informed
7 when agencies come online, the information that
8 they are then able to transmit amongst themselves.

9 People are safer, children are
10 safer and so on. That's an example of a positive
11 that I think could be reported in the future
12 administrations who may not have the same ability
13 to pull this together as you do. NYCwin is a
14 great tool but it's only as good as the
15 coordination and the collaboration of the agencies
16 who participate.

17 The public doesn't know, for
18 instance, that ACS is or isn't part of it. Then
19 at a budget hearing the public could ask why isn't
20 this agency part of it, why isn't that agency part
21 of it. Would you agree that would be something
22 for the future to have some kind of a goal and
23 timetable for?

24 MR. COSGRAVE: There's three key
25 tenants to the PlanIT. Accountability,

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accessibility and transparency so--

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Which you mentioned.

MR. COSGRAVE: --there's no question that we're supporting your desire for more transparency here. I think it's just as Councilman Koppell pointed out, I think it's in some of the wording specifics of how this is worded and how it gets rolled out.

The way I read the proposed bill is that you go through this formal plan every year. And frankly, the way we did this involving 120 different interviews and a process that frankly took about six months.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I understand.

MR. COSGRAVE: That's just too much of a burden to do that every year so if the notion's more around the lines of a strategic plan, let's say for each four year period and then an annual update or something, that would make more sense.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I think we would be more than eager to work on that wording. I think that's what we're looking for particular

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2 because with technology it changes so quickly that
3 it doesn't make sense to do the kind of what you
4 did initially but to build on that, that would be
5 my sense.

6 I just want to know a little bit
7 more about the budget issues. Obviously when
8 agencies are collaborating even on something like
9 data warehousing, databases and so on, is that
10 something that you think does have any cost
11 savings to it? Obviously sometimes there's a
12 hardware, software, retraining, retraining,
13 retraining issues.

14 I have a lot of friends in the
15 agencies and this is a concern of theirs; people
16 who are just working daily trying to make sure
17 that the databases are platforming, collaborating,
18 et cetera. It's a challenge.

19 MR. COSGRAVE: Absolutely. Because
20 most of the technology in the city grew up in a
21 fairly what I called siloed manner...

22 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Correct.

23 MR. COSGRAVE: ...where they
24 essentially built their own. You've got a lot of
25 different technologies out there today and so

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2 trying to interface those technologies is a
3 challenge. The thrust of a lot of our plan has
4 been around customer service, the notion that
5 constituents shouldn't need to know what agency to
6 get data processed or whatever but essentially
7 deal with the city as an entity.

8 That requires us to share data a
9 lot across different agencies so what we create is
10 a component called data share that we built first
11 with the criminal justice agencies to allow us to
12 do e-arraignments and things of that sort where
13 data that would reside in the Police Department
14 could be easily submitted in to the courts and in
15 to the DAs and et cetera.

16 That same technology is at the
17 heart of all these implementations, whether it be
18 health and human services where we're trying to
19 share data better among the different health and
20 human services agencies or business express where
21 we're trying to change the whole process of how
22 people get permits in this city.

23 Rather than trying to go to 20
24 different agencies for 20 different permits, there
25 will be one uniform process. All that requires

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2 underlying technology to do data sharing. We've
3 created that one set of technology with criminal
4 justice and we're employing that all across.

5 So this should be savings here in
6 the sense that we won't have to buy that kind of
7 technology each time; we can use that base
8 technology and then we only have to maintain that
9 solution once. Yes, that's a good example of
10 where we definitely will be saving money.

11 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: And when it's
12 all said and done, do you think that we're savings
13 in the thousands, the millions, the hundreds--
14 obviously probably not hundreds of millions. But
15 is it hard to make that kind of guesstimate? When
16 you are submitting working with a portfolio of
17 managers headed up by you and OMB, are there
18 timetables for some of these savings, perhaps?
19 Because I guess we're all looking for some magic
20 bullet, which doesn't exist, for the upcoming
21 budget. I would assume--

22 MR. COSGRAVE: [interposing] One
23 specific area that I'm working with Mark Pagim
24 right now is looking at technology. We have too
25 many data centers in the city.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: You do,
there's no question.

MR. COSGRAVE: So how we can
consolidate the data centers and reduce the number
of data centers. We'll have a huge savings in
terms of both the amount of equipment we need, the
amount of floor space we need, the amount of
energy we consume, et cetera. So that's one of
those strategic initiatives. Probably will be one
of the anchor projects that you see in terms of
the next budget submission to make a significant
savings.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: And obviously
working with PlaNYC, there's energy management
issues. How would technology fit into that kind
of discussion as part of the 127 PlaNYC but it's
still a challenge?

MR. COSGRAVE: So there's this
project. It's a number one IT foundational
project for data center rationalization and
graining. The objective of that project is to
identify all these technology assets that we have
throughout the city and figure out a better way of
consolidating them. We've done the identification

2 phase and now we're working on the plans around
3 how we would consolidate them.

4 In addition to that, we're looking
5 at not only the cost of running these data centers
6 but the energy consumption of the data centers.
7 So we're driving our consolidation from both a
8 perspective of reducing energy as well as reducing
9 the cost of operating.

10 This is very interesting actually.
11 What's happening with today's technology is that
12 historically the constraint always was the size of
13 your data centers and stuff. The constraint now
14 is a matter of energy you're pumping into these
15 centers because the server technologies that exist
16 today run much hotter.

17 They do a lot more in a smaller
18 area but they run much hotter and consume a lot
19 more electricity, both in terms of the electricity
20 to run the machines but to cool them too. So
21 we're doing a lot in terms of looking at how we
22 can be a lot more efficient with both those
23 functions.

24 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: And in terms
25 of someone--I'm very familiar with the criminal

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2 justice effort and the effort regarding human
3 services. Are there other collaborations? I'm
4 thinking about Buildings Department, HPD, some of
5 the harder core services. Are there other kinds
6 of collaborations or are they already part of what
7 you're doing in terms of maybe public safety. I
8 don't know...

9 MR. COSGRAVE: There is an effort
10 underway that is focused right now primarily
11 between the Buildings Department and Fire
12 Department on building inspections and doing a
13 better job of sharing information around building
14 inspections.

15 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: How's that
16 going in terms of...? This is an example, if I
17 may suggest, every time for the last seven years
18 each has come to testify at budget hearings, we do
19 ask about this. I know it has improved; it's
20 always been a challenge. But this would be an
21 example for the future thinking about how you
22 could update a plan that would talk about how
23 they're progressing.

24 MR. COSGRAVE: It is progressing
25 but to be successful, they have sort of defined it

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2 as a relatively small problem. The problem is
3 very big so they're focused primarily on those
4 buildings with asbestos abatement problems so they
5 are focusing primarily on that.

6 They're also focused, just between
7 those two issues but as you mentioned in y our
8 question, there's HPD and other entities as well.

9 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Health
10 Department.

11 MR. COSGRAVE: Health Department,
12 et cetera that could be involved in that. So
13 we're starting small but the eventual plan will be
14 to broaden that to all forms of buildings issues
15 not just the asbestos abatement problem but also
16 expanding it to other agencies as well.

17 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. So the
18 bigger efforts are criminal justice and human
19 services. Those are the two that are fairly well
20 under way in terms of collaboration.

21 MR. COSGRAVE: The third very large
22 one--

23 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [interposing]
24 Public safety.

25 MR. COSGRAVE: Of course there is

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2 public safety for emergency communications. If
3 you give me an opportunity, I'll tell you where
4 the status is on that because we're very happy
5 with that.

6 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Sure.

7 MR. COSGRAVE: All testing for the
8 technology for the PSAC [phonetic] one is going to
9 complete by the end of this year. And then
10 starting in February we'll actually be moving the
11 agencies into the center. That's for the PSAC one
12 on the EDP. PSAC two, we're on target assuming
13 the ULURP process goes as planned to break ground
14 by next fall. So we're on schedule with both PSAC
15 one and PSAC two right now.

16 So that's also a very major
17 collaboration effort. We have meetings many times
18 a week between police and fire on that whole
19 effort, and EDC and many other agencies that are
20 involved.

21 The other major area is the
22 business express with SBS driving it. We're also
23 are working very actively with consumer affairs,
24 health department and a number of other agencies
25 that are involved in the whole permitting process

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2 around opening up new businesses.

3 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. The
4 other issue of course is just personnel with
5 300,000 city employees. Is that something that--
6 there's a lot of collaboration, there's a lot of
7 agencies. Is that something that you feel is both
8 saving money and could perhaps for the future have
9 an updated version on an annual basis? That is
10 something that I think around the country that
11 there's a lot of discussion about how to improve.
12 I think that New York has been a leader but just
13 payroll.

14 Payroll, even something simple that
15 we recently tried to do in the City Council was to
16 have the pay stubs come electronically as opposed
17 to paper. To me, everything that could both be
18 customer friendly, in this case employees, and at
19 the same time save money and environmentally
20 friendly would make sense.

21 So I guess my question is you got a
22 lot of different aspects how to improve employee
23 satisfaction and at the same time money saved and
24 at the same time being environmentally friendly.
25 There are probably other ideas along those lines.

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2 MR. COSGRAVE: Of the 23
3 initiatives, 2 of them are addressing the issue
4 you're talking about. The one that is making the
5 most headway in terms of the exact problems you
6 raised is the NYCaps projects. NYCaps has now
7 been implemented. Every employee in the city is
8 now with NYCaps except for the teachers and the
9 teachers will be converted next year.

10 That system can be used to do full
11 electronic pay statements, if that's what is
12 decided. NYCaps is the personnel, it does not
13 actually do the payroll but it interfaces with the
14 payroll system. The payroll system is old and the
15 payroll system probably has some issues in terms
16 of how it would be modified. But we can do most
17 of those things you talked about through the
18 NYCaps system, which is state of the art
19 technology.

20 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I think the
21 other question I have which is in terms of
22 savings, which I know comes up often in the plan
23 that is submitted, PlaNYC. But fleets and real
24 estate and all the things that I think DCAS deals
25 with, is that something also that perhaps there is

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2 any kind of savings in the future? I'm sure it's
3 been looked at very carefully.

4 MR. COSGRAVE: The automated
5 vehicle locator technology, which just about every
6 agency is implementing in some form today through
7 the NYCwin or through other means, has the
8 definite potential to help DNCs be much more
9 efficient in their fleet. There's no question
10 about that.

11 We've got some very positive
12 results happening that I've already mentioned with
13 the Fire Department. But the Sanitation is using
14 it now very effectively and police actually has
15 moved all their tow trucks on to it now. So in
16 effect, we're starting to be across all the
17 agencies with large fleet that are using that
18 technology to do a much better job in managing;
19 both from the perspective of just keeping track of
20 the vehicles as well as trying to do better route
21 planning so you use less fuel, et cetera.

22 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: All right. So
23 that's something that, again, would be updated in
24 a plan if there was one in the future, that would
25 say we have six agencies online now. The unions

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2 are happy or not happy with it, which is always a
3 concern because we want to make sure that there
4 are safeguards for individuals so that there's no-
5 -

6 Something that makes sense for
7 human beings as well as performance and
8 transparency. And then of course, other agencies
9 could come online because you have a lot of
10 fleets, that are not just the ones that you
11 mentioned, in the City of New York. Right? Okay.

12 MR. COSGRAVE: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I think my
14 final question is in terms of all of your
15 initiatives, do you think that given some wording
16 that it would be appropriate that there could be a
17 level of periodic review that would be
18 appropriate?

19 I think you said if in the future
20 it was the kind of review that made sense. Do you
21 think into the future, do you think a Technology
22 Steering Committee could be codified? Is that
23 something that could be part of some discussion in
24 any future administration? Obviously you're doing
25 it now.

2 MR. COSGRAVE: The chairman of the
3 Technology Steering Committee, as I mentioned
4 earlier, is probably-- let me take it back and
5 talk with him about whether he would want to do
6 that annual update. Go back and modify the
7 executive order for that but that would be the
8 place to do it, through the Technology Steering
9 Committee.

10 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: All right. I
11 want to thank you very much, Commissioner. I
12 think we're looking forward to working with you
13 on, not only the wording of a future bill but
14 certainly in terms of budget savings, if at all
15 possible. Because we're all very nervous about
16 people's lives and safety net and if technology
17 could help not for technology's sake but for the
18 purpose of saving funding so that others can have
19 the kind of safety net they need.

20 I think we will all feel great
21 about the work that we're doing. Thank you very
22 much and I always appreciate your testimony.

23 MR. COSGRAVE: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I don't think
25 anyone else has signed up to testify. If so,

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2 please let the Sergeant at Arms know. No? Okay.

3 I want to thank in addition to Jeff Baker, Lionel
4 Falshaw, who is with the Finance Division of the
5 City Council and thank you all for joining us. We
6 will see you on September 29th for another hearing
7 regarding something called white spaces.

8 I was recently in Washington
9 yesterday, members in Congress don't know what I'm
10 talking about. Thank you very much. [Bangs
11 gavel]

12 I'm reopening the hearing on
13 September 19, 2008 discuss Intro No. 54 and
14 Commissioner Cosgrave testifying. We have two
15 individuals who would like to sign in.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LETITIA JAMES:
17 Council Member James.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BILL DE BLASIO:
19 Council Member De Blasio.

20 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you.
21 This hearing is now closed.

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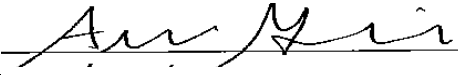
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature _____  _____

Date September 30, 2008