

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES  
Of the  
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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B E F O R E: Chris Banks  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Alexa Avilés  
Erik D. Botcher  
Justin L. Brannan  
Darlene Mealy  
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## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Emanuel Martinez

Jocelyn Strauber  
Department of Investigations Commissioner

Shin Kim  
Senior Vice President of Supply Management and  
Procurement at NYCHA

Lauren Gray  
Senior Vice President for Quality Assurance,  
Safety and Technical Programs at NYCHA

Joseph Terranova  
Senior Director of Office of Fire Safety

Brian Honan  
Vice President of Intergovernmental Relations at  
NYCHA

Christopher Leon Johnson

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Renee Keitt  
Elliott-Chelsea Houses

Sadie



[missing intro audio]

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: --of why it took

NYCHA so long to hold Allied Universal, the contractor, accountable for such blatant impropriety. DOI found that NYCHA and Allied Universal failed to properly implement oversight measures, allowing a pattern of infractions to continue unabated. These failures range from improper documentation of required field inspections, failure to notify those in charge when guards were found to be noncompliant and failure to implement quality control plans to verify guard performance. As such, this hearing is a valuable opportunity to explore what went wrong, what is being done to make up for these mistakes, and how NYCHA's positioned to ensure this kind of situation never happens again. This is unacceptable, NYCHA. NYCHA residents were endangered due to abandonment of responsibilities, and further for an entity marred [sic] in so many budgetary problem, it is unbelievable that NYCHA with little oversight continually paid contractors who were failing to deliver their contractual obligations. I want today's hearing to not only identify where the system failed, but to establish concrete measures to hold

1  
2 contractors accountable for the services they are  
3 paid to provide. This DOI report shows that NYCHA  
4 needs to have stronger penalties for non-compliance  
5 and regular verification that paid services are being  
6 delivered and transparent reporting mechanisms to  
7 prevent such mismanagement from occurring again. Most  
8 importantly, these improvements must be accompanied  
9 by cultural shift towards proactive oversight rather  
10 than reactive damage control. Public housing  
11 residents deserve to know when NYCHA spends money  
12 they are actually receiving the services they were  
13 promised. I would like to thank my staff, Michael  
14 Lambert [sp?], Cal [sp?], along with Sarah, and also  
15 along with the Public Housing Committee staff, Jose,  
16 Charles, Jack, Reese [sp?], Sierra for all the work  
17 they put into this hearing. Keeping in tradition  
18 with this committee before the hearing-- before we  
19 begin testimony, we get testimony from Department of  
20 Investigations at NYCHA, we will first hear from a  
21 panel of NYCHA resident, and we will start with Mr.  
22 [inaudible]. We were joined by Councilman Botcher.  
23 We will now hear testimony from Emanuel Martinez  
24 [sp?].

25 EMANUEL MARTINEZ: Good morning.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Good morning.

EMANUEL MARTINEZ: Good morning and thank you for this opportunity and for putting focus on this and for inviting me. I have a testimony here I would like to provide. Living in public housing can feel like living in the embassy of a foreign country, but instead of diplomatic immunity, we are centered in political bureaucratic crosshairs. We are hunted, not helped, for the billions our presence brings into this system. That's not a punchline. It's policy and it's practice. This report by the Department of Investigations shows what we already know because we live it. The guards left. The doors fail. The cameras didn't work. Fires happen, and NYCHA said nothing, did nothing. But while it's easy and even convenient to beat up on NYCHA, let's not ignore the other failure happening right here. This report never mentions our rights, not once. It talks about contracts. It talks about staffing, but it says nothing about how residents were excluded from the process, from oversight, from partnership even though federal law requires it. Under 24CFR964135 we are supposed to be included in operations. Under 105, we're supposed to help shape policy. Under 11, we

1  
2 are supposed to be equal partners in protecting the  
3 homes we live in, but NYCHA treats those rights like  
4 fine print, and DOI didn't even read them, not in the  
5 findings, not even in the recommendations. This is a  
6 failure, not just of NYCHA, but of the DOI and the  
7 City. Because this isn't the first time resident's  
8 rights were ignored. Last year, 70 people were  
9 arrested in a raid tied to NYCHA micro contracts.  
10 The report said nothing about those, how those events  
11 could have been prevented if resident's economic  
12 rights had been respected, monitored and enforced.  
13 The law says residents should have been involved in  
14 contract oversight and shaping policy and the  
15 reviewing of how money moves, and if we had been,  
16 that raid never would have happened. This isn't just  
17 a failure of security, it's a failure of recognition.  
18 We are not correctional facility inmates, but that's  
19 how NYCHA treats us. The cameras we live under,  
20 20,000 of them aren't used to protect our rights to  
21 enforce housing policies. They're used by the NYPD.  
22 That tells you everything about how NYCHA sees us,  
23 not as neighbors, not as retirees, not as working  
24 families, but as threats, as cases to be managed, as  
25 noise to be contained. The real crisis isn't just

1  
2 that guards left their post, it's that we were never  
3 invited to stand at the post with them. If NYCHA had  
4 honored our federally-mandated right to partnership,  
5 this failure wouldn't have lasted five years, it  
6 would have ended in five minutes. So, yes, this  
7 report is a start, but it doesn't name our rights. If  
8 it doesn't center resident participation, if it  
9 doesn't examine how government intentionally excludes  
10 the people it's required to serve, then it's just  
11 paperwork with a headline. We are not guests in this  
12 system. We are the backbones of it, and we will not  
13 sit quietly while you audit the contracts, ignore the  
14 people. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Just a couple of  
16 questions, and thank you for your advocacy, Mr.  
17 Martinez. Pertaining to community engagement, what  
18 level of community engagement are you familiar with  
19 when it comes to the security guards or the fire  
20 guards, particularly as a leader of public housing?

21 EMANUEL MARTINEZ: When it comes to  
22 community engagement in that regard, there's zero.  
23 So, you'll have resident council officers who  
24 represent the community who may say something to the  
25 local management. That report then gets muffled by

1  
2 department compartmentalization, because one  
3 department has to speak to another department, has to  
4 speak to another, and it get lost in the jungle. And  
5 so there is no. It's obstructed right from the  
6 start.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: If you were to give a  
8 recommendation-- we got recommendations from DOI. If  
9 you were to give a recommendation as a NYCHA leader  
10 and a resident, what recommendation would you give?

11 EMANUEL MARTINEZ: First, they have to  
12 make sure that every step of the process as the law  
13 requires that we are included. From contracting, who  
14 is being contracted with and the expectations of  
15 those contracts and what is happening. They should  
16 also provide summaries of what's going on to us at  
17 least on a quarterly basis of what has been  
18 responded. And lastly, they need to start using  
19 their resources such as the 20,000 cameras to enforce  
20 housing policy and to put stronger priorities on the  
21 compliance of residents' rights.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When it comes to  
23 local hiring as well, do you think that that's  
24 something that they should engage the residents on? I  
25 mean, I know that's a Section 3 requirement, and

1  
2 would it make a difference if local residents were  
3 also in these positions?

4           EMANUEL MARTINEZ: It would make a huge  
5 difference because you have local residents who care  
6 about their communities. Currently, NYCHA has a  
7 policy in which they don't allow their own NYCHA  
8 employees who live in NYCHA working the developments  
9 they're at, and we think that that's a huge failure.  
10 That signifies a gross mistrust of the residents that  
11 they're supposed to serve and who works for them  
12 instead of them upholding compliance and securing  
13 that people doing their jobs.

14           CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Would you agree--  
15 last year, we had a bitter fight to make sure that we  
16 preserved and protect the \$6.8 million for this  
17 particular security program and to really-- to pay  
18 these contracts or this contract. Would you agree  
19 that this is a slap in the face to the residents of  
20 public housing who came out, especially the seniors  
21 who came out-- I'll call them the younger adults who  
22 came out and said we need the security apparatus?  
23 This is a lifeline for us. Would you agree that this  
24 is a slap in the face to all of those folks who need  
25

1  
2 this particular service and thought that we were  
3 doing the right thing?

4           EMANUEL MARTINEZ: Yes, but more than  
5 that, it signifies the conditioning that has happened  
6 in our communities, right? So our wiser population,  
7 our elderly who we look up to who are constantly used  
8 by NYCHA when it comes to the need for funding, but  
9 then excluded when it comes to the execution of their  
10 safety, security, an actual-- what is supposed to be  
11 happening through it. It is a symbol that this  
12 decade's long tradition, a habitual action that this  
13 agency as well as the City on a larger scale has  
14 taken for this particular community. it's okay for  
15 us to fight for the funds, but it's not-- it's  
16 overlooked when it's time to make sure that those  
17 funds are used correctly.

18           CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And this is my last  
19 question, and this is-- goes back to community  
20 engagement. Were you ever aware of any situation  
21 where NYCHA asked for feedback on contractor's work?

22           EMANUEL MARTINEZ: Never. Actually, I  
23 have demanded that that very same issue to which they  
24 ignored did not.

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2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your  
3 testimony.

4 EMANUEL MARTINEZ: Thank you, sir.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We will now have  
6 Commissioner Jocelyn Strauber. Thank you. You may  
7 swear her in.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hi, good morning. If  
9 you could just raise your right hand, please? And do  
10 you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and  
11 nothing but the truth before this committee and to  
12 respond honestly to all Council Member questions?

13 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I do.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thanks. You may  
15 proceed when you're ready.

16 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Is this  
17 microphone on? Can you hear me? Okay. Good  
18 morning. Before I begin my prepared testimony, I  
19 just wanted to acknowledge what we just heard from  
20 Mr. Martinez which raises questions that as Mr.  
21 Martinez rightly notes are not the subject of this  
22 report and were not the subject of this  
23 investigation. I'm obviously not prepared to speak  
24 today on the nature of resident involvement in  
25 contracting and other issues, but we've heard you

1  
2 loud and clear, and you know, I'm going to take a  
3 look at the issues that you raised and I'm happy to  
4 have further conversation with you after this if  
5 you'd like to speak to me about concerns that you  
6 have. Alright. Good morning. My name is Jocelyn  
7 Strauber. I'm the Commissioner of the Department of  
8 Investigation. Thank you, Chair Banks and other  
9 members of the Committee on Public Housing, for the  
10 opportunity to speak to you today about our recent  
11 investigation and report on the oversight of security  
12 guards at New York City Housing Authority Senior  
13 Buildings and its compliance with fire guard  
14 requirements at Senior Buildings and other NYCHA  
15 developments. DOI's investigation identified  
16 numerous failures in the security and fire guard  
17 services provided by FJC Security, doing business as  
18 Allied Universal Security Services, which I'll refer  
19 to today as Allied Universal or Allied, which had a  
20 \$155 million, five-year contract with NYCHA to  
21 provide these services. DOI determined that both  
22 NYCHA and Allied failed to consistently provide  
23 required and sufficient oversight of the Allied  
24 guards and thus failed to ensure that Allied  
25 fulfilled its obligations to NYCHA under the

1 contract. The absence of security guards at  
2 buildings dedicated to seniors jeopardized the safety  
3 of some of NYCHA's most vulnerable residents, and the  
4 absence of fire guards not only posed a safety risk  
5 to residents but also violated the New York City Fire  
6 Code. Furthermore, as a result of NYCHA's lack of  
7 oversight of Allied, NYCHA paid Allied for services  
8 that it did not provide and missed opportunities to  
9 pursue contractual damages to which NYCHA was  
10 entitled based on Allied's non-performance. Our  
11 investigation was prompted by March 2022 media  
12 reports the front door of NYCHA's Corsi Houses in  
13 East Harlem did not lock, allowing trespassers to  
14 enter. DOI initially focused on the functionality of  
15 the lobby doors at Corsi Houses and the quality of  
16 security guard services provided by Allied Universal  
17 at that location. In our first inspection,  
18 investigators observed that the scheduled security  
19 guard was absent and a non-resident trespasser was in  
20 the lobby of Corsi Houses, prompting a broader  
21 investigation of the security guards and  
22 infrastructure at NYCHA's Senior Buildings that  
23 continued through April 2023. DOI inspected 39  
24 Senior Buildings and reviewed CCTV footage of 55  
25

1 security guard shifts, reviewing a total of 94  
2 individual security guard shifts as part of its  
3 investigation. We concluded that security guards  
4 frequently abandoned their posts or failed to show up  
5 for work and falsified their paper timesheets to  
6 reflect a full shift. We found that approximately 68  
7 percent of the security guards that we surveilled  
8 through inspections and review of CCRV footage were  
9 absent for all or part of their required shift. Of  
10 the 94 shifts we reviewed, 54 guards abandoned their  
11 post for an average of approximately two hours; five  
12 were no-shows for their entire eight-hour shift; and  
13 five committed other infractions, such as remaining  
14 in an unauthorized location away from their required  
15 posts, sleeping, or consuming alcohol during shifts.  
16 Some of those absent guards also falsified their  
17 timesheets. We also found that approximately 32  
18 percent of the 28 lobby doors that we inspected were  
19 not secure, and 70 percent of the 63 senior buildings  
20 that we looked at had CCTV cameras that were  
21 inoperable or could not be viewed remotely. In the  
22 spring and summer of 2023, DOI also investigated the  
23 fire guard services provided by Allied Universal at  
24 NYCHA buildings where, due to deficient safety  
25

1 features, the NYC Fire Code requires that a fire  
2 guard be present 24/7. DOI inspected 60 Fire Watch  
3 Sites in June and July of 2023 and found that only 30  
4 percent of the fire guards scheduled to be present  
5 were at their assigned posts for the duration of our  
6 inspection, which lasted one to two hours. Some fire  
7 guards also falsified their time sheets to indicate  
8 that they had worked a full shift. DOI made NYCHA  
9 aware of its findings while conducting the  
10 investigation, and the fire guards continued to  
11 abandon their posts thereafter, in violation of  
12 Allied's contract with NYCHA. Furthermore, DOI found  
13 that scheduled fire guards were absent during three  
14 fires that occurred in three different developments,  
15 in the Ingersoll Houses, Douglass Houses and Taft  
16 Houses, two of which resulted in minor injuries.  
17 These fires occurred in February, March and May of  
18 2023. DOI attributed these lapses in security and  
19 fire guard services, in part, to NYCHA and Allied  
20 Universal's failure to consistently exercise required  
21 oversight of the security and fire guards that could  
22 have prevented or mitigated the guards' absences and  
23 other noncompliance. The contract, as well as  
24 NYCHA's Standard Operating Procedure manual, required  
25

1  
2 NYCHA to actively oversee security and fire guards.  
3 At NYCHA, oversight was the responsibility of the  
4 Office of Safety and Security, OSS, a Department that  
5 did not consistently conduct field inspections of the  
6 security and fire guards and did not document the  
7 inspections that it did conduct for multiple  
8 consecutive years of the contract term. As a result  
9 of these failures, NYCHA and Allied did not identify  
10 and promptly address the guards' absences and other  
11 noncompliance. Allied Universal billed and NYCHA  
12 paid for services which NYCHA did not in fact  
13 receive. While Allied Universal is no longer  
14 providing services to NYCHA, NYCHA has committed to  
15 provide security guards at senior buildings and  
16 continues to be legally required to provide fire  
17 guards wherever necessary. Therefore DOI made 12  
18 recommendations in its report to improve NYCHA's  
19 oversight of vendors providing these services. Those  
20 recommendations include: NYCHA contracts for security  
21 and fire guard services should include a requirement  
22 that a vendor provide a smartphone application for  
23 the guards that incorporates geofencing technology  
24 and electronic timekeeping that alerts managerial  
25 staff when guards leave the boundary of their

1 assigned post during their shift. NYCHA contracts  
2 for security and fire guard services should include a  
3 definition of post abandonment that specifies the  
4 minimum number of minutes that constitutes post  
5 abandonment. NYCHA should provide security guards  
6 with a designated security desk on the main floor of  
7 the building to serve as a central location for the  
8 guards. NYCHA should also post signage in the lobby  
9 with information about contacting NYCHA for  
10 emergencies or with complaints or inquiries. NYCHA  
11 should require OSS to conduct and document a minimum  
12 number of unannounced inspections each month. NYCHA  
13 should revise the Security Guard Field Inspection  
14 Report to require that inspections include a check  
15 that the lobby doors are functioning properly, to  
16 specify that deficiencies related to security  
17 infrastructure be immediately reported, and to  
18 provide an electronic method of submitting that form.  
19 NYCHA should establish a process for receipt and  
20 verification of invoices, certified payroll,  
21 electronic timekeeping, and geofencing records prior  
22 to payment. NYCHA should require the vendor to  
23 provide bi-weekly invoices to permit timely CCTV  
24 footage review and NYCHA should retain the relevant  
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1  
2 footage until the invoice has been approved. NYCHA  
3 accepted eight of the 12 recommendations and accepted  
4 the remaining four in part. Thank you, and I'm happy  
5 to take any questions that you have.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you,  
7 Commissioner, and thank you for the report and  
8 keeping the public informed as of these findings.  
9 First of all, let me start with a-- and I thank God  
10 that Allied is no longer the contractor. Were you--  
11 are you able to share at what point during the  
12 investigation NYCHA was first alerted of the issues  
13 with Allied Universal?

14 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, certainly  
15 with respect to the fire guards, as I mentioned,  
16 NYCHA was alerted in the course of the investigation.  
17 So that would have been some time in June or July of  
18 2023, and I believe it's in the report. I'm going to  
19 try to find you the exact date, but we also made  
20 NYCHA aware of the issues with the security guards,  
21 you know, well before the issuance of this report.  
22 I'll find the exact-- actually, we informed-- we  
23 shared the results of the security guards inquiry  
24 with NYCHA in June of 2023. We completed that  
25 portion of the inquiry of April of 2023. So, NYCHA

1  
2 was timely informed which is something that we will  
3 always try to do in a public safety related  
4 investigation like this one.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. How did  
6 NYCHA actions and responsiveness change before and  
7 after they were alerted during this investigation?

8 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, just to be  
9 clear, our investigation is really focused on the  
10 time periods that I mentioned.

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

12 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: So I'm not in a  
13 position to give sort of details that goes beyond the  
14 report--

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: that addresses  
17 how NYCHA responded to the information that we  
18 provided then. I can say, and the report, you know,  
19 goes into some detail about the approach that NYCHA  
20 took to the inspections and to documenting the  
21 inspections prior to and during a period of our  
22 investigation, but in terms of what NYCHA has done  
23 differently since then, I'm not able to go beyond  
24 what's in the report. I know that the recommendations  
25 have been accepted. I don't think at this point

1  
2 they've all been implemented, but NYCHA can probalby  
3 give you more, more specific detail on that.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Well then, can  
5 you answer this then? What sparked the need for this  
6 investigation, and what key events led to the DOI to  
7 investigate?

8 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Yeah. So there  
9 were-- in March, I believe, of 2022, media reports  
10 that I think had video from the lobby of the Corsi  
11 Houses that show, you know, the broken lobby doors, a  
12 trespasser, and that was really what caused us to  
13 start this investigation. It was then our own  
14 findings when we did, you know, on-the-scene  
15 inspections that led us to broaden the investigation  
16 beyond where, you know, where it started.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What is the earliest  
18 connection that DOI found between NYCHA and Allied  
19 Universal?

20 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: The earliest  
21 connection in terms of the contract period?

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Yes.

23 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I believe the  
24 contract with Allied goes back to 2019. Again, we  
25 can certainly get you the specifics on that, but it--

1  
2 it goes back well beyond the period that we looked at  
3 and, you know, NYCHA for a number of years did not  
4 conduct at least in terms of a documentation that we  
5 saw. Yeah, it goes back to 2019, the commencement of  
6 the contract. And the inspections, we have a chart  
7 in the court that goes through this-- the  
8 inspections, the field inspections to ensure that the  
9 security and fire guards were present on the scene.  
10 NYCHA did not begin those inspections or at least did  
11 not begin to document them in a way establishes that  
12 they took place until September of 2021.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What are the main  
14 takeaways from the investigation regarding how both  
15 parties, NYCHA and Allied, are failing-- failed on  
16 conducting oversight, the proper oversight?

17 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, you know,  
18 as we mentioned, this was-- obviously Allied had its  
19 own responsibilities to do oversight of its guards  
20 which we found that they were not fulfilling. NYCHA  
21 also had its own responsibilities, both to oversee  
22 the guards itself in terms of conducting its own  
23 inspections and to ensure that Allied was conducting  
24 the inspections it was required to conduct pursuant  
25 to the contract. And for a number of years-- and the

1 chart on page 19 of the report is a useful reference  
2 point because it shows there were almost no  
3 inspections in 2021, more inspections-- probably not  
4 enough in 2022, and then the number goes up  
5 significant in 2023. So for a number of years, NYCHA  
6 was not fulfilling its responsibilities. This was the  
7 Office of Security Services that was required to  
8 conduct these inspections, but it also through our  
9 investigation-- not only was OSS not performing, but  
10 there did not appear to be any supervisor or more--  
11 you know, supervisor of OSS within NYCHA who  
12 identified these issues until, you know, far later in  
13 the contract term, so.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The report reference  
16 to-- they referenced t the contract as failed. What  
17 would a successful partnership between NYCHA and the  
18 security guard/fire safety guard program look like?

19 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, I think  
20 ultimately in a public safety context, fire safety  
21 security, you know, success is-- you don't-- there's  
22 no partial success. Like, you've got to have fire  
23 guards on the scene 24/7. You've got to have the  
24 security guards that you hire present for the period  
25 that you hired them. I think what our recommendations

1 do here is to try to use it-- you know, use the  
2 technology that's now available, you know,  
3 geofencing, for example. There is the ability to  
4 know based on an app that can be put on a phone that  
5 a guard can be in possession of. There is the  
6 ability, you know, to actually know whether someone  
7 is where they're supposed to be when they're supposed  
8 to be there. And so our recommendation, certainly we  
9 want, you know, physical things like a podium, a desk  
10 where the security guards can actually sit and be  
11 present. That wasn't true in every lobby where they  
12 were supposed to be. We want there to be clear  
13 signage. So when residents see that there are  
14 issues, there's a number for them to call to report  
15 concerns, but we also think you should make-- you  
16 should take advantage of the technology that we now  
17 have so that you don't have to rely on hand-written  
18 time sheets and in-person inspections. And even  
19 review of CCTV footage which obviously those TVs  
20 should be operable. They should be remotely viewable.  
21 That will also help. But I think if you use some of  
22 the technology that we've recommended and that NYCHA  
23 has agreed to use with any contract going forward,  
24 you will have a more fool-proof way to ensure that  
25

1  
2 people who you hire are where they're supposed to be,  
3 that you're getting what you paid for, and also that  
4 if they're not there that you will know, right?

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

6 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Because there can  
7 be alerts that are pinged to managers when someone  
8 goes outside of the geofencing zone they're supposed  
9 to be in for the period of their shift, for example.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, of the 12  
11 recommendations in your report, which would you say  
12 are priority items for NYCHA to avoid this kind of  
13 situation in the future?

14 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, I would say  
15 they're all priorities. We really do try to be  
16 judicious and not make recommendations that we don't  
17 think are important, but I think the geofencing  
18 technology that we just mentioned is going to be, you  
19 know, a very significant step forward in reducing the  
20 risk of human error and reducing the risk that  
21 someone can falsify a time sheet which is difficult  
22 to, you know, to identify in real-time if you don't  
23 have that kind of technology.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, do you think we  
25 can achieve a combination of the two?

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2                   COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I think we can.

3                   CHAIRPERSON BANKS: NYCHA only partially  
4 accepted for the DOI's 12 recommendations. Primary  
5 declining to implement changes to current contracts.  
6 Does DOI believe that NYCHA's response adequately  
7 addresses the serious oversight issues identified in  
8 the investigation?

9                   COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: So, what I'll say  
10 here is, you know, we receive-- we share our report  
11 when it's complete before issuance with the agencies  
12 so we can get their feedback so we can incorporate  
13 their responses, and we incorporate them as they  
14 provide them. Whether-- you know, one of the things  
15 that NYCHA says with respect to geofencing is that it  
16 would be overly burdensome and require substantive  
17 contract changes that would be too time consuming to  
18 achieve, to try to potentially retroactively change  
19 the terms of current contracts. You know, I'm not--  
20 I'm not in a position at this point without doing  
21 sort of a further deep-dive to assess that.  
22 Certainly, you know, we were looking at the contract  
23 with Allied. We haven't looked at every contract  
24 that these recommendations would be affected by. So,  
25 I think the answer is that these are NYCHA's

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2 responses. We're certainly, you know, very pleased  
3 that they've accepted the majority of the  
4 recommendations. As for the nuances of what they can  
5 and can't do now, I'm really not in a position to  
6 comment on those contracts, because I haven't  
7 reviewed them.

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, do you believe  
9 that NYCHA can maintain adequate oversight if they do  
10 not implement all the changes?

11 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I think it's  
12 harder for the reasons that I've just said, but I  
13 think, you know, providing sufficient resources so  
14 that OSS can do in-person inspections which is what  
15 we did to shed light on these issues will go a long  
16 way if in fact the current contracts are simply not  
17 amenable to change at this point.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: NYCHA cited cost and  
19 time concerns as a reason for not implementing the  
20 geofencing technology in the current contract-- in  
21 the current contracts. Given that millions were  
22 potentially wasted on unperformed services, do you  
23 find this justification convincing?

24 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, again, it's  
25 hard to say because the losses or waste that we found

1  
2 relates to the Allied contract. I think the concerns  
3 about implementation of the recommendations relate to  
4 current contracts, and again, I don't know whether  
5 there's, you know,-- I just don't know the cost of  
6 reforming, revising, renegotiating the current  
7 contracts. So I think we'd need to know more about  
8 that to really fully evaluate that response.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What is DOI's  
10 estimate of money NYCHA lost paying for these  
11 services that were never rendered and how was this  
12 calculated?

13 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Right. It's a  
14 difficult calculation to make, unfortunately because  
15 NYCHA wasn't doing the inspections that would have  
16 identified guards' absence which would have given  
17 rise to both, you know, liquidated damages which  
18 NYCHA was entitled to under the contract or an  
19 affirmative remedy they could have sought, and also  
20 would have obviously enabled them not to pay Allied  
21 for the work that Allied wasn't doing. We know that  
22 all I can actually give you on this therefore is  
23 NYCHA's calculation which was about half a million  
24 dollars of liquidated damages that they calculated  
25 based on the inspections they did do from October

1  
2 2022 to February 2024. My understanding is at least  
3 as of the date of the issuance of the report, NYCHA  
4 had only received about \$88,700 in damages based on  
5 Allied's failure to comply with the contract term,  
6 but I can't actually give you a sort of overall  
7 picture. You know, you could take the findings that  
8 we made and extrapolate them out over the total  
9 number of guards that Allied provided. I haven't done  
10 that math. That would-- if you viewed the work that  
11 we did as a representative sample, that might give  
12 you some rough sense, but that's probably a very, you  
13 know, inaccurate way to do a calculation.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for that.  
15 When it comes to previous investigations to NYCHA's  
16 contractors, based on this most recent investigation  
17 and previous investigations into NYCHA's contractors,  
18 what are your primary takeaways?

19 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, I mean, we-  
20 - you know, there have been sort of two major, you  
21 know, recent investigations that I'm thinking of that  
22 relate to contracting. We had the micro purchase  
23 issue which may be one of the one's you're referring  
24 to. You know, that actually posed different issues,  
25 I think, than this investigation does. I'm sort of

1  
2 reluctant to speak in sweeping terms beyond the work  
3 that we've done. We certainly found in connection  
4 with the micro purchase investigation that resulted,  
5 as you know, in the charges against 70 NYCHA  
6 superintendents, that there were policy improvements  
7 that in fact we had recommended a number of years  
8 before that we thought would have gone a long way to  
9 mitigating the risk of the kind of bribery that the  
10 micro purchase process which although it has many  
11 advantages has a number of down sides. We thought  
12 there were recommendations that we made that in fact  
13 NYCHA has now implemented that would have potentially  
14 prevented some of the misconduct we saw in that case.  
15 Here, this is not an issue that I'm aware that DOI  
16 has addressed before, but I think fundamentally it  
17 was a failure of oversight of the contract, of the  
18 vendor.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Has the DOI noticed  
20 any trends in the quality of service provided by  
21 NYCHA contractors?

22 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: You know, I can't-  
23 - again, I can't really speak to trends in general. I  
24 think we certainly saw here that there was a lack of  
25 oversight, and that lack of oversight may have

1  
2 facilitated and certainly allowed to go unchecked,  
3 you know, a failure to provide service at the level  
4 that was contracted for, and that was legally  
5 required in the case of the fire guards.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, are the issues  
7 you've identified in your investigation of NYCHA  
8 unique to NYCHA or do you see these issues across  
9 agencies?

10 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, I think it's  
11 fair to say, and without suggesting that we've done  
12 investigations of exactly this type across other  
13 agencies, I think it's fair to say that when there is  
14 a lack of oversight, there is always a risk of some  
15 kind of waste, fraud, you know, misconduct, time  
16 sheets being falsified, you know, conduct that is  
17 allowed to go unchecked, right?

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

19 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: You know, kind of  
20 perpetuates itself in that sense, and perhaps, you  
21 know, comes to be accepted or acceptable. so I can  
22 certainly say that I think in any situation where  
23 there's a significant contract, particularly one that  
24 requires or facilitates compliance with the law like  
25 the fire code, when you don't have oversight of it

1  
2 and you don't make sure that it's being enforced,  
3 there's a risk that we'll see just this kind, you  
4 know, of failure to comply.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Before we proceed  
6 with my further questions, we've been joined as well  
7 via Zoom by Council Member Sanchez. A lack of  
8 security guards and fire safety guards at critical  
9 NYCHA developments including senior housing and fire  
10 watch locations is incredibly dangerous for public  
11 housing residents. Is a situation as severe as the  
12 investigation being discussed comparable to  
13 investigations the DOI has conducted in the past?

14 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Again, I think,  
15 you know, this is-- I think that's a difficult  
16 question to answer. I mean, I think this is a  
17 serious issue when you have security guards who are  
18 not present. NYCHA has made the point and they're  
19 right, they don't have a legal obligation to provide  
20 security guards, but they've chosen to do so. As you  
21 noted earlier, funding's been provided for that.  
22 Senior buildings have residents that are vulnerable  
23 in unique ways. So I think it's critically important  
24 that these kinds of services be provided and  
25 certainly obviously in the fire guard context it kind

1  
2 of goes without saying, you only need a fire guard  
3 fire safety features are deficient in certain ways.  
4 So to have that guard not in fact be present is, you  
5 know, a violation of the fire code. It clearly poses  
6 a safety risk. I think these are very serious issues,  
7 and I think, you know-- as we heard, I think  
8 residents are certainly entitled to be protected from  
9 these kinds of risks. And when it's NYCHA's  
10 intention to protect them and they're spending money  
11 to protect them, then the contract should be properly  
12 overseen so that that protection is provided.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. With that, I'm  
14 going to now allow Council Member Bottcher to start--  
15 give his questions. Council Member Bottcher?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you,  
17 Chair. Hi. Last year, 70 NYCHA employees current  
18 and former were charged with bribery and extortion,  
19 and earlier you referred to policy recommendations  
20 that the Department of Investigation had issued to  
21 NYCHA earlier, that they had not rec-- that they had  
22 not implemented, and that you said that you believe  
23 if they had implemented these recommendations, some  
24 of this fraud could have been avoided. Are there  
25 current recommendations that are outstanding that

1  
2 you've issued to NYCHA on any issue that they've yet  
3 to implement, and if so, what are those  
4 recommendations that have yet to be implemented?

5 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, on the 14  
6 recommendations relating to the micro purchase  
7 process, those have all been implemented which is  
8 good news. As to, obviously, the current  
9 recommendations that we've made, you know, have not  
10 yet been implemented but they have been accepted.  
11 You know, I have a lengthy chart here of all the  
12 recommendations that we've made and their status, but  
13 I'm not-- actually, I think this chart is really just  
14 of the current recommendations, because there are  
15 only 12. But even if I had them all here, I'm not in  
16 a position now to speak to you about every  
17 recommendation, you know, going back in time that  
18 we've made to NYCHA and the status. It's certainly  
19 something, you know, we are engaged with all the  
20 agencies that we oversee in an ongoing process of  
21 evaluating the outstanding recommendations, their  
22 implementation status in pushing for those  
23 recommendations to be implemented, as we should be.  
24 But I'm not in a position to speak today about of  
25 sort of the history of the recommendations we've made

1  
2 t NYCHA and their status. I can certainly have a  
3 further conversation with you about that, but I can't  
4 do it now.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Do you meet  
6 regularly--

7 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: [interposing] Just  
8 because it's not all in my head.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Understood. Do  
10 you meet regularly with NYCHA to review all these  
11 recommendations?

12 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: We have regular  
13 meetings with NYCHA on any number of issues including  
14 outstanding recommendations, yes.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: And would you  
16 say that the majority of the recommendations are  
17 being implemented?

18 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I would. I mean,  
19 the majority of our recommendations are accepted and  
20 implemented, accepted [inaudible] actually. I have a  
21 little bit information than I thought I did, although  
22 I still can't go through chapter and verse in terms  
23 of all of our recommendations. But I can tell you  
24 that as of just a couple days ago since 2022 we've  
25 issued 94 recommendations to NYCHA; 85 have been

1  
2 accepted; 56 have been implemented; and three of the  
3 85 we deem as practice is already in place.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: And the 56 of  
5 94 implemented, are these like recent recommendations  
6 or are these years in the making?

7 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: So, the period--  
8 I may not have made this clear. I'm giving you stats  
9 from 2022 to the present.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: So, that's how  
12 far back they go.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Alright, okay.  
14 We're discussing in this hearing the use of paid  
15 security guards with services like Allied Universal.  
16 We get in the campuses that are located in my Council  
17 District, NYCHA Elliott-Chelsea and Fulton Houses,  
18 paid security detail has been hired. I don't know if  
19 it's Allied Universal or another firm, but we get  
20 really mixed results from those security firms  
21 because they, you know, as paid security detail they  
22 lack the authority to do much other than be there and  
23 serve as a deterrent and you know, ostensibly report  
24 things, but they're not a substitute for uniformed PD  
25 presence. I understand that currently it's not

1  
2 allowed-- it's not legally prohibited for like a  
3 RAD/PACT partner, for example, to hire paid NYPD  
4 detail to patrol NYCHA developments. Like, you know,  
5 Duane Reade they hire NYPD off-duty PD, other  
6 commercial enterprises. Are you aware of that  
7 dynamic with paid NYPD detail in NYCHA campuses?

8 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I mean, we haven't  
9 to my knowledge looked into it. As I'm sitting here  
10 I don't have any information on that to provide, no.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: So that--

12 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: [interposing] It  
13 doesn't mean it's not happening or that it's not  
14 being contemplated or--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Sure.

16 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I just-- I can't  
17 speak to it.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Do you have any  
19 assessment of the efficacy of the security detail  
20 like Allied Universal even when they are present?

21 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Right. Well,  
22 certainly if they're not present they're not  
23 effective. But the issue that you're raising which  
24 is obviously a different one which is the limits of  
25 the authority and enforcement capability of a

1 security detail of the type that Allied provides.  
2 That is not something that as far as I know we've  
3 studied, the sort of relative, but I can certainly  
4 see how, you know, they serve primarily as a  
5 deterrent, and my assumption is in a dangerous  
6 situation they would likely require more support to  
7 provide, you know-- and would reach out to law  
8 enforcement if necessary.

9  
10 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Council  
12 Member Bottcher. Now, I just wanted to dive back  
13 into how some of your findings when it came to the  
14 [inaudible] security guards and-- is it common for  
15 NYCHA to rotate the same guards across different  
16 properties?

17 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: In terms of the--

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] On the  
19 same day, in the same day?

20 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: The assignment of  
21 the same guards, I don't know whether they rotate  
22 them or they don't rotate them. I don't know exactly  
23 how they're assigned to particular locations.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: well, in your  
25 investigation was that-- did you look into that?

1  
2           COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: We weren't really  
3 looking into guard rotations at all. We were looking  
4 at whether those who had been contracted to be there  
5 were present.

6           CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

7           COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: But we weren't  
8 looking into rotation issues, specifically.

9           CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When we-- because I  
10 know we're talking about coverage, and if a guard is  
11 rotated and the next guard that's supposed to be on  
12 shift doesn't show up, but is also claiming that they  
13 were there, that possibly could be a scenario where a  
14 guard can falsify time sheets in a situation like  
15 that.

16           COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: sure. I mean,  
17 these were paper time sheets. So, you know, what we  
18 saw was things like, you know, we were there in the  
19 middle of the day. A guard wasn't on-site, and the  
20 time sheet showed that the person had already worked  
21 a full day. So the kind of thing we were seeing I  
22 think could happen under kind of any circumstances,  
23 because they're just paper time sheets with no real  
24 time monitoring. But sure, I suppose if there was a  
25 rotation situation and someone, you know, was leaving

1  
2 and someone else was expected to show up and didn't,  
3 that would create the kind of circumstances that  
4 we're seeing.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I mean, well, would  
6 you recommend-- I mean, outside of the  
7 recommendations that you gave-- that NYCHA observe  
8 these gaps in coverage?

9 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, certainly  
10 there shouldn't be gaps in coverage, right? So the  
11 contract should be structured in such a way that if  
12 there's going to be-- I mean, someone may have to  
13 leave the desk for some very brief period of time,  
14 but other than that, the way-- for whatever period of  
15 coverage NYCHA intends to provide which is 24/7 for  
16 the fire guards and, you know, potentially a  
17 different schedule depending on the building for the  
18 security guards, there should be sufficient coverage  
19 for that period however that's accomplished. Could  
20 be splitting a shift among different guards. It  
21 could be somebody working a longer shift. We--  
22 that's not an issue we really drilled down into,  
23 because we had sort of more fundamental problems  
24 with--

25 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Right.

1  
2                   COMMISSIONER STRAUBER:  the way this was  
3 being handled.

4                   CHAIRPERSON BANKS:  When it comes to  
5 working conditions for the fire guards and the  
6 security guards at NYCHA, any insight into what the  
7 working conditions were?

8                   COMMISSIONER STRAUBER:  You know, one of  
9 the findings-- you know, one of the recommendations  
10 we make about having a central security desk is some  
11 of these buildings didn't have a set location for a  
12 person to sit, which obviously makes it easier for  
13 someone-- first of all, it makes it more difficult  
14 potentially for them because they don't have a  
15 central, you know, location to be at, but also  
16 potentially easier for them to wander off.  Beyond  
17 that, we weren't really looking into the working  
18 conditions for the guards.  We certainly didn't learn  
19 anything that suggested that guards were abandoning  
20 their posts because of their working conditions were  
21 so difficult.  That's not something that we learned  
22 about or heard of in the course of this  
23 investigation.

24                   CHAIRPERSON BANKS:  When we're talking  
25 about the possibility of a guard needed to charge

1  
2 their phone, were there adequate charging stations?  
3 Was there adequate bathroom facilities for them to  
4 use, or any-- talking about bathroom breaks? I mean,  
5 these are possibly gaps.

6 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Right. I mean,  
7 the absences that we were seeing were not, given the  
8 length of time, were not about somebody needed a  
9 bathroom break or someone needed to go charge their  
10 phone. And the definition of post abandonment is  
11 intended to recognize that there's some flexibility  
12 here, right?

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

14 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: If you get up to  
15 use the bathroom, you get up to charge a phone,  
16 etcetera, that isn't-- you know, that isn't the kind  
17 of problem we were observing. So, that's--

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Alright.  
19 Would geofencing technology and electronic time  
20 keeping worked if the guards aren't able to keep  
21 their devices charged?

22 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: No, I think you  
23 would need a working device that is charged in order  
24 for that technology to work.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Based on the  
3 last few DOI investigations into NYCHA's contracting  
4 practices, why has there been a disconnect between  
5 NYCHA's central office and the reality of the  
6 conditions at the individual buildings?

7 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: You know, I don't  
8 know that that's a question that I can answer. We  
9 certainly looked at the fact that there was an office  
10 that wasn't performing and the fact that the  
11 supervisors who oversaw that office did not  
12 appreciate, understand, address that issue certainly  
13 in real time as it was allowed persist. Exactly why  
14 there was a disconnect, that's-- you know, that's not  
15 something I can really-- I can answer.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, has DOI noticed  
17 any improvements in communications between residents,  
18 on-site staff, and the Administration?

19 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Again, we weren't  
20 in this investigation really looking at resident and  
21 staff communication. I can tell you that there was  
22 not sufficient communication between OSS and its  
23 supervisors or sufficient oversight here because of  
24 the length of time that we saw when OSS was not  
25 fulfilling its responsibilities, but-- and whether

1  
2 that's improved since then, I can't say at this  
3 point.

4           CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, I mean, did you  
5 agree that communicating with residents or having a  
6 relationship with residents to some degree when it  
7 comes to securing these properties, would you say  
8 that's important and it should be a part of the  
9 security apparatus?

10           COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, I just-- I  
11 want to be careful here, because as I said, I haven't  
12 studied-- you know, Mr. Martinez has raised a number  
13 of questions about the nature of resident involvement  
14 in contracting in security services. I cannot speak  
15 to the details of that and what those requirements  
16 are, although as I said, I'd like to be better  
17 educated about them and I plan to be. Certainly, I  
18 think, you know, we've proposed the kind of signage  
19 that would facilitate residents being able to say  
20 there's no security guard here. And certainly, I  
21 think communication is important in any community.  
22 So, I think the answer to that is absolutely.  
23 Exactly what kinds of communication should have taken  
24 place here, beyond what we've recommended, I would  
25 want to think more about. But I-- absolutely, I

1 think communication with residents and understanding  
2 their concerns and being aware that they're being  
3 placed in unsafe situations is critically important.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Does DOI conduct  
5 ongoing monitoring when it issues a report to see if  
6 the accepted recommendations are being implemented?  
7 I think you answered that [inaudible].

8 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: So, just to be  
9 precise about this--

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Yeah.

11 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: we have regular  
12 communications with all of the agencies that we  
13 oversee about the status of our recommendations.  
14 Monitoring really to me suggests we're on-site doing  
15 spot checks to ensure that the processes that we've  
16 been told have been implemented are actually  
17 implemented. We do that sometimes depending on our  
18 available resources and the nature of the issue, but  
19 it doesn't mean we are always able to sort of go back  
20 and essentially reinvestigate to see whether or not  
21 all the recommendations are implemented. We do rely  
22 on our communications with the agencies and their  
23 representations about what they're doing to determine  
24 how to allocate our resources.  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So you're solely  
3 relying on a report or direct conversations with  
4 NYCHA that these--

5 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: [interposing] I  
6 mean, it depends. I wouldn't say solely in all  
7 cases, but I also-- I wouldn't want to suggest to you  
8 that we have the resources--

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Right.

10 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: to go around sort  
11 of to physically confirm implementation of everything  
12 that we recommend? We don't.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, have you in the  
14 past done it? And since NYCHA has a pattern of these  
15 types of lapses, has there been any special focus on  
16 the [inaudible] when it comes to--

17 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: [interposing] I  
18 mean, look, I think with NYCHA in particular we have  
19 a very strong open line of communication. For  
20 example, the 14 recommendations that came out of the  
21 micro purchase contracts, we've had regular  
22 communication with NYCHA about the implementation.  
23 There are new policies and organizational structures  
24 in place. So, you know, that's an example where I

1  
2 think we can feel very confident that those  
3 recommendations are being implemented.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Based on NYCHA's  
5 responses, does DOI believe that the underlining  
6 cultural and systemic issues that led to the  
7 oversight failures are being adequately addressed?

8 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I think NYCHA has  
9 committed to address them. I mean, I think they've  
10 accepted our recommendations. We talked about the  
11 recommendations that have only been accepted in part,  
12 but certainly in terms of making sure that OSS is  
13 conducting the oversight it's supposed to. I think  
14 NYCHA's fully accepted that recommendation. My  
15 understanding is that's how they intend to proceed.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Do you think there  
17 are any key factors of the findings that need  
18 attention or the recommendations that need attention?

19 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I mean, I think  
20 as I've said, I'm most interested-- I think they're  
21 all important, but I'm interested in the deployment  
22 of geofencing technology as a way to remove the kind  
23 of human error and/or misconduct element of some of  
24 the issues that we've seen. So I think-- and I'm  
25 aware that those may complex to implement, and there

1  
2 may be some cost associated with that, but I think  
3 it's sort of well worth it given the value of these  
4 contracts. So that's going forward one of the ones I  
5 would try to focus on.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, the geofencing,  
7 how would that look? How would that be implemented?  
8 How would that-- if that was-- became part of the  
9 security apparatus?

10 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, I think the  
11 concept is that there is a mechanism by which guards  
12 I would imagine through their phones are kind of  
13 checking in when they arrive, and then their phone is  
14 sending a signal that confirms they are within a set  
15 location, you know, a perimeter if you will, and if  
16 they go outside that perimeter, there's both a record  
17 of that and also a real-time notification to whomever  
18 is handling the monitoring. And so that is, you  
19 know, probably a pretty, you know, simple non-tech  
20 savvy explanation--

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Right.

22 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: of how it would  
23 work.  
24  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Would geofencing  
3 would it-- do you think it would eliminate boots on  
4 the ground?

5 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I'm not sure  
6 anything eliminates boots on the ground. I mean,  
7 there are usually, you know, as technology evolves  
8 sometimes ways of evading what that technology is  
9 seeking to provide can evolve. So I do-- I don't--  
10 no, I don't think it eliminates it, but I think it  
11 could reduce the amount of boots on the ground you  
12 need to have effective oversight, and I think  
13 together, you know, those are probably the most  
14 powerful way to address, you know, what we saw happen  
15 here.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you,  
17 Commissioner, for your testimony, and we'll now have  
18 NYCHA. You may swear them in.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good morning  
20 everyone. If you could each raise your right hand,  
21 please? Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole  
22 truth and nothing but the truth before this committee  
23 and to respond honestly to Council Member questions?  
24 And if you could each state your name and your title  
25

1 for the record before you begin, that would be great.

2 Thank you. And title.

3  
4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: My name is  
5 Shin Kim. I am the Senior Vice President of Supply  
6 Management and Procurement at NYCHA.

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Good  
8 morning. I'm Lauren Gray. I'm the Senior Vice  
9 President for Quality Assurance, Safety and Technical  
10 Programs at NYCHA.

11 SENIOR DIRECTOR TERRANOVA: And good  
12 morning. Joseph Terranova, Senior Director Office of  
13 Fire Safety.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. I want to  
15 know exactly what are the security standards for  
16 NYCHA developments if any, and are there--

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Chair, I'm  
18 sorry to interrupt you. [inaudible] testimony?

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Do apologize.

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I'm getting into my  
22 questioning, but you may begin your statement. I do  
23 apologize.

24 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I appreciate  
25 that. Thank you so much. Chair Chris Banks, members

1 of the Committee on Public Housing, other  
2 distinguished members of the City Council, NYCHA  
3 residents, community advocates, and members of the  
4 public: good morning. I'm Lauren Gray, NYCHA's Senior  
5 Vice President for Quality Assurance, Safety, and  
6 Technical Programs. I'm pleased to be joined by Shin  
7 Kim, Senior Vice President of Supply Management and  
8 Procurement, and Joseph Terranova, Senior Director  
9 for the Office of Fire Safety. Thank you for the  
10 opportunity to discuss the Authority's security guard  
11 and fire guard programs, and how we are partnering  
12 with the New York City Department of Investigation to  
13 foster safer and more secure NYCHA communities. The  
14 safety and security of NYCHA families is a priority  
15 for us. To that end, NYCHA, in partnership with  
16 tenant association presidents, have proactively  
17 implemented a security guard program at our 52  
18 buildings dedicated for seniors, even though security  
19 guard services are not required at any NYCHA  
20 developments. NYCHA is working with the City on  
21 another capital swap which will fully fund the  
22 program in City Fiscal Year 2026. Fire guard  
23 services are required at buildings where an installed  
24 fire protection system is out of service for repairs.  
25

1  
2 In accordance with the NYC Fire Code, one fire guard  
3 is assigned to patrol up to 50,000 square feet of  
4 space to watch for fires and alert emergency services  
5 and the Fire Department of New York, if necessary.  
6 NYCHA has focused our efforts and financed an  
7 aggressive repair program that has significantly  
8 reduced the reliance on fire guards in buildings -  
9 from over 150 locations in 2023 to just over 30 in  
10 2025. We value our partnership with the NYC  
11 Department of Investigation and appreciate their  
12 efforts to bring to our attention areas at the  
13 Authority that need improvement. NYCHA has already  
14 made significant progress with implementing several  
15 of DOI's recommendations and is accepting  
16 substantially all of the 12 recommendations, as part  
17 of our shared goal to ensure safe and secure  
18 communities for NYCHA residents. For instance, NYCHA  
19 is amending its contracts and invoicing processes for  
20 security and fire guard services to enhance  
21 oversight; providing dedicated security desks or  
22 podiums for security guards in a central location at  
23 each building; posting signage with information for  
24 residents to report emergencies or make security-  
25 related inquiries or complaints; performing

1 unannounced inspections, as well as spot checks of  
2 cameras, to ensure guards are present; and revising  
3 procedures related to the reporting of security  
4 infrastructure issues. While we acknowledge that  
5 there is a lot of work to do, we are grateful for the  
6 support of our partners, including DOI and the City  
7 Council, as we strive to ensure safe and secure  
8 communities at NYCHA and continue to improve  
9 residents' quality of life. Thank you for your  
10 partnership, and we're happy to answer any questions  
11 that you may have.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your  
14 testimony and your opening statement. When it comes  
15 to security standards, what are the security  
16 standards for NYCHA development if any, and are there  
17 a pre-requisite number of CCTV cameras or similar  
18 protocols?

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So,  
20 protocols and standards for security officers at the  
21 NYCHA developments and senior buildings is they're  
22 our first line of defense. They're supposed to be at  
23 their site, manning station, doing patrols at the  
24 lobby to check the doors to make sure that they're  
25 secure, keeping out any intruders to the buildings,

1  
2 obviously working with our TA presidents if they have  
3 any concerns, and of course, you know, if an  
4 emergency does happen at the development they're to  
5 call 911 and of course reach out to their company to  
6 let them know than an emergency happened at the  
7 development.

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, how often do  
9 you check the functionality of the security equipment  
10 and these NYCHA developments, particularly with the  
11 CCTV cameras? Can you give us the-- how often you  
12 check?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Certainly.  
14 That's a great question, thank you. So, it's a mix  
15 of property management and the Office of Safety and  
16 Security that do checks in the cameras. So when  
17 people, the caretakers start cleaning the buildings  
18 from rooftop to ground, if they see any vandalism  
19 through the cameras, they report it to the office of  
20 safety and security. Property management is supposed  
21 to check the cameras and the systems every single day  
22 like a quick spot-check to make sure that they're  
23 working, and of course, the Office of Safety and  
24 Security does random spot checks on cameras while  
25

1  
2 looking at footage and CCTVs all day long and make  
3 repairs to the CCTVs.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The contract that you  
5 have with Allied, was it a pre-requisite for the  
6 security guards, do they have access to those-- to  
7 the cameras?

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: No, they do  
9 not.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How does NYCHA engage  
11 with other development or buildings in need of  
12 security system upgrades or repairs?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So that  
14 usually comes from capital assessment and some  
15 feedback from operations if we see that cameras are  
16 failing or that systems are failing. We work  
17 together to identify hopefully some additional  
18 funding to make repairs to the camera system.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Are there currently  
20 any developments that only have a fire guard and  
21 doesn't have a security or boots on the ground  
22 security guard in lobby?

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Well, fire  
24 guards are supposed to roam the building. They're  
25

1  
2 not actually supposed to be in the lobby, but we  
3 have--

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] No, I'm  
5 asking you are there any NYCHA developments or senior  
6 developments that have a fire guard, but don't have a  
7 security guard?

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes, there  
9 are 24 or 23 developments that have fire guards  
10 because there's an impairment to the system, and  
11 we're required to do that. And there's two or three  
12 buildings that have both the fire guard and a  
13 security guard because they're a senior building.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And when that happens  
15 are the residents made aware?

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes, we  
17 notify property management and the TA president that  
18 either a security guard or a fire guard is going to  
19 be present at the building.

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Just an anecdote,  
21 Vandalia Houses, for years-- we've gone for years or  
22 for a couple years after speaking to the tenant  
23 association president-- I think they just recently  
24 got a new tenant association president in the last  
25 year or so. But residents were saying that they were

1  
2 under the impression that the fire guard that was  
3 there was the security, and by finding that out and  
4 digging deeper, we found that at Vandalia Houses  
5 there was no-- they haven't had a security guards in  
6 the development for the last three to four to five  
7 years. Your testimony was that there was adequate  
8 communication or there was communication to the  
9 tenant association and to management and to the  
10 residents. Why is it in that scenario there was no  
11 communication given to the residents that there was  
12 only-- that the fireguard wasn't a security guard?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I'm not  
14 aware of the situation at Vandalia. I don't know  
15 when this took place. I do know that since I've come  
16 on board along with James Aprito [sp?] we've been  
17 actively engaging residents about the fire  
18 guard/security guard program. We've also as part of  
19 the DOI findings have already posted in our lobbies  
20 when a fire guard is supposed to be there and when a  
21 security guard is supposed to be there. We host  
22 quarterly meetings with residents and NYPD. It's  
23 like a resident roundtable. We talk about safety and  
24 security issues. We talk about the guards at these  
25 conferences, and we also meet with our CCOP yearly to

1  
2 give them updates about safety and security issues  
3 and guard development.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, currently are you  
5 aware there is a security guard and a fire guard at  
6 Vandalia?

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: There's one  
8 at 77 Vandalia.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: As of today, how many  
10 functioning CCTV cameras are installed at each  
11 development?

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, we have  
13 52 developments that do not have CCTV coverage. We  
14 have over 20,000 cameras in the portfolio across 214  
15 developments and 1,519 buildings.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How's that  
17 determination made as to what development receives  
18 cameras and what development doesn't?

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: A lot of  
20 that comes through working with the Council, working  
21 with our partners at the state and federal levels in  
22 terms of funding. We also work with the TA president  
23 and property management once funding has been--

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] No, I'm  
25 asking you how the determin-- how's that

1  
2 determination made? Not from the funding aspect. Is  
3 there-- if there's a need for security at these  
4 particular developments, this type of layered  
5 security that exists in other senior developments?  
6 How is that determination made that one development  
7 should have cameras and the other one should not? Or  
8 is it solely on the advocacy of the electeds?

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: A lot of it  
10 is advocacy on the elected, and I'm not necessarily  
11 involved in the actual capital and construction of  
12 that. That's our AC&M's [sic] Department who oversee  
13 the placement of CCTVs.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, cameras are not  
15 part of the regular security apparatus for these  
16 buildings?

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: There's 52  
18 developments that don't have the cameras, so no.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Are you aware of any  
20 of the crime stats or some of the security concerns  
21 or needs at all the 50 NYCHA-- 55 NYCHA sites, 51  
22 NYCHA senior sites?

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: At the 52  
24 senior sites--

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Sorry,  
3 52.

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: The crime's  
5 [inaudible] senior buildings, sorry. The crime is  
6 managed and monitored by NYPD.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I said are you aware,  
8 not who manages it. Are you aware of the security  
9 needs or concerns?

10 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes, of  
11 course.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Would you  
13 agree that most seniors would-- if you were having  
14 conversations with them, would we request or say  
15 there's a need for cameras in their building?

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes,  
17 absolutely.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: As of today, what  
19 percentage front doors at NYCHA buildings are secure?

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I don't have  
21 that information available, but we will get  
22 information about work order tickets for doors that  
23 are broken to you.

24

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Would you agree that  
3 having a secured front door is part of security  
4 apparatus?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Hundred  
6 percent.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When a door is  
8 breached or when it's broken, how is that then  
9 communicated to the authority so that that door can  
10 be fixed?

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Through a  
12 couple of ways. One, residents can call the CCC and  
13 put in a work order ticket for the door to be  
14 repaired, but mostly boots on the ground property  
15 management should be checking the doors every single  
16 day as they're doing clean-up of the buildings and  
17 walking all over the developments, and then creating  
18 a work order ticket to get the door repaired.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You know, we had a  
20 contract with Allied for \$6.8 million. What's the  
21 relationship as far as reporting back to the  
22 Authority when the door is broken in one of these  
23 senior buildings?

24

25

1  
2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: They were  
3 under the 2019 contract. They weren't required to  
4 broken doors to NYCHA.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Who was in charge of  
6 overseeing security at the NYCHA buildings?

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Well, I'm  
8 overseeing the Office of Safety and Security and we  
9 have our role in terms of making sure cameras are  
10 working. People have access to work on the system.  
11 We work with various partners with NYPD and DHS to  
12 ensure different programs happen at the development  
13 to make residents more safe and more secure. But  
14 property management oversees the day to day  
15 operations to make sure that the doors are closing  
16 properly.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What types of  
18 relationships the security guards and the fire safety  
19 guards expected to have with the public housing  
20 residents, and what level of visibility are they  
21 expected to maintain?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, with our  
23 new vendors, and we also have a solicitation out  
24 right now for a new guard in contract for security  
25 guards and for fire guards. We are going to have

1  
2 mandatory meetings with these companies to meet with  
3 the residents on a quarterly basis to discuss any  
4 issues that they might be having, anything we could  
5 do to improve the level of service from the fire  
6 guard and the security guards.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What-- and I think  
8 this is a broad question. Would you agree that-- do  
9 you agree to the findings in the report?

10 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And the  
12 recommendations that have been made?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Can you explain why  
15 NYCHA has not fully agreed to four of the 12  
16 recommendations put forth by DOI then?

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Sure. I'll  
18 let my Chief Procurement Officer Shin Kim answer.

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for  
20 that question. So the four that we part-- that we  
21 stated were partial mainly due to the fact that there  
22 is currently a solicitation out there on the street  
23 for fire and security guards services that  
24 incorporates all of the DOI recommendations, all 12.

25 So,--

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] So, this  
3 is the procurement process, or is this the--

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: So, what I  
5 wanted to say was that there is a procurement out  
6 there currently that incorporates all of these  
7 recommendations, and these are material changes to  
8 the requirements that would be implemented post-award  
9 to the current contractors. So we really  
10 characterize it as partial in light of the fact that  
11 there was a new solicitation out there, and once the  
12 new complement of vendors are on-boarded through this  
13 process, everybody will be subject to all 12, and we  
14 will have fully accepted the recommendations.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: For the  
16 recommendations not accepted, can-- for the  
17 recommendations not accepted due to contractual  
18 obligations, can NYCHA commit to accepting them in  
19 future contracts?

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Yes,  
21 certainly. Thank you for that question. And we will--  
22 - and that is exactly our plan to do so with the new  
23 [inaudible] of vendors.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Is there any easy  
25 accessible system in which public housing residents

1  
2 can report the absence of security or fire safety  
3 guards, and do residents have knowledge of schedule  
4 hours for security and fire safety guards?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: That's a  
6 great question. So, yes, we have a 24-hour hotline.  
7 It's 306-8800. They can call the Office of Safety  
8 and Security to report any fire guard or security  
9 guard issues. we let the TA president and property  
10 management staff know the times of the security  
11 guards and that was agreed upon as we've done walk-  
12 throughs with the TA president and property  
13 management, because we wanted to give the residents  
14 the hours that they wanted. So, most of the  
15 residents at these senior buildings know the times  
16 when a guard should be there. For fire guards, it's  
17 24/7 at most buildings. So, there should be--  
18 there's usually three eight-hour shifts, unless it's  
19 like a community center or senior center. A guard  
20 will be there when the center is open if there's a  
21 fire impairment, but fire guards have to be there  
22 24/7 in our residential buildings.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, how many NYCHA  
24 developments or senior developments have 24-hour

1 security, and can you give me a breakdown of what's  
2 the security apparatus of all the 50-- 52 sites?

3 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Give me one  
4 second.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay, while you're  
6 finding that, I think you had a-- talked of the  
7 knowledge, the knowledge of the schedules. Is that  
8 made public to advertise to the residents outside  
9 just the walk-through that's being done? Is there  
10 any type of direct communications to the senior  
11 residents as to what's the shifts for security  
12 coverage?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, for  
14 security, again, we work with property management and  
15 the TA president to no-- they notify us what--

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] I ask  
17 you that-- well, are you aware of what's the direct--  
18 how do they directly reach out to residents to let  
19 them know what the security apparatus is or what the  
20 security schedule is?

21 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Currently, I  
22 don't know if they're doing that, but this is  
23 something we're going to--

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] You  
3 think that's important?

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Absolutely.  
5 Something we're going to implement with the new  
6 contracts shortly. To answer your question about 24-  
7 hour coverage, there's currently one building with  
8 24-hour coverage. The remainder, either 16 or 18  
9 hours.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Repeat that.

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: The  
12 remainder of the 52 buildings are either 16 or 18-  
13 hour coverage. Eight, sorry, excuse me.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The-- how does OSS  
15 ensure that security guards show up at their  
16 scheduled post?

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: That is  
18 really a good question. So, since 2022/2023 when  
19 myself and James Frito took over the Office of Safety  
20 and Security for mismanagement of the contract, you  
21 know, one of the main director resigned. The deputy  
22 director was moved. The first thing we started to do  
23 was better oversight by hiring additional staff and  
24 really changing the culture of how we managed the  
25 contract. So, during the time of 2019 through 2022

1  
2 there was an average of 40 to 60 inspections  
3 happening a month between--

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] You said  
5 how many inspections?

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: 40 to 60.  
7 So, in 2022 and 2023 we upped these inspections to  
8 almost 150 per month, and from 2024 until 2025 we've  
9 been doing over 250 inspections a month between the  
10 Office of Safety and security, the Fire Safety  
11 Department, and Quality Assurance Department which is  
12 also under my purview.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And that's since the  
14 termination of the contract with Allied?

15 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: We've  
16 increased during Allied. We went from 40 to 60 all  
17 the way up to 150.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So during Allied  
19 you've been doing inspections.

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Correct,  
21 2023 through 2024. And then--

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] And you  
23 missed the fact that they were forging time sheets?

24 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: No, we  
25 actually went after them very aggressively. We sent

1 multiple liquidated damages demos-- memos to Allied.  
2 We asked for a corrective action plan to try to get  
3 them to perform better. When they failed to perform  
4 better, either by not including geofencing which we  
5 asked for, additional quality assurance checks on the  
6 buildings, and giving us accurate and up-to-date time  
7 keeping, we started to pursue other vendors to get  
8 other vendors on board in 2023.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Were these failures  
11 as you found internally, were they made available to  
12 the residents?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: No, they  
14 were not.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Did you report them  
16 to the TAs or?

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: No, we did  
18 not.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And why was that?

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: NYCHA was--

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] You  
22 don't think that it's important for them to know that  
23 these lapse exist?

24 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: We do, but--  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] So why  
3 didn't report it?

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Because they  
5 were active-- we were actively pursuing--

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, after you got  
7 your findings, why didn't you think that was  
8 important to do?

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Oversight on  
10 our part, but something we will definitely do with  
11 the next contracts?

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, you would agree  
13 that you failed there?

14 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I think we had  
16 actually started going through a walk-through of  
17 NYCHA's Office of Safety and Security policies. How  
18 does the OSS schedule security guard shifts?

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, we--  
20 before a security guard is brought on-site, we work  
21 with both property management and the TA president to  
22 ask and identify preferred times to have the security  
23 guard there, because they live there, they know when  
24 they'll feel more vulnerable. And based on

1  
2 information provided by property management and the  
3 TA president, we schedule the guards accordingly.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, the tenant  
5 association plays an active role in scheduling?

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, how does OSS  
8 document and escalate misconduct by security guards  
9 such as missed shifts?

10 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, missed  
11 shifts or being out of uniform or leaving a post  
12 early-- as I mentioned earlier, we have documented  
13 multiple memos, and this is towards Allied. We  
14 documented multiple instances when they were failure  
15 to perform, and we've gone after them for liquidated  
16 damages and unpaid-- some of the invoices.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How is that  
18 information gathered? Are there situation or  
19 scenarios where a tenant association president or the  
20 TA member or resident has reached out and made a  
21 complaint? And is there-- you said there's a  
22 hotline--

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: [interposing]  
24 Yes. And yes--

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] And how  
3 many? Can you give us an insight as to how many  
4 times that has happened? Do you have those numbers?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I don't have  
6 those numbers with me, but we have had TA presidents  
7 complain to us about safety and security issues even  
8 with the fire guards or the security guards. We  
9 immediately jumped into the action in Office of  
10 Safety and Security. If there are cameras, we looked  
11 on the video to see if the guard actually showed up  
12 or not or stayed on their posts. We took snapshots.  
13 We provided that information to Allied. We also  
14 informed Allied that that guard is no longer allowed  
15 to work on the NYCHA campus because of their failures  
16 to our residents.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: But can you-- guys,  
18 we go to maintain some decorum. Right now it's--  
19 thank you. The-- you said you have those documented.

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, we'd love to see  
22 the numbers as to how many times you've gotten  
23 reports from this hotline or from any leadership from  
24 a tenant association leadership. What percentage of  
25 security and fire guard services are provided by

1  
2 contractors versus NYCHA staff? And if these  
3 services are provided by contractors, can you share  
4 which contractors?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Sure. So,  
6 100 percent of both guard, fire guard and security  
7 guard is contracted out. The current guard companies  
8 that NYCHA is working with is ISS, Wisdom and City  
9 Safe.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We're going to come  
11 back to my round of questioning, and I will allow  
12 Councilman Bottcher to ask questions. Thank you.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Thank you,  
14 Chair. Earlier in today's hearing, the Department of  
15 Investigations testified about their recommendations  
16 to NYCHA and they referred to the 70 current and  
17 former NYCHA employees that were charged with bribery  
18 and extortion last year. Department of  
19 Investigations referred to recommendations that they  
20 had made earlier before that, saying that if those  
21 recommendations had been implemented, then those  
22 indictments, that misconduct may not have happened.  
23 Since 2022 the Department of Investigations has made  
24 94 recommendations to NYCHA; 56 have been implemented  
25 according to their testimony today. can you explain

1  
2 why only 56 of the 94 recommendations since 2022 have  
3 been implemented and what's the status of the  
4 outstanding recommendations?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Thank you  
6 for that question, Council Member. I don't oversee  
7 the DOI 56. I can tell you about the 12 related to  
8 this report that we're going to-- most of which have  
9 already been implemented and we're going to implement  
10 over the next year. Yeah, we can give the  
11 information from the compliance department.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Are there other  
13 recommendations that follow under your portfolio,  
14 recommendations relating to quality assurance, safety  
15 and technical programs that are outstanding from the  
16 Department of Investigations?

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: None.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Can you speak  
19 to within the RAD/PACT program the ability of  
20 RAD/PACT partners to hire paid NYPD security detail  
21 for NYCHA campuses?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY:  
23 Unfortunately, I don't oversee the RAD/PACT portfolio  
24 and I'm unable to answer that question today.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: So, that's-- if  
3 it's a RAD/PACT portfolio, that's not under your  
4 purview at all?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: No.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Is NYCHA able  
7 to hire paid security detail from PD?

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: DO you affirm to tell  
9 the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth  
10 before this committee and to respond honestly to  
11 Council Member questions?

12 VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yes, I do. And  
13 I'm Brian Honan, Vice President of Intergovernmental  
14 Relations. So, Council Member we do have paid  
15 security in terms of NYCHA hiring NYPD. For many  
16 years, NYCHA pays NYPD \$70 million a year.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Right.

18 VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Under the de  
19 Blasio administration that money was-- NYCHA was  
20 forgiven of that and we didn't have to pay anymore. I  
21 think public housing residents shouldn't have to pay  
22 NYPD for services that you or I provided in our  
23 developments. I think that this should be a regular  
24 course of business. I think security officers are  
25 very important in senior developments, but paying

1  
2 extra for NYPD service, I don't think that is  
3 something that with limited funds we should be  
4 expected to do.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: I agree. And  
6 for many years, NYCHA was paying \$70 million a year  
7 to the NYPD for NYPD coverage, and it was a good  
8 thing that they're no longer made to pay for the NYPD  
9 coverage. Anecdotally we hear about a lot less NYPD  
10 coverage since NYCHA hasn't been paying \$70 million a  
11 year. Is that true, and do you attribute that to the  
12 fact that NYCHA's not paying the NYPD?

13 VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: I think NYPD would  
14 be better able to answer that question. You know, I  
15 do know that things have changed, but I don't know  
16 the cause of that.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Has the NYPD  
18 ever said to you that the fact that there's no longer  
19 \$70 million annual payment that that's resulted in  
20 less presence?

21 VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: No, they have not.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Council  
23 Member Bottcher. I guess I'll go on to the recent  
24 DOI report, and we'll do a deeper dive into the  
25 recommendations. NYCHA contracted with Allied

1  
2 Universal for \$75 million to provide security and  
3 fire guard services from 2019 to 2023. NYCHA renewed  
4 tis contract twice for an additional \$80 million,  
5 extending services to February 2024. When did NYCHA  
6 first become aware of the infractions by Allied  
7 Universal with regard to this contract?

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, when I  
9 came aboard and James Aprito who is the VP for Safety  
10 and Security came on board it was 2022, and like I'd  
11 mentioned earlier we started to work with Allied to  
12 try to correct the wrongs with corrective action  
13 plans, additional oversight by doing unannounced site  
14 visits, waiting for them to give us the geofencing  
15 technology, time keeping that was not done on paper,  
16 and when we realized that the work was not improving  
17 on Allied's side in 2023, we started to work with our  
18 Law Department and our Procurement Department to  
19 bring on additional guards and start to take away  
20 some of the Allied sites, and as I mentioned, we  
21 brought on Wisdom in mid-2023, ISS at the end of 23,  
22 and City Safe in 2024.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, that was the  
24 documented plan of action as far as the oversight of  
25 NYCHA. Why did it take an outside investigation by

1  
2 DOI to reveal problems that should have been caught  
3 by NYCHA's internal controls?

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Well, we  
5 did. The report only came out in 2025 and we started  
6 making these changes back in 2022. Additionally, the  
7 biggest sticking point, not even the security guards,  
8 was the fire guards. So I was tasked to oversee and  
9 restructure the Fire Safety Department. I brought on  
10 a fire safety professional, Mr. Joe Terranova, and he  
11 brought on a team of folks who were not  
12 administrators but more hand to hammer kind of  
13 workers. Our tackle and our goal was to go to  
14 development that had the highest concentration of  
15 security-- fire guards, excuse me, and actually start  
16 making the repairs to the fire impairment. And with  
17 that, we were able to reduce, as I mentioned in  
18 testimony-- we went from 150 buildings with fire  
19 guards pretty much 24 hours a day, seven days a week.  
20 We're now down to 26 today. So, it's a lot easier to  
21 oversee fire guards 24/7 in 26 buildings as opposed  
22 to 150. Residents are safer. They're more secure  
23 with now fire equipment that's actually working.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The DOI report found  
25 that 70 percent of the CCTV cameras at senior

1 buildings were inoperable or inaccessible. What are  
2 the causes as to why the cameras were inoperable or  
3 inaccessible?  
4

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I don't know  
6 what they were at the time of the investigation, but  
7 I know we regularly check safety-- the safety and  
8 security CCTV cameras at senior developments. Not  
9 having access, some of our systems are standalone.  
10 They don't directly connect to--

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] How old  
12 are these cameras?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: It varies  
14 from development to development.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, I mean, as far as  
16 the maintenance of these cameras, can you dive into  
17 what that looks like?

18 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, if we  
19 find out that a camera is inoperable, my team is  
20 notified. We go out within 24 to 72 hours to repair  
21 the camera as quickly as we can. If it requires  
22 extensive work, we would potentially go to an outside  
23 vendor to do the work, but we do most of the work in-  
24 house. It's just easier for us to manage and track.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How many of your  
3 cameras are working as of today?

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I'm assuming  
5 all 20,000, but I don't have that number right now.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You said you're  
7 assuming all 20,000?

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: would you agree that  
10 should be a number you should know that? I mean,  
11 when we're talking about securing safety of people's  
12 lives and cameras being a deterrence or possibly  
13 bringing justice, helping to bring justice, do you  
14 think it was important to have that information  
15 today?

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Absolutely,  
17 but I haven't been made aware of any cameras that are  
18 not working today.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So you said you would  
20 assume that all cameras are working?

21 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What is NYCHA doing  
23 to maintain these cameras?

24 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, there's  
25 several things that we're doing. Again, if

1  
2 janitorial staff when they come down and they see  
3 that a camera's been vandalized, report to us  
4 immediately. We go out into the field. Vandalism  
5 usually with the cameras is someone either have  
6 spray-painted on it or they've cracked it open. The  
7 team is replacing the camera heads as quickly as  
8 possible. If property management notices when they're  
9 going through their day-to-day that the cameras not  
10 working, they notify us immediately and we deploy  
11 some staff to go in and report any issues.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When was the last  
13 time you got a report that a camera or system is down  
14 and what particular development was that?

15 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I'll have to  
16 get back to you on that information.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How often are you  
18 being informed as to when cameras are down?

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Well, the  
20 Office of Safety and Security gets informed if it's  
21 something catastrophic like a development--

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] I said  
23 how often. How often is that?

24 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY:  
25 [interposing] How often? If it's a-- well, again, I

1  
2 have an entire office that oversees this. If it's  
3 something that's catastrophic that they need to loop  
4 me in, I get involved, but for the most part it's  
5 usually one or two cameras that are off or a couple  
6 cameras were off per day that they go in to fix.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: According to the DOI  
8 report, NYCHA failed to conduct or document required  
9 field inspections for almost two years of the Allied  
10 Universal contract. Does NYCHA know how many  
11 inspections actually occurred from October 2019 to  
12 August 21<sup>st</sup>?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: We do not.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And that's because  
15 your failure to do the inspections?

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I was not  
17 responsible for overseeing the department, nor were  
18 the people sitting here. The ones that were would  
19 have that information. They're no longer with NYCHA.

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, if there's no  
21 proper documentation, how can you be sure?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I do know  
23 that in 2022 when we came on board, we started to  
24 document these more frequently and recently switched  
25 to an electronic format of documenting the guards

1  
2 when they're out in the field, and that number we can  
3 provide to you, the ones that we've done  
4 electronically to-date.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What assurances can  
6 NYCHA provide that similar oversight failures are not  
7 occurring with other contractors currently working at  
8 NYCHA properties?

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Well,  
10 there's several measures we're putting into place.  
11 We've obviously increased the amount of quality  
12 assurance checks that we've done at the developments.  
13 As part of the new contract we're not only including  
14 geofencing, but we're also including geotabs which  
15 go-- for fire guards, that goes throughout the  
16 building which would have them actually make sure  
17 that we know what floors are on at various times to  
18 make sure they're actually patrolling the because.  
19 Additionally, the geofencing technology which the  
20 three vendors are currently using right now, gives us  
21 updated real-time time-keeping and we're also  
22 checking that against the cameras to make sure that  
23 they are reporting their time appropriately and that  
24 there is a guard on site.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The-- why did NYCHA  
3 wait until October 2022 to begin documenting  
4 infractions and sending liquidated damages to Allied  
5 Universal when the contract began in October of 2019?

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, previous  
7 management from 2019 to 2021 did not document  
8 anything. I don't think any liquidated damages went  
9 out during that time. Again, when we started to  
10 recognize-- the new team that was brought on board  
11 started to recognize the problems within the managing  
12 of the contracts for both fire and security, we  
13 started immediately documenting and reporting to  
14 Allied their deficiencies.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Let me ask you this.  
16 In your oversight of the inspections that "were  
17 done," where in that approach by NYCHA includes  
18 speaking to the residents?

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: It hasn't.  
20 That's something we would take into advisement and  
21 let the, you know, the residents know that we're  
22 doing these oversight inspections and that we'll be  
23 on-site at unannounced times.

24

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I mean, would you  
3 agree that the communications to the residents have  
4 been-- have not been the best?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I agree with  
6 that, and we only want to get better.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The report indicated  
8 that even after NYCHA began documenting infractions,  
9 if often sent notices months after becoming aware of  
10 the problem. Is there a reason NYCHA does not send  
11 an infraction notice much sooner?

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, we were  
13 waiting for Allied to provide us the time-keeping.  
14 We can't send an infraction and we can't go after  
15 them for liquidated damages if we don't have the  
16 information before us. They were very deficient in  
17 giving us proper time-keeping. So for example, if we  
18 were looking at April's-- at the end of April, they'd  
19 have two weeks to three weeks in May to give us that  
20 report, the time-keeping report. We sometimes didn't  
21 get those reports until June or July.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Is there-- in your  
23 internal investigation is there any other ways do a  
24 check or to inspect if they're not compliant with  
25 providing that information?

1 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Well, now--

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Or  
3 you're solely waiting on-- were you solely just  
4 waiting on them to report to you?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So,--

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Or being  
7 proactive--

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: [interposing]  
9 Yeah.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: as opposed to just  
11 waiting on that data?

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, we  
13 actually, as part of the corrective action plan,  
14 required Allied to do geofencing, because we just  
15 couldn't trust the time sheets that were coming into  
16 us anymore, and there was a lot of buildings to  
17 manage. Allied assured us that they were going to  
18 implement geofencing. I believe this was in March of  
19 2023 and by May of 2023 when we didn't see any form  
20 of improvement including the geofencing and the time  
21 sheets, that's when we started to work to get new  
22 contractors at the sites.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The DOI report  
24 mentions that NYCHA did not request proof of Allied  
25

1  
2 Universal's implementation of the staffing  
3 accountability plan? Can you share more about this  
4 plan and why it was never implemented?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, the  
6 corrective action plan or staffing accountability  
7 plan is what I was talking about. There were three  
8 components to that plan, the first one being that  
9 Allied was supposed to send out additional quality  
10 assurance officers like NYCHA was doing on their  
11 front, and provide us with documentation showing that  
12 they actually did quality assurance checks. They  
13 were also supposed to implement the geofencing as  
14 part of upgrading the time keeping so NYCHA was to  
15 get that in real time. And the third was to actually  
16 provide us time sheets in a regular cadence if  
17 geofencing was not available. Again, we monitored it  
18 for several months to see some form of improvement.  
19 The improvement was not there and we started to work  
20 to get rid of Allied out of NYCHA properties.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Could you share more  
22 details on how you plan to implement DOIs  
23 recommendations that were published in their report?

24 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Certainly.  
25 So, invoicing system, again, we have geofencing

1  
2 technology now. We're getting the invoices on a  
3 regular cadence. We actually have already  
4 implemented the security guard desks at I think 98  
5 percent of the locations I think where we have a  
6 backorder of two desks, and hopefully they'll be  
7 installed this week. We actually posted the signage  
8 for both security guards and fire guards throughout  
9 the buildings that have it. We do unannounced site  
10 visits as requested by DOI. We, again, part of this  
11 even went out. We were doing 160 even before the  
12 report. We're now doing 250. So we're doing about  
13 3,000 unannounced inspections a year. We are going  
14 to update the report as DOI requested the security  
15 board to include checking of both cameras and doors.  
16 That's a little bit of enhancement we have to do  
17 because it's an electronic security report. One of  
18 the other items that they ask is that to update our  
19 manual which we are in the process of doing as well.

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What is the projected  
21 time for completing the implementation for these  
22 recommendations?

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Probably  
24 within less than a year.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Outside the DOI's  
3 recommendations, what measures if any are being  
4 evaluated to take a more proactive approach to  
5 oversight of contractors?

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, more  
7 active approaches, again, not only my Office of  
8 Safety and Security are doing the checks. Fire  
9 Safety Department when they go out to the field does  
10 quality assurance checks on guards, and I have also  
11 the quality assurance and cost control department  
12 under my purview. They go out and they do  
13 unannounced inspections of fire guards and security  
14 guards as well, and report back to the office of  
15 safety and security if they find any deficiencies.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When it comes to-- I  
17 think Councilman Bottcher had brought this up to some  
18 degree with the RAD/PACT converted developments. How  
19 many RAD/PACT converted developments have senior  
20 facilities-- not senior facilities-- where there are  
21 senior buildings on those particular properties?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Happy to  
23 provide that information to you after the hearing.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. The reason I  
25 want to know because I want to know what's the

1 security apparatus and how that was transferred over  
2 and is that still part of the NYCHA security? Are  
3 they still-- is NYCHA still providing security for  
4 those particular--  
5

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Once the  
7 development goes RAD/PACT, NYCHA's not required to  
8 provide safety and security at the--

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: But what's the  
10 oversight that's being done as far as what that  
11 security apparatus looks like?

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: That I don't  
13 know.

14 VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Council Member, so  
15 once a property is converted to RAD/PACT, they are  
16 required to provide a security plan to us, but when  
17 it's a senior building we do require at least the  
18 same level of service. Some of them have done even  
19 more. We also know that these workers are members of  
20 32BJ. So we have had conversations with them to make  
21 sure that the membership transfers over to the new  
22 properties and that folks don't lose their jobs if  
23 they-- you know, if they're up to the task.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Who picks up the cost  
25 for that?

1  
2 VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Picks up the to--  
3 would be the developer.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The developer, okay.  
5 And they're report to you as far as how that  
6 apparatus looks and any inefficiencies that exist?  
7 And what is your oversight in that security apparatus  
8 for those converted developments.

9 VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So, it wouldn't be  
10 our teams here, but the real estate office in NYCHA  
11 gets regular reports on safety and security, and  
12 whatever plan that they-- you know, have put in place  
13 before, you know, before closing or after closing.  
14 It's up to them to make sure it's being maintained.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When it comes to--  
16 let me back track. Is Allied Universal or its parent  
17 security firm, FJC Securities, still under contract  
18 with NYCHA in any capacity?

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for  
20 that question, Chair Banks. Allied stopped providing  
21 services to NYCHA as of March 2024.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And what about FJC  
23 Security?

24 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Same. So,  
25 it's Allied working-- I believe, Allied-- one was

1  
2 bought out by the other. We initially contracted  
3 with FJC and they've been performing in capacity of  
4 Allied, and both Allied and FJC have provided--  
5 stopped providing services.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I need you to break  
7 that down a little bit better.

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Sure.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And I'm going to  
10 repeat the question to you. Alright? Is Allied  
11 Universal or its present parent security firm, FJC  
12 Securities, still under contract with NYCHA in any  
13 capacity?

14 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for  
15 that question. No, Chair Banks, both FJC and Allied  
16 are not providing services to NYCHA as of March 2024.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. The DOI  
18 report showed that NYCHA collected only 16 percent of  
19 the liquidated damages it was entitled to. How does  
20 NYCHA plan on recouping these outstanding damages in  
21 full?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, OFS is  
23 working closely with our Law Department to pursue  
24 remedies, including liquidated damages and  
25

1  
2 withholding payments. We don't have a cost estimate  
3 for how much we are looking to recoup at this time.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Do you have numbers  
5 as to-- as far as how much the damages were?

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I do not.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Can you get those  
8 numbers to us?

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Absolutely.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And that would  
11 obviously be a breakdown as to the dollar amount?

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Does NYCHA have a  
14 reason to believe that the lack of time sheets or  
15 certified payrolls resulted in an undercount of  
16 damages?

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: As per the  
18 review of the team in the office of safety and  
19 security, yes, we do, which is the reason why we  
20 wrote several liquidated damage memos to Allied for  
21 providing us with inaccurate time keeping of their  
22 sale.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I think it would be  
24 important to make sure that the residents get  
25 justice. This is not only a security gap, you know,

1  
2 a failure, but also these folks stole money from  
3 NYCHA and the residents. How has NYCHA improved its  
4 enforcement of financial penalties against the  
5 underperforming contractors at NYCHA?

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, in these  
7 current contracts we are currently-- any time a guard  
8 fails to show up or leaves its post, we immediately  
9 send them a notification letting them know that we  
10 are not going to be paying them for their services.  
11 As part of the new contracts, and I could let Shin  
12 tell you a little bit more, I think there's more in  
13 terms of liquidated damages that we can go after.

14 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: yes, we have--  
15 - thank you for that question. We have contractual  
16 remedies including liquidated damages that are built  
17 into the contract. And NYCHA also has the  
18 infrastructure to discontinue relationships with a  
19 vendor if deemed necessary and appropriate. It's--

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Are  
21 these new actions or these have always been tool used  
22 by the Authority to go after these bad actors?

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Yes, thank  
24 you for the opportunity to clarify. These have  
25 always been part of our terms and conditions, the

1  
2 ability to go after any damages as well as  
3 contractual [inaudible] contract.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Do you think they've  
5 been useful with helping to correct some of the  
6 behavior of these contractors?

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: As a general  
8 statement from a procurement perspective, yes, we  
9 believe they're useful tools, and the procurement  
10 department also outside of DOI's recommendations has  
11 instituted vendor disqualification as well as vendor  
12 responsibility standard procedures aimed at really  
13 strengthening vendor responsibility and the integrity  
14 of our vendors.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Since the replacement  
16 of Allied Universal and NYCHA security and fire guard  
17 contracts, has NYCHA identified any instances of  
18 guards missing or being late for their shifts, and if  
19 so, how are those instances handled?

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: We have been  
21 working very closely with City Safe, ISS, and Wisdom  
22 to address those issues immediately. The head of my  
23 Office of Safety and Security, Director Anthony  
24 Katarsky [sp?]--- the day we find out about the issue,  
25 they are getting an email. We are sending them and

1  
2 letting them know that they are not going to paid for  
3 that shift, and that we do not want that guard back  
4 on our property.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When did their  
6 contract begin?

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I'm sorry?

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When did their  
9 contract begin?

10 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: ISS  
11 [inaudible] City Safe, they were in various stages.  
12 I believe ISS officially started with NYCHA in  
13 September of 2023, and Wisdom was November of 2023,  
14 and City Safe officially started in March of 2024.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So these are the  
16 three new contractors--

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: [interposing]  
18 Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: that are now  
20 providing-- and is there a report card on, you know,  
21 them meeting their contractual obligations?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I wouldn't  
23 say there's a report card, but we are active--

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Or can  
25 you enlight [sic] us as to how they've been behaving?

1  
2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yeah, much  
3 better. We are actively engaged with these three  
4 companies. I know Anthony meets with them probably--  
5 when they first came on board, we were meeting with  
6 them weekly. As services improved and they got a  
7 rhythm and were showing up more regularly at NYCHA  
8 developments, we saw less and less of an issue.  
9 There will always be an issue. You know, a guard  
10 might not show up. They might be late, but for the  
11 most part we're seeing a much better turnaround rate  
12 and a much better performance by all three vendors.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And I have to  
14 constantly mention this or ask this, what role-- how  
15 are you bringin in the residents and that report card  
16 or this oversight? Are you speaking to residents  
17 more now than you were before?

18 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I think with  
19 the quarterly meetings, I think that's a great idea.  
20 It's getting their feedback about guards at their  
21 sites and almost like giving them a ranking or a  
22 rating and seeing where we can improve. This is  
23 something we'll incorporate in the future for sure.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Can you do that-- can  
25 you commit to doing that in the near future?

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SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We don't want a repeat of this.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: No.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When it comes to general oversight of the contractors, what percentage of repair work is performed by NYCHA staff versus contractors? This is for CC--

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: [interposing] Oh, this is for CCTV?

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Yes.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Oh, 99 percent of the work that happens on CCTV cameras is repaired in-house.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay, and who's responsible for verifying the delivery of contracted services at a development?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: These are usually not big purchase-- they're like micro purchases. It's to fix a camera that might not be able to be fixed under our jurisdiction. The number is not that significant in terms of the amount we use for vendors to do this work.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You can provide those  
3 numbers?

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: After this  
5 hearing, absolutely.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. NYCHA  
7 often blames budget constraints for its inability to  
8 deliver certain services. Yet, it paid millions for  
9 security services that were not delivered. How is  
10 NYCHA tracking the actual delivery of services across  
11 all contracts to ensure that NYCHA is not paying for  
12 work that has not been performed?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Is this  
14 particularly for fire contracts and security  
15 contract, or all contracts?

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Fire-- no,  
17 particularly relegated to fire and safety.

18 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Okay. So,  
19 again, we're constantly looking at time sheets. We  
20 are going out into the field to make sure that staff  
21 is there. We are checking cameras daily to make sure  
22 that staff is there. And again, this is a lot easier  
23 for NYCHA for manage now that we've repaired a lot of  
24 our buildings with the lack of-- or need of fire  
25 guards. So it's really important that we do as many

1 field visits as possible to all of these sites, as  
2 many as possible per month to ensure that the  
3 services that NYCHA residents are getting are there.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Have you visited any  
5 of these sites?

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I have.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What was the last site  
8 you visited?

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: it was two  
10 weeks ago I went to Bronx River.

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. When you  
12 visited that site, did you get a chance to speak to  
13 the tenant association president?

14 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: In fact, I  
15 met with the tenant association president.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Excellent. How does  
17 NYCHA keep track of contract infractions?

18 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, for the  
19 Allied, we have been using liquidated damages memos.  
20 So every time we get a group or several issues, we're  
21 noting it. We're immediately sending-- during the  
22 Allied years we were immediately sending out the  
23 memos letting them know that they have committed an  
24

1  
2 infraction and this is what we were going to be going  
3 after for their lack of service to the residents.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And how are NYCHA  
5 residents expected to submit complaints about these  
6 contractors?

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Well, thanks  
8 to the DOI report, we've now put the postings  
9 throughout our lobbies for both fire guards and  
10 security guards, and there's a number on there that  
11 they can report to us to if they're having an issue  
12 with a guard.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Does NYCHA keep track  
14 of resident complaints about a vendor or particular  
15 employees? And where are these records normally  
16 kept?

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Well,  
18 thanks to the DOI report, we've now put the postings  
19 throughout our lobbies for both fire guards and  
20 security guards, and then there's a number on there  
21 that they can report to us to if they're having an  
22 issue with a guard.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Does NYCHA keep track  
24 of residents' complaints about a vendor or particular  
25 employees? Where are these records normally kept?

1  
2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: The Office  
3 of Safety and Security does keep records of when  
4 there is a complaint that comes in from a resident.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Does NYCHA have an  
6 internal requirement to maintain documentation of the  
7 contractor's infractions?

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: We choose  
9 to. We keep it on file for anywhere from seven to 10  
10 years. I know we have Allied's information stored and  
11 have no intent of getting rid of that any time soon.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And is there  
13 a-- how often do you check, you know, the proper  
14 documentations being filed?

15 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I'm sorry,  
16 could you repeat the question?

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I said how often do  
18 you check whether proper documentation is begin  
19 filed?

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: The time  
21 keeping?

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Yes.

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yeah, so it  
24 is checked regularly as time keeping information is  
25 coming in to us, and I think it's reported daily or

1  
2 weekly. Yeah, as we receive the invoices that come  
3 in, we are checking it up against the time keeping  
4 that is provided to us by the guard companies.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And what is the  
6 procedure when contractor's employees are found to be  
7 in violation of their service agreement such as being  
8 absent for a shift or consuming substances on duty?

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, we will  
10 get that infraction sent to the guard company, and I  
11 mentioned we will request that that guard is not  
12 allowed to serve on NYCHA campus ever again.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And what recourse do  
14 tenants have if they have issues with a particular  
15 security or a fire guard?

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: They are  
17 more than happy to reach out to the Office of Safety  
18 and Security, and we will work to have that guard  
19 removed from the property.

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How often does NYCHA  
21 go to developments to ask tenants about their  
22 satisfaction with security and fire guard services?

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So we have  
24 quarterly meetings, community roundtable meetings.  
25 We discuss a whole host of safety and security

1  
2 issues. Guards happens to be one of them, and again,  
3 we also meet with CCOP at least once a year to go  
4 over safety and security issues. Guards are also  
5 mentioned at the meeting as well, and if a TA  
6 president has an issue with the fire guards and the  
7 security guards, I know myself, Anthony Katarksy, or  
8 James Aprito [sp?] will absolutely go out to the  
9 development and have a conversation with them.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What is NYCHA's  
11 policy towards vendors who are in violation of their  
12 contract?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for  
14 that question. So, as mentioned earlier, we do have  
15 contractual remedies built in and we do have the  
16 infrastructure to disqualify a vendor or continue  
17 services with the vendor. As I mentioned earlier, we  
18 do have the vendor disqualification standard  
19 procedure as well as NYCHA's first vendor  
20 responsibility procedure that lays out the factors  
21 for non-responsibility.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Has NYCHA identified  
23 any instances of bid-splitting or other abuse of  
24 micro purchase contract policies in the past year,  
25 and if so, how did NYCHA respond to that?

1  
2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for  
3 that question. As a result of the DOI  
4 recommendations last year, we have moved to establish  
5 what's known as the micro purchase qualification  
6 list, and as properties are required to go through,  
7 the micro PQL as we call it, to identify vendors. To  
8 my knowledge, I have not been made aware of any bid  
9 splitting in the last year.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What is the current  
11 status of the Mayor's Action Plan they call MAP in  
12 NYCHA developments, and if you can give me a dive  
13 into how that works with the security apparatus? I  
14 know senior buildings that are on those developments  
15 that MAP program.

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I'm not  
17 aware of any senior buildings that are part of the  
18 MAP program. I'll have to get back to you on that.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, those senior  
20 buildings that are on those-- that are a part of  
21 those developments that have a MAP program.

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I'd have to  
23 get back to you on senior developments that are a  
24 part of MAP. I know a little bit about the MAP  
25 program and safety and security, but I don't know

1  
2 which developments are necessarily part of the MAP  
3 program that are senior.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Are you familiar with  
5 the MAP program?

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: A little  
7 bit, yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Do you have a--  
9 - are you aware of the developments that there is a  
10 MAP program?

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Has NYCHA identified  
13 any instances of bribery or quid pro quo in awarding  
14 contracts in the past year, and if so, how did NYCHA  
15 respond to that?

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for  
17 that question. To my knowledge, I'm not aware of any  
18 instances of bribery and the like in the past year.  
19 We work very closely in close partnership with DOI  
20 and we would be-- if such information was brought to  
21 us, we would be working in close partnership with  
22 them to determine if that's--

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. How has NYCHA  
24 reformed its procurement process to ensure that  
25

1  
2 contractors with histories of poor performance are  
3 not awarded new contracts or renewed?

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for  
5 that question. We've actually made several reforms  
6 to the procurement department including  
7 restructuring, developing new processes, and coming  
8 up with standard procedures that have not existed in  
9 the past. As I mentioned earlier, the vendor  
10 disqualification process as well as the vendor  
11 responsibility procedures are very robust in terms of  
12 identifying what we check in terms of vendor vetting  
13 and the actions that are taken as a result of factors  
14 that could lead to disqualification. We also had a  
15 long-standing non-responsibility and protest  
16 resolution procedure that lays out the factors for  
17 responsibility as well as responsiveness and how to  
18 resolve the protest. All of these efforts related to  
19 standard procedures are aimed at really strengthening  
20 our vendor base and to ensure that we are working  
21 with responsible vendors only. And if I may add, I'd  
22 like to also state the procurement department last  
23 year did institute NYCHA's first procurement ethics  
24 policy. We've conducted numerous training across  
25 developments as well as with our vendors which is

1  
2 also a pre-requisite for getting on the micro  
3 purchase qualifications.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Quality assurance,  
5 how's that factored in? I know there's been multiple  
6 complaints by residents where contractors-- you get  
7 the same contractors and they're doing the same  
8 shabby jobs over and over. So, how are we ensuring  
9 that the quality of work is there when we're making a  
10 determination on whether or not a contractor should  
11 be doing business again with [inaudible]?

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: thank you for  
13 that question. I will speak a little bit on the  
14 ability for us to take past prior performance into  
15 consideration in selection of vendors, and I will  
16 defer to my colleague to speak about quality  
17 assurance. So one of the procedures actually I  
18 failed to mention was we are in the process of  
19 finalizing vendor performance evaluation. When  
20 there's a contract, the user [sic] departments are  
21 required to do a performance evaluation of the vendor  
22 and that information is factored into our vendor  
23 responsibility vetting before we award the contract.  
24 We're also looking to implement ways in which we can  
25 factor this information when we do request for

1  
2 proposals and take that into consideration as part of  
3 the evaluation criteria.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [inaudible]

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Could you  
6 elaborate on the question regarding quality  
7 assurance?

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: No, no, I was saying  
9 when it comes to-- is that factored in making  
10 determination where they-- when a vendor is selected  
11 again to do work? Are we looking at the quality of  
12 work that was done to that part of making that  
13 determination? If they-- if they get another  
14 contract?

15 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Previously?  
16 I wouldn't--

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] And  
18 that's--

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes, yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I mean, I ask that  
21 question because, you know, the ground you don't see  
22 that. So, I want to kind of understand what's the  
23 disconnect. I think obviously this is also  
24 associated with the issues we had with Universal and,  
25 you know, this ongoing theft against the NYCHA

1 residents. So, I just want to know across the board  
2 how are we dealing with that and making sure quality  
3 assurance is factored in when you're giving another  
4 contract.  
5

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, NYCHA  
7 during 2022 through 2024 filled out five-- we did  
8 five performance evaluations that were submitted to  
9 procurement to ensure that if we got future bids from  
10 Allied that would be a factor, and documented its  
11 poor performance helps us to not choose a poor-  
12 performing vendor in the future.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. When it comes  
14 back to engaging and getting feedback from the  
15 residents, in 2024 Comptroller report recommended  
16 that NYCHA provide residents with a platform for  
17 rating their vendors and viewing other residents'  
18 reviews. At a hearing before this committee February  
19 26<sup>th</sup> of 2025, NYCHA testified that it implement this  
20 recommendation after future consideration. Can you  
21 share the status or update us on it?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for  
23 that question. Procurement Department currently does  
24 not have a mechanism to solicit formal feedback from  
25 residents, but we like to note that in the case of

1  
2 the current RFP that is out of [inaudible] for fire  
3 and security guard services, TA leadership input and  
4 feedback was incorporated into defining the scope and  
5 the requirement. We have engaged in conversations to  
6 start the dialogue and how it is that we can capture  
7 that performance at the point of service.

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Do you think that  
9 this recommendation that was made through the  
10 Comptroller's report, do you think it's needed? Do  
11 you think it's important to get feedback from the  
12 residents?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: so, why is it  
14 that you haven't implemented this? This was actually  
15 back in February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025. This is over a month  
16 ago, and now, seeing and speaking to residents and  
17 the fact that we're constantly hearing vendors are  
18 not doing an adequate job. why don't you think it's  
19 important to implement this feedback program so  
20 tenants can rate the work of these vendors so we can,  
21 you know-- we can bring in vendors that are going to  
22 provide quality work for the residents?

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for  
24 that question. It is-- we believe it's very  
25 important and it's something that we started to

1  
2 discuss and we will continue to-- we will take this  
3 back and continue--

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Well,  
5 how important is it, because it seems like nothing's  
6 been done?

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: I believe  
8 it's very important to get--

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] You  
10 believe feedback from the residents is important?

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Yes, I do.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Since you believe  
13 that it's important, that means that you hopefully in  
14 the near, near future, that you'll put in a ranking  
15 system so residents can weigh in and let you know  
16 the quality of work that we've received. I didn't  
17 hear that--

18 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Oh, I'm  
19 sorry. I thought you were making a statement.

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: No, I was making a  
21 statement, but I'm just--

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Yes, I said  
23 yes. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: At the 2019 hearing  
25 before this committee, NYCHA spoke about data system

1  
2 improvements to detect bid splitting and other policy  
3 violations. Can you say more about these changes and  
4 areas where additional changes may be needed?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: I apologize,  
6 Chair. Would you mind repeating the question?

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Can you-- well, let  
8 me-- I'll do this. Can you walk us through the  
9 changes NYCHA has made to its micro purchase contract  
10 policies over the past few years in response to the  
11 2019 DOI investigation to Matrix Construction and  
12 recent federal bribery charges? And connected to that  
13 at a 2019 hearing before this committee, NYCHA spoke  
14 about the data system improvements to detect bid  
15 splitting and other policy violations. Can you say  
16 more about those changes and areas where additional  
17 changes may be needed?

18 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Okay, so  
19 thank you for that question. In terms of  
20 improvements that have been made to the micro  
21 purchase process, we have established the micro  
22 purchase qualification list, known as the PQL. In  
23 order for vendors to be placed in the PQL they have  
24 to have been I-supply [sic] or registration which is  
25 NYCHA vendor registration system. Had a past court

1 filing with the City's [inaudible] system which  
2 requires vendor's representation and disclosure of  
3 certifications. They have to have taken anti-bribery  
4 training that was conducted by our Procurement,  
5 Ethics and Vendor Responsibility Department, and then  
6 undergo a background check. So there is vendor  
7 vetting that is required as a result of-- in order to  
8 be placed on the PQL. We have also updated our micro  
9 purchase solicit-- it's not a [inaudible]. It's a  
10 micro purchase template where vendors are required to  
11 break down their costs and overhead and profits so  
12 that we can itemize and determine cost reasonableness  
13 of their quotes. We've also required rotation of  
14 vendors amongst the PQL vendors and there are I think  
15 a host of other recommendations that were made and  
16 implemented as a result of the DOI recommendations  
17 including hiring of NYCHA's neighborhood contract  
18 managers to oversee the micro purchase process. You  
19 referred to a 2019 data. I'm sorry, I was not at  
20 NYCHA and so I'm not aware of that. However, in  
21 terms of detecting bid splits, we have also made  
22 substantive improvements in our apex database which  
23 tracks when a vendor is up for bidding. When the  
24 aggregated amount of award exceed \$250,000. We work  
25

1  
2 with DOI to receive an investigative memo known as a  
3 Vendor Name Check, and we've made substantial  
4 improvements there to make sure the appropriate flags  
5 are made in there.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: At a 2021 hearing  
7 before this committee, NYCHA shared that it created a  
8 new purchasing and logistics department to help  
9 property manager's access contracts quickly. Can you  
10 say more about the department and if it's been  
11 effective so far?

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Yes, thank  
13 you for that question. That was one of the  
14 restructuring that was done in 2021 with the  
15 onboarding of the Chief Procurement Officer. We did  
16 create a separate unit called Purchasing, Logistics  
17 and Inventory, and they were to be collocated in the  
18 development and support the micro purchasing and  
19 other small purchasing efforts. We believe that the  
20 transition has been very helpful.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: In response to the  
22 2024 federal bribery charges, DOI issued 14  
23 recommendations to NYCHA. At a February 2024 hearing  
24 before this committee, NYCHA testified that it would  
25 implement all 14 recommendations within one year.

1  
2 Have all the recommendations been implemented as of  
3 today, and if not, why?

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for  
5 that question. Yes, all 14 recommendations have been  
6 implemented as of today.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And this is going to  
8 be my last few questions and it's going to just dive  
9 back into some of the work conditions of the security  
10 guards and the fire guards. Is it common for NYCHA  
11 [inaudible] coverage, is it common for NYCHA to  
12 reinstate-- to rotate the same guards across  
13 different properties in the same day?

14 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, NYCHA  
15 doesn't oversee where the guards are supposed to  
16 report to. That comes from the security guard and  
17 fire guard company.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Is there any  
19 coordination with these that did the contracting?

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Just the  
21 shifts. They are the ultimate responsibilities of  
22 the contractor to provide the service and the guard  
23 at the site that they're supposed to be in.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, what oversight is  
25 being provided by NYCHA in that sense? Are you the

1  
2 paying attention to that? I think this goes to the  
3 fact when talk about coverage, the gaps that can  
4 exist with these shift changes and making sure that  
5 there's a-- you know, that there's a body that  
6 proceeds the next person?

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, my  
8 apologies. So, in terms of fire guard which are  
9 again required 24/7--

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing]  
11 Security.

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Well,  
13 security, most of the shifts are only eight hours so  
14 there is no coverage afterwards. Fire guards are  
15 where--

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Well,  
17 what about those developments where there's 24-hour  
18 security?

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, similar  
20 to fire guards, security guards, if there's a 24-hour  
21 shift on site, if the vendors knows in advance that a  
22 guard is going to be either late or there's a no-  
23 show, the guard that is currently there is requested  
24 to stay to do the additional shift, and if not, it's  
25

1  
2 up to the vendor to find someone to go and replace  
3 the guard at the time.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And are you  
5 aware what the working conditions are when it comes  
6 to the fire guards and the security at these NYCHA  
7 buildings?

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I haven't  
9 heard of any poor working conditions from the guard  
10 company.

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: No, I said are you  
12 aware of what the conditions are?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: The  
14 conditions are the conditions. It's the-- being in  
15 the building and there doesn't seem to be any issues.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Well, I mean, I  
17 know that there was-- one of the recommendations was  
18 to provide a podium or some type of-- right?

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes, and  
20 we've already implemented that.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: That would be part of  
22 conditions. It would be part of conditions, correct?

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Sure, sure.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Or if they had a  
25 chair.



1  
2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I'm not too  
3 technologically savvy on the geofencing. I don't know  
4 if the app can go offline if there's no power to it.  
5 But we could explore these options when we meet with  
6 future vendors at the NYCHA properties.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Alright. Thank you  
8 for your testimony.

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We're going to take a  
11 two-minute break and then we're going to allow the  
12 public to give testimony, and we would encourage  
13 NYCHA to stay behind so you can hear back from the  
14 residents, people that pay your salaries. Thank you.

15 [break]

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I'm going to call  
17 this committee meeting back from adjournment, and now  
18 we're going to move into our public testimony. Now,  
19 open up the hearing for public testimony. I remind  
20 members of the public that this a government  
21 proceeding and that decorum shall be observed at all  
22 times. As such, members of the public shall remain  
23 silent at all times. The witness table is reserved  
24 for people who wish to testify. No video recording  
25 or photography is allowed from the witness table.

1  
2 Further, members of the public may not present audio  
3 or video recordings as testimony, but may submit  
4 transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant at  
5 Arms for inclusion into the hearing record. If you  
6 wish to speak at today's hearing, please fill out an  
7 appearance card with the Sergeant of Arms and wait to  
8 be recognized. When recognized, you will have two  
9 minutes to speak on today's hearing topic which is  
10 obviously security guards and fire guards and NYCHA's  
11 oversight of contractors. If you have a written  
12 statement or additional written testimony you wish to  
13 submit for the record, please provide a copy of that  
14 testimony to the Sergeant of Arms. You may also  
15 email written testimony to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov)  
16 within 72 hours of this hearing. Audio and video  
17 recordings will not be accepted. [inaudible]  
18 testimony, Christopher Leon Johnson. You may  
19 [inaudible]. Yes, sir.

20 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Hello, Chair.  
21 Can you hear me?

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We can hear you.

23 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Hello. Hello,  
24 chair Banks. My name is Christopher Leon Johnson.  
25 I'm calling on-- I'm speaking on behalf-- not behalf-

1  
2 - of myself. I used to be a member of 32BJ. I used to  
3 be a shop steward for the MTE [sic] access project.  
4 But I want to make this clear that, yeah, the tenants  
5 have a big issue with safety in the public housing,  
6 but the guards have the issues, too. Guards going  
7 through a lot of things that the companies refuse to  
8 even address. I know-- I now understand why the 32BJ  
9 didn't come out, because of that, the fact that  
10 they're scared of seeing the Speaker. They were  
11 scared the Speaker coming and tell them what they  
12 need to hear, but at the same time that-- look, the  
13 guards get abused by the tenants. The guards get  
14 abused by these tenants presidents. A lot of the  
15 tenant presidents are corrupt. They play little  
16 dirty games by controlling how the guards get-- do  
17 their job. What people don't understand that the  
18 guards who work at NYCHA works for a security  
19 company. They don't work for NYCHA. They work for  
20 the company. And what happens is if you're a guard  
21 and you do something that the company don't want you  
22 to do, you can get fired. The only thing that  
23 protects these guards from like the real hell as a  
24 guard is the union, 32 BJ. At the same time I'm  
25 calling on the abolishment of all resident president

1  
2 input when it comes to security schedules and how  
3 security is operated. I'm calling on the eradication  
4 of how CCOP is involved with how security is in the  
5 NYCHA developments. This shouldn't be happening at  
6 all. The same time that-- what happens is security  
7 companies get business contracts. Whoever gives the  
8 lowest bid gets the contract. So yeah, if the guard--  
9 - if a company gets paid by NYCHA \$20 an hour,  
10 they're going to pay the guard \$16 an hour. So if  
11 you're getting paid \$16 an hour in a city where you  
12 have to make \$30 an hour to have a-- be what is  
13 called a livable wage, yeah, they're going do all the  
14 type of stuff, sleep on the job, abandon their post,  
15 walk out on their job. It's something where like  
16 you, as the Chair--

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Thank  
18 you for your testimony.

19 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Alright, thank  
20 you. I got to go.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The-- can we have  
22 Kenisha Conrad [sp?]- Cornish [sp?], sorry about  
23 that. Kezilar Cornish, please. Thank you. You may  
24 begin your testimony.

25

1  
2 KEZILAR CORNISH: Hello, Council Member  
3 Banks and everyone else. So, I was listening to the  
4 testimony, and so they were talking about how many of  
5 the security apparatus that they have the NYCHA  
6 buildings are not working, and so I was asking that--  
7 will the citizens whose buildings are not working be  
8 the first buildings to receive the geofencing,  
9 etcetera, in order to plug the security? Because  
10 obviously, if they have security at the other sites  
11 that are working, then they don't need the geofencing  
12 first. It should be the citizens that have no  
13 security at this point because of the broken  
14 apparatuses to receive that. Is that in the making  
15 for them? Also, something that's fundamental that  
16 they're saying that the citizens were not able to  
17 identify whether or not this was the Fire Department  
18 or the security guards. Something that's simple as  
19 an identification badge should be able to fix that.  
20 Why the people that are working there don't have  
21 identification badges so that the people can clearly  
22 see significantly that they are workers of this kind  
23 or that kind. Simple. Okay. So, what committees or  
24 voting process is to determine what buildings receive  
25 the CCTV? They also said that they check every day

1  
2 to see if the CCTVs is working, but not if the guards  
3 are actually on post or securing the perimeters of  
4 the building. she testified that, you know, every day  
5 they check to see if the cameras are working and  
6 that's it, as if you know, they just want to make  
7 sure that the apparatuses are working but not if the  
8 people that are working in those perimeters that--

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] 30  
10 seconds to wrap it up.

11 KEZILAR CORNISH: Thank you. So, also  
12 fire and security solicitations, basically that means  
13 that they're soliciting for people to take these  
14 positions. Is that something that's being made known  
15 to the public? Because these are jobs that are  
16 available. And we'd also like to know if it's  
17 possible for these people who are in the tenants  
18 associations, you know, that they may be able to get  
19 those jobs inside of their areas and working their  
20 areas because they have a vested interest in making  
21 sure that these things are secure and safety for  
22 their families as well. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your  
24 testimony. We will now turn to remote testimony.  
25 Once your name is called, a member of our staff will

1 unmute you and the Sergeant at Arms will give you the  
2 go-ahead to begin. Please wait for the Sergeant to  
3 announce that you may begin before delivering your  
4 testimony. We have Renee Keitt.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Renee, you may begin  
7 your testimony.

8 RENEKE KEITT: Okay. I'm actually the  
9 resident association president of the Elliott-Chelsea  
10 Houses. I come today with deep concern, frustration  
11 and a call for accountability. FJC security, also  
12 known as Allied Universal, has long provided security  
13 and fire watch guards at public housing developments.  
14 Most recently they have been awarded \$76 million  
15 contract in 2019, on track that has now ballooned to  
16 \$155 million. On top of that, FJC holds a separate  
17 \$6.5 million contract with the Mayor's office. We  
18 need this to stop, and it has. This practice has  
19 gone on for years and it continues. We are back  
20 again demanding transparency, oversight and resident  
21 engagement, something mandated under HUD's 964  
22 regulations as Mr. Martinez has stated. NYCHA has  
23 failed to enforce contractual obligation and has not  
24 demanded a return of funds where contractors have not  
25

1  
2 complied. Why has there been no public process for  
3 recovery of money they were overcharged? Like in the  
4 case of the now infamous \$700 lightbulb scandal.  
5 NYCHA repeated claims it lacks funding. If that's  
6 the case, they should be ensuring every dollar is  
7 spent wisely. Instead, we see waste, poor oversight,  
8 and decisions that erode public trust. We are tired.  
9 We continue to face NYCHA's failures in its most  
10 basic responsibility, to manage and protect public  
11 housing and its residents. It feel intentional. It  
12 feels like they are trying to destroy this prime  
13 housing stock to hand it over to developers. Who is  
14 ensuring that recommendations NYCHA claims have  
15 accepted are actually being implemented? Is this  
16 under the purview of the federal monitor? If not, it  
17 should be. There must be penalties written into the  
18 executive leadership contracts. If this is about  
19 money and funding, then failure must come with  
20 consequences. NYCHA has over 300 lawyers at a cost  
21 of \$50 million. Surely someone can revise a contract  
22 to hold vendors accountable. This is inexcusable.  
23 This is shameful. These officials are sworn in. If  
24 they lie, what is the penalty? If one exists, it  
25 must be enforced. Security should not be used--

1  
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Time  
3 expired.

4 RENEE KEITT: [inaudible]

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: 30 seconds to wrap it  
6 pu.

7 RENEE KEITT: we call for a moratorium of  
8 PACT, NYCHA's claim that security is now needed is no  
9 longer paid \$70 million. Sorry. That was Erik  
10 Bottcher, paid \$70 million to NYPD raising secret  
11 issues about representation. We are taxpayers. We  
12 already pay for the NYPD. To be forced to pay again  
13 for services others receive through public funding is  
14 double taxation. NYCHA needs a revolution, a  
15 revolution of advocacy, of honest resident  
16 engagement, of sustained reinvestment and continued  
17 maintenance. We need real solutions, real  
18 accountability, and respect for our communities.  
19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Renee.  
21 Thank you for your testimony. We'll now move to Gail  
22 Frederick [sp?].

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

24 SADIE: It's Sadie. No worries. Thank  
25 you for this platform, Chairman Banks. There's no

1  
2 transparency or accountability. As per Assemblyman  
3 Epstein's newsletter from a report submitted by  
4 Comptroller Lander, Riis received over a billion  
5 dollars in capital funds since 2019 and protected  
6 another \$600 million from 2023 to 2042, but yet it's  
7 ailed with lead, asbestos, mold, arsenic,  
8 contaminated soil, and bribery. Same contractors,  
9 i.e., three different companies, due to no or low  
10 bid, undertrained had violated OSHA regulations,  
11 water, air quality when remediating lead and other  
12 issues from my apartment and countless other  
13 residents as well. We have also incurred ailments,  
14 illnesses, and health conditions that can't be  
15 treated or untreated. As you know, Beth Israel  
16 Hospital is closed. There's over 71 and counting  
17 residents at Riis alone whose quality of life is  
18 violated. Their gross negligence has cost people  
19 their lives. Imagine the atrocities at the other  
20 developments. Unlocking funds for NYCHA should not  
21 be at the tenant's detriment. Collect the fines,  
22 investigate past poor invoices, NYCHA staff and  
23 contractors as to why gross mismanagement is afoot.  
24 Protect, inform, and comply with the 964 regs. Riis  
25 beatpack [sic] scorecard section 9, 667 to PACT [sic]

1  
2 371, game over. I say this to give hope to those  
3 residents in development who are in elections and  
4 undergoing conversions. United we stand and divided  
5 we fall. Preserve public housing and save Section 9.  
6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your  
8 testimony and your advocacy-- your strong advocacy.  
9 This ends-- end of the testimony. If we have  
10 inadvertently missed anyone that has registered to  
11 testify today and has yet to be-- have been called,  
12 please the Zoom to raise your hand function if you  
13 are testifying remotely and you will be called in the  
14 order that your hand has been raised. If you are  
15 testifying in person, please come to the dais.  
16 Seeing none, I will now close this hearing. I thank  
17 you to the members of the administration and members  
18 of the public who have joined us today to discuss  
19 this very important topic. This hearing is  
20 adjourned.

21 [gavel]

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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 May 18, 2025