

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

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November 28, 2018  
Start: 11:24 a.m.  
Recess: 11:53 a.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: KAREN KOSLOWITZ  
Chairperson

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

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

2 [sound check] [background comments/pause]

3 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please. [Gavel]

4 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Good morning and  
5 thank you for returning to our recessed hearing. My  
6 name is Karen Koslowitz, and I am honored to chair  
7 the City Council Committed on Rules, Privileges and  
8 Elections. Before we begin, I would like to  
9 introduce the Rules Committee Council Members and  
10 other Council Members who have returned for the Rules  
11 Committee vote. First, we are pleased to be joined  
12 by our Speaker Corey Johnson as a member of the Rules  
13 Committee as well as Minority Leader Steven Matteo  
14 from Staten Island, Council Member Adrienne Adams  
15 from Queens, Council Member Margaret Chin from  
16 Manhattan. [background comments] Council Member  
17 Rafael Espinal from Brooklyn, Council Member Ritchie  
18 Torres of the Bronx and Council Member Mark Treyger  
19 from Brooklyn. There are Council Members that will  
20 be joining us. The Rules Committee is meeting today  
21 to resume a recessed hearing, the first part of which  
22 we held on Monday, November 26, 2018. This hearing  
23 addresses the appointment of Ms. Margaret Garnett as  
24 Commission of the New York City Department of  
25 Investigation. Mayor Bill de Blasio nominated

2 Margaret Garnett to serve as Commissioner. As  
3 required by the New York City Charter Chapter 2,  
4 Section 31, the Mayor submitted Ms. Garnett's name to  
5 the Council for its advice and consent. The Rules  
6 Committee will soon vote on whether to grant Ms.  
7 Garnett such as advice and consent. If the candidate  
8 receives the Rules Committee's advice and consent,  
9 the full Council will vote on the nomination later  
10 this afternoon at the Council's Stated Meeting. If  
11 approved, Ms. Garnett will be appointed DOI  
12 Commissioner to get us started. I would like to call  
13 on Speaker Johnson for his statement.

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Good morning. Thank  
15 you, Chair Koslowitz for chairing the hearing earlier  
16 this week, and for chairing this hearing this  
17 morning. The City Charter gives the New York City  
18 Council the power of advice and consent to just a  
19 limited number of officers in city government, and it  
20 is a power that we do not take lightly. Indeed, our  
21 advice and consent to the appointment of the  
22 Department of Investigation's Commissioner may very  
23 well be the most important of all. Through its  
24 investigatory powers, DOI guards against corruption  
25 waste and fraud. DOI ensures that city agencies,

1 city contractors and public officials are working to  
2 further the interest of the city, not to benefit  
3 themselves. Accordingly, the Commissioner of DOI has  
4 broad authority to investigate allegations of wrong  
5 doing, to audit the operations of city agencies, and  
6 to make appointments for various positions  
7 responsible for overseeing the operations of the  
8 city. Similarly, DOI has the responsibility of  
9 reporting its findings to the Council, which can  
10 inform some of the actions the Council could take to  
11 reform city government. Fulfillment of DOI's mission  
12 is important in ensuring faith in government and this  
13 responsibility rests on the shoulders of the DOI  
14 Commissioner. On Monday, this committee had the  
15 opportunity to hear from Margaret Garnett, the  
16 Mayor's nominee for Commissioner of the Department of  
17 Investigation. She came before us and presented a  
18 compelling argument as what her vast professional  
19 experience and temperament make her an outstanding  
20 candidate to lead the Department of Investigation.  
21 Prior to the hearing, she answered questions  
22 presented by the Council and during the hearing she  
23 ably answered questions poised by myself, and a  
24 number of the colleagues on this committee and folks  
25

1 who are not on this committee. Ms. Garnett has  
2 communicated to the Council that her vision for DOI  
3 is to first uphold the dignity of public service by  
4 rooting out wrongdoers who abuse the public's trust  
5 or appropriate public money. Two, to use the DOI's  
6 vantage point as the city's oversight agency to try  
7 to improve public services by identifying systemic  
8 failures, exposing waste and mismanagement, and  
9 giving the Council, the Administration and the public  
10 the information they need to push for necessary  
11 reforms. But most importantly, she is committed to  
12 maintaining the independence of DOI, and ensuring  
13 that it's free from political interference. For this  
14 city to succeed, our employees and residents must  
15 believe in the integrity of the Department of  
16 Investigation and that the Commissioner is beyond  
17 reproach. Given her impressive history of dedicated  
18 public service, and from what I heard and saw in my  
19 interactions with her both privately and at the  
20 hearing, I have no doubt that Ms. Garnett can and  
21 will achieve this vision. Because of this, I am  
22 happy to vote in favor of Ms. Garnett's appointment  
23 as Commissioner of the Department of Investigation.  
24 Thank you, Madam Chair.  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Thank you, Mr.  
3 Speaker. I-I agree with Speaker Johnson. Ms.  
4 Garnett has the resume and qualifications to serve as  
5 DOI Commissioner. Mr. Garnett's responses to our  
6 questioning responded satisfactorily to the Council's  
7 primary concerns, whether she would commit to running  
8 an independent agency free of influence by City  
9 Government, and whether she would continue all  
10 investigations currently and under—and currently  
11 underway at DOI. Ms. Garnett's responses assured me  
12 that she would run DOI free of any outside  
13 constraints and influence and pursue investigations  
14 currently underway. I will now open the floor to  
15 Rules Committee members to be followed by other  
16 Council Members in attendance for any brief comments  
17 concerning our nominee. Does anybody have--?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: [off mic] Well I  
19 do actually. (sic)

20 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Council Member  
21 Torres.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I-I share the  
23 sentiments of—of both Council Member Koslowitz and  
24 Speaker Johnson that I think DOI is the immune system  
25 of good government here in New York City, and we have

1  
2 in Ms. Garnett really the consummate law enforcement  
3 professional. No one can question her  
4 qualifications. No one can question her  
5 independence, but I do believe that the Speaker  
6 deserves another spread (sic) because the Advice and  
7 Consent role that we play sends a clear message to  
8 the opposite end of City Hall that the Council would  
9 not tolerate any one other than a truly independent  
10 DOI Commissioner, but that was—that created an  
11 incentive to choose the best possible nominee. So, I  
12 just give you enormous credit, Mr. Speaker, for  
13 exercising the checks and balances role that the City  
14 Council plays.

15 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Seeing no other  
16 further comments, I would now like to call on the  
17 Clerk to take the vote.

18 CLERK: William Martin, Committee Clerk,  
19 roll call vote committee on Rules, Privileges and  
20 Elections. Chair Koslowitz.

21 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: I wholeheartedly  
22 vote aye.

23 CLERK: Matteo.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Aye.

25 CLERK: Chin.



2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Ms. Garnett is  
3 highly qualified for this position and I proudly vote  
4 aye. Thank you.

5 CLERK: Espinal.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: I vote aye.

7 CLERK: Torres.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I proudly vote  
9 aye.

10 CLERK: Treyger.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Aye.

12 CLERK: Adams.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: I'm proudly voting  
14 aye.

15 CLERK: Speaker Johnson.

16 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I want to thank Chair  
17 Koslowitz and Chair Torres for their work on this  
18 nomination. I also want to thank Chuck Davis and  
19 also our Committee Counsel, and Jason Goldman and  
20 Robe Newman for their work on this. This was an  
21 important process I'm glad we've gone to this point,  
22 and I proudly vote aye in favor or Ms. Garnett's  
23 nomination to be the next Commissioner of the  
24 Department of Investigation.

2 CLERK: By a vote of 8 in the  
3 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,  
4 the item has been adopted by the committee. [pause]

5 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: We will hold this  
6 vote open for 15 more minutes. Advice and Consent of  
7 the Rules to this nomination has been granted. The  
8 full Council final vote will take place later today.  
9 Thank you to our esteemed Speaker Rules Committee  
10 Members and all Council Members. [pause] Rules,  
11 Privileges and Elections [background comments]

12 CLERK: The final vote in Committee on  
13 Rules Preconsidered M is adopted by a vote of 8 in  
14 the affirmative, 0 in the negative and no  
15 abstentions.

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

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date December 21, 2018