

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
INVESTIGATIONS

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March 14, 2024
Start: 11:30 a.m.
Recess: 1:03 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - COMMITTEE ROOM, 16TH
FLOOR

B E F O R E: Gale A. Brewer, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Diana Ayala
Rita C. Joseph
Shekar Krishnan
Lincoln Restler
Nantasha M. Williams
Kalman Yeger

A P P E A R A N C E S

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner at Department
of Investigations

Towaki Komatsu, self

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone
3 check for the Committee on Oversight and
4 Investigations, recorded by Layla Lynch on March 14,
5 2024, on the 16th Floor.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning and
7 welcome to the New York City Council Committee on
8 Oversight and Investigation.

9 At this time, please place your phone on
10 vibrate or silent mode.

11 If you want to submit testimony, send it
12 to testimony@council.nyc.gov. Once again, that's
13 testimony@council.nyc.gov.

14 At any time during this hearing, do not
15 approach the dais.

16 Thank you for your cooperation.

17 Chair, we are ready to begin.

18 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: [GAVEL] Thank you
19 very much. I'm Gale Brewer, and I want to welcome you
20 also to the Committee on Oversight and Investigation
21 during these budget hearings. We will review the
22 Department of Investigations' Fiscal '25 budget to
23 understand the changes in the Department's budget and
24 how it addresses the needs of New Yorkers to
25 comprehensively improve the way New York operates.

2 Department of Investigation promotes and maintains
3 integrity and efficiency in government operations
4 across our city. DOI's Fiscal '25 Preliminary Budget
5 totals 45.5 million, including 24 million for
6 personal services to support 293 positions and 21.5
7 million for what we call other-than-personal
8 services.

9 I would like to welcome and thank
10 Commissioner Strauber and her team at DOI for their
11 steadfast work over the year. The Department of
12 Investigation has successfully worked with Homeland
13 Security in uncovering corruption at NYCHA, I'm sure
14 she'll talk about that, performed important
15 investigations and oversight, and issued policy and
16 procedural recommendations to City agencies, all with
17 a very restricted budget, one that I think should
18 increase. I look forward to continuing our fruitful
19 conversations with oversight hearings.

20 However, we have a lot of work ahead,
21 holding agencies accountable and ensuring public
22 money is spent lawfully. That's number one. Today we
23 are interested in learning about the Commissioner's
24 plans for the Department in the coming year,
25 including DOI's role with the city as an oversight

2 Department, which is incredibly important; it's
3 revenue-generating capacities, which is why I don't
4 understand why there are any cuts to the agency as
5 well as how we can work together to improve and
6 baseline the Department staffing needs, as I have
7 stated. This plan did not include any new needs and
8 decreased the Department's Fiscal '25 budget by 2
9 million although there were no headcount reductions
10 in this plan. This Committee and this Council is
11 concerned that after years of reductions, the
12 Department is not adequately funded. We would like to
13 discuss the concerns we have on its current budget at
14 this hearing.

15 The Committee would also like to discuss
16 budgetary decisions made by the Administration and
17 highlight the important role that oversight agencies
18 play in City government, and I'd like to add that
19 when we ask about this with OMB, we're often told
20 when they're staffed up completely, then they will
21 get more funding if appropriate, and I point out you
22 can never staff up completely. People are going to
23 move to other jobs. You need to have funding to do
24 this oversight. Staffing up completely is not
25 possible.

2 I want to thank our Committee Staff and
3 the Oversight and Investigations Division staff for
4 their hard work, Owen Kotowski, Jack Storey, Nicole
5 Catá, Alex Yablon, Erica Cohen, Zachary Meher, also
6 from O&I, Kevin Frick, Katie Sinise, and my staff,
7 particularly Sam Goldstein.

8 I'd like to now welcome and thank
9 Commissioner Strauber, the Department's,
10 investigators, background investigators, and
11 inspectors general for the work that they do, and I
12 look forward to hearing from the Commissioner. Thank
13 you so much. All yours.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CATÁ: Thank you, Chair
15 Brewer. Before we begin, I will administer the
16 affirmation.

17 DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber,
18 could you please raise your right hand?

19 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
20 whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this
21 Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member
22 questions?

23 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I do.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CATÁ: Thank you. You
25 may begin when ready.

2 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Good morning and
3 thank you, Chair Brewer, for the introduction. I'm
4 Jocelyn Strauber. I have the privilege of serving as
5 the Commissioner of the Department of Investigation,
6 and I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you
7 today about DOI's Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget. We
8 have achieved a great deal over the past year. DOI
9 has conducted complex and impactful investigations
10 involving a range of City agencies. Many of those
11 investigations are still ongoing. Many have resulted
12 in criminal prosecutions and convictions, both
13 federal and state, as well as referrals to agencies
14 with recommendations for policy and procedural
15 reforms. These prosecutions and investigations have
16 targeted public officials and City employees involved
17 in bribery and other misconduct, such as frauds
18 related to sick leave and overtime, as well as
19 persons outside of City government engaged in
20 construction fraud, wage theft, and various schemes
21 to defraud public programs. A number of our
22 investigations were prompted by City employees and
23 agencies reporting potentially problematic conduct to
24 DOI, reflecting both the importance of the City's
25 affirmative reporting obligation and the strong

relationships that DOI has with the agencies we oversee. Just last month, as you are aware, DOI Investigations led to arrests in two particularly significant multi-defendant cases. In early February, 70 current and former New York City Housing Authority, or NYCHA, employees responsible for micro purchases at the housing development level were charged by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York with bribery and extortion charges in the largest single day bribery take down in Department of Justice History. Later in February, 25 defendants, individuals, and one corporation were charged by the Manhattan District Attorney's Office for providing and procuring safety training cards for City construction workers who did not actually complete the required training. This left approximately 20,000 people working on construction sites without the safety training required by local law and the Department of Buildings. In both of these matters, DOI issued recommendations that have been accepted and are in various stages of implementation by NYCHA and DOB respectively. We issued nine public reports in 2023 on topics including the New York City Police

Department's Criminal Gang Database, the negative impacts of excessive police overtime, fire safety and prevention at NYCHA, and fraud by certified asbestos investigators, among others. Each report contained detailed recommendations in each of these areas. We issued a report in January 2024 concerning data maintenance and reporting at the Department of Homeless Services' Prevention, Assistance, and Temporary Housing, or PATH, Intake Center, and we have additional reports in the pipeline to be issued in the coming months concerning parking placards, the handling of the Jacob Riss NYCHA development water crisis where a development's water was incorrectly deemed to be contaminated with arsenic as well as NYPD's use of surveillance technology. We are also supervising 11 integrity monitorships in which DOI selects and supervises an outside firm to provide oversight of either vendors that have historical integrity issues but provide a critical city service or of large-scale, high-budget City projects. Eight of the 11 monitorships are vendor focused monitorships, and those are funded by the vendor. Of the large-scale budget project monitorships, one relates to post Hurricane Sandy rebuilding, that one

2 is actually funded by the Federal Emergency
3 Management Agency, and the last two monitorships of
4 City projects are City-funded, and those include the
5 Asylum Seeker Initiative, for which DOI has retained
6 KPMG as the monitor, and the Borough-Based Jails
7 Construction Project, for which DOI has retained K2
8 Integrity as the monitor, and I will discuss the
9 budget implications of these two monitorships a
10 little later on. In addition, DOI's investigations
11 recoup funds for the City. In Fiscal Year 2023, our
12 investigations resulted in the return of 2.1 million
13 dollars to the City and, in the first four months of
14 Fiscal Year 2024, that number is 1.3 million in
15 returns, and we expect more financial recoveries to
16 be agreed to and ordered this Fiscal Year. In Fiscal
17 Year 2023, 10.1 million in recoveries were agreed to
18 and ordered to be collected in future years. In the
19 first four months of Fiscal Year 2024, that number
20 agreed to and ordered is 3.4 million. As these
21 examples of our work reflect, many of our major
22 indicators in Calendar Year 2023 and in the first
23 four months of Fiscal Year 2024 are on the rise or
24 have remained steady, including complaints received,
25 recommendations issued, active investigations, and

arrests made. For a full view of our work in Calendar Year 2023, our year-end release is attached to the written submission of my testimony. These accomplishments are significant under any circumstances, but especially so in light of the headcount cuts that DOI has sustained over the past few years as well as the departure of many highly skilled and experienced employees to higher-paying jobs in the private and public sectors. The work of the past year is a testament to the dedication, hard work and talent of the entire DOI staff, who manage our operations and our investigations, many of whom had not received raises for several years and who were among the last employees in the City to receive a cost-of-living increase, because over 95 percent of our team are managerial or regional jurisdiction employees. Our staff are deeply committed to DOI and its mission, and I and the entire DOI executive team, could not be more grateful to them. We are honored to have the opportunity to work with them each and every day.

Let me turn now to our 2025 Preliminary Budget. DOI's Fiscal Year 2025 Preliminary Budget is 45.5 million; 24 million for personal services and

21.55 million for other-than-personal services. At the start of Fiscal Year 2025, as it has in previous years, DOI anticipates receiving an additional 1.6 million dollars in Intra-City funds from other agencies that support a portion of our staffing. The total Fiscal 2025 budget will support 465 employees, 315 funded by DOI's budget, and the remainder through Memoranda of Understanding arrangements with other City agencies and public authorities, including NYCHA and New York City Health and Hospitals. DOI is a small agency that runs an extremely lean operation. Our core mission to investigate corruption, fraud and other wrongdoing, to make recommendations to improve how City government works, and to ensure public transparency about what we do requires a team with diverse skills and experience made up of Inspectors General, investigators, attorneys, auditors, data analysts, statisticians, digital forensic experts, information technology experts, and executive and administrative staff. The success of our work depends on all of the people who power our agency. As a result, DOI is hit particularly hard by mandated budget reductions. We do not have programmatic initiatives or discretionary obligations that can be

easily cut to satisfy Programs to Eliminate the Gap or PEGs, and thus reducing vacant positions has been our primary tool to meet reduction targets. To that end, between Fiscal Years' 2021 and 2024 budgets, 50 budgeted positions have been eliminated to satisfy mandated cuts, reducing our budgeted headcount by nearly 14 percent, from 365 in the end of 2021 to 315 as of this week. DOI has worked hard to fill all of its budgeted positions and to reduce its vacancies. Just prior to the hiring freeze, in August 2023, DOI successfully reduced vacancies to just 19 positions. Since the hiring freeze, that number has risen to approximately 30 vacancies. While we are recruiting for every vacancy, a miscalculation from a prior PEG created a funding shortfall that is limiting our ability to fund all of our vacancies. We are currently in discussions with OMB on how best to resolve this issue. It is our position that a resolution would require OMB to return nearly 1.06 million to DOI's personal services budget and DOI to reduce approximately 15 unfunded headcount. We expect that this issue will be resolved in the upcoming Executive Budget. In order to retain staff, we have fought hard for salary adjustments and created a path

to promotion for our investigative staff as well as improved basic training for them. We know our efforts are working. From February 2023 to February 2024, we have reduced our attrition rate from 16.7 percent to 9.3 percent, and our hiring rate has increased from 10.6 percent to 12.1 percent. The Fiscal Year 2025 Preliminary Budget, taking into account PEGs from Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024, is 20 percent less than our current modified Fiscal Year 2024 budget of 57.17 million. Over the course of the five years covered by this financial plan, DOI has committed 19.9 million in baselined PEG savings to the City. For the November 2023 PEG, DOI made a 2.04 million reduction in Fiscal Year 2024 in the cost of the BBJ construction monitorship. This reduction was made possible by the delayed start in work on that project, such that the need for monitoring in that period was significantly reduced. For the January 2024 PEG, OMB set a baselined PEG target of 1.95 million for each year between Fiscal Years 2024 and 2028. To meet that PEG, DOI cut an additional 400,000 from the BBJ monitorship and 1.5 million from the OTPS budget by re-evaluating some of our infrastructure and maintenance needs, such as

telecommunications and vehicle maintenance and repair. Because DOI's OTPS budget largely consists of non-discretionary obligations, such as rent, we have limited flexibility to make cuts. As a result, to avoid a disruption in operations, we offset the cuts in Fiscal Year 2024 by reprogramming 1.6 million in federal forfeiture funds in accordance with United States Department of Justice guidelines. DOI also reprogrammed 3.4 million in federal forfeiture funds in accordance with DOJ guidelines to meet the outyear PEG targets for Fiscal Years 2025 through 2028.

Additional forfeiture funds may need to be reprogrammed to meet the full target going forward if other projected OTPS savings are not realized. I want to be clear that while DOI is permitted to reprogram forfeiture funds to manage the impact of Citywide budget cuts, DOJ guidelines expressly prohibit the City from making budgetary decisions based on DOI's federal forfeiture funds. The guidelines require that forfeiture funds supplement, not supplant, our budget. Were federal forfeiture funds to be considered in determining DOI's budget, per DOJ guidelines, we could lose its access to the funding. I understand, of course, that DOI is not the only

1 agency facing significant budgetary difficulties, but
2 the reality is that smaller agencies feel a greater
3 impact from so called across-the-board cuts that
4 nominally apply equally to all agencies. I want to
5 reiterate what I said during last year's budget
6 testimony because it continues to be relevant to the
7 current budget discussion, to fully fulfill DOI's
8 mission and to operationalize certain measures
9 intended to promote efficiency, DOI will need more
10 staff in our investigative squads and in other units
11 across the agency and, while we are only one agency,
12 in a City government that must address numerous
13 critical needs, our mission is to maintain
14 efficiencies and ensure integrity and appropriate use
15 of resources citywide, a particularly vital function
16 in the current environment.

18 Let me turn now to our monitorships. With
19 respect to DOI's proactive monitorships, the ones
20 addressed to large-scale City projects, the cost of
21 hiring an outside monitoring firm is included in
22 DOI's overall budget. The City has appropriately
23 funded these monitorships in connection with large-
24 scale, resource-intensive City projects where
25 oversight protects against the risk of fraud, waste,

and misuse. It is important to recognize that DOI's budget for monitorships is used solely to hire outside monitoring firms, whose work provides a benefit to the agency or agencies supervising the project and to the City overall. The funds do not support any additional DOI headcount or other DOI resources, although DOI devotes significant staff time to supervising the monitor. That work includes developing an oversight strategy, conducting site visits, reviewing and evaluating reports, holding regular meetings with the monitor as part of DOI's supervisory role, sharing information or red flags with the relevant stakeholder City agencies and offices, pursuing investigations as appropriate where misconduct is identified, and making any necessary policy and procedural recommendations for reform. DOI has just three staff working to manage all of DOI's monitorships. We also utilize Inspector Generals and their staff throughout the agency to participate in investigations that may arise from the monitorships and to conduct some oversight as appropriate.

Let me describe in a little more detail the scope of the two proactive City-funded monitorships that we are currently managing. The City

has budgeted nearly 6.9 million over 18 months, from July 2023 to December 2024, for oversight of the Asylum Seeker Initiative, to be paid to KPMG, the firm selected by DOI to serve as the outside integrity monitor. The City has budgeted 13.1 million over nearly five years, from July 2023 to June 2028, for the Borough-Based Jails construction monitorship, to be paid to K2 Integrity, the firm selected by DOI to serve as the integrity monitor for that project.

Let me now take a moment to speak to some important DOI initiatives recently undertaken to strengthen our oversight role. As I mentioned earlier, DOI's staff is the foundation for all the work we do, and I am grateful for their continued commitment to this agency and to the work of improving integrity, efficiency, and transparency in New York City government. I am pleased to update the Council on an initiative that DOI has pressed for consistently over the past year, and which OMB recently approved, salary increases for DOI's Assistant Inspectors General, critical supervisors within our investigative squads who directly oversee our investigators and who report to our Deputy Inspectors General. These increases were a part of

our larger self-funded retention effort and followed similar self-funded salary adjustments for our Confidential Investigators, Inspectors General, and Deputy Inspectors General, which we completed last year. As a result of this plan, we have created a clearer promotional path for our investigative staff and provided raises, promotions, title realignments, and parity adjustments for nearly everyone in the agency over the past 18 months. While retention continues to be a challenge, these raises and promotions have been critical to DOI's efforts to retain experienced staff. I am thankful for the Council's support on these efforts and for OMB's approval.

I now want to briefly mention three other initiatives that we began in 2023. At the end of the year, we restructured our Law Enforcement Technology Unit, which, as its name suggests, provides investigative technology that is critical to our cases, such as opening seized phones and recovering stored or deleted materials. This restructuring, which included new leadership for the Unit, is focused on ensuring that we obtain and use cutting-edge investigative technology. We have begun to

1 cross-train staff across the Enforcement Technology
2 Unit's subunits, which include Digital Forensics,
3 Technology Services, and e-Discovery, to expand
4 employees' skills and knowledge bases, promote career
5 growth, and provide increased assistance to our
6 investigative squads. We have also implemented a
7 Technology Liaison Program to train confidential
8 investigators outside of this Law Enforcement
9 Technology Unit in the use of law enforcement
10 technology to build their skills in this area for use
11 in their investigations, and so that they can educate
12 their colleagues about the use of advanced
13 investigative technology.

14
15 In late 2023, DOI embarked on an effort
16 to strengthen the impact of our Policy and Procedural
17 Recommendations, known as PPRs, a critical part of
18 our preventative work to reduce the risk of fraud and
19 corruption by strengthening internal controls and
20 oversight within the City. The public can view our
21 recommendations on our website through a searchable
22 portal. Our PPRs promote transparency in government,
23 accountability by City agencies, and participation by
24 other governing bodies and the public in DOI's anti-
25 corruption work. In order to strengthen the impact of

our recommendations, in late 2023, we began a thorough review of our outstanding PPRs to identify those recommendations that have not yet been implemented by the agencies and to determine which recommendations remain viable and warrant further dialogue with the relevant agencies or City Hall.

Finally, we are in the very early stages of an effort to expand DOI's direct access to City agency databases, so that DOI can conduct data analysis to identify potential corruption and fraud. Several years ago, DOI invested in a stand-alone data analytics team, and their work has shown what DOI can accomplish with access to City data. For example, we regularly review CityTime data to flag potential instances of employees stealing time and taxpayer dollars. Our data analytics team utilized geo-location data including in an investigation that led to federal charges against a man who allegedly stole 16 utility vehicles belonging to NYCHA worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. The data analytics team is also involved in an array of ongoing investigations. Our goal at this stage is to assemble larger data sets and to conduct more sophisticated searches for patterns that can provide leads to investigations.

With respect to our anticipated new needs requests, DOI plans to submit new needs for the upcoming Executive Plan, although in light of the recent PEGs and even with the realignment that we are discussing with OMB, we do not have the resources to fully self-fund these new needs. DOI plans to submit a 1.3 million City tax levy personal services funding request and a 6.5 million capital funding request for consideration. These requests reflect essential operational needs for DOI to effectively and proactively carry out its mission. We expect that the expense request will include funding to support the hiring of 20 staff in total, 18 on the investigative side, including investigators, auditors, data analysts, and forensics experts, as well as two staff members for the Information Technology Unit. Sufficient investigative staffing including in these uniquely skilled areas is central to DOI's mission and work, and our squads are currently under-staffed. We continue to respond to an increasing number of complaints and maintain a large investigative docket but with fewer people, placing a significant burden on our existing staff. These limitations also restrict our ability to conduct proactive data

2 analysis and investigations. The capital request
3 would support the purchase of a new financial
4 planning and analytics program along with an upgrade
5 to our firewall and cybersecurity infrastructure.

6 In conclusion, our mission is critical to
7 protecting and preserving public funds and public
8 confidence in City government. The City's support of
9 a watchdog agency like DOI is a testament to its
10 commitment to integrity, efficiency, and good
11 government. I thank you for your continued efforts to
12 ensure that we have the resources necessary to fully
13 fulfill our mission, and I'm happy to take any
14 questions you may have.

15 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very much,
16 Commissioner, for excellent testimony. We've been
17 joined by Council Members Ayala and Council Member
18 Williams, and I think you had excellent testimony,
19 but I think the word placard would be something that
20 both of my Colleagues would be very happy to know
21 that you are going to be observing and investigating.
22 That comes up all the time. I'm sure they'll have
23 questions, I know you've covered some of this, but I
24 just want to understand the budget requests for FY25,
25 and I know last year's, there was certainly

2 investigative and a complaint unit and data clerks
3 and a timekeeper. I you mentioned it, but just so
4 everybody can hear. What are your exact requests for
5 '25, and I thought it was good that you made it clear
6 that forfeiture is not part of this. I know for sure
7 that even when you get state money or federal money,
8 you're not supposed to supplant it so that's the same
9 with forfeiture.

10 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: That's correct.

11 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: And I also know that
12 the monitors are separate. Last year, for the last
13 two years, I've been trying to get funding through
14 OMB and I'm hoping this year might make a difference,
15 and I noticed that you have had some conversations
16 with them so if you could just be a little bit, even
17 more specific about what your request is and what it
18 would cover.

19 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Sure. In terms of
20 the needs that we're requesting, it's really 20
21 additional staff. That includes two information
22 technology personnel, that's really an operational
23 need, and the remaining 18 staff will be, and we will
24 determine the precise allocation among these
25 categories, but we are looking for additional

2 confidential investigators, roughly 11 or so,
3 probably out of that 18, and the other positions
4 would be split among what I would describe as skill-
5 specific positions that serve our investigations so
6 that would be auditors, data analysts, digital
7 forensic experts who can help us with the
8 investigative technology side of our investigations,
9 and I just want to note that some of the categories
10 that you mentioned that were in our new needs request
11 last year such as a complaint unit and certain data
12 entry clerks, those would be very significant
13 improvements as well but, given the PEGs and the
14 budget cuts and the attrition that we're dealing
15 with, we're asking for the sort of fundamentals to
16 conduct our investigations. Those positions, if we're
17 able to get them in the future, clerks, etc., they
18 will take some of the administrative burden from our
19 investigators, and those would be wonderful positions
20 to have but, given where we are now, we're sort of
21 going back to the basics and trying to make sure that
22 we have the full complement of investigative staff
23 that we need.

24 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. Again, in your
25 testimony, you talked about some of the work that

2 you're doing. My question would be, what would you be
3 able to do, in other words, maybe you have a backlog,
4 what would you be able to do that you can't do now
5 with this increase in staffing. Obviously, you talked
6 about some of the needs that you have, technology,
7 etc. but if could just be more specific about maybe
8 generally, because you can't say everything that
9 you're working on, I know that.

10 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: So one area where
11 I think we would like to spend more time would be on
12 proactive investigations, and what I mean by that are
13 investigations that are not complaint-driven, that
14 don't necessarily relate to wrongs that we can see or
15 that are reported to us, but that involve doing data
16 analytics and other sort of more sophisticated,
17 creative, investigative steps to identify problems
18 that haven't yet surfaced, that might not yet be the
19 subject of complaints. When we're dealing with
20 responding to a significant volume of complaints and
21 responding to the significant problems in the city
22 that we can see, we have less time to set aside for
23 that kind of proactive work, which I think could
24 ideally have a significant preventative effect as
25 well, if we can catch problems in a smaller stage

2 before they become more significant so that's one
3 area where I think additional staff would be
4 extremely useful. The other area is that I think
5 there is often in investigations that you conduct, if
6 you have the time and the resources, a way to go a
7 level deeper where you may see a problem and you may
8 be aware of a person or persons engaging in
9 misconduct. If you have the time and the resources to
10 commit, you can sometimes sort of fan out from that
11 and see whether that problem is actually multiplied
12 across multiple people that maybe haven't come to
13 your attention initially. Now, we do that when we
14 can, but I think we could do more of it. A sort of
15 good example of a real sort of deep, sustained dive
16 into an investigative area that yielded significant
17 results is the recent NYCHA arrests, right? It takes
18 significant time and resources to do a case of that
19 nature. The hope would be that we could do more
20 things like that, assuming that the cases and the
21 misconduct is out there, if we had a bigger staff. We
22 would at least be able to kick the tires, I think, a
23 little bit more, and we are endeavoring to do that in
24 all the cases that we do, but these limitations are,
25 are real obviously.

2 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Another limitation,
3 and Chair Ayala had a hearing on this which I
4 attended in General Welfare, was what you did with
5 the PATH and the issues regarding all of the
6 individuals who are applying to be part of shelter.
7 These are usually New Yorkers, not the migrants, and
8 so my question to that would be another example, and
9 the Chair might want to jump in, is that it was a
10 little upsetting to me that the recommendations had
11 not been followed in a timely basis. In other words,
12 you did that DOI discussion of what happened, and I
13 would think that there would have been more response,
14 there was eventually, I understand that, but more of
15 a response because in order to get people to follow
16 recommendations, you actually have to stay on top of
17 them. I've learned that over the years. Is that an
18 area where you could also use more staff or is that
19 something that you feel you're doing appropriately
20 because I know there are many recommendations even
21 preceding your tenure that may not be followed.

22 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: This is an area
23 that we have recently refocused on where we're going
24 back to make sure that we're really following up on
25 those historical recommendations, and that's

2 something that I think we are now doing and will be
3 doing some significant work in, but certainly having
4 more people available to have those conversations, it
5 not only means that we can do more of that work, but
6 I think we can do it at a faster pace. The report
7 that you alluded to, these are real deep dive
8 efforts. They take a lot of work on the part of a lot
9 of people, and folks have just so many hours in the
10 day so if we have more people, we can A, get some of
11 this work done more quickly, which I think is
12 important to be able to come back to the public and
13 give them the results of our investigation and enable
14 the agencies to take the necessary actions that we
15 recommend more quickly so that's one way in which I
16 think additional staff would be helpful, and I think
17 there are also some areas that we might be able to
18 spend more time on, like following up on our
19 outstanding recommendations if we had more staff.

20 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay.

21 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Absolutely.

22 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: We're delighted to
23 have Council Member Restler. Do you have questions?
24 I'm delighted to have Council Member Restler. Go
25 ahead.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: We're all excited
3 that you're here, Council Member Restler.

4 I guess the followup question to that is
5 if DOI is making recommendations, it's on, it's just
6 low. If DOI is making recommendations to DSS to
7 implement policies and procedures to capture data
8 accurately, does DOI then have the capacity to go
9 back and ensure that the agency is following those
10 recommendations or are they then expected to report
11 back to you? How does that work?

12 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I think it's an
13 iterative process so we have a back and forth with
14 the agency first to make sure that the recommendation
15 is actually being implemented and to check on the
16 status but, if we want to do a separate gathering of
17 data or review of information to ensure that even
18 after a recommendation is accepted and implemented,
19 that the agency is really following that procedure
20 consistently, then that would be another type of
21 inquiry that we would need to undertake, and do we
22 have the resources to do it? Sort of yes, we do, but
23 not necessarily for every recommendation in every
24 case across every squad.

2 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Council Member
3 Williams, you had some questions. I'll ask many
4 later. Go ahead.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yes. Okay. I
6 have one question, well, two. My question is
7 regarding the procurement process so we're doing
8 participatory budgeting and something like a bathroom
9 is very, very expensive, and we've heard reasons for
10 high cost is supply chain issues, inflation, and
11 COVID. We believe there might be other reasons that
12 are too overstated since this issue preceded these
13 reasons. One conversation that we've been having in
14 our office that identified the City Record, which is
15 where agencies put the request is not reaching out to
16 as many providers, which makes the pool small enough
17 and it does not introduce competition so can you
18 elaborate on DOI's approach to monitoring the
19 procurement process to ensure taxpayer dollars are
20 spent efficiently and effectively?

21 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: We don't do
22 auditing of agency's procurement processes generally.
23 If there was a specific issue, like perhaps the issue
24 that you're identifying, that would be something that
25 we could look at, and we would do, I would imagine,

2 the same type of review we do with any policy and
3 procedural issue, we would see what are the agency's
4 policies, are those policies being followed, and you
5 could use data analytics in this area as well. If
6 there are costs that appear to be outsized, above
7 what they should be, you can try to identify who are
8 other vendors out there that provide the service,
9 what's a reasonable cost, that, that kind of thing.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay. So only
11 like when prompted, not proactively like reviewing.

12 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: We could do it
13 proactively. I'm not aware that right now we're doing
14 a proactive review of a particular procurement
15 process, but it's certainly something that we could
16 do if an issue was brought to our attention. We could
17 also do it proactively. It would be the sort of thing
18 that likely would be guided by some kind of data
19 analytics work that showed a mismatch in costs, that
20 one agency was spending as opposed to others or a
21 mismatch in pricing versus what market pricing
22 appeared to be, that kind of thing.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, and the
24 other question I have is another bill that we were
25 working on having to do with CCRB and NYPD's access,

2 easier access to NYPD body cams. This was a big
3 holdup in CCRB and cost a lot of time and resources
4 and so just wondering. macro level, how much
5 difficulty and effort DOI faces when trying to gain
6 data access from any respective agency and how that
7 affects your budget.

8 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: That's a broad
9 question, and it does vary to some extent depending
10 on the agency that you're talking about. I would say
11 with the NYPD in particular, we have developed a very
12 good relationship. Our contacts with their Legal
13 Department and with others have enabled us to get the
14 materials that we need for our investigations on a
15 very reasonable timeframe. With respect to body cam
16 footage in particular, there's a redaction process.
17 It can take time to get body cam footage. We have not
18 experienced challenges in that area that have
19 negatively impacted our investigations. We did make
20 some recommendations a number of years ago regarding
21 access to body cam footage that are in various stages
22 of implementation.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yeah, and that
24 was just an example, but I guess just wondering
25 overall, like I'm sure you might have, I'm looking at

2 the type of people you have working for you, but I'm
3 sure you have people that are like collecting data,
4 collecting information, and so if you have to get
5 information from an agency, does that at all affect
6 your ability, your scopes of work, how much work you
7 have to do in collection of the data from said
8 agencies? Like it is a seamless process or is it a
9 little bit more cumbersome to work with agencies when
10 you're trying to grab different forms of whatever
11 type of data that you need to conduct your
12 investigation?

13 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Yeah, I think it
14 really depends on the type of data. Typically, if
15 there are delays in receiving data, that definitely
16 can delay our investigations, and that can happen. If
17 there are privacy concerns, for example, there may be
18 a need for an agreement to ensure that DOI will treat
19 the data with the security that it requires. We've
20 had a very productive working relationship with OTI
21 to ensure that we're able to get what we need while
22 fulfilling all of the requirements relating to the
23 privacy laws so I don't have a particular concern
24 about how this is working now, and we have a sort of
25 tight process within the office of escalating any

2 delays that might occur so that I or other members of
3 the executive team can address them with the relevant
4 agencies.

5 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Welcome to Council
6 Member Yeger.

7 Picking up on Council Member Williams,
8 one bathroom at the Parks Department, one building
9 with, I don't know if it's male, female, gender
10 neutral, 11 million dollars. That's what it costs. So
11 I do think you have a point there, Council Member,
12 and something, they could do an audit on it, but
13 proactively across the board is every single Parks
14 Department bathroom 11 million dollar or mores so
15 that's, she's got a point there. It's just
16 unbelievably expensive.

17 Second, if you could elaborate because I
18 know that there is an IG fairly recently at the
19 Police Department, and if you could elaborate what
20 staffing needs she has or needs or vacancies and
21 anything that you could say about her budget.

22 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I think the
23 current staffing in that Department is 18. We have 18
24 staff members and I think four vacancies. As we think
25 about filling vacancies, obviously we're in a two-

2 for-one hiring situation, so we have to consider with
3 every vacancy we have what is our highest priority,
4 and who have we already interviewed and identified
5 who might be waiting on us to be able to start them
6 who they might lose so we've got to prioritize among
7 the different groups. I think right now we have
8 sufficient staff in that group. We would like to be
9 able to fill those four additional vacancies to bring
10 them back up to a 22-person unit. As you know, that
11 unit put out a number of significant reports last
12 year. We have other reports in the pipeline for this
13 year, including an upcoming annual report and the
14 report on the POST Act. Those are both mandated
15 reports. So again, we could use additional staffing.
16 across the board, but relative to where we are, that
17 unit at 22, I think, will certainly be sufficient and
18 that would require filling the four additional
19 vacancies.

20 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. I think your
21 headcount is 315 with, I think you said 28 or 30
22 vacancies at this time.

23 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I think it's 30 at
24 this time.

2 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: 30. That's what you
3 said. Yeah, and so my question is yeah. It is not
4 easy to hire in today's environment, given salaries
5 and competition and so on. I just wanted to know how
6 you're going about it and maybe what positions fall
7 in the two-for-one hiring rule, etc. In other words,
8 where are you in terms of trying to do the outreach
9 and hiring?

10 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: We're proceeding
11 on all fronts, I would say. We are making robust
12 efforts to reach out to law schools, universities,
13 particularly local ones, to ensure that we have a
14 pipeline of interested graduates. We attend career
15 fairs. We're very active on social media. We have
16 active internship programs throughout the year and
17 the summer, which are good ways to introduce
18 potential future full-time hires to DOI. In terms of
19 the two-for-one process that OMB has in place, we are
20 certainly asking for exemptions to that process
21 because we have some significant needs that we feel
22 should not have to wait on the sort of two-for-one
23 hiring timeline. We'll have to see how those asks and
24 that dialogue pans out. I would say that there are
25 certain positions, auditors are one, where it is very

2 hard to hire the staff that we want at the salaries
3 that we offer, and it's particularly hard to retain
4 staff so so that's an area where, and this is another
5 aspect of our new needs that I think I did not
6 mention, we're interested in trying to raise the
7 salaries for that particular category so we are
8 moving forward aggressively to identify people to
9 fill all of our vacancies, and I just helpfully
10 received a note that says that 14 of 30 vacancies,
11 we've identified candidates for those, but being able
12 to fill those is dependent on getting approval either
13 for exemptions for the two-for-one process or having
14 something else open up plus, as I said, we do need
15 additional funding for a number of these spots.

16 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: What's your current
17 attrition? Do you know? Is that something that
18 manageable. Very frustrating when OMB says, the same
19 thing I keep telling them. They say, you have to be
20 fully funded. You can't be fully funded if you're
21 attriting because somebody has an opportunity
22 elsewhere because the salary is not high enough.

23 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Our current rate
24 is 9.3 percent, which is better than it was, but
25 certainly if the standard is that we have to get down

2 to zero vacancies, I'm not sure how, and if that is
3 the condition on which we will have additional
4 headcount, I am not sure we will ever get there. I
5 don't think DOI has ever gotten there.

6 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I don't think any
7 agency does or any company does, and I think it's a
8 ridiculous mandate that has to be fulfilled,
9 particularly when you're focused on staffing. This is
10 not an agency that contracts out. You have staffing
11 needs, period. That's what you do, and so the notion
12 of zero is, to me, not reasonable so we'll all argue
13 that so I appreciate that you've been doing the same.
14 Every time I say something, OMB says, oh, we're
15 talking to them. I said you're not making any sense.

16 I also have a question just about all the
17 monitorships. I know you mentioned the two in
18 particular, the two larger ones. With the Borough-
19 Based Jails, lots of conversations in the last couple
20 of days with budget hearings, delay, not delay, it
21 looks like it's going to be '29 before even Brooklyn
22 is done, that's the general feeling, so how does that
23 impact, I know that there was a reduction because of
24 the delays, but there's still demolition going on. I
25 just wanted to hear a little bit more about how you

2 are going to be approaching in terms of the funding
3 and the monitorship of the Borough-Based Jails.

4 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: The reduction that
5 we were able to achieve didn't in any way limit the
6 work of the monitorship because the construction
7 wasn't at the stage where monitoring was necessary
8 and, even though construction has not yet fully
9 started even on the initial project, we are involved
10 and K2, the monitor, is involved with DDC and with
11 Tutor Perini, I believe is the entity involved. We
12 are involved currently in meetings and discussions to
13 make sure that we're providing the foundation for the
14 construction monitorship at this early stage, and
15 that was K2's recommendation. We agree with that. DDC
16 agrees with that so we're all on the same page so
17 that the work of ensuring that the right rules and
18 policies are in place is starting even before the
19 construction actually begins.

20 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. So what will
21 you be looking at specifically? Probably, will it be
22 vendor integrity? What kind of things will a monitor
23 be looking at? This is a big project.

24 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: It's a wide range
25 of things, but certainly it's vendor integrity. It's

2 the procedures in place to ensure that, if there is
3 overspending or waste, that that is identifiable and
4 that there are people who are looking at that,
5 there's people with DDC who are looking at it, there
6 are people at the monitor who are looking at it so
7 it's really about putting in place a sort of
8 preventative web of procedures so that if there are
9 problems, they can be identified and promptly
10 addressed.

11 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay, and you think,
12 has this been something that up to now you feel
13 hasn't needed the full throttle? It'll take timing on
14 the construction or have these issues come up, not
15 yet. In other words, I assume it's construction,
16 although I know in Manhattan it's very complicated,
17 it's in the middle of Chinatown, you've got
18 neighborhood issues, my understanding the other day,
19 I don't know for sure, there's a wonderful senior
20 program and housing right next door, and there were
21 some concerns about that building, it's a very small
22 building, and the demolition, so there are already
23 issues, I would assume.

24 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I think the work
25 that we're able to do at this stage is sufficient to

2 address the issues that the construction is posing
3 before it gets fully underway, and that would involve
4 demolition. It would also involve planning and other
5 construction adjacent types of work, and I think we
6 have the funding and we worked hard to ensure DDC
7 also felt comfortable with the level of funding and
8 attention we were able to give this even with the
9 cuts.

10 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. (INAUDIBLE)

11 Okay, same issue on the asylum seeker? That's a
12 larger issue, even more current. I was wondering if
13 you could just talk a little bit about that.

14 Certainly in this Committee, certainly all of the
15 wonderful staff at O and I as well as General
16 Welfare, I think we've been knee deep in contracts
17 and so have you so if you could just talk a little
18 bit about whether you reallocated staff to this
19 issue, figuring out what the investigations might
20 entail. I have to say from my perspective too much
21 money is being spent on security. Too much money is,
22 we can't get anything from DocGo personally. Maybe
23 you've been able to do that. The hotel contract has
24 been helpful. The companies have been sending to O
25 and I some of their information more so than from the

2 City so this to me needs a lot of integrity, shall we
3 say.

4 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Let me speak to
5 the work that we are doing so KPMG began with site
6 visits to get an understanding of how things were
7 really working on the ground so that was the first
8 phase. We then moved to assembling in a single
9 database that City agencies have access to all of the
10 contract information, at least everything that we
11 could get our hands on from all of the different
12 agencies that are participating in the asylum seeker
13 effort and, as you know, there are many, and the goal
14 of that database and the way it operates now is you
15 can look at all of the vendors across the city and
16 see what they're charging for different services,
17 security, food, etc., and my understanding is there
18 have been some changes in the way food is contracted
19 and paid for, in part because of what we saw in terms
20 of discrepancies and what was revealed by this
21 database exercise, which enabled you to compare the
22 costs of the various services provided across
23 agencies and across the city. KPMG is also doing a
24 risk analysis that's based on a number of factors.
25 The site, the contract, the nature of the service,

1 the price, etc., to try to identify particular
2 contracts or particular sites or particular areas
3 where there should be more attention and, depending
4 on what the issue is, that will be the subject of
5 additional site visits. If we have a concern about a
6 particular contractor, there will be a sort of deeper
7 dive and audit of their invoices to ensure that
8 they're actually substantiating the cost that they're
9 submitting to the City, and the goal of this
10 monitorship, which is somewhat unique in its scope,
11 is that we are endeavoring, unless there's some sort
12 of criminal investigation that spins out of this,
13 which is a separate issue, we're trying to share in
14 real time with the agencies all of the information
15 that we can so if there's an issue at a site visit,
16 we're not holding on to that until we can fully
17 investigate it. We're sharing it with the various
18 folks at City Hall who are running this effort and
19 the relevant folks at the agencies. Same issue with
20 contracting concerns if we think we see overspending
21 so the goal is to make sure that everyone is armed
22 with the information and can make better decisions as
23 a result.

2 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Do you share with the
3 public what you share with the agencies? In other
4 words, if...

5 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Not in real time,
6 no.

7 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Not in real time.

8 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: No.

9 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: So you do it at some
10 point?

11 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: We may at some
12 point have some sort of report that we issue that
13 relates to lessons learned in emergency contracting
14 perhaps. I don't know that we will. It may depend on
15 what we find, but I think the most efficient way to
16 make sure that information, even information that may
17 not be particularly problematic but that somebody
18 should know about and act on gets shared in real time
19 with the agencies handling it.

20 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. I may ask more
21 about this.

22 Welcome to Council Member Joseph, and
23 Council Member Restler has questions.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so
25 much, Chair Brewer, and I just want to say how

1 honored I am that you were delighted not once, but
2 twice by my presence. Just kidding. Okay.

3
4 I have a series of questions,
5 Commissioner, so thank you so much for making the
6 time to be with us today. I just want to first ask
7 about DOI's role on monitoring the Borough-Based Jail
8 construction. I'm broadly and strongly supportive of
9 the Borough-Based Jail plan. I have been deeply
10 frustrated by DDC and the City's management of the
11 demolition process, which has been severely
12 disruptive for my community. I have a dozen plus
13 buildings that have experienced months of intense
14 vibrations, and the contractor barely shows up to
15 meetings with me so I'm just trying to understand
16 what role have you guys played because we haven't
17 heard from DOI at all in this process. The City has
18 not done nearly as good a job as it needs to managing
19 the demolition process and mitigating impacts and, if
20 this was a private contract, a private development,
21 it would have been shut down months ago. Like DOB
22 never would have let an operator treat our community
23 the way the DDC and Northstar has so far. DDC is
24 testifying later this afternoon so they'll get the
25 full brunt of this but what, if anything, has DOI

2 done to help mitigate this? Are you aware of just how
3 awful a job Northstar has done in terms of the
4 enormous community impacts that they've caused and
5 the severe vibrations that have been a result of
6 their haphazard work?

7 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: These are not
8 concerns that I've been made aware of. I do want to
9 be clear that our monitorship is focused on
10 construction and it's focused on ensuring that the
11 City's funds are being spent well and appropriately,
12 right, that they're not being wasted, that we don't
13 have, unlicensed or unqualified people working on
14 these jobs, that kind of thing.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Yeah, for months,
16 this project has gone on from 7 a.m. until 11 p.m.
17 every single day, all day Saturdays, worked on
18 federal holidays, so if we're maximizing the
19 efficiency of spending to cause severe disruptions
20 for our communities and, if that's the oversight role
21 that you're playing to make sure that money is well
22 spent and the vendors are operating with integrity,
23 there are real questions for me about how everybody
24 involved in this process has been making decisions,
25 and I want to see Rikers Island closed as urgently as

2 anybody else in the city of New York, I promise you,
3 certainly much faster than this Mayor, but I am
4 deeply concerned with how this project has been
5 handled so it doesn't sound like you've been involved
6 in ways that have impacted our community directly.
7 You're just looking to make sure that the vendors are
8 operating with integrity.

9 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: That's right, but
10 I do want to say, if there are things that you're
11 observing that you think raise integrity issues, you
12 should communicate that with us and we can have a
13 separate discussion on that. I don't know whether...

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I can send you
15 all the pictures I sent to DDC and City Hall of the
16 fence being down for hours upon hours on end for a
17 block long where people can just enter into the
18 construction site, the dust plumes that we've been
19 experiencing, the severe vibrations and the shaking
20 of building, the cracks in walls. All of these issues
21 that to me are indicative of a contractor that is not
22 doing its job well and the fact that they don't even
23 show up to meetings with me tells me that they know
24 that they don't have good answers.

2 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Yeah. We have not
3 been engaged in that phase. We are just getting
4 engaged now.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I'm yelling at
6 the wrong person about this.

7 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: You might be but,
8 if there's something you think we should know that's
9 relevant to what we are looking at, we're happy to.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I just think that
11 Northstar should never work in City of New York again
12 so that's how I feel. Luckily, demolition will be
13 done by the end of the month. I have a couple other
14 questions if the Chair will let me.

15 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Go right ahead. You
16 got as long as you want. I don't do minutes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Oh, there's no
18 clock. We're just having fun.

19 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: No clock.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Commissioner, I'm
21 sorry. Okay, first up, background checks. You
22 mentioned how eager you are to hire your staff, which
23 I certainly want you to hire every line that you have
24 as do I want every other agency to hire every line
25 that they have between the seven rounds of budget

1 cuts and the multiple hiring freezes and even the
2 two-for-one policy that we have in place now, the
3 Mayor has dramatically shrunk City government by tens
4 of thousands of people. One of the obstacles to
5 hiring are the DOI background checks, and my numbers
6 and looking at your PMMR data year-over-year is that
7 we've seen a 45 percent reduction in investigations
8 closed and a 50 percent increase in the amount of
9 time it takes for you to complete a background check.
10 Those are significant problematic indicators that for
11 every employee that's coming in, over 125,000
12 dollars, so all the management in City government
13 that we need to get into these jobs as quickly as
14 possible, they are slowed down because of DOI's
15 processes. Is that because you don't have the
16 adequate staff to do the work?

18 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Yeah, let me just
19 back up for a minute here because we do not pose a
20 barrier to agencies starting their employees, even at
21 senior levels. There are plenty of folks in the City,
22 this is up to the agencies, but people can commence
23 working and often do before their background check is
24 completed so I'm surprised to hear that there are
25 folks who haven't started, now at DOI, an agency can

2 do this the way they want, we often will not start
3 staff before their background is fully completed.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: It's risky.

5 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: But even we have
6 developed a sort of tighter, sort of short-form
7 process that we can use just to get someone on board
8 so it's not clear to me that delays in agencies
9 starting personnel are attributable to a delay in
10 DOI's background checks. Whether there may be a small
11 increase in the amount of time that it takes,
12 generally we have significantly decreased the backlog
13 that we had. I'll have to find the exact number for
14 you, but we are promptly completing background
15 investigations within a very reasonable time period,
16 and we are not having an issue there, and there is
17 not a staffing problem that is leading to that. If I
18 can find the exact number, I can...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: The average time
20 to complete a background investigation went from 101
21 days in FY23 to 117 days for the first four months of
22 this year, a 16-day increase, or about a 15 percent
23 increase year-over-year, which is not 1,000 increase,
24 but it's an increase and, when it's already taking a
25 significant amount of time, 100 over three months,

1 we're at four months to get that background check
2 completed now, I hope things have improved in the
3 ensuing few months since the PMMR was released. Those
4 are troubling trends, and I appreciate that you, as
5 you noted, for your own staff, you want to make sure
6 those background checks are completed. You can't have
7 anyone coming on board until we've ensured that they
8 have the absolute unimpeachable integrity that they
9 should have when they're working at DOI, and many
10 agency heads have a similar feeling, that they want
11 to make sure that they're not hiring somebody with a
12 surprise in their CV and they rely on that DOI
13 background check so I am concerned about the trends,
14 I'm concerned about the number of cases that have
15 been closed. Just want to, if you don't think there's
16 a staffing issue, I would like that to be revisited.

18 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Yeah, there's not
19 a staffing issue and, sometimes, when we're gathering
20 information, we are dependent on other outside
21 entities to provide that information to us. There are
22 there's tax information that we need, there's
23 employment information that we need, and it can take
24 time to gather that information. The checks we do are
25 pretty extensive, and the goal has been to complete a

1 background investigation within 180 days, and we are
2 well within that target and, like I said, the
3 backlog, we only have 466 backlogged investigations
4 remaining. I think that's a reasonable pace for a
5 background investigation, particularly because
6 agencies do have the discretion to start personnel
7 before the background check is completed. We are also
8 always willing when asked to provide what's called a
9 Quick Vet, which is, can you do a sort of quick check
10 to ensure there's no glaring problem that's going to
11 surface later, and then some of the other things
12 we're gathering are educational information, tax
13 information, that kind of thing, property
14 information, financial information that is unlikely
15 to be a barrier to someone's hiring.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And just for
18 clarification, the PMMR tracks background
19 investigations on City employees. Does it also
20 capture like daycare workers? Do you know? It does
21 not.

22 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: That's right.
23 That's because we do the fingerprinting and we don't
24 do the backgrounding for other employees.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I would like to
3 see data on the fingerprinting tracked in the PMMR,
4 which is maybe a recommendation we can make, note for
5 the Finance Team in our Council budget response. We
6 get a ton of complaints from daycare providers in our
7 communities about delays in background checks, excuse
8 me, for the fingerprinting that has delayed the
9 hiring which has delayed having the necessary staff
10 in place for the daycare centers to operate. I will
11 admit, I checked with my staff before the hearing, we
12 haven't gotten any complaints in the last few months
13 so maybe something's working better under your
14 leadership, but is this something that you're
15 tracking carefully? Is there any insider data that
16 you can share with us on delays in processing
17 fingerprinting and any complaints about daycare
18 centers not operating at full capacity as a result?

19 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Yeah, I know that
20 we also have not received such complaints, certainly
21 not recently, and so I'd have to look for the kind of
22 data that you're talking about. I certainly don't
23 have it handy now.

24

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: All right. The
3 Chair has been incredibly gracious. I have more
4 questions, but I will...

5 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: You can go ahead.
6 Keep going.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Keep going. One
8 more? All right.

9 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: One more.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I'll go for one
11 more. Thank you. We're having fun. The role of the
12 DOI Commissioner is a kind of complex balance where
13 you're appointed by the Mayor and then responsible
14 for investigating him and his agencies if there's
15 misconduct, wrongdoing, etc. Could you clarify for
16 us, and I've seen up close different DOI
17 Commissioner's are more or less communicative with
18 City Hall about the investigations that they're
19 undertaking, the complaints that they're receiving,
20 the recommendations that they're making, providing
21 that information in real time, providing that
22 information after conclusions have been reached.
23 Could you share with us how frequently you
24 communicate with City Hall about, and are there
25 particular investigations that you've completed that

you've discussed with the Mayor or with senior level staff?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I have regular meetings with the Mayor's Chief-of-Staff, with Camille Joseph Varlack. I have regular, although less frequent, meetings with the First Deputy Mayor, Sheena Wright. I use those meetings for a number of purposes. One is to discuss our budget and to advocate for our needs. The other thing that I use them for is to give a general update on upcoming, let's say reports that we're doing so I will share, just as I've shared with you today, we anticipate in the next couple months that we're going to issue a report on under Local Law 6 on parking placards. I will not say this is what the report says, this is what the conclusions are, or this is what the recommendations are. Those recommendations and the draft report will be shared with the relevant agencies when it is in final form, meaning we think we have done our job, we know the facts, we know what we want to recommend. We will then share the final draft with the relevant agencies for factual input and correction, if any, and any input they may have on the recommendations, which we may or may not take

1 and incorporate. Once that process is done, the very
2 final draft, like before it's issued, depending on
3 the complexity of the report, a day or two before or
4 three or four days before, will be shared with senior
5 folks at City Hall, including the Chief Counsel, the
6 Chief-of-Staff and the First Deputy Mayor so that
7 they understand what it is that we will be saying so
8 that's how I handle notification about reports and
9 recommendations. That is really for notification as
10 opposed to for input. Of course, if anyone had
11 information they thought we needed to know, we would
12 want to hear it and we would take that input as we
13 saw fit. In terms of other investigations,
14 disciplinary investigations relating to City
15 employees or criminal investigations, I do not share
16 information about the progress of those
17 investigations with City Hall. Sometimes there are
18 matters that City Hall has referred to us, and so
19 it's public that we're working on them, sometimes
20 they're not, but I do not give updates on those sorts
21 of investigations. If an investigation in our view
22 suggests that there is a safety issue or a serious
23 integrity issue with an employee that an agency needs
24 to know about, we will work within the limitations
25

1 imposed on us, let's say by grand jury secrecy rules,
2 to endeavor to make sure that the agency knows what
3 it needs to know so that if it needs to do something
4 for safety reasons, for example, if there's a
5 correction officer who's engaging in misconduct and
6 we have sufficient certainty about that and it's
7 reached a point where we think there could be a
8 safety issue, we will want to let that agency know
9 you need to move that employee for X, Y, and Z
10 reason, or you need to know what's going on with this
11 employee and you should make the right, appropriate
12 decisions for safety and care of persons in custody.
13 That's a longer answer than you asked for, but I
14 think it's important to be comprehensive on this.

15
16 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I thought that
17 was a clear and concise and compelling answer, so
18 thank you very much for it.

19 The last question I just want to ask is,
20 there's been a series of reports in the press of
21 senior staff at City Hall intervening in public
22 safety projects like street calming projects,
23 intervening on behalf of individual contractors
24 outside of what would appear to be an appropriate
25 process. I assume you read all the same articles that

2 I do. I don't assume that you're going to comment on
3 any active investigations into members of the
4 Administration or things that you're looking at, but
5 have you been concerned by the amount of reporting on
6 senior level Adams officials intervening in projects
7 and intervening in contracting processes that
8 certainly appear to me to be wildly inappropriate and
9 potentially illegal.

10 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I'm not going to
11 offer an opinion on media reports. What I can tell
12 you, as you suggested, is that we pay close attention
13 to all sources of information, including what's
14 written in the press and, when we see something that
15 we think is concerning, we do not hesitate to open an
16 investigation and take the next steps.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I appreciate you
18 being here and I just want to echo what the Chair has
19 advocated for quite some time now, that we need to
20 fund our oversight agencies adequately and appreciate
21 her leadership on that effort among many others.

22 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: We fight for
23 oversight money.

24 Council Member Ayala.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I'm sorry if this
3 was asked and I missed it. I'm trying to do a million
4 things at the same time, but, generally, how long
5 does an investigation take from the time that a
6 complaint is made to the time that a resolution is
7 come to?

8 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Our target is to
9 complete all investigations within 180 days, but I
10 want to be clear that this is not a one size fits all
11 thing, right, and the most important thing is that we
12 conduct each investigation, giving it the time and
13 attention that it needs until it's thoroughly and
14 fully completed so, generally it is our goal, I would
15 say with sort of an average investigation of medium
16 complexity when possible to complete it within 180
17 days, and I think, as of the most recent data, we're
18 slightly below that number. I think we're at 174
19 which is a product of work that we've done to make
20 sure that we're streamlining and moving efficiently
21 those cases that can be moved more efficiently, but I
22 would say there are investigations that take longer.
23 The PATH report that was mentioned earlier was an
24 example of a very complicated sort of data-based
25 investigation, at least in part. It took a lot of

2 time to work through that information and make sure
3 we understood it and we'll take the time that we need
4 to.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: And the complainant
6 will receive a response after the investigation has
7 concluded?

8 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: We will
9 communicate with complainants as we need to. When a
10 complaint comes in, we may need to be in touch with
11 the complainant to get more information. We don't
12 keep members of the public, including complainants,
13 apprised of the progress. If an investigation is
14 closed as unsubstantiated, it's just unsubstantiated,
15 and we won't explain sort of the steps that we took,
16 but often there will be public action and through
17 that the complainant will see the steps that are
18 being taken, and there may also be an interview or
19 more in-depth inquiry with the complainant and so
20 they will understand from that some of the work that
21 we're doing.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: When the complaint
23 is against a public official, is that complaint
24 handled any differently?

2 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: It's not handled
3 any differently. That could be a more complex inquiry
4 depending on what it is, but all complaints really
5 are handled consistently. They may go in different
6 directions, whether they require more or less work,
7 whether they end in a criminal case or in an a
8 disciplinary or administrative resolution, but we
9 don't treat them any differently.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Okay. I'm
11 particularly asking because I know that we had an
12 incident at Randall's Island. There was a complaint
13 lodged against (INAUDIBLE), and we haven't heard back
14 on what, if any, the findings were, and I'm patiently
15 waiting to hear what the conclusion was because
16 obviously there were a lot of other people that were
17 impacted by whatever may or may not have happened
18 that day, and I'm sure that they're also eager to get
19 a response.

20 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: And we work as
21 quickly as we can within the bounds of being thorough
22 and diligent.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I appreciate that.
24 Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Just one question
3 back to the asylum monitorships. I think in your
4 testimony, you said that the contract ends December
5 24. Obviously, the asylum seekers are still here,
6 etc. so I thought you said that so I just was
7 wondering how these contracts get extended, etc.

8 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: If I said that, I
9 misspoke. Let me get the...

10 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay, I believe you
11 said December 24.

12 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Let me get the
13 asylum seeker, oh, I did say December 2024.

14 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I read pretty well.

15 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: That's what I have
16 written right here. It's funny, these dates come up
17 quicker than one would expect.

18 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Come up real fast.

19 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: What I will say on
20 that is given, obviously, that this is a priority for
21 the City, it would be my hope and my expectation that
22 to the extent that the expenditures persist and are
23 necessary to persist beyond the end of this year,
24 that we would ask that contract be extended and that
25 additional funding be allocated.

2 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. The other
3 question I have just back to those contracts. The way
4 that you're operating, it's not really an
5 investigation, it's in a monitorship and, if there's
6 an investigation necessary, fine, but if there's not
7 one, then there isn't one. In those particular cases,
8 with seemingly what you will be looking at is whether
9 the City is getting its money's worth, basically,
10 from these different contracts, and is that something
11 that at this point, I don't know what you can say,
12 there hasn't been any red flag that indicates there's
13 any problem up to this point. Is that generally what
14 you can say about these contracts?

15 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I think that to
16 the extent that there have been discrepancies in
17 expenditures, those are things that we have pointed
18 out and that are visible to City agencies from our
19 databases to the extent that there are other issues
20 that we're following up on, really I don't want to
21 get into the status of any of that.

22 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. On complaints,
23 I think that DOI received 13,500 complaints in '23.
24 It's an increase of 2,000 from '21. I don't know what
25 it is at the moment. The PMMR said that the

1 complaints have increased each year and is on pace to
2 increase in '24. Again, I don't know. My question is,
3 because that's how the public, I assume, contacts
4 you, and sometimes they're frivolous, sometimes
5 they're not so I want to know, again, is that one of
6 the agencies that's staffed adequately, is that a
7 number that you expect to increase, and how do you
8 advertise? Even though we think people should know to
9 call you, how do you advertise that you exist so that
10 people do complain if they see something?
11

12 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Based on the year-
13 to-date numbers, you're right that the four month
14 actual in this period for Fiscal Year '24 is higher
15 than the four month actual for Fiscal Year '23 so
16 would be on pace to increase. Complaints obviously
17 are managed across the whole agency so, as complaints
18 go up, hence the need for more staffing and the way
19 we're asking for budgeting this year would enable us
20 to allocate that staffing across the investigative
21 squads, for example, as needed, but we do a number of
22 things to get the word out. One of the important
23 things we do is we do in-person and also remote
24 trainings for agencies so that we're speaking to
25 agency employees about the anti-corruption rules and

1 practices and about their obligation to report to us,
2 and I think those are really valuable in getting the
3 word out, and sometimes even people in agencies will
4 call the specific person who did their training
5 because they feel like, I have a face, I trust this
6 person, I'm going call that person so that has been
7 an important source of information. We also have
8 flyers and cards that when we go to agencies, we
9 bring them, we give them out, they have all of our
10 information, they explain how to file a complaint. In
11 the context of the asylum seekers, we have a hotline
12 that's been set up and advertised in various
13 languages and posted at the various sites. We also
14 have, and this is very important, our individual
15 inspector generals and their teams develop good
16 relationships with the agency personnel that they
17 work with, and we're not just getting complaints from
18 individuals on the ground who may see something, but
19 also from more senior folks in the agencies who have
20 a concern or a worry and will pass that along to us
21 so we can investigate it so there are a number of
22 different sources and, I think, to the extent that
23 our efforts may have prompted that rise in
24 complaints, I think that's a positive thing.
25

2 Obviously, if there are more concerns in general, we
3 would say that that's a negative thing.

4 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: It's only positive if
5 you have the staff to be able to address them too.

6 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: That's true.

7 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: That's the other
8 issue.

9 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: That's true.

10 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I should know this,
11 but, if you are unemployment, obviously we focus on
12 City agencies and the City employees and the
13 allocation of funding, etc., but we also contract out
14 billions of dollars. Do you also look to the
15 contractors or is it City agencies and what they're
16 doing? I should understand this, but if you could
17 explain.

18 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Oh, in terms of
19 oversight?

20 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Yes.

21 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: We are definitely
22 looking at City vendors, City contractors. We have a
23 number of cases ongoing and every year in that area,
24 and we also have third parties who may be entitled to
25 or not entitled to City benefits that they're getting

2 who are taking money from the City in that way but,
3 absolutely, City vendors are important components in
4 our efforts to make sure that City resources are
5 protected.

6 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. It is
7 frustrating to me and to you, I think also, when you
8 are revenue enhancing, and you went through some of
9 the funds that have come in, that OMB doesn't
10 understand the more staff, the more revenue,
11 potentially. Obviously, it's like this, what you just
12 said, double-edged sword. If everybody was honest,
13 then you wouldn't have any revenue coming in but,
14 unfortunately, I don't think that's going to happen.
15 I'm always focused with these different agencies on
16 collecting. I think that would end up probably the
17 Department of Finance and not you, but do you have
18 some sense when you allocate these fines if they're
19 actually collected? That may not be your job, but I'm
20 just wondering if that's something that is analyzed?

21 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: We track both
22 numbers so we track recoveries that are ordered and
23 agreed to. I think the, for the most recent period,
24 the number ordered and agreed to is 10.1 million, and
25 then we also track what we've actually received

2 because it can take some time to collect for various
3 reasons.

4 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Correct, and do you
5 find that it is received generally? In other words,
6 we are finding in other agencies, the Department of
7 Buildings just told us it's a billion dollars of
8 uncollected as an example. Is that generally received
9 at DOI?

10 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I have to say I
11 would want to go back and confirm that. I don't have
12 a number I can give you in terms of a percentage, so
13 I do know we look at both, and that information is
14 certainly knowable but, sitting here, I need to do
15 more research to answer that.

16 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: That's something that
17 I think around, maybe, your agency may be better at
18 collecting because it's a different type of...

19 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I mean these are
20 court-ordered recoveries for the most part.

21 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Right, but I'm
22 talking about Sanitation and Building fees and
23 they're not court-ordered and they're not paid in
24 some cases.

2 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Right, that is a
3 different situation.

4 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Just wanted to check
5 on that. Let's see. I think one of my last questions
6 is just in terms of, I have one more question, hold
7 on one second. I feel something here that I wanted
8 to. I think I just want to hear one more time about
9 because I'm so concerned about the funding that's
10 going to not or will, what would you say with, if
11 there wasn't this funding that would hopefully we can
12 allocate and get included in the FY25 budget, what
13 would be the areas that you wouldn't be able to cover
14 if that budget is not allocated, just generally?
15 Again, you've talked about it, but I want to hear it
16 again.

17 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I want to
18 reiterate what we said about auditors. We have an
19 excellent auditing team, and they we have some
20 auditors who are embedded in particular squads. We
21 also have a standalone auditing team. They are
22 critical to the complex case work that we do in terms
23 of analyzing financial records. Those are the types
24 of cases that are more likely to lead to financial
25 recoveries. There are cases where you need to follow

1 the money. Some of them involve non-profit service
2 providers who are way up-charging the city, just for
3 example, and so I think not only getting additional
4 positions but getting higher salaries for auditors is
5 something that I think we need to focus on doing. As
6 I mentioned, I also think we could be doing more with
7 data analytics, and I think that work is a way to
8 efficiently identify areas for investigation that may
9 also be financially fruitful for the City so that's
10 another area where I think we need more staffing. Our
11 investigators also are the foundation of the work
12 that we do, and a lot of the work we do is the sort
13 of day-by-day interviewing witnesses, doing
14 surveillance, receiving complaints. That is one of
15 the ways in which you build great cases, right, and
16 then you pair that with these other techniques, and I
17 think that is really, how you do cutting edge work,
18 and we need our law enforcement technology folks to
19 support us in doing that also so their work is really
20 critical because a lot of what we do now obviously
21 involves analysis of electronic devices. We can see
22 who's communicating with whom, there's money
23 movements now often that you can see in phones
24 because there's all kinds of Cash App and other ways
25

1 that people move money so, as I said, it really is a
2 full team effort over here, and our operations folks
3 are vital because they really keep us running, the
4 people who are actually doing the investigative work
5 and then the auditors, the data analytics folks, the
6 digital forensics folks. We really need to increase
7 the numbers of all of those people to do what we do
8 in the sort of fullest and most significant way.

10 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I appreciate the
11 listing and being concrete because we do need
12 oversight of our agencies so that's helpful.

13 The Comptroller did an Asylum Seeker
14 Spending Report, as I'm sure you know, and one of the
15 issues for us is, and we hear this constantly, there
16 are so many different agencies doing asylum work, and
17 I understand that we need a lot, but when you've got
18 Homeless Services, Emergency Management, DCAS, HPD,
19 and I'm sure I'm leaving some out, obviously H and H
20 in addition, that they do seem to have different
21 spending operations going, arrows this here, and
22 arrows that different, and food is this amount here,
23 and food is that amount there so is that something
24 that you're looking at? Is that report giving you any

2 information to be able to do your investigations? Is
3 that something that you're looking at carefully?

4 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Absolutely, and
5 that's really the sort of critical function that the
6 KPMG dashboard and database serves, which is to
7 create a single central repository for all of the
8 contract information that the City has in the asylum-
9 seeker space so that agencies themselves can see
10 about as they're engaging in contracting what other
11 agencies are paying, what kinds of services they're
12 getting, and we can see, hopefully, discrepancies
13 where they exist in different services that should
14 cost the same thing.

15 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Okay. We've been
16 joined by Council Member Krishnan.

17 I guess, back to the same issue, this
18 point there's no report that is needed because you
19 haven't found anything that is reportable, shall we
20 say. I just feel, listening, having had several
21 hearings on this topic, these numbers are so huge and
22 you have wasted food, and we have, in many cases, I
23 think, an awful lot of security. Of course, I'd love
24 to see that money go towards English as a second
25 language or something. Again, maybe not corrupt,

2 maybe not something that rises, but in terms of
3 waste, and that's a concern also.

4 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Our priority right
5 now has been making sure that the agencies and the
6 City have the information they need so that they can
7 adjust their decision-making and expenditures where
8 necessary. We're not at the point yet. I think it's a
9 little soon to say whether there's going to be any
10 sort of report issued and what that might say.

11 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very much,
12 Commissioner. We appreciate that you have such good
13 testimony.

14 I think one thing that I would like to
15 see is more information coming out of the IG at the
16 Police Department because it seems very quiet to be
17 honest with you, and I feel if you feel 18 to 22
18 staff is enough then fine, but there seems to be,
19 between what's going on with CCRB, what's going on,
20 what are their complaints, what is the complaint to
21 the Police Department in general, what are we looking
22 at? I'd love to hear more about that in the future,
23 all right? Thank you very much.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CATÁ: Thank you, Chair
25 Brewer.

2 We will now turn to public testimony. We
3 will be limiting public testimony today to two
4 minutes each. Please note that if your prepared
5 testimony exceeds two minutes, in addition to
6 testifying before the Committee today, you may also
7 submit your full testimony to the record up to 72
8 hours after the close of this hearing by emailing it
9 to testimony@council.nyc.gov.

10 If you are here to testify in person and
11 you have not yet completed a witness slip, please
12 visit the Sergeant's table and complete a witness
13 slip now, even if you registered to testify online.

14 For in-person panelists, please come up
15 to the table once your name has been called.

16 For virtual panelists, once your name is
17 called, a Member of our Staff will unmute you, and
18 the Sergeant-at-Arms arms will set the timer and give
19 you the go ahead to begin. Please wait for the
20 Sergeant to announce that you may begin before
21 delivering your testimony.

22 We will now hear from Towaki Komatsu.

23 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: You may begin. Go
24 ahead.

2 TOWAKI KOMATSU: Ms. Brewer, we've talked
3 many times. One of the times we talked was on
4 September 26, 2017. Wouldn't it be something if Mr.
5 Restler would actually stay in the room during a
6 public hearing so that the public could be heard? He
7 was complaining about people not coming to his
8 meeting when he has the audacity to walk out of the
9 room before the public gets to testify. You talked
10 about contract issues. The woman who was just over
11 here, the Commissioner of DOI, talked about that too.
12 There's a lot of waste, fraud, and corruption with
13 regards to contract issues. I talked to Ann Marie
14 Scalia on Monday during Ms. Ayala's public hearing.
15 She's the General Counsel of DSS. As you're aware,
16 I've had litigation against HRA, DSS, so forth. They
17 haven't complied with discovery. We've talked about
18 that. So if you're the Chairwoman of this Oversight
19 Committee, at what point do I have to stop taking
20 punches to my face so that somebody like you will
21 actually start doing your job? I have a petition for
22 a writ of certiorari to submit to the U.S. Supreme
23 Court by the end of next month about the fact about
24 public meetings, that's why I brought that issue up.
25 Bottom line is, at the same time that I'm preparing

2 to prepare that legal brief to submit to the U.S.
3 Supreme Court, I'm getting punched in my face. That
4 is very distracting to my ability to effectively
5 prepare that. I could go back to DOI to talk to them
6 about that, but you know what? I've been there like
7 eight times. They don't do anything. All they do is
8 refer my complaints back to HRA, DHS, so forth. The
9 point is, it's like a rapist. If a woman gets raped
10 by a rapist, would a police officer refer the
11 complaint back to the rapist for a resolution? So why
12 in the heck does an agency like DOI simply take a
13 complaint by a complainant, refer it back to the
14 agency that's the target of that complaint, and have
15 the agency sort that out?

16 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very much
17 for your testimony.

18 TOWAKI KOMATSU: Yep.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CATÁ: We have now heard
20 from everyone who has signed up to testify.

21 If we inadvertently missed anyone who
22 would like to testify in person, please visit the
23 Sergeant's table and complete a witness slip now.

24 If we inadvertently missed anyone who
25 would like to testify virtually, please use the

2 raised hand function in Zoom, and I will call on you
3 in the order of hands raised.

4 Seeing no one else, I would like to
5 reiterate that written testimony, which will be
6 reviewed in full by Committee Staff, may be submitted
7 to the record up to 72 hours after the close of this
8 hearing by emailing it to testimony@council.nyc.gov.

9 Now, I will turn it back over to Chair
10 Brewer to close us out.

11 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very much
12 to the Staff and to the Commissioner and to those who
13 testified, and I hope that we are able to fund this
14 agency to its fullest. Thank you very much. [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 March 31, 2024