

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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NOVEMBER 19, 2020

Start: 9:08 A.M.

Recess: 9:19 A.M.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 1)

B E F O R E: CHAIRPERSON DANIEL DROMM,

COUNCIL MEMBERS: ADRIENNE E. ADAMS
ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL
DIANA AYALA
ROBERT E. CORNEGY, JR.
LAURIE A. CUMBO
VANESSA L. GIBSON
MARK GJONAJ
BARRY S. GRODENCHIK
KAREN KOSLOWITZ
RORY I. LANCMAN
FARAH N. LOUIS
STEVEN MATTEO
FRANCISCO MOYA
KEITH POWERS
HELEN K. ROSENTHAL
JAMES G. VAN BRAMER

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

2 TECHNICAL: CAN YOU TURN THE REEL ON?

3 MALE SPEAKER: ALRIGHT, LIVE AND RUNNING.

4 SERGEANT HOPE IF YOU COULD DO THE CLOUD RECORDING.

5 ALRIGHT AND YOU MAY BEGIN WITH YOUR OPENING
6 STATEMENT.

7 SERGEANT HOPE: THANK YOU. GOOD MORNING AND
8 WELCOME TO THE COMMITTEE VOTE ON FINANCE. AT THIS
9 TIME WILL ALL PANELISTS PLEASE TURN ON YOUR VIDEOS.
10 I REPEAT, AT ALL, AT THIS TIME WILL ALL PANELISTS
11 PLEASE TURN ON YOUR VIDEOS. THANK YOU. TO MINIMIZE
12 DISRUPTION PLEASE PLACE ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES TO
13 VIBRATE OR SILENT MODE. CHAIR DROMM, YOU'RE READY
14 TO BEGIN.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: OKAY, I JUST WANT TO ASK
16 COUNSEL TO SEND ME THE LIST OF ALL OF ALL OF MY
17 COLLEAGUES WHO ARE ON HERE. I DON'T THINK I HAVE
18 THAT YET. BUT ANYWAY, GOOD MORNING AND WELCOME TO
19 TODAY'S FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING. I'M COUNCIL
20 MEMBER DANIEL DROMM, AND I CHAIR THE COMMITTEE.
21 I'LL INTRODUCE MY COLLEAGUES IN A MOMENT. TODAY
22 THE COMMITTEE WILL BE VOTING ON THREE ITEMS, ONE
23 ARTICLE XI PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION, A TRANSPARENCY
24 RESOLUTION AND INTRO 2136, WHICH WOULD AUTHORIZE
25 TWO BIDS TO INCREASE THEIR ASSESSMENTS. FIRST, WE

1
2 HAVE THE LAND USE ITEM, 1402 YORK AVENUE IN COUNCIL
3 MEMBER KALLOS' DISTRICT. IT'S THE SITE OF A NEW
4 CONSTRUCTION AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT CONSISTING
5 OF 11 UNITS OF, 10 OF WHICH WILL BE PERMANENTLY
6 AFFORDABLE. TODAY, UM, TODAY'S ACTION WOULD
7 PROVIDE A FULL 40-YEAR ARTICLE XI PROPERTY TAX
8 EXEMPTION TO SUPPORT THIS PROJECT. COUNCIL MEMBER
9 KALLOS IS SUPPORTIVE OF THE PROPOSED EXEMPTION.
10 SECOND, WE HAVE THE TRANSPARENCY RESOLUTION. THE
11 TRANSPARENCY RESOLUTION SETS FOR THE NEW
12 DESIGNATION AND CHANGES IN DESIGNATION OF CERTAIN
13 ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVING LOCAL AGING, ANTI-POVERTY
14 AND YOUTH DISCRETIONARY FUNDING AND FUNDING
15 PURSUANT TO CERTAIN INITIATIVES IN THE BUDGET. AS
16 WITH ALL TRANSPARENCY RESOLUTIONS, COUNCIL MEMBERS
17 WILL HAVE TO SIGN A DISCLOSURE FORM INDICATION
18 WHETHER OR NOT A CONFLICT EXISTS WITH ANY OF THE
19 GROUPS ON THE ATTACHED LIST. IF ANY COUNCIL MEMBER
20 EVER HAS A POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST WITH ANY
21 OF THE ORGANIZATIONS LISTED, HE OR SHE HAS THE
22 OPPORTUNITY TO DISCLOSE THE CONFLICT AT THE TIME OF
23 THEIR VOTE. AS A REMINDER, PLEASE DISCLOSE ANY
24 CONFLICT YOU MAY HAVE WITH PROPOSED SUBCONTRACTORS
25 USED BY ORGANIZATIONS SPONSORED BY DISCRETIONARY

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2 FUNDING. THESE DISCLOSURES MUST BE MADE BEFORE THE
3 SUBCONTRACTOR CAN BE APPROVED. DISCLOSURE FORMS
4 MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED PRIOR TO THE VOTE
5 ON THE TRANSPARENCY RESOLUTION, AND MAY BE EMAILED
6 TO CHARLES DAVIS. FINALLY, WE HAVE INTRO 2136,
7 WHICH WOULD AUTHORIZE TWO BIDS TO INCREASE THE
8 AMOUNTS THEY WOULD SPEND ANNUALLY. THE COUNCIL
9 PREVIOUSLY APPROVED RESOLUTION 1471 ON OCTOBER 29TH
10 SETTING TODAY AS THE DATE FOR A PUBLIC HEARING ON
11 THIS LEGISLATION. THE BUDGET INCREASES HAVE BEEN
12 REQUESTED BY THE PROPERTY OWNERS WITHIN THE
13 BOUNDARIES OF EACH BID AND WOULD BE USED TO ENHANCE
14 THE SERVICES PROVIDED. THE DETAILS ABOUT WHICH BIDS
15 WOULD SEE INCREASES IN THE AMOUNT SOUGHT ARE SET
16 FORTH IN THE DOCUMENTS PREPARED BY THE FINANCE
17 STAFF. DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BLAISE BACKER FROM THE
18 DEPARTMENT OF SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES IS HERE TO
19 TESTIFY REGARDING THE REQUESTED ASSESSMENT
20 INCREASES AND WE'LL HEAR FROM HIM IN A MINUTE AFTER
21 HE IS SWORN IN BY COUNSEL, BUT LET ME INTRODUCE MY
22 COLLEAGUES BEFORE WE DO THAT. WE HAVE BEEN JOINED
23 BY COUNCIL MEMBER AND SUBCOMMITTEE CO-CHAIR VANESSA
24 GIBSON, COUNCIL MEMBERS CORNEGY CUMBO, MAJORITY
25 LEADER CUMBO, COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL, VAN BRAMER,

2 MOSKOWITZ AND, ADAMS, GRODENCHIK, AYALA, MOYA,
3 POWERS, LOUIS, AND MATTEO AND KOSLOWITZ. (LAUGHS)
4 OKAY AND BEAR WITH ME ONE MINUTE. OKAY AND COUNSEL,
5 WOULD YOU SWEAR IN, UM, MR. BACKER, PLEASE.

6 LEGAL COUNSEL: I WILL AND ALSO WE WERE JUST
7 JOINED BY COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ. UM, DO YOU AFFIRM
8 THAT YOUR TESTIMONY WILL BE TRUTHFUL TO THE BEST OF
9 YOUR KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION AND BELIEF?

10 MR. BACKER: I DO.

11 LEGAL COUNSEL: THANK YOU. YOU MAY
12 PROCEED.

13 MR. BACKER: THANK YOU. GOOD MORNING
14 CHAIR DROMM, AND MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE. SO
15 GOOD TO SEE SO MANY OF YOU ALL AT ONCE. I HOPE YOU'RE
16 ALL DOING WELL AND STAYING HEALTHY. I AM MICHAEL
17 BLAISE BACKER, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR NEIGHBORHOOD
18 DEVELOPMENT AT THE DEPARTMENT OF SMALL BUSINESS
19 SERVICES, AND I WISH TO EXPRESS OUR SUPPORT FOR THE
20 LAW PROVIDING AN INCREASE IN THE AMOUNT TO BE
21 EXPENDED IN TWO BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS OR
22 BIDS. TO PROPOSE AND ASSESSMENT INCREASE BIDS MUST
23 COMPLETE A MULTI-STEP REVIEW PROCESS OVERSEEN BY SBS,
24 THE BID BOARD OF DIRECTORS, WHICH INCLUDES PROPERTY
25 OWNERS, MERCHANTS AND RESIDENTS AS WELL AS

1 REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE CITY COMPTROLLER, BOROUGH
2 PRESIDENTS, THE COUNCIL AND SBS, MUST PREVIEW AND
3 APPROVE THE PROPOSED ASSESSMENT INCREASE.
4
5 ADDITIONALLY, SBS REQUIRES ALL BIDS TO SUBMIT A FIVE-
6 PART JUSTIFICATION OUTLINING HOW THE INCREASE WILL BE
7 ALLOCATED, MINUTES FROM THE BOARD MEETING WHEN THE
8 INCREASE WAS APPROVED AND LETTERS OF SUPPORT BY ALL
9 CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS REPRESENTED IN THE BID
10 BOUNDARIES. SBS THEN REVIEWS THESE JUSTIFICATIONS
11 AND DETERMINES WHETHER THEY HAVE SUFFICIENT TO BRING
12 THE CITY COUNCIL. THIS YEAR SBS IS ALSO CONSIDERING
13 THE IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. THROUGHOUT THE
14 CITY BIDS HAVE BEEN CALLED UPON TO DELIVER AN
15 INCREASED LEVEL OF SERVICES AND SUPPORT TO THE SMALL
16 BUSINESS COMMUNITY REELING FROM THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND
17 ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF THE VIRUS. EVERY SINGLE DAY IT
18 HAS BEEN SCOURING THEIR BUDGETS FOR SAVING AND
19 EFFICIENCIES. MANY BIDS HAVE OPTED TO FOREGO
20 ASSESSMENT INCREASES THIS YEAR HAVING FOUND
21 SUFFICIENT SAVINGS, BUT FOR SOME IT INCREASES
22 CRITICAL TO CONTINUING SERVICES AND SUPPORT DURING
23 THESE CHALLENGING TIMES. AS REQUIRED BY LAW, EACH OF
24 THE TWO BIDS PUBLISHED A NOTICE OF THIS PUBLIC
25 HEARING AT LEAST ONCE IN THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER HAVING

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2 GENERAL CIRCULATION IN THE DISTRICTS SPECIFYING THE
3 TIME AND PLACE OF TODAY'S HEARING AND STATING THE
4 PROPOSED THE AMOUNT TO BE EXPENDED ANNUALLY. EACH BID
5 HAS ALSO CERTIFIED THAT THEY HAVE MAILED A LETTER TO
6 PROPERTY OWNERS INFORMING THEM ABOUT THE PROPOSED
7 ASSESSMENT INCREASE AND THE TIME AND PLACE OF THIS
8 PUBLIC HEARING. IT IS A PRIORITY THAT SBS DOES
9 ASSESSMENT INCREASED PROPOSALS FOCUSED ON ENHANCING
10 PROGRAMS AND SERVICES PROVIDED TO THE DISTRICT. THE
11 TWO BIDS PROPOSING ASSESSMENT INCREASES ARE DOING SO
12 TO ADDRESS VITAL NEEDS AND CHANGING CONDITIONS ON THE
13 GROUND. FOR EXAMPLE, BY IMPARTIAL OFFSET DECLINES
14 AND PROGRAM REVENUES CAUSED BY THE EFFECT OF THE
15 COVID-19 OUTBREAK AND RECOVERY SPECIFICALLY CHANGING
16 THE CONFIGURATION OF STAFFING OF THE WINTER VILLAGE
17 TO ACCOMMODATE PROPER DISTANCING AND FOLLOWING ALL
18 HEALTH GUIDANCE, ANTICIPATING LOWER VOLUME OF PARK
19 DEATHS AND SCALING DOWN BACK ON REVENUE GENERATING
20 PROGRAMS DUE TO THE OUTBREAK. FOR FLATBUSH NURSE
21 INJUNCTION, THE INCREASE WILL PROVIDE THE BID WITH
22 MUCH NEEDED FUNDS TO STABILIZE SUPPLEMENTED
23 SANITATION SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT THEREBY RELIEVING
24 FINANCIAL PRESSURE AND ALLOWING THE ORGANIZATION TO
25 DELIVER SERVICES THAT ARE MOST CRITICALLY NEEDED TO

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2 SUPPORT THE COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR. IN ADDITION TO
3 INVESTMENTS IN SUPPLEMENTARY SANITATION, THIS
4 INCREASE WILL ALLOW THE BID TO PROVIDE PROGRAMMING ON
5 UNDER THE NEW (INAUDIBLE) PLAZA AND HIRE ADDITIONAL
6 STAFF TO FURTHER PROMOTE THE DISTRICT. THE PROPOSED
7 INCREASES WROUGHT BY '21 RANGE FROM \$150,000 TO
8 \$900,000 VARYING ACCORDING TO BUDGET SIZE, DISTRICT
9 SIZE AND PROPOSED CHANGES IN PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.
10 THE PROPOSED INCREASES ARE FOR BRYANT PARK FOR ONE
11 \$1,600,000 TO \$2,500,000 AND FLAT BUSH, NELSON
12 JUNCTION FROM \$200,000 TO \$350,000. THE CITY'S 76
13 BIDS INVESTED OVER \$167 MILLION INTO NEIGHBORHOOD
14 ECONOMIES IN THE FORM OF SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES AND
15 PROGRAMS THAT SERVE MORE THAN 93,000 BUSINESSES
16 ACROSS THE CITY. BIDS HAVE BEEN VALUABLE IN IMPROVING
17 PARTNERS AND ONGOING INITIATIVES AND NEIGHBORHOOD
18 REVITALIZATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE
19 FIVE BOROUGHES MAKING NEW YORK CITY NEIGHBORHOODS
20 CLEANER, SAFER, MORE VIBRANT. BIDS ARE ALSO
21 ADVOCATES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES IN THEIR DISTRICTS
22 HELPING THEM TO NAVIGATE GOVERNMENT, FACILITATING
23 NETWORKING AMONG FELLOW BUSINESS OWNERS, PROVIDING
24 BUSINESS RETENTION SUPPORT AND ATTRACTING SHOPPERS TO
25 THE AREA. CURRENTLY BIDS HAVE BEEN CRITICAL PARTNERS

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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2 IN EXECUTING THE CITY'S PANDEMIC RESPONSE. THEY HAVE
3 BEEN ADVOCATES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES BOOSTING
4 MARKETING EFFORTS AND PUSHING IN PROGRAMS FOR THOSE
5 BUSINESSES THAT ARE OPEN HAVING DISTRIBUTED PTE TO
6 LOCAL STOREFRONT AND REMAINED AN REMAINED AN
7 IMPORTANT LIAISON BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THEIR
8 COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS AND DISTRIBUTING ACCURATE UP TO
9 DATE INFORMATION AND PROVIDED DIRECT TECHNICAL
10 ASSISTANCE HELPING BUSINESSES APPLY FOR GRANTS AND
11 LOANS. THE PARTNERSHIP WITH CITY GOVERNMENT BIDS HELP
12 FOR JOB CREATION, IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR NEW
13 YORKERS AND VISITORS, ENHANCE THE CITY'S TAX BASE AND
14 STRENGTHEN LOCAL ECONOMIES. REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH
15 BID REQUESTING ASSESSMENT INCREASE ARE PRESENT TO
16 ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THEIR SPECIFIC
17 REQUESTS, AND I AM HAPPY TO TAKE ANY QUESTIONS YOU
18 MAY HAVE NOW. THANK YOU.

19 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: OKAY. HAVING NO
20 QUESTIONS, UM, I WILL NOW ASK BILLY MARTIN TO
21 COMMITTEE CLERK TO CALL THE ROLL. GOOD MORNING.

22 WILLIAM MARTIN: WILLIAM MARTIN COMMITTEE
23 CLERK, ROLL CALL VOTE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE. THE ITEMS
24 ARE COUPLED. CHAIR DROMM.

25 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: AYE.

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WILLIAM MARTIN: AYE, GOODNESS. GIBSON.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: GAVEL. COME ON IN. I
VOTE AYE.

WILLIAM MARTIN: THANK YOU. CORNEGY.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: AYE ON ALL.

WILLIAM MARTIN: CUMBO.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: YEAH, I VOTE, I VOTE
AYE.

WILLIAM MARTIN: THANK YOU. KOSLOWITZ.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: I VOTE AYE.

WILLIAM MARTIN: ROSENTHAL.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I VOTE AYE.

WILLIAM MARTIN: VAN BRAMER.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: AYE.

WILLIAM MARTIN: GRODENCHIK.

COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: AYE.

WILLIAM MARTIN: ADAMS.

COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: AYE.

WILLIAM MARTIN: THANK YOU. AYALA.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I VOTE AYE.

WILLIAM MARTIN: GJONAJ.

COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: AYE.

WILLIAM MARTIN: MOYA.

COUNCIL MEMBER MOYA: I VOTE AYE.

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WILLIAM MARTIN: POWERS.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: I VOTE AYE AND K
JUST WANT TO WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT MY SONS
FROM THE BRYANT PARK BID WHO ARE HERE TODAY AS
WELL AND I VOTE ON THE ITEM HERE AS WELL AND I
VOTE AYE. THANK YOU.

WILLIAM MARTIN: LOUIS.

COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: PERMISSION TO EXPLAIN
MY VOTE. I TAKE THAT AS A YES. UM, I WANT TO
THANK CHAIR DROMM AND THE FINANCE TEAM FOR YOUR
SUPPORT AND SO WE CAN VOTE ON THE REASSESSMENT OF
THE FLATBUSH NOSTON BID LOCATED IN MY DISTRICT.
YOUR VOTE, EVERYONE'S VOTE TODAY WILL KEEP BLACK,
IMMIGRANT AND WOMEN OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES ALIVE
IN THESE TROUBLING TIMES AND I VOTE AYE ON ALL.

WILLIAM MARTIN: MATTEO.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: AYE.

WILLIAM MARTIN: THE QUE WANTS ONE MOMENT.
OKAY, BY A VOTE OF 15 INT THE AFFIRMATIVE, ZERO
IN THE NEGATIVE AND NO ABSTENTIONS, ALL ITEMS
HAVE BEEN ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE. THANK YOU.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: OKAY, THANK YOU VERY
MUCH, AND I'D LIKE TO THANK MY COLLEAGUES FOR, UM
COMING IN EARLY TODAY. THIS MEETING IS ADJOURNED

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AT APPROXIMATELY WHAT TIME IS IT? 9:20 IN THE
MORNING. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

COUNCIL MEMBER: THANK YOU.

FEMALE SPEAKER: OKAY, THE LINE HAS BEEN
ERASED. (SIC)

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 NOVEMBER 24, 2020