



## **General Board Meeting Summary**

### **Thursday, January 19, 2023**

**Present:** Brandon Ganaishlal, Linda Soto, Ram Halder, Sadie Marie, Miriam Sanchez, Juan Torres, Antoinette Vereen, Brent Woodie, Daniel Porro, Kristine Garcia, Jennifer Sayers, Mitchell Halpern, Shante Chamblee, Chandra Moore, Mohammed Mujumder, David Marin, Md Allaudin, Robbin Kelly, Lashei Deoleo, Lenora Easter, Lorenzo VanNess, Sharyn Brown, Anne Johnson, Alizia McMyers, Julio Quinones, Isabelo Adames, Abunoman Rahman, Loretta Masterson

**Meeting Start Time:** 6:30pm

**Note:** The Public Session commenced.

#### **Public Session**

1. Anthony, DSNY – Anthony gave an update regarding the sanitation set out times. The times will be changed to a little bit later to keep fewer bags on the streets during rush hour times.

#### **Elected Officials Report**

1. Senator Nathalia Fernandez- Introduced herself and stated she is excited to work with the community. Please reach out to the office with any inquiries. In Albany the Senator has been appointed to chair of alcohol and substance abuse, which is a very serious topic. The Senator will be working with the department of health to address these issues at hand.
2. Councilmember Amanda Farias- The CM worked with the commissioner earlier in the last year to place some new garbage bins around the area. The cm is exited to see city-wide composting. The cm was co-sponsor on several different aging in place bills, dealing with language translation in adult centers, and community centers, legal representation in housing court.
3. Video Message from Public Advocate
4. Congressmember AOC- The new offices have opened today in Co-Op City. The address is 177 Dreiser Loop, Room 3, Bronx, NY 10475. Searching for offices in other parts of the new district and will also continue to see constituents at the joint office with State Assemblymember Karines Reyes in Parkchester, Mondays or Tuesdays from 9am to 5pm. It is located at 1973 Westchester Ave, Bronx, NY 10462. After a historic speaker's vote, the Congresswoman was sworn in the morning of January 7th, 2023. Her committee assignments for the 118th congress is to be determined. Right before the close of the 117th Congress, we passed, and the President signed into law, the FY2023

Appropriations omnibus bill, which included almost \$16 million dollars in funding for our community projects for programs like Department of transportation Safety Improvements at Westchester Square Plaza and a mental health services expansion for Jacobi Medical Center's Stand Up to Violence program (SUV). Here is a link in case you would like to see the projects included in the omnibus bill. (<https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/congress/fy23-community-project-funds>)

Currently hiring for a Bronx Constituent Liaison and Field Representative. People from BIPOC, LGBT+, working class, and/or other underrepresented communities are strongly encouraged to apply, as well as people with ties to NY-14. In-district residency and Spanish or Mandarin language skills are highly preferred. Contact the office of Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez, you can reach us at 718-662-5970 or on our website at [ocasio-cortez.house.gov](https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov). Our Co-Op City office is now open for walk-ins 9-5pm on M-Th and our Parkchester office is open on Monday's and Tuesdays from 9-5pm. To be notified about our next town hall, please sign up for our newsletter to get updates:

English Newsletter: <https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/contact/newsletter-subscribe>

Spanish Newsletter: <https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/contact/boletin-espanol>

Bronx Constituent Liaison and Field Representative Position: <https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/media/open-positions/bronx-constituent-liaison-field-representative>

Submit a casework request: <https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/services/help-federal-agency>

Legislative comments and general questions: <https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/contact>

FY23 Community Project Funds: <https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/congress/fy23-community-project-fund>

5. NYC Comptroller- On December 6, 2022, New York City Comptroller Brad Lander released *Title Vacant*, a snapshot of the latest City agency workforce data and the impact of high vacancy rates on essential city services. Post-pandemic shifts in the labor market as well as decisions made by City Hall under the previous and current administration accelerated a national trend in declining public workforce. Seven large mayoral agencies have vacancy rates above 20%, and departments within agencies that provide essential services, such as inspecting buildings or administering childhood public assistance have vacancy rates between 29% and 46%. The overall city workforce vacancy rate is at 7.9%, driven by relatively low vacancy rates at uniformed and pedagogical services, with Fire at 2.2% vacant, Police at 5%, and Education at 7.4%. However, the 35 mayoral agencies with a headcount over 100 have a vacancy rate of 14.9%. The Comptroller recommends measures to accelerate hiring, improve retention, and right-size the workforce more strategically to advance the City's ability to deliver high-quality services to all New Yorkers:

1. Expedite hiring for approved positions;
2. Allow agencies to hire within their budgets at salaries within the range, rather than the minimum posted;
3. Analyze pay and other barriers in hard-to-recruit or retain positions;
4. Report hiring outcomes for transparency;
5. Instruct agencies to plan for attrition over longer-term cycles;
6. Allow hybrid work in appropriate titles;
7. Create new technology civil service titles;
8. Share talent among agencies;
9. Appoint a Chief Talent Officer.

### **Department of Small Business Services' COVID-19 Loans and Grants Audit**

On December 8, 2022, the Comptroller released two audits on the Department of Small Business Services oversight of two COVID-19 assistance programs – a zero-interest loan and a partial-payroll grant. He found that the Department of Small Business Services conducted inadequate oversight of two COVID-19 assistance leaving eligible businesses denied critical assistance and public funds unequally distributed across the city. The Bronx saw the fewest loans and grants relative to their share of potentially eligible small businesses, while Manhattan received far more than their share.

#### **Loans:**

- Although Manhattan accounts for 41.3% of City's small businesses with fewer than 100 employees, Manhattan businesses received 56.9% of the loans and the businesses were highly concentrated in Midtown, its surrounding neighborhoods, as well as downtown.
- On the other hand, the Bronx saw both the smallest number of loans approved and the smallest dollar amount distributed. The Bronx accounts for 7.7% of the City's small businesses with under 100 employees but received 2.2% of the SBS loans. Just 9 out of 519 Bronx business applicants received loans.

#### **Grants:**

- Although Manhattan accounts for 37.7% of the City's small businesses with fewer than 5 employees, Manhattan businesses received 63.1% of the grant funds and constituted over half of the recipients, mainly located in Chelsea, Midtown, Tribeca, and Downtown
- Even though the Bronx has nearly double the number of businesses under five employees than Staten Island, both boroughs' businesses had similar number of awarded grant recipients, with Staten Island receiving more total grant money than the Bronx. The Bronx accounts for 7.9% of businesses with under 5 employees but received 3% of SBS grants.

The auditors recommended for both programs:

1. Implement multi-level or secondary reviews to ensure staff are following procedures and determining eligibility correctly when evaluating applications;
2. Require applicants to submit federal tax returns, State withholding forms, NYC business tax returns, accounting records to corroborate revenue, number of employees, and location as well as independently obtain tax records from the IRS and NYS;
3. Conduct independent record searches or obtain tax records to determine whether businesses have outstanding judgements or liens;
4. Communicate changes to documentation requirements to prospective applicant;
5. Increase outreach to underserved areas and distribute public funds equitably.

Additionally, the Comptroller visited small businesses in the Westchester Square Business Improvement District in the Bronx to discuss the impact of the pandemic and how the City can best support their recovery.

### **Turn Up the Heat: Strengthening Enforcement of NYC's Heat Laws Report**

On Monday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the anniversary of the tragic Twin Parks fire in the Bronx which took the lives of 17 New Yorkers. The New York City Comptroller's office released a report entitled: Turn Up the Heat: Strengthening Enforcement of NYC's Heat Laws.

This report analyzes heat code complaints, violations, and interventions between 2017 and 2021 to find patterns, understand the barriers to heat code enforcement, and develop data-informed recommendations to address them.

Some of our key findings are:

During the 2017 – 2021 heat seasons, **a total of 814,542 heat complaints** were made by tenants living in 70,766 unique privately owned buildings.

**Heat complaints and violations are not distributed equally across the city.** The top five neighborhoods from which heat complaints are made and in which the City issues violations are majority people of color communities. The population of the five community districts with the highest volume of 311 complaints related to a lack of heat are 93% people of color and the five community districts with the most heat related violations are 89% people of color.

Almost 80% of heat complaints come from buildings with 5 or fewer complaints made within the same heat season and nearly 90% come from buildings in which there were 10 or fewer heat complaints made in the same heat season, indicating that **persistent heat issues are concentrated in around 10% of buildings experiencing heat issues, overall.**

**In a small percentage of buildings, lack of heat is persistent and severe.** On average, there are over 6,000 unique buildings each year in the five years observed in which tenants complain about a lack of heat more than 5 times and over 1,350 buildings in which tenants complain about a lack of heat more than 20 times.

The City’s active strategies for addressing heat complaints are generally effective when they are deployed. However, they are **not deployed in many eligible cases, and the strategic rationale for their deployment is unclear.**

The following list of recommendations are also expanded upon in the report:

Expand the Heat Sensor Program which currently only covers 50 buildings

Use data and technology to inform and prioritize inspections with a focus on buildings with persistent heat complaints

Conduct comprehensive sight inspections jointly between HPD and DOB to better understand the underlying issues

Expand proactive code enforcement and targeted escalation

Expand direct multilingual outreach to tenants, and pass Good Cause Eviction protections so that tenants don’t have to fear retaliatory evictions

## **Business Section**

### **DM Report**

- Seniors Connected will be tomorrow at 10am at ShopRite on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor
- CB9 office is not completed in terms of the electronics and computers

- Commanding Officer Keiyon Ramsey is no longer the co of the 43<sup>rd</sup> pct. He will be promoted.

### **Committee Reports**

1. Youth & Education Committee Minutes were submitted as is.
2. Land & Zoning minutes were submitted as is.
3. Social Services minutes were tabled.
4. NYCHA minutes were submitted as is.
5. Public Safety Minutes were submitted as is.
6. Parks & Recreation minutes were submitted as is.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:30pm

#### **OFFICE INFO**

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