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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS PRESS AVAILABILITY AFTER VOTING IN
THE 2014 NEW YORK CITY PRIMARY ELECTION AT THE PARK SLOPE BRANCH PUBLIC
LIBRARY**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: With that, what's on your mind, people? Yes.

Question: Bill Bratton said yesterday he would like more police officers. [inaudible] what you think about this and why the change?

Mayor: I think Commissioner Bratton was expressing the same kind of view that every commissioner expresses – you know, that he ideally wants more personnel. We're certainly going to have a full process around the city budget. When he finishes his review, which is still in progress – we've talked about it for a long time – there will be a very formal proposal that comes out of the NYPD into our budget process. We'll evaluate that, we'll make a final decision, and that will be reflected in the preliminary budget. But I think he was expressing an aspiration –that's a very different thing from what we will decide.

Question: Did you know he was going to [inaudible]?

Mayor: He has said many times, you know, internally, as he has proceeded with the review, that he assumes he's going to be asking for more resources, but we haven't, again, gotten to a formal decision. That's him projecting the kind of range he thinks he'll be asking for, but that's not the same thing as what the budget process will yield – it might yield that, it might yield something different. That's why we have a budget process. But I've been to a lot of City Council budget hearings in my day when I was a councilmember, and commissioners often express their ideals and their wish-list – that's normal – but we have a very formal budget process that it has to be submitted to before it becomes something that's proposed by the administration.

Question: Just following up on that, [inaudible]?

Mayor: No.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: My job is to figure out what's in the best interests of the city and come up with a budget that reflects all of our needs and is fiscally prudent. Again, not surprising to me when elected officials want a number of things. Not surprising when any – a head of any city agency – wants more resources or more personnel. These are kind of traditional realities. A mayor's job is to make sense of all that and come up with a final proposal and submit it to the council. We'll do that in the spring. So, no – it's pretty par for the course, actually.

Question: [inaudible] Commissioner Bratton's analysis [inaudible]?

Mayor: Well, I think it's a work in progress. We talk constantly about the review he's doing and about his assumptions, but no, the review is not complete. We have not received a formal recommendation from the NYPD. So it's a work in progress. When we get it, we'll fully evaluate it. But he and I talk all the time about the kind of moves that we need to make. Obviously, look, we made a series of moves going into the summer of the 200 cops that we picked up from civilianization, the additional overtime that we applied, the focus on the youth centers at NYCHA and putting additional policing on there, the focus on some of the most troubled precincts, the focus on the 15 most troubled housing developments. So, we're constantly making moves. In terms of the bigger picture and where we want to go with the overall size of the force – again, he's offered ideas and thoughts but the real process begins when he submits his formal evaluation and his formal proposal.

Question: [inaudible] would you and the first lady tell us who you voted for today?

Mayor: Andrew Cuomo and Kathy Hochul.

First Lady Chirlane McCray: Same.

Phil Walzak: One or two more, guys.

Question: Mr. Mayor, I wanted to ask you a little bit about pre-k [inaudible] delayed. Why is it that you haven't named those sites? Why is it [inaudible] the public has a right to know since they end up paying for it?

Mayor: Well first of all, the update as of yesterday is 14 sites have now opened from that list of delays. We expect more to open tomorrow – Wednesday. We expect additional sites to open on Friday. So we will get you an update on the ones that have opened. We've tried throughout this process to communicate constantly with parents and we'll certainly get you an update on where we stand.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: I don't honestly know which specific information has given out where. We'll follow up. But we'll certainly get a list of where we stand on the sites. Go ahead.

Question: [inaudible] report that [inaudible] Cuomo administration was trying to intimidate Democrats who do not support Cuomo [inaudible]?

Mayor: That's outrageous. There's just no truth in it at all. I've endorsed the governor wholeheartedly. I've endorsed Kathy Hochul wholeheartedly. That's the extent of it. So, that was surely fabricated, and I think – look, just a word to the wise – when you see unsourced material, when you see, you know, allegations of something that no one will put their name to, oftentimes it's just not true. If you ever want to ask me, it's really easy to ask me. But, I'm getting a little sick of, you know, someone said that someone did something, with no attribution, because it usually is not true.

Question: [inaudible] assertions that a lot of them [inaudible]

Mayor: Did you say "portly"?

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: I have not heard that word in a while. Rich Lamb, Word Choice Award of the day. Portly. Please, continue.

Question: Your opinion on – do you think that they do need a lower [inaudible] number of [inaudible]?

Mayor: I – I don't know specifically the dynamics of, sort of, fitness among the rank and file of our corrections force. I think the general approach, though, that Commissioner Ponte is taking is, you know, to improve in every way what we do in corrections. We're going to, I think, improve our training process. I think we're going to make very clear how important it is to get the best corrections officers, and give a lot of respect to that job – which hasn't always been the case in the past. So, I think a series of actions will be taken to improve the department, but I can't speak specifically to that one.

Phil: Last call, guys.

Mayor: Please, go ahead.

Question: [inaudible] Upper East Side [inaudible]?

Mayor: What's your first question?

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: Do I...

Question: [inaudible] registration

Mayor: No. No, I'm voting here. We're voting here. This is our home. We're going to keep voting here. We're voting here.

Question: How do you feel?

Mayor: – you only come from one place. We feel great. I mean, this is our neighborhood. It's always been our neighborhood – well, 22 years –

First Lady Chirlane McCray: That's a long time.

Mayor: It's a long time. The house that we have just moved out of was the house each of us lived in the longest in our entire lives. This is our neighborhood. This is our borough. And we'll be back here constantly, and we're certainly going to keep voting here until the day that we return to the house, and then we will keep voting here.

Question: [inaudible] publicly been on the same page. Were you disappointed that he came out publicly with his recommendation [inaudible]

Mayor: Again, this is such a common reality of a commissioner expressing their wish list. It never surprises me. But there's been a constant dialogue with the commissioner about the fact that when we get to a formal proposal, then that will be entered into our budget process, and we'll make formal decisions. You know, I have immense respect for Commissioner Bratton. I think he knows very well that I'm going to pass judgment on his budget requests, and everyone else's, according to my own values, and what I think is right to do, and so – no, it's not a surprise that some – any commissioner would express their wish list.

Phil: Last call, guys.

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: Well, we're going to enforce this policy very rigorously. There's going to be a retraining process that's going to make very clear that but for the most exceptional circumstances, meaning the life of the officer is in

immediate danger—for example, one perpetrator and one officer in a death struggle—in that situation, if an officer were to use a chokehold to save their own life, that might be appropriate. But the everyday policing that happens in this city will not include chokeholds. That’s departmental policy, it has been for decades. We will enforce that policy. There will be consequences for anyone who violates that policy. The retraining is going to make that very, very clear, and I think that’s sufficient.

Question: How about the question about the [inaudible]?

Mayor: As I said, I think the way we have it now—it’s against department rules, the retraining is going to reiterate that, anyone who violates department rules will suffer from consequences. And also, you know, the CCRB, to their credit, is going to go back now and review any previous allegations to see what it tells us about other changes. But I think we have to be a little careful in terms of the legal front that there are some very exceptional situations where the life of the officer could truly be in danger, and that’s where there has to be some flexibility. Sally, did you have something? No? I thought I saw your hand. Jillian, I’m sorry.

Question: Mr. Mayor, for many New Yorkers, the Democratic primary is basically the only big race, right? The general election is not always contested. It was, in some ways, that way when you ran for mayor. Your campaign for the primary involved lots of forums, lots of outreach to voters. What do you think of the primary season so far, both for the gubernatorial race but also on the local level?

Mayor: Look, I think there are some years that obviously capture people’s imagination. I think last year, there was a lot of interest. It was a very hard-fought race and I think the forums helped, and the debates helped. I think that they’re good for democracy. So, in the end, I always prefer a year where there’s a lot of engagement. I think, at the same time, we have a bigger problem. There’s clearly been a decline in turnout over the last few years in every kind of election. And I think we have to make a series of changes in this state, and, bluntly, in this nation. We see a lot of efforts around the country to suppress voting—sadly, almost always coming from Republican and conservative forces—that has to end. In this state, we’re actually not that advanced in terms of the kind of reforms we need. We need same-day registration. We need early voting. There’s a series of things I’ll certainly be working on to reform our electoral system to make it more accessible. So we have a bigger problem of engaging our citizens, and we’ve got a lot of reforms we’re going to have to undertake to fix that. Thanks everyone!

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