



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 11, 2018
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY ON NYCHA SETTLEMENT

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Welcome everyone. There are 400,000 people who live in public housing in this city. 400,000 good New Yorkers who every day work hard to make ends meet, 400,000 who are part of the backbone of this City. And I have been in public service for decades and I've spent a lot of time with the people who live in public housing, listening to their concerns and needs, working with them to try to improve their reality.

I want to honor those people today with the actions we are taking because we have to take new and bold actions to address the challenges at NYCHA and we do it for them because they deserve safe and livable homes and they have for decades. The problems we'll talk about today have very long and deep origins but I want the entire discussion to focus on the people and what we have to do to make their lives better in the years ahead.

This is a pivotal moment for those 400,000 New Yorkers. This is a pivotal moment for the future of public housing in New York City. We have reached a settlement with United States Attorney and this settlement will help to improve the safety and the quality of life for those 400,000 New Yorkers who live in public housing. It was not the easiest action to take, it was certainly not the traditional action to take in government, we did something very different here, and I made this decision because I believed it was the right thing to do.

I'll talk about what this entails in a moment, but I think it is important also to talk about how we got here. This story goes back decades, I would mark it back to the election of 1980, and since that time progressively every level of government has failed the people who live in public housing in this city, it's failed men, it's failed women, it's failed children. The federal government disinvested progressively over years but the City and the State government often turned their backs on public housing as well.

That status quo was broken at the time I entered this office and in too many ways it's still broken. Even though my colleagues and I here did not create it, it is our job to fix it. And I want to be very clear when I ran for this office, I did not run for this office to continue a broken status quo. It will be my sacred mission to fix the reality in public housing and set the stage additional improvements in the years after I have completed my term in office.

I want to say the outset that this will be a long and tough battle. The ideas in the consent decree are the right ones but they also indicate a huge challenge ahead. It will take many years to undo that which has been broken. I want to be honest with my 400,000 fellow New Yorkers, you will see changes each year, you will see improvements each year, but to address the totality of the problems recognizing the consent decree will take a long time and a huge amount of resources.

Problems that were created over the course of decades are not solved in mere months or even just a few years in the real world, our job is to fix them more and more each year, and as best we can, and as fast as we can. Now historically and legally NYCHA of course has been its own entity chartered by the federal government, the State government. The City of New York was not obligated to fund NYCHA in any particular manner.

When this administration took office we made a very different decision than that of many of our predecessors, we decided it was important to provide additional and new funding to NYCHA from the very beginning, and the first preliminary budget of 2014 we ended the payments that NYCHA had had to make for many years for reasons that I find inexplicable, payment for police service that no similar institution would have had to cover. That money was turned back to NYCHA so to start addressing the repair backlog. A number of other choices were made over the years, previous to anything you see in the news, today's consent decree. Those investments added up to \$3.7 billion in new funding for NYCHA that this administration is committed in the last four years, not because we were obligated to do it, but because it was the moral and right thing to do because people needed the help and deserved it. That's why I see the consent decree as an appropriate next step in that progression.

Now I want to be clear, I want to be straightforward, we can't hold ourselves blameless either. This administration also has made mistakes. There are too many times that things happen on our watch that we didn't know about, but that is still our responsibility. Inspections, of course, that were supposed to be done in terms of lead paint halted before we got here but I wish to the depths of my soul we had learned that immediately and we would've acted on it the moment we found out. We did not achieve that mission, when we did find out, we acted decisively, but I don't want to hold any element of government blameless.

This administration, previous city administrations, state governments, or federal government, I think the honest reality is that everyone has been a part of this, and everyone has to now be part of the solution. And we can spend a whole lot of time talking about what went wrong in the past, we can revisit the past, and that's important to do, but more important is to fix what's broken. People live in public housing need action and they need it as quickly as possible and that's where our focus will be.

We are very clear-eyed about the scale of the problem and I don't want anyone to think that because I understand this will take years and years that that is indication of any lack of urgency. We feel tremendous urgency to address these problems but I never want to in any way suggest to the people who live in NYCHA something that is not true and is not going to happen. I want them to know that the work will happen every day, improvement will be real and constant, but again it will take years. People deserve the truth, it will take years to fix these underlying problems.

That said, there are reasons for some optimism because some things are working better and it's important to note that as well. Repair times have come down in NYCHA over the last few years because the investment was there and that has affected real people's lives. Crime has come down at NYCHA and again, I said I spent years talking to and working with NYCHA residents, crime was often the number one concern. Thank God, between their good efforts, the efforts of NYCHA, and of course the efforts of the NYPD, there has been a steady reduction in crime at NYCHA and I want to emphasize the NYPD deserves tremendous praise, but NYCHA was a big part of that work as well.

Fixing the physical realities that so often made it harder to start crime, providing more lighting, getting scaffolding down, a number of things that really made a difference, and the people of NYCHA, the resident patrols and the leaders and the activists who did so much. And I want to thank the NYCHA residents who are here, some many of whom have been part of the solution, who fought for safer developments, that is a success story that can give us some real heart as we move forward on these other challenges.

NYCHA, the first day I took on this job, was near bankruptcy. The team at City Hall and the team at NYCHA turned that around, it is a financially solvent organization today that is the basis for all the other changes we need to make. These things happened, they signify the potential for real change in NYCHA, we've seen some change, a lot more has to come. Even in the area of lead where there have been so many mistakes, as of today every apartment that was mandated to be inspected under Local Law 1 of this city, every apartment that was mandated for 2017 was inspected, remediation efforts have occurred in 90 percent of those apartments. I want to make very clear the remainder are in situations where residents have not granted access or it's been for some reason or another difficult to schedule access. I want to be clear with everyone that any resident who has an apartment that requires remediation must give access to NYCHA for that work to be done, if they do not grant access we will use other means to gain access. I'm not going to have an apartment that has any lead present that is not remediated. We will use whatever means we need to address that situation.

Another very important development, and a very positive development, is the new leadership at NYCHA sitting beside me today. Stan Brezenoff has taken on the job as Chair, Stan has seen this city through some of its toughest times in the aftermath of the fiscal crisis, he is one of the people who helped lead New York City back, and as recently as last year, he helped to turn around a Health and Hospitals Corporation that was also teetering on bankruptcy and ensured the continuity of our public hospitals and clinics.

A herculean effort that has brought stability to Health + Hospitals – that turn around skill, that ability to make the tough choices, to right a complex organization is what Stan Brezenoff brings to the table and is proven over and over again. NYCHA is a city within a city, I want to emphasize this, 400,000 people. It is an extraordinary complex organization. The areas addressed in the consent decree are crucial but there are many, many other aspects of NYCHA, all of NYCHA must keep operating, it must keep improving. I mention public safety, the consent decree does not address public safety but every single day Stan and Vito and all of the people who work at NYCHA have to focus on public safety in addition to so many other areas who are depending on Stan's leadership and it's been proven time and time again.

Vito Mustaciuolo is a legend in city government for those who have seen his work up close, I've known him for a decade. He's one of the most hands on managers I've ever met in all of my years in public service. He is legendary for challenging landlords all over New York City who are not providing their tenants with proper heat and hot water and repairs and making them fix those problems. He is strong and he is resolute and a man of extraordinary integrity. These leaders, I am convinced are the right people for this moment to take this situation and turn it around.

The consent decree gives us a mutual framework for action with the federal government. I'm sure there will be questions about why I decided to sign the city on to this. And again it was not the traditional act. But I felt that being in accord with the federal government was important, being on the same page – the City, NYCHA, HUD, U.S. Attorney, will a common vision of how we move forward was important to the future. We agreed to create a common game plan. We agreed to address serious issues that had to be addressed. We agreed for all that we had to do in the short term but we also agreed because it was the best path way to the future. The City commits \$1 billion in capital funds over the next four years in addition to \$200 million per year thereafter for as long as the consent decree continues. I think you all know by now there's a five year minimum term to the consent decree.

Our hope of course is that given this extraordinary commitment by the City, that now the State of New York will come forward with the half billion dollars previously committed to NYCHA and provide that money so we can do additional good work to protect our residents. Also crucial is that the State authorize design-build authority for all the work at NYCHA to ensure that every effort undertaken whether it be on lead, or elevators, or heat, or any other matter be done as quickly as possible. I remind everyone that design-build in many cases, shaves a year off a major construction project. That should be made available for all NYCHA efforts. This agreement fosters a culture of compliance which clearly was not sufficient at NYCHA previously, formalizes a compliance office and a Chief Compliance Officer. This is about ensuring that everyone does their job and rooting out any misconduct which we will not tolerate. We know that there have been elements of the institutional culture at NYCHA that were simply broken. We have to systematically root them out.

Now I mentioned why it was important to come to a common understanding with the federal government. We believe that the City's history with federal monitors had been a positives one. It's important to say this. We have currently a federal monitor at the NYPD. The NYPD is acknowledged all over the country, all over the world as the greatest police organization there is and yet it has a federal monitor this very moment. That monitor has been a very constructive, positive force working with the NYPD. We have a federal monitor at the Department of Correction, also an example of a constructive, positive relationship that has yielded positive outcomes for all. I have seen with my own eyes that federal monitorships can work for everyone and we have faith that that will be the case here.

Crucial to the equation is the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. And important commitments are made in the consent decree. We can talk about some other things that aren't in the consent decree but there are important commitments that are there. It's clear in the consent decree that HUD will work with the City and NYCHA to review and expedite a number of waivers and elements of regulatory reform that could also help to speed up the work that NYCHA does to address underlying problems and support the residents. It's clear

in the consent decree that HUD will immediately lift any restrictions on funding to NYCHA so the flow on money can continue. It's clear in the consent decree that HUD cannot reduce funding because of any new commitments made by the City. These are important steps. We want an atmosphere of collegiality with HUD and mutual purpose and I think this helps us to get there. I also think it paves the way for a future which I can begin to see the outlines of in which the federal government once again gets back to the important work of supporting affordable housing and public housing in this city and in this country. None of us can predict what's going to happen in the upcoming election or the one after that but I do believe there are substantial signs of change coming. And I believe this consent decree creates a corporative environment that will help pave the way to that day when we look forward to receiving the kind of federal support we need to complete the missions outlined in the consent decree.

I want to be very clear that this process has been a really challenging one for everyone involved. We've had to review a lot of information that was downright painful. When I saw the federal complaint it made me angry as all hell to know that there were some people in NYCHA who withheld information, tried to deceive the federal government and NYCHA's own leadership. It disgusted me. It's unacceptable. We are going to review our leadership, Stan Brezenoff and Vito Mustaciuolo are going to review the complaint very carefully. I emphasize the complaint is a series of allegations and we will independently review them and if we find that any individuals who work for NYCHA did anything inappropriate there will be very serious consequences for them. They way forward involves recognizing the extent of the problems and being resolute in acting on them. In the end I believe this was the best way to achieve that goal. I believe in my heart this was the right thing to do and it sets us on a path forward for the 400,000 people who live in our public housing.

It's very important to be able to say exactly what someone commits to you in life and our conversations with the U.S. Attorney there was a clear request and an unprecedented request – to provide funding for the long term, in two forms, one to continue our existing funding streams that we committed to before any discussion of the consent decree, we committed to in our own budget process. I believe that was the right thing to do for the people who live in public housing. When we took away that requirement for NYCHA to pay for police services, I never intended that to be temporary, I believe that needed to be a permanent change. We codified this in this legal agreement. That is binding on my successors and I think that is the right thing to do. I think it should be binding on my successors. We codify long term, additional capital spending commitments, also binding on whoever holds this seat after me and I think that is the right thing to do. I think there should have been binding commitments to the 400,000 people who live in NYCHA a long time ago. So I can certainly look all of them in the eye and say we have skin in the game, we've made our commitments, we are perfectly comfortable that they are legally binding because they deserve nothing less.

A few words in Spanish.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish:]

With that I will turn to questions.

Question: Mayor, just a few months ago you said, thank God there has not been harm done to any child because [inaudible] wasn't accurate. Do you acknowledge that that statement wasn't

accurate? And can you explain how you came to say that? Were you aware of the facts [inaudible] in the consent decree when you said that? And can you explain what information you were given and what lead you to make that statement?

Mayor: First, to put things in perspective. The entire administration has been focused on children from the beginning. The number-one initiatives of this administration have been about children and their welfare. Clearly, the health of children in NYCHA is paramount. I felt that from day-one, and I feel that today. I mentioned earlier there's a difference between the consent decree, where there are facts that we all agree to versus the complaint where there's a series of allegations that we will now review, but we have not passed judgement on. Based on the information I had at the time, what I said I absolutely believed to be accurate. I'm not changing that statement until I have facts otherwise. But the bottom line is, we must support these children and these families. So, every inspection that is required will be made, and remediation will be achieved. It will take time in some cases, but where we're focused, first and foremost, is on the apartments that are applicable under Local Law 1, which have all now been inspected. As I said, the remediation is 90 percent done, the remainder will be done quickly. We are also going to review any apartments that previously, under previous administrations, were indicated to not have lead present, but may have. You know of the reporting about the decisions made in the Giuliani era, that some buildings did not have lead present that have now been called into question. We're going to go back and review any building where we believe lead would be present, and do those inspections in those apartments.

Any child who there's any reason to believe may have been exposed, either because of lead paint at NYCHA or any other lead source – and there are many others, sadly, and we have to be very aware of this outside of NYCHA. Any child that may have been exposed to lead should seek – and their family should seek treatment immediately. They can get free treatment from public hospitals and clinics. Any child who needs lead testing can get it. We need to focus on making sure that every child gets the help they need. So, that's where our emphasis is right now.

Question: Would you agree with the statement in the complaint that at least 19 cases of lead poisoning were tied to exposure of deteriorated –

Mayor: Again, all that matters is serving any child who's in need. Anything in the complaint, we're going to look at very carefully. But my focus right now is continuing to fix the problem.

Question: City Councilman Ritchie Torres was – expressed concerns about this consent decree, basically saying, you know, aren't you giving up some powers to the federal government here? And also, by entering this deal, isn't it a tacit admission of guilt by the City? What's your response to that? Are you giving up power?

Mayor: No, I disagree with his analysis essentially on every level. This agreement is going to allow us to get things done, that's what it's about. I don't understand the analysis that he put forward. Federal monitorships are part of government. When they are done productively, they can help solve longstanding problems. I've seen very productive, positive examples in my time as Mayor in this City, and certainly seen them elsewhere as well. I think the process here, working with the US Attorney and his team was fair. I think everyone had a common goal, the same with HUD, the same with NYCHA. Everyone had a common goal of solving the problem. I think when you can get everyone into agreement on a plan to solve a problem with real

commitments, that is in everyone's interests, rather than continuing to fight over something when agreement is available.

It's also very important to read the consent decree carefully. I have read it many times. It makes abundantly clear that the work of NYCHA – again, a city within a city. Go check your list of American cities and see how many have a population of over 400,000 – NYCHA would be its own major American city. These two gentlemen are running the day-to-day affairs of NYCHA. It's abundantly clear in the consent decree, and their work must continue. By the way, it will be months before the time comes that the consent decree is confirmed by the court, the monitor is confirmed by the court, the action plans are confirmed by the court, but these guys and their team are at work right now immediately solving these problems. And we're going to have a series of announcements in the coming weeks and months addressing other important changes and new plans for NYCHA in the meantime.

So, to me, if you look carefully at the document, it makes very clear that NYCHA's chair, its board, its general manager, its leadership have to continue their work for the good of all the residents. They will work in cooperation with the monitor to get a specific series of very important things done. And then the day will come with that consent decree ends and NYCHA will still have that important work to do, going forward. And I think that's fair.

Question: Much of this, Mayor, doesn't seem entirely new. The untrue representations at least when it comes to lead, that's something we've talked about in recent months. So, why only now the announcement that you're going to review and hold accountable those who may have, frankly, lied, or, put charitably, not followed policy?

Mayor: I think other people have been held accountable previously, in a variety of ways, and we needed to focus on fixing the problem first. So, look, I wish I could describe to all of you what it takes to govern, because it's exceedingly complex and I don't blame anyone who looks at it and says, well, why can't this stuff just be done? But it's very complex to put together the right leadership, put together the right plan, fix problems from the past, get information that wasn't always available or wasn't always accurate and actually go back over things and figure out exactly what happened and what needs to be done differently – that was our focus. When I said to you that every apartment mandated under Local Law 1 had been inspected for 2017, well that had not happened for years, as you know. It started in the previous City administration, that's where everything broke down. I wish to hell we had caught it earlier. When it came to our attention, we immediately went to work fixing it. But even fixing it took time because things were so out of whack. But what these guys and everyone else has been focused on is getting us into compliance with the law as quickly as possible, while we were trying to sort out these bigger issues. So, clearly, some people have been held accountable, some people are not there anymore. But now, we have some specific examples based on an investigation, which you know was ongoing by the US Attorney for two years. They've yielded a lot of new information that we are going to review now and act on. We will do the work of weeding out anyone who should not be here or anyone who's done something wrong. But even more important is fixing the problem, and that work is sacred and has to happen every single day.

Question: Was there ever a possibility that there were going to be criminal charges brought against anyone at NYCHA or in City Hall?

Mayor: The conversations that I was part of were all about fixing the underlying problems. The US Attorney of course reserves their rights, and I understand that. But all we talked about was fixing the structural problems. I can't conjecture on anything else.

Question: Mr. Mayor, the talks about a problem that's been going on for a decade [inaudible] predates you being Mayor of the City of New York, but what it says is that NYCHA actually trained the staff on how to [inaudible] internal guidelines expressly encouraged staff to use [inaudible]. And it includes all kinds of things, from using painted cardboard to hide ceiling tiles, to turning off the water so the inspectors won't see the leaks, building false walls –

Mayor: Yes, I have read it all.

Question: So, my question to you is, if this is ingrained in the culture at NYCHA, which the complaint makes abundantly clear – how do you un-ingrain it? How do you get it out of the culture? Because it seems to be a pattern of [inaudible] when you read this?

Mayor: I was sick to my stomach. Look, this has been – talk about un-peeling an onion – with every passing month I've gotten more and more information and it's more and more distressing, and it's not the first time this has happened, I want to be very clear, just in case anyone thinks that NYCHA is the only agency anything like this has ever happened to. In the first months of this administration, I was shocked to find out what I did about our Corrections system, for example. I came in the door, knowing that a lot of professional people had been in charge, to find out a huge number of things had been done wrong, and there were a lot of profound problems that went unaddressed. Someday, I'd like to believe in New York City we'll get to a point where we can't say that about any agency, but we're not there yet.

But with NYCHA, I've learned more with every passing month, and some of these situations shock me. It's unacceptable in any way, shape, or form, we're not going to tolerate it. That said, to your very important question – how do you change a culture? I ask people to really dwell on the history here, it's so important. Once upon a time, public housing in the City was the envy of the nation, it really was. You can talk to any number of New Yorkers from decades ago who grew up in public housing, of all different backgrounds, became great successes, talk fondly about what it was like to live in public housing. A lot of things went wrong thereafter, some bigger things in our society, but obviously, also, consistent reductions in funding that just shot the legs out from under NYCHA. I mean, we have to be honest about this. We wouldn't be talking about roofs that were broken, or mold, and elevators if there had been maintenance year after year, and investment year after year. We're talking about buildings that, on average, are 50, 60 years old, and regular investment stopped 30 years ago. It was, you know – there was a book once called Chronicle of a Death Foretold. This was a problem that was growing before our very eyes for decades. It's not a shock when you actually break it down. But if you want cause for hope, I remind people that even some of our most sacred institutions in this city once were very troubled.

The NYPD is the greatest police force in the world. If you go back and read the book Serpico, you wouldn't have felt it in the 1970's. There were problems and scandals that were profound for years after. But some very good people, and I want to give particulars appreciation to Bill Bratton, obviously, as an example, took an institution that had a lot of challenges and problems,

with a lot of other great people – a whole generation of reformers – and turned it around. That was a very, very tough job.

School Construction Authority – a lot of people here know – used to be a basket case. Under a succession of leaders, it is now considered exemplary in terms of how it does its work. These leaders are the kind of people, the caliber of people who can start that process of profound culture change. It will not happen overnight, but we're not going to tolerate lying, we're not going to tolerate people who don't do their job, or don't support the residents of NYCHA. We have a really clear game plan, and we have to make that culture change.

Question: This is a question for Deputy Mayor Glen [inaudible] not sure about you personally, but she informed you [inaudible] the decision was made not to make that public until all of this came out later. And [inaudible] certified not once, but twice to HUD that the Housing Authority was in compliance with all of its lead paint federal, State, and local requirements, but those were false certifications. What was your role in crafting that?

Mayor: Greg, look, I'm going to step in for a second.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Greg, I'm sorry, I'm running this press conference. We are not here to rehash each and every step of the past. We've spoken to it before. The bottom line is, the Chair made very clear when she learned of the information, she did the most important thing, which was she altered HUD, and that has been documented. Clearly, we're not satisfied with anything that happened. It should not have happened. We're fixing it now. So, I just don't want to go into a rehash of a number of things we talked about. Today is announcing a step forward, and what people at NYCHA need to know and care about is how are we going to fix their problems.

Yoav?

Question: [Inaudible] to ensure that people do their jobs, I'm wondering what responsibility you and Deputy Mayor Glen take for not having done that? I mean essentially your role should have been making sure those people are doing their jobs.

Mayor: Yoav, we can only act on the information we have. This is a huge government, my responsibility is for all of it and NYCHA is a free standing entity, we have to be really clear about this – everyone understands it, the law recognizes it as a federally and State chartered entity but the City plays an important role obviously. Had I known on January 1st 2014 that the previous administration stopped doing lead inspections, I assure you I would have acted on it that day. It's no brainer, whatever people can think politically or otherwise, I would never allow children or NYCHA residents to be in harm's way, I would have been sick to my stomach that day that inspections weren't happening instead of many years later when I finally heard. Every leadership group depends on people to provide them with information. And when you are at the beginning of a new administration you have to depend on your predecessors and you have to depend on the career employees to give you information and bluntly in a way that was worse than many other agencies we were not told the truth. Once we found the truth we acted on it. But it wasn't just flick a switch, we had to literally recreate what happened and figure out how to address it. It's been a painful process. All of us take responsibility for what we learned when we

learned it. Once we learned it we had to swing into action and we have tried constantly to make changes. And also Yoav, crucially, sadly against a back drop where other administrations did not make major new investments, we were constantly making major new investments in NYCHA trying to fix the underlying problems. But I'm not satisfied. We have to change the whole thing which is why I don't fear this consent decree. I embrace it because it is a path forward. David?

Question: I wanted to ask you something on that note – I mean you are having a separate press conference from the U.S. Attorney –

Mayor: Yes.

Question: It's almost as if these press conferences are happening in different worlds. He's talking about the culture at NYCHA of dysfunction, that it was fundamentally flawed and that even if you had as much money as you might have needed to make the repairs that were necessary there, it wasn't about that, it was about the flawed culture. Yet you are presenting this as if you guys are in lock step and this is sort of a common cause that you are all working towards so how do we square those different versions of what's being agreed upon today?

Mayor: Look I think you square it by the fact that there are legal documents that stipulate a way forward that is very clear.

Question: [Inaudible] forced into signing.

Mayor: It was not forced, it was a decision my friends. So, seriously my friend? You represent a rather prestigious journalistic entity. Do not put words in someone's mouth. That's really not cool. I was not forced for a minute. I had the choice if I wanted to do something different to do something different. So really try and respect the truth. This was the right thing to do for the city. I told you in the beginning it was not traditional, plenty of people would say don't do something like this, don't commitment to long term funding. I thought it was the right thing to do. I thought it was a way to make up for some of the wrongs of the past. We have a much more important than any analysis or tonality is the document which stipulates a common path forward. Now I believe that you can have two things happening at once, a problem in institutional culture and a lack of funding. I think it is self-evident that those are both profound problems. I think if you had proper funding it would have supported a much better institutional culture. If you have had a better institutional culture it would have led to the funding being used better. We need to fix both so I respect Mr. Berman a lot, we've had a very good working relationship with him. I think he led a very productive, respectful, serious process. Disagree with that one point, I think it goes beyond the culture to the funding as well. But I think this is the way to address that. Rich?

Question: [Inaudible] my ability to ask a question that was truthful. The federal monitor for the NYPD came about after a trial that the City didn't agree to sign a consent decree in that case and went to trial and then had a monitor imposed. So that was the other option here, not that you would –

Mayor: A trial is an option. We made a choice. You could ask the question rather than editorializing in your question. Did we have a choice? Yes. Did we consider the options? Yes. We thought this was the right thing to do. Rich?

Question: Mr. Mayor, Governor Cuomo about two hours ago said it was never about the money when it came to NYCHA, always about the mismanagement. And he also said that he hopes that the federal monitor will quote on quote run the place.

Mayor: Wrong and wrong. Just couldn't be more wrong. I'm not going to get into a lot of detail. The Governor has spent very little time looking at the details of NYCHA. This could not be clearer, this consent decree. Stan Brezenoff is Chair, Vito Mustaciuolo as General Manager are running NYCHA. They work, you could look at passage by passage, they will work with the federal monitor to develop plans, have to be approved by a judge, they will work together to implement those plans. Is the monitor there to make sure those plans are implemented? 100 percent.

Just like Mr. Zimroth is there at the Police Department right now to make sure that the remediation dictated by the federal government in terms of stop and frisk is acted on. So do you want to know if Jimmy O'Neill is Commissioner of the Police Department, is that something you wanted to know next? No disrespect to you, I'm saying just play it out – federal monitors work with the existing leadership of an agency. The agency has to keep doing its job every single day on a thousand other fronts. But we expect a positive, cooperative situation. We want to solve the problems in common. We really share a goal.

As to the money argument – that is almost a neoconservative argument. It really is and I'm stunned to hear any Democrat say that decades of disinvestment by the federal government and state government is not part of the problem. Could we be honest here please? The fact is you cannot have a city of 400,000 people that lost a lot of its source of funding with buildings that average 50 and 60 years old and what was Exxon Mobile going to manage it better? I mean where were these magical managers who with no resources were going to fix a problem when there was nothing to invest with? This deification, what it is, of private management and putting down public management is outrageous and inappropriate. Of course money matters in solving big, challenging problems. Money matters in education. Money matters in public housing, affordable housing, and everywhere. It's a cop out to say otherwise. Yes?

Question: Mr., Mayor, it doesn't appear, look no one can predict the future, but you're not going to get from the federal government the type of money that NYCHA says it needs to improve the entire system. \$2 billion later, there is still going to be issues, some of these buildings date back to the Great Depression so, are you acknowledging that there needs to be, whether you want to call it a privatization or more private capital, that there needs to be some new paradigm out there in order to pump money into the system?

Mayor: Okay, it's a great question. The – first I want to start with your first assumption, which is a very important one. Has history ended when it comes to NYCHA? No. We're talking about a United States Senate that is 51 – 49 today, could change in any direction in November, we don't know. We're talking about a House that belongs to one party today, it could be in another party's hands in November, we're talking about a Presidency that I can't even make sense of, I can tell you there is going to be a very contested election in 2020.

You can see government all in the hands of one party as it is today, you can see it in the hands of a different party by 2021. We don't know. We do know, as changes occur though, that there is more likelihood of the federal government investing in affordable housing, in public housing

again. We do know for a fact that there is a scenario where the Senate majority leader will be a New Yorker, Chuck Schumer, who cares deeply about public housing.

So no, we are not at the end of the line, there is the potential for serious new federal funding. I'm not counting on it, I'm not waiting by the phone, but I not ruling it out, and that is really important to the people who live in public housing that we not rule it out, and we continue to fight for it. So that's part one.

I think the changes that we're making are to ensure that we're setting up the best possible path for renewed federal funding. I argued that being in – another reason why we did not choose to go to court, we chose to settle – was to be in some kind of working relationship with the federal government. And look, I believe that will result in some real regulatory relief. It has not been confirmed yet, there is a process, there's an agreement to work together and review in an expeditious fashion, but I believe there will be a regulatory relief and that's going to mean a lot to NYCHA. I believe the federal government issues being settled helps to encourage the movement of state resources and that design build authority. We see all these pieces fitting together.

But no I don't want to close the door on a different future, you're right if you say, you know, it is the money talked about here enough to solve every problem in NYCHA, no it's not. It is enough to do a whole lot to address the health and safety areas that are in the consent decree, undoubtedly. I also think it paves the way, potentially, for something much bigger. That's what we have to work toward.

Question: [Inaudible] what about that new [inaudible] –

Mayor: Not be?

Question: [Inaudible] I mean there is NextGen NYCHA but nothing - nothing substantial as –

Mayor: Well – as I – I only will put down a marker that in the months ahead you are going to hear a lot from these two leaders about additional changes because we need to put additional bold plans in place. NextGen NYCHA is a very powerful plan and made some real progress, part of why NYCHA is solvent is because of it. But there's got to be a lot more, and you're going to be hearing more, even before we get to the point of the full impact of the consent decree. Gloria?

Question: Mr. Mayor, I wonder if - with the information you know now, you stood by NYCHA Chair Shola Olatoye for a long time and I would like to ask you if you continue to feel that way and if you can tell us whether or not she was fired when she –

Mayor: You know exactly what happened with her, she made a decision to leave. I thought she was doing important and good work. She was as frustrated as I was that she was not given accurate information by other people in the organization. She achieved a lot, the things I mentioned, the reduction in crime, the speeding up repairs, getting the organization of fiscal solvency. Look, I wish we had known the full truth on day one, I'm sure she wishes it as well. Okay, Jillian?

Question: Mayor, you said earlier in this press conference that you would not tolerate lying within NYCHA and I'm just curious how you swear that with your sort of insistence that we not go back over when your administration – you and other members your administration – were made aware that Miss Olatoye had lied to the federal government three times about the issue of lead according to what the press release said –

Mayor: Again, she told them openly - it is documented- she told them openly what she had learned. So I just don't agree with your characterization. We're going to keep reviewing the history, that's fair, and everything in the complaint, which again, is allegation by its nature, everything in the complaint – has to be very carefully reviewed, we take it very, very seriously. But at the same time, when you enter into consent decree, you're stating a commitment to address issues, and boy, talk about skin in the game, this is a lot of commitment, this is a lot resources, this is ongoing resources.

I don't think any of us have ever seen a scenario where the City agreed to an open-ended commitment of resources. I'll take on the critics any day who think that was wrong, I think it was the right thing to do, so there's no question about the intensity of the commitment and taking these issues very, very seriously. We will keep looking for anything from the past that we need to learn from, but I feel job one is to fix the problems right now. Monica?

Question: Thank you, live on Facebook as usual, and we've done 20 shows, we've done this for six months every day telling the stories of the families of NYCHA. They're watching, do you want to offer them an apology for what has happened? And they want to see someone to blame, they want to see someone accountable, are you accountable? And will you –

Mayor: I don't think they want to see someone to blame. I've talked to residents of NYCHA for decades, I don't think they want to see someone to blame, I think they want to see people who are going to fix the problem. Stan Brezenoff is going to fix the problem. Vito Mustaciuolo is going to fix the problem. We're all going to fix the problem.

As to the question of an apology, I want to offer a joint apology and you can find out if the other people involved want to be part of it. I think the federal government owes them an apology, recent administrations going back 30 years owe them an apology. I think the State government also owes them an apology also going back decades. I think the City government owes the apology. My Administration and I will offer an apology, but the administrations before me should offer an apology too.

I think if anyone wants to say there's one person to blame, you're kidding yourself. Anyone who wants to break it down to one person is not respecting the intelligence of the people who live in public housing. They've lived it. They know it's been going on for decades. So you want an apology, I apologize and I want to hear everyone else apologize, but more importantly I want to fix the problem. This is the first time the City has taken it seriously in the way it needs to.

Thank you, everyone.

###