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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ADAMS ANSWERS QUESTIONS FOLLOWING FY23
PRELIMINARY BUDGET PRESENTATION**

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor Eric Adams: And I was clear, when I rolled out my Blueprint to End Gun Violence, that there were many rivers that fed the sea of violence, and we have to dam each one of them. And we're going to continue to roll out a clear plan of what we can do within our span of control here in the city. The Commissioner announced she will be rolling out the- in actually putting on the street, our anti-gun unit using precision policing, we're going to focus on precision resources, our partnership with our Crisis Management Team, we laid out our whole agenda. We want our outside entities, the state and the feds to look at what we stated, and hopefully join us in that. But regardless of what happens outside the city, I have to keep New Yorkers safe. That is my obligation, the buck stops with me.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: We're going to maintain, right now we're at 35,000, roughly that figure. We're going to do, number one, before we bring on an additional police officer, we're going to look at who we have. Why do I have police officers that are sitting doing clerical duties? So once we bring our officers back to patrol, we could do a real analysis of how many officers we need and we want to do something else, better deployment with our manpower, how we're utilizing the manpower, are they at the optimum level that we deserve? And no matter what we have to do, the number of police officers, I'm going to make sure we have the right number of officers to keep our city safe. That's my primary obligation and responsibility.

Question: Mayor, I know that you said [inaudible]. Congratulations. It's made clear in your presentation, that spending right doesn't always necessarily mean spending more. At the same time, if you are contemplating adding police officers and giving the department a little bit more financial leeway to do what you need to do to keep the city safe. What I didn't see was any sort of number towards them. Can you give us in terms of dollars or percentage wise like how much more the police department would get to do the job that you think they need to know?

Mayor: No. Next.

Question: Yeah. Mr. Mayor, so, what would you allocate to the new technology for police work and what are you looking at as far as improving the technology they have?

Mayor: We have to do a better job. I'm a big believer in using facial recognition correctly within the confines of the law. I'm a big believer in that we have technology out there that could define now, if people are carrying a gun, we should use that. We should not leave any legal stone unturned to utilize technology to make New Yorkers safe. Other countries are using smart technologies to do so and we're going to do that. We're not going to be intrusive, and abusive with that technology. My Chief Technology Officer and the Deputy Mayor of Public Safety, they have charge on my behalf to go out and find that technology. And I'm open to making sure that investment is right that we get the safety that we deserve by using that technology.

Question: Hi, Mayor.

Mayor: How are you?

Question: [Inaudible] How does this [inaudible] or is the NYPD budget growing or is it getting smaller? Or is it staying flat?

Mayor: Based on our preliminary look, the budget is going to be basically flat. There may be a slight decrease in the next few months, but it's basically going to be made flat. That's the number one concern right now, public safety. And I know that in previous years people called for defunding the police. I think that when we build out my overall plan and start to see them kick into gear of what I'm going to do to prevent crime, we're going to reach a place that we won't have to spend as much as we're dealing with the emergency that we're facing, but I'm not going to do anything that's going to get in the way of keeping New Yorkers safe, dealing with the proliferation of guns and stop the violence that we're witnessing in our city.

Mayor: How are you?

Question: Good. How are you?

Mayor: Good.

Question: How much money did you set aside for labor negotiations and can you give us an update on how that's going? I know the number of contracts are expiring or expired or about to expire.

Mayor: We did something that was very important for those of you who continuously watch the budget. They made us make believe \$500 million in cost savings of labor, I was clear with my OMB director, we're not doing that those games. Let's take that money out, we know that they are no cost savings that's there in labor. We took that half a billion dollars out, we still have contracts that we have to negotiate. That is why we are proud to have over \$6 billion dollars in our reserve. We don't know the unexpected climate as we hit-go to the tables and start negotiating our union contracts. I want my city employees who are predominantly black and

brown women that are civil servants to be paid a fair salary, but at the same time, we must be conscious of taxpayers' dollars. And so yes, we are understanding that we have contracts we have to negotiate and that is going to be factored into the decision that we're going to make.

Question: Mr. Mayor, [Inaudible]

Mayor: Good point. Good question. First, we paid for those decrease because there was a lot of uncertainty in 2021. We did it also in thinking in 2020. So now we're headed into 2022 is timing the right size. In 2022, we're going to look at the exact headcount, we're hoping that there's a level of confidence. Number one, we want all those folks who are living in Florida to, you know, come back to the city, this is their city, we want them back here. And we believe we're going to get the enrollment counts up. The name of the game, we assured the city is safe, you're going to see a massive return to the city. That's the number one thing I hear from those who have left the city. And it's crucial that we do so then we will make the adjustment, those numbers don't get back up to the proper headcount.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. [Inaudible]

Mayor: So, there's a couple of things. Number one, I'm happy to hear that the state, they heard our request for help. We repurposed psychiatric beds, to have those who are dealing with COVID. That was something that we did during a period of emergency. Now, they are going to repurpose those beds back to those who are dealing with a mental health crisis that's crucial for us. And we're going to take a more thoughtful approach that we've witnessed particularly street homelessness. I've said for some time now, it was a big mistake to ignore street homelessness on our subway system, on our streets. That is not the direction I'm going into, I'm moving to getting those who are living on the streets to support the need. We're ending the era of tents. We're in the era of sleeping on our subway system, with all your belongings, that era has ended in the city. But at the same time, we want to have additional help and giving people the mental help that they need. And that is why we want to repurpose how we're spending the dollars. All of this is going to be fleshed out in a budget. This is a preliminary preliminary budget, seven weeks into the administration. The team knows what the initiatives are, and we're going to flesh out exactly what we're going to do in that area.

Question: Mr. Mayor, could you square the circle around keeping the police department budget flat. [Inaudible].

Mayor: There's no circle to square. My police commissioner knows my charge. They know what they're doing. They understand that the better deployment is what I said for a long time, Nolan, that how we deploy our resources. Taxpayers deserve a better product. You can't have hundreds of police officers doing clerical duties. When as you said, shooting up. We are seeing every major crime we're seeing increases. Every man and woman must be on deck with the mission of the police department. I'm not going to taxpayers and say let's spend more of your money when I'm not doing a good job in the agency with what they gave us already. We're going to redeploy our manpower, we're going to make sure that everyone who is supposed to be on the streets doing their job, they're doing the job, then we will make the analysis if we have to put more money into it.

Question: [Inaudible] The previous administration's management of the police department was, we are throwing money at it and not getting the results. Is that fair?

Mayor: Nope. What's the only thing that's fair is, is that as Helen Keller stated, that the only thing worse than not having sight is to have sight and not vision, I'm a visionary.

Question: Mr. Mayor, I have a question for you about Fair Fares. The advocates point out the two flaws in that program right now. One is awareness [inaudible].

Mayor: Great question. This is one of the failures of New York City. We expect people to come to government to find out about the resources. And then we advertise in our own little circles, we talk to each other. Those days are over. I'm partnering with the Speaker and I take my hat off to Adrienne. Councilwoman Adrienne Adams, we're going out to New Yorkers and telling them the benefits that are available to them. Now, let's be clear, there's never been a time that we spent more than \$49 million dollars into Fair Fares. We bring it up to over \$70 million dollars. We're getting it right. And we're going to continue to analyze the need. I'm talking about putting money back into the pockets of New Yorkers. \$2.75 per swipe, when you add two fare zones, you're talking about a serious dollar amount that can pay the meals for a family or household. And so our goal is number one, to baseline this, it has never been done before. And to increase the dollar amount, and to make sure we go out to New Yorkers and use our partnerships of grassroot organizations to let people know about this and get a better accessibility of it.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: That's something that we're going to evaluate and discuss. And as part of what we're going to do in our executive budget if we need to do so we want to meet, reach as many New Yorkers as possible.

Question: Mr. Mayor, even though we haven't seen the budget plan yet, can you tell us anything about whether or not you are planning to change the way that Mayor de Blasio allocated the \$13 billion dollars in federal aid that New York City's receiving from the way that he had planned to spend a lot of it on 3-K and other big ticket items?

Mayor: The goal of the budget was to - as I stated in my speech - was to really go at the underlying reasons of that we're seeing the institutional poverty and inequality in this city. And I take my hat off to former Speaker Corey Johnson, and folks like Councilman Adams, to put a pause on just the spending that took place. Remember, we're going to lose this stimulus from the federal government, we're not going to continue to have it. So, we have to get it right in 2022 and lay the foundation for '23 and two fiscal years '23 and '24. So, we're going to examine the dollars we have remaining to spend and make sure that we spend it correctly. Would I have done some things differently?, yes. But we have to look at what's in front of us right now. But we want to invest in those long term things. Pre-K was a success. It was the right thing to do. Drilling down in education is the right thing to do. Using infrastructure dollars to build is the right thing to do. But we have to also attach to that a real job plan so we can hire locally. So we're examining how to best use the last of the stimulus dollars and then encouraging the Feds we got

to get Build Build Back better. That bill we need it for the billions that can go into NYCHA, they are dealing with a \$40 billion capital deficit. So we need to get as much help as we can we could possibly do but I want to be clear on this. Regardless of their help we get, the buck stops with me. I have to take what we have run an efficient city, and this city can run better than what we have witnessed.

Question: Mr. Mayor, how are you?

Mayor: Good. How are you doing?

Question: Good. Thank you. So, your budget items [inaudible].

Mayor: It's called \$6 billion dollars in reserve, you know, called, having the pegs and tell everyone we have to do better to prepare for the uncertainties of the future. And I see myself not in crisis, I see myself out of crisis. And the best thing we can do to deal with COVID is get back to work. People have to get back to work, you know we have to see this as we're in this together. Yes, if you are an accountant, a CPA, yes, you can work from home. But what happens if we lose the low wage employees that's going to impact your business. This is a circle. And so, you know, I'm hearing people often say that, you know, Eric, you're not, you know, focused on COVID. I'm like, what are you saying? What are you saying? We have masterfully kept our schools open, brought down rates inside our schools, so that parents can go to work. We have pushed the vaccine mandates, 75 percent. This has been the first seven week average since November of less than 1,000 cases. This has been unbelievable the success we've had around COVID. We took a crisis and thoughtfully ensured that the right leadership to do the right things to get our city back up and operating. New Yorkers did their job, vaccinated, boosters, taking testing. Now, I need them to do one more job, go back to their job. Let's get our city up and operating.

Question: Mr. Mayor, Good afternoon. You talked about mental health a little bit, it's still being fleshed out. Do you plan on doing new vision work through the Mayor's Office of Mental Health formerly known as Thrive, which was criticized for not tracking spending over the years? And will that budget be similar to the 200 million it got last year?

Mayor: Here's where we're going with the-our new Office, street homelessness. That's the focus, we must look at street homelessness, and then we want to create partnerships, to help those who are dealing with areas of depression and other issues around mental health crisis. And then we need to go beyond it. We've sat down with leaders in this field across the country, using telemedicine could also be used during mental health crises. We don't do that, we are afraid to think differently. And so our focus is going to be focusing a lot on street homelessness where the crisis is, because if we get that right, we deal with some of the crime, some of the assaults of some of the people who are dangerous to themselves and others. That is our huge focus. And we're going to rethink how we use that office. And I'm excited about the team that we're putting together to address it.

Question: Thank you. Mr. Mayor,

Mayor: Did I say I was doing off-topic?

[Laughter]

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: So, you want two questions? You want on-topic and off-topic?

[Laughter]

Question: [Inaudible] So, you mentioned in your speech earlier that the City has record amounts of reserves, at the same time your administration is requesting \$19 billion dollars in additional borrowing power from Albany, why is it that you have direct [Inaudible]

Mayor: Jac, can you feel like handling?

[Laughter]

Director Jacques Jiha, Office of Management and Budget: Yeah, these are two different issues.

Mayor: [Inaudible]

Director Jiha: The reserves are operations, whereas the request that we have in Albany is to fund a capital program. They are two different things.

Question: How do you mean two different things?

Director Jiha: The reserve is coming out of the operations, out of the expense budget, okay. That request that we have in Albany is asking Albany to raise the bonding authority for TFA, which is the Transitional Finance Authority which is basically, to fund the capital program, not to fund operations. Okay.

Question: [Inaudible] So, the City has this great testing infrastructure, it put in a vaccine mandate for the private sector. What else does the City need to do or what else can the City do to incentivize private workers to come back to the office if they're comfortable working in their PJs and they feel that they're productive at work? What can the City do? Is there some kind of incentive they could dangle in front of the companies? What are the conversations you're having? With CEOs?

Mayor: I met with my CEOs today, we had about 100 online. We meet with our small businesses, and we meet with our corporations. And the message is clear. Number one, I need for them to help with 30,000 jobs with Summer Youth employments. Number two, we can't send mixed messages, we can't keep kicking the can down the road, we want you to come back in January, no, come back in February, no, come back in March, it's time. It's time. And then we have to be very clear, so that people can understand if you are an accountant, and you stay at

home, and it impacts that local diner, a local restaurant, it's going to impact you. Eventually, you're going to lose your clients, because if our restaurants close, if our small businesses close, who's going to give you the business? So I think that many of us are believing that we can stay home and not impact our financial ecosystem. Now, we're connected. New York City can't run from home. We're all connected. We need that cab driver operating. We need our tourism industry boosted. 70 percent of our hotel occupancy are business travelers, if no one is coming in, those hotels are going to be impacted. So, who's going to give that accounting the business? And so what I need my CEOs to do, and I shared with them today, it's time to tell the employees, like I believe Microsoft just acknowledged you know this, it's time to get back to work.

Question: The time frame?

Mayor: The timeframe is now. I'm going to work. Now is the time for us to get back. And so I'm hoping within the next few weeks, the CEOs map out a real plan of this is when you go when you need to come back. And there's certain companies that are open already and then have been really pushing through this COVID crisis. But I cannot be any clearer, we need people back to work.

Question: Mr. Mayor, the Commissioner of the NBA today suggested that perhaps you would change the rules, so a player like Kyrie Irving can play. Would you consider changing the rules? And if so, when?

Mayor: You know, first of all, I think the rule is unfair. I believe that we are saying to out of town athletes, that they can come in and not be vaccinated. Yet, New York athletes, you have to be vaccinated. And they also do this for entertainers. I want people to know that. Entertainers can come here without being vaccinated and perform. I think that's unfair. And I'm not sure if a Boston fan created this rule, I don't know.

[Laughter]

But I am really really leery about sending the wrong message. Having the city closed down, again, keeps me up at night. And the message was put in place. The rule was put in place, to start changing it now, I think it was sending mixed messages. So I'm struggling with this, just to be honest with you.

Question: Maybe yes, no, maybe so. [inaudible]

[Laughter]

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: How are you doing?

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: First, let's talk about that stream. We need to dam every river that feeds the sea of violence. And I believe that, but I can only do those things within my span of control. I don't dictate what happens in other areas of government and listen, our founders of this great country, they made sure that one area does not control all the areas. I just can continue to advocate. And I believe in the long run that my conversation with the Speaker and the Majority Leader, we're in the same place that we need to be safe. And we're going to continue to negotiate on how to accomplish that. And I'm not going to give up that since we're both at that place of being safe. I think we're going to find a resolution to this and I'm excited about the possibilities.

Question: [Inaudible] Detail the lack of diversity within the media. Can you detail the mechanism with how it affects how you are covered?

Mayor: Yes, well, two things. Number one, my staff will tell you, I say what I say and I don't sleep on it. I don't live on it. I don't live in it. You know, there's nothing personal I have against anyone. But I will be very clear on my expectations. And it's nothing personal. And you know, I think of some of the people that have in the media. I think Josh from the Daily News Editorial Board, I think he's a solid guy. You know, they disagree with me, and who has been more kinder outside of Nolan to me than the Post? So, you know, this is not this not attacking. I don't know, when I come to a platform and just say, hello, Marsha. And everyone knows I adore you. So, this is what this is about. That sometimes I think we don't realize it. I went to the Fashion Show on Sunday and the fashion industry realize that they will discriminatory towards women based on their body type. And finally, they are allowing women to model. They were discriminatory towards hair texture. They were discriminatory towards people behind the scene. We are at a place that we have to ask ourselves, if everyone is not around the table, then are we really getting different views from everyone? That's what this is about. And if I'm just a black mayor, that is just going through the motions and say, oh, you know what, I got elected, and not use this platform to go after the systemic inequities and I know what [inaudible] went through as a Chinese reporter. I know my African American reporters are going through. I don't see reporters that are from the Sikh community. We had to diversify this. And it's a painful conversation. I know, people will say, you know what, oh, he said he has the only black reporters. Listen, fine. Just as a black NFL Coach says we need to start allowing black coaches, everyone is becoming conscious. And either we can drag everyone along or we can sit down together and say, listen, let's look at these inequities and change the way we're doing business. And I'll be darn if I'm going to remain silent, because it's painful. Pain brings growth.

Question: Mr. Mayor, the CDC last month, published a study based in California [inaudible] vaccines for things like restaurants?

Mayor: And this is the same when you are exposed that you build natural immunity? Listen, I sent that over, someone sent me a report, I looked through it. And based on what I read there was something interesting here. And I sent it over to my Deputy Mayor of Health and Mental Hygiene. I said, Listen, can we look, take a look at this? Is this true? When he came back with is that the vaccines allow a longer period of strengthening your immune system than the natural immunity. That's what he came back with. But I told him, I needed him to study this, I need to find out if this is a viable option. And if it is a viable option, we need to revisit it.

Question: [Inaudible].

Mayor: Listen, he's going to come back with information. I'm going to follow the science. And I believe let's deal with the facts and the facts state that then we need to have that conversation. But here's the danger, if we're saying the natural immunity has a shorter period of time, if it's substantial, he said we're going to allow it for that long. Then you're saying every time someone goes to a restaurant, we're going to test them to see that natural immunity is still present. That just doesn't make sense. Now I can't stay here. Okay, I heard you. He's looking at it. And I'll hunt you down and give you the results and what he says.

Question: Mr. Mayor, how did the meeting last night with the Drill rappers come about? What's your takeaway from that?

Mayor: It was the first time they were in the meeting of the cow, you know, that these young men and women was sitting inside. I don't know if you saw the picture. But for the first time in my life, I looked cool hanging out with all of them. And it was very interesting because I don't know who said it. But they said we heard you were going to ban drill rapping and I did not say that. No, I was very clear on what I stated. And they came in with a lot of energy. You know, here's the 62-year-old guy that don't understand young people and you want to destroy and I let them talk. And then I told them what I said that violent people who are using Drill rapping, to post who they killed, and then antagonize the people who they are going to kill is what the problem is. And they heard me. And we're going to be rolling out something in the next few days to deal with this issue. It was a great conversation. I was happy to have them there.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Nolan, Nolan.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: I got you. What's the question, Nolan?

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: I don't recall, one time saying a press corps was racist. Not once. I want you to go back and listen to what I said yesterday, and see if I use the term racist at all. I want you to do that. This is exactly what I'm talking about. When you hear something comes from my mouth, you use a predisposition of your life to interpret what I say. And then when I express something based on my observation, it's called a rant. Eric is ranting. I am trying to help you, Nolan. I want you to grow. I want you to be kinder, I want you to be emotionally intelligent not to feel that everyone is trying to attack you. If you go and speak to some of your colleagues, and ask them what are their feelings in your institution? Let them tell you, don't listen to me. That them tell you what they're saying. I never called the press corps racist. That has never come out my mouth. But since you heard me say something that you didn't agree with, you interpreted for me. I'm sure you didn't think I was saying the press corps was racist. I'm sure others, oh it's in the paper. It's in the paper. Would you, go look at the tape.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Nolan, can I ask you a question? Would you be honest? Did I use the term racist?

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Nolan, Nolan, Nolan, stay with me. Did I use the term racist?

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Nolan, Nolan, it's just a simple question. Did I use the term racist? Come on, Nolan, you're not even willing to admit when you were inaccurate? Did I use the term racist? Okay, I'm not asking any more questions. Thank you.

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