

EXCERPTS FROM COMMUNITY BOARDS' "STATEMENTS ON THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET" FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

Reactions to Agency Responses listed in the FY '16 Register of Community Board Budget Requests are collectively listed under Agency Subheading

OMB

BRONX 6

Bronx Community Board #6 thanks Mayor de Blasio and his administration for increasing the budget of the city's 59 community boards to \$229,895 each. This is a generous increase and the first budget increase that the community boards have received in many years. It will allow the community boards to continue their important function of monitoring the delivery of municipal services to their respective districts, and to be a voice for the individuals, businesses and institutions that look to us to advocate on their behalf.

BROOKLYN 1

COMMUNITY BOARD BUDGET

Community boards provide a vital function for the districts they are designated to serve and consequently stand as valuable assets to the City as well. There is need for increased allocation as funds were lost in previous budget crunches (also lost were the Board's assigned youth coordinators and promised planners to aide with development never materialized).

Our internal budget is not sufficient enough to meet the ever escalating costs of necessary office operations and staffing. The rapid changes in communications, media and computers, plus the costly upgrading of various programs and equipment hinder our Board's meager budget, which covers a small staffing (two full-time persons & one part-time person) and miniscule operating (OTPS) budget.

Over the years our members have repeatedly expressed vehement opposition to any plans to cut our Board's budget. In the past the Office of Management and Budget advised us of cuts to take place in FY 2013 & FY 2014. We pointed out that although cuts like this may have little effect on larger agencies, these cuts have a tremendous negative impact for community boards across the City. Any cuts to our budget would further erode our personnel service dollars resulting in staff reductions. As previously noted, our board has a small staff of two full-time persons & one part-time person. In several past years the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) related that it would implement cuts to our budget. After the community board budgets were restored in 2012, the Office of Management and Budget announced that Community Board No. 1 would be cut in FY 2013 by 5.4% (\$11,172) and 8% (\$15,658) for FY 2014. These kinds of cuts would have forced our office to reduce its already diminished staff! Fortunately, with action by the City Council, our budgets were held safe for FY 2013 and FY 2014.

Our board respectfully asks your assistance again in ensuring that Community Board No. 1 is fully funded and that moneys allotted to our agency are duly appropriated and distributed timely. As you are aware, the community boards exist with a "fossilized" bare-bones budget that has not been increased in over 20 years. Postage,

supplies, equipment and other expenses are ever increasing and we have never received the corresponding cost of living adjustments (OTPS Inflation) to compensate since 1991.

Every dollar is truly needed and vital to our operations. We seek your continued help in securing our budget for Fiscal Year 2016 .

Last year our board submitted its opposition in testimony regarding a requirement measure being introduced by the City Council (Intr. 28). CB #1 feels that this proposal should be abandoned because it is simply not feasible and lacks any solid hindsight or forethought.

As previously noted -- we have consistently advocated for increased budgets for community boards, Community Board No. 1 -- however our board continues to lack adequate funding. The meager budget provided for our board does not keep pace with inflation and any increased operating costs. The cost for acquiring much needed newer technology, computer software, upgraded hardware as well as internet/web access capabilities is expensive and way beyond our fiscal capability. Web casting is a high tech area of deployment requiring cameras, software, various hardware, a streaming server, a database server, a web/content management server, a directory management server and a series of "apps"; least of all, staff to operate the camera.

There are also serious costs included in setting up an infrastructure to carry out webcasting. All of this is something that we cannot both fiscally and physically accomplish "in house". Most of us make do with the limited resources of DoITT (there is one tech person assigned for all of the 59 community boards). Additionally, since community boards lack their own meeting venues (relying on rented or donated space) any recording set ups must be portable.

Community Boards are always facing yet another round of budget cuts in the budget process. We are pleased that the City Council supported the Boards and voted to restore our respective budgets this fiscal year, but the boards' operating budgets were not made whole. We remain guarded about projected cuts for upcoming fiscal years. Community Boards have not seen an increase in our budget in over 20 years!

Instead of (for the sole purpose of being "transparent") proposing another layer of responsibility that would prove too costly for community boards, we propose an alternative:

The NYC Charter's language regarding community boards must be strongly re-written to ensure that community boards are first and foremost fiscally protected and legislatively sound. It is our belief that if the City endeavors to resume its pursuit for increasing "transparency" by resurrecting this proposal (previously known as Int. No. 28) it must first consider developing and fully funding an independent dedicated IT team to conduct this digital video recording. This team would then make itself available to document each of the 59 community boards' monthly meetings, provide/maintain a web outlet to display the documentation as well as create an appropriate archive for their recordings. Any form of Intro. No. 28 is certainly a nonstarter.

We need your help to keep our budgets safe!

We ask for your aid in ensuring that there are no cuts for the 59 community board budgets and to immediately hold our board's budget harmless from any future proposals to reduce funding.

BROOKLYN 2

Community Board Budget

CB2 is grateful for the \$23,000 increase proposed for each of the budgets of the 59 community boards. For the past nine fiscal years, the highest Expense Budget priority of Community Board 2 has been a budget increase (202200706E). A not insignificant portion of this increase will be needed to cover cost-of-living increases already negotiated through collective bargaining.

The responsibilities of community boards have grown over the years but their budgets have not kept pace. Whether it is digital communication, partnering with city and state agencies, or proactively planning for the neighborhoods they serve, community boards are doing more and more. At the risk of appearing unappreciative, it is time for the city agencies that work most directly with the public to receive a budget increase commensurate with their increased responsibilities.

BROOKLYN 8

Community Board budgets have not been increased with the exception of collective bargaining purposes since 1989. The increase to accommodate increased salaries as part of the recent contract should not be looked at as an increase in functionality. We still do not have the funds available to hire adequate staff, maintain livable wages for existing staff, and even purchase necessary equipment and supplies for our offices. A thorough reconsideration and reexamination of this Expense request must be made.

BROOKLYN 9

Community Board 9's Budget

Community Board 9 expresses its sincere appreciation to the Mayor and the members of the New York City Council for recognizing the important work that Community Boards do and for seeing the importance of an increase in the budget for Community Boards.

BROOKLYN 12

TRACKING CODE 212200701E

INCREASE COMMUNITY BOARD BUDGETS

Several years ago monies were taken out of the Community Board budgets and were never fully replenished.

Five years ago the Community Board budgets were negatively impacted because the Boards had to partially fund collective bargaining increases as well as the Mayor's Personnel Order for Managerial increases. All in all, with cuts, restorations, cuts again, and so on, the reality is that the budgets have basically not been increased in over 20 years. Although the Boards operate on a shoe-string budget; some Boards operate on a deficit unable to afford supplies and other amenities. Taking a broader look at the Community Board budgets over the last several years, those budgets have overall decreased rather than increased even though Personal Services along with OTPS needs have increased dramatically.

Community Boards are one of the smallest agencies in the City and yet they produce a great amount of assistance and services to their communities with the least amount of money.

Board budgets should be increased to continue services they provide to their respective communities.

BROOKLYN 14

Community Boards continue to be an integral part of city government. They are the first line for residents, elected officials and city agencies in the dissemination of information and for a more efficient coordination of delivery of city services at the local level. The board is gratified that the increased funding is provided to assist boards in meeting their Charter-mandated responsibilities. The board supports additional funding beyond personnel expense offsets.

BROOKLYN 17

Brooklyn Community Board 17 thanks Mayor de Blasio and his administration for increasing the budget of the city's 59 community boards \$229, 895.00 each. This is a generous increase and the first budget increase that the community boards have received in many years. This will allow all 59 community boards to continue their important function of monitoring the delivery of municipal services to their respective districts and to be a voice for the individuals, businesses and institutions that look to us to advocate on their behalf.

BROOKLYN 18

The Board's #1 Priority Expense Request to; *"Increase the budgets of Community Boards to restore the PEG (Program to Eliminate the Gap) cuts and to allow for the hiring of a planner consistent with Sections 191(b)(5) and 2800(g) of the City Charter"* the response was; *"In FY 2016, the budget for each community board is increased to \$229,895."* – increase of \$20,000. Community Board #18 and Community Boards, in general, cannot perform Charter mandated responsibilities with this meager increase in budget allocation.

MANHATTAN 4

Asks:

- **Provide Community Board with additional funding for staffing, technology upgrades and to access outside resources.**

Although Community Boards are comprised of 50 volunteers that either work or live within the District, the work that is done could not be accomplished with the support of the District Office. The District Office is the lifeblood of a Community Board by providing the resources required by the volunteers to best represent the voice of the community. We would argue the a Community Board is as vital a "City Agency" as any and to that we are deeply concerned that Community Boards have not received an inflator to the OTPS budget since 1990, twenty-four-years-ago. Over these years the prices of goods and services in New York City increased by 85%. In the meantime, union employees receive pay increases, the cost for supplies have skyrocketed, postage increases have occurred, and additional increases are inevitable; the workplace continues to become more technical in nature; most City and State agencies now send all types of documents electronically. This has translated into savings for them while creating additional expenditures for the Community Boards, such as increased network system maintenance costs, IT consulting services, and other needed technological infrastructure updates.

In addition, Community Boards are expected to take the lead when planning for their community, funds are needed to pay for outside planning consultants and software such as GIS and Adobe, and Sketch up.

Thus, we endorse Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer's efforts to improve the technological capacity of the Boards to analyze land use applications and neighborhood data available on the New York City Open Data portal, created pursuant to the Law she passed as a Council Member. She has brought local technologists and civic hackers to Borough Board meetings, in an effort to get open data tools into the hands of the community. However, implementation of these efforts, along with proposed transparency projects such as webcasting Board meetings, require a capital and staff investment.

We ask that Boards be provided with additional funding to better compensate their staff, improve their technological capacity, improve their websites, and provide important local data visualizations to their constituents.

MANHATTAN 5

305201001E—For many years, community board budgets have remained flat and so, in real terms, have decreased, which damages the boards' ability to properly carry out its mandated duties.

MANHATTAN 6

Community Boards continue to face increased demands for service and rising expenses, so it is crucial that the City provide appropriate resources for them to function.

Our office functions at a capacity that has not changed for years. Without significant additional operating funds, we will remain constrained in our ability to serve our growing community on interests such as development and planning, land use, and service delivery. Our request for a budget of \$300,000 would allow us to hire a full-time urban planner or to restore the position of youth coordinator. We welcome the modest increase in funding, but ask that you reconsider the contemporary realities of office operations.

E-05: 306201201E - Funding for Community Boards

MANHATTAN 7

Tracking Code: 307200802E

Request: Increase Community Board Budgets

Agency Response: In FY 2016, the budget for each community board is increased to \$229,895.

Reply: CB7 appreciates the increase in funding. While the increment will not enable CB7 to hire additional staff to address the ever-increasing flow of constituent concerns as well as the heightened demands of serving the Board's review of a broad spectrum of applications to City agencies and other vital links between the community and the agencies and elected, the additional funding will assist in more modest ways to ensure the continuity of service the public deserves and demands.