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Civic Engagement Commission
Wednesday, December 16th, 2020
Remote CART Services

>> SARAH SAYEED: We haven't started yet.

Okay, I think we have forum, we can begin the meeting okay, oh, I need to put myself on camera, all right, everyone. Very nice to have you all here with us today. And I want to thank you for making the time for this. And as usual, I want to start off with a couple of technical assistance instructions, so if Francis, if you could go to the first screen. As you know, your audio is enabled but we are asking you to please mute yourself. And turn on your mic when you are speaking. And this is for the commissioners and for all participants, you are muted on entry and your audio will be enabled when the moderator enables you during the public comment. And we will call on the participants for public comment in the order that they registered for the meeting, if you sent in your name before the meeting, you will be called on first.

And if you are dialing in via phone or if you are on the video call, you could also submit your name for public comment. And during a call, you can do it during the meeting -- sorry, on the video call, you can do it in the chat, own the phone, you have a number you can send a text to which is 6467632189 to offer public comment. And we will call on the dial-in participants by name of the order the text was received.

Now, Francis, I have a question for you. Because I think someone is on the phone, is it Amy on the phone today? How does that work for Amy?

>> FRANCIS URROZ: Amy is on the phone, she can unmute herself.

>> AMY BREEDLOVE: I'm here, Sarah, sorry, I had to drive and got caught a little late so I apologize.

>> SARAH SAYEED: No worries, I just wanted to make sure you didn't have to do the texting thing to be able to speak. Sounds like we are all good there. And then the option to if you need close captioning. Under more options on Webex, under the more options icon, you can enable what you get to by seeing the "..." on the screen, next to the smiley face icon. You can click on that and you will be able to enable the close captioning. So thank you for the brief text.

And let's go to what is next... okay, so we will start off today by doing what we usually do. Which is attendance and moving through the agenda. And I wanted to make sure before we start that all the commissioners received the agenda and other materials for today's meeting? Is there anyone who did not receive it for some reason?

Should have gotten it in an e-mail. Okay, so I will assume that everyone has it. And speaking of e-mail, I just wanted to -- well, actually, I will come back to that a little bit later, e-mails.

All right, let's go through the attendance. I am going to just call on you, call your name and just say if you are here. And before I do that, I just want to say that (inaudible) has resigned and I believe I e-mailed you all that information. So please just say here, when I call your name. Chuck Apelian? Murad Awewdeh?

>> MURAD AWEWDEH: Here.

>> CHUCK APELIAN: I'm here, but I apologize, I have a 2:30 stop.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Murad? Mark Diller? Lori Fiorito? Donna Veronica Gill? I heard Donna before. And Anthony Harmon? I see you.

>> ANTHONY HARMON: Here.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Yeah, thank you. José Hernandez? José here? Lilliam Perez?

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: I'm here.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Okay, and Anastasia Somoza?

>> ANASTASIA SOMOZA: I'm here.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Okay.

>> JOSE HERNANDEZ: I'm here. You can hear me now?

>> SARAH SAYEED: Perfect. Okay, so let's go through the approval of the minutes.

>> SPEAKER: Hey, Sarah, I'm here as well.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Awesome, hopefully Lori and holly are here and I couldn't see them for some reason or hear them but I don't see them on the participants list.

Okay, so the next... someone saying something?

>> MARK DILLER: I was going to move to approve the minutes as presented.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Thank you for the moving, is there a second?

>> SPEAKER: Second.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Okay, all in favor? Anyone oppose, say nay. Okay, everyone is in favor of approving the minutes. So the minutes for the September 30th meeting are now approved. So for the program (Static) -- there seems like a bad echo here on the computer. Can everyone hear me okay? Okay, the first item on the agenda is to update of the service during the general election. So to do that, I have -- we have Gagan who is going to present a quick update for us or summary for us, sorry. And I will go on mute.

>> GAGAN KAUR: Good afternoon, folks. Thank you so much, Dr. Sayeed, as you know the CEC implemented the poll site program for the November 2020 election as mandated by the city charter. To expand interpretation services in 11 languages at select poll sites and through this first implementation there have been many challenges and through which many lessons learned to improve the processes, timelines, training materials and think through alternative approaches to further streamline the work prior to administering the program again for the June primary.

And as you folks are familiar, the CEC served more languages than in the past that were served by the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs pilot program, specifically 9 languages and 2 additional languages through our formula that is included in the city charter, the languages as you know are Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Mandarin, creole and polish. And languages were provided in two languages per voting site with the exception of 3 sites that served 3 languages.

On election day, one language was served by poll site with the exception of one poll site that served 2 languages and the reasoning for that is that there are certain

languages that have the highest concentration of speakers at the same site as where there are already 2 languages being served so instead of going to the next ranking site, we serve 3 languages instead of serving 2.

And, as folks are familiar, we provided in services in the last 2 days in early voting at 52 sites on election day. The program provided services at 102 poll sites across the days and 77 unique sites. As I shared with you all, being the first time implementing this program, there were definitely some challenges we were navigating. One was recruitment of interpreters, we experienced some difficulties with addition of new languages, the vendor we worked with, they were expanding their language portfolio by several languages.

So having to build that base, there was definitely some issues with recruitment and drop off but in addition, the layer of the challenges due to COVID-19 was also a very real thing.

And we had the most difficulty recruiting for Urdu, Yiddish and creole and we met the target for recruitment but it was down to the wire and the members of the language assistance committee really stepped in to help get the information out there and help recruit additional interpreters for those languages.

In terms of operations, the CEC worked with several vendors, predominantly, MWBEs to recruit and screening of interpreters and supervisors and transportation of interpreters and supervisors like going to different poll sites throughout the day.

And delivery of materials, this is all the materials that the interpreters and supervisors may need throughout the poll site every day and includes PPE and delivery of furniture to non-department education sites and materials like creating our table cloths and all of that -- those material pieces that we used during the operation days. And also created collateral media bytes and it was a very wide effort in terms of operations to implement this program.

And, yes. So the other piece, in terms of operations, navigating and managing this number of -- this number of vendors was something that -- it wasn't necessarily challenging but it was something that we had to be organized in our debrief, we have been working With Do-it who is our home agency to better streamline those vendors and also to identify maybe there are alternative ways to work with the city or other vendors that may be out there. So that is 1 piece that we are working through.

We worked very closely with the New York City Board of Elections central team to troubleshoot challenges that came up during early voting during election day some of those challenges were we had some interpreters placed outside of certain poll sites and for early voting, the first day, October 31st for which we provided services, we had 3 outdoor poll sites and on November 1st, we had 3 poll sites outdoors and October 31st was a very cold day.

And that was a huge challenge for us because we are trying to balance both the experience of the interpreters and making sure that while being in safety is kept into consideration, while at the same time, providing services in the ranked sites that we have outlined through the methodology. So that was definitely something that was navigating and the reasoning for CEC being placed outside that these were poll site that is were like one room polling sites. So as soon as you walked into the building, that was it.

So there wasn't necessarily a separate space where the interpreters could be placed.

Other challenges that came up was, you know, a challenge that has come up before in the pilot program which is certain poll site staff being unfamiliar with the oath form or affidavit form and that's something that we would flag to the board of election

service team and either send materials or help solve in real-time. Other issues were around the communication on the ground between poll site staff and CEC interpreters but that is something we discussed and debriefed with the board of election team in ways to improve that.

Which includes attending the -- training the board of election holds for their staff and speaking of the program there and we already began to think about collaborative solutions to prevent these type of on the ground communication issues from happening in the June primary.

Of course, there will always be something but we are trying to mitigate the issues that we saw in the last cycle.

And, just for -- just to quickly go back to the issue around interpreters being placed outside. Due to weather on October 31st, we had one poll site where we changed the operation hours. We had to close down the poll site by 1:00 p.m. as oppose to 4:00 p.m. Just due to how cold it was outside.

And making sure that the interpreters were good. So that was an issue that we were trying to resolve. In real-time, we sent warm materials to our interpreters and flagged to them ahead of time that you will be placed outside but it was again unreasonably cold so that was... that was a collective decision the team had to make around closing the site earlier oppose to staying open throughout the day.

And, we really, you know, it's important for us to also prioritize the health and safety of interpreters and also the morale of interpreters because these are the same folks that we want to work with through the cycles, we want to continuously build a deep pool of interpreters of who would we can work with who are familiar with the program and thus knows how to navigate the types of issues that come up, even though we go through them in the training, it's great to have that historical knowledge.

And other challenges that we navigated were just around materials. We coordinated the delivery and pick off of all materials but there were specifically with more of the private sites or poll sites that were operate within a commercial building, those are the ones where we had these issues. Like not finding our materials or them being misplaced by the building support staff and to mitigate those issues we had folks that were runners and would troubleshoot or run materials of any missing documents, PPE, whatever the interpreters needed to the poll sites.

In terms of the division of issues, early voting was, I think, had much more issues than we did on election day and that is perhaps just because of the first day of early voting was the first day we were implementing the program and everything was very new oppose to election day, I think our interpreters, our supervisors, the CEC central team knew how to mitigate the issues much quicker. And thus election day was very very smooth, especially compared to the first early voting day. In terms of utilization and impact of the program, the most utilize languages over the course of the 3 days were Russian, polish, Haitian, Creole, French, Bengali, Udu, and Arabic. And as folks know, Bengali and Arabic was served for the first time in this last cycle, the pilot program would serve the prior languages, Russian, polish, Haitian, Creole and French and we saw high utilization of Bengali and Udu despite the sites of Creole, and due to historic voting turn out, the CEC saw a drastic increase in utilization from the November 2019 pilot program. So the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs their program utilization in the general election, November 2019, and this past cycle, we saw almost double utilization and of course, we would like to say all of our outreach efforts and we did partner with memberses of our language assistance advisory committee with good government groups in addition, we worked with -- sorry, my brain just went blank.

So we partnered with also the census 2020 infrastructure to really disseminate

information poll site language assistance program and in addition voting education materials we created with city partners as well.

So we would like to say there was all of those efforts that led to high utilization but it's really record-high voter turn out and we saw those numbers reflected in our utilization as well.

And as folks know, we partnered with democracy NYC and Campaign Finance Board and Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs on early voting and voting by mail and voter rights to bring an interpreter during the voting. As I said, we worked with the language assistance advisory committee and census both on dissemination on these materials and also on the creation of it.

The lack helped review the scripts as they were being developed and offered further feedback to make sure that the language that we were using was very localized verses like academic or inaccessible or maybe eye dialect that is not necessarily spoken in New York City and same with the census 2020 team, we worked with the census team and the lack to create a PSA on absentee voting and we utilized the stories and -- sorry, we worked with members of our lack so they could, you know, talk of an sentee voting in language in their environment and we partner withdrawn Brook Media to create a collateral so there was a lot of not necessarily a lot of chefs in the kitchen but there were a lot of partnerships throughout the complementation poll site program in this past cycle that really helped to make it a success. And it was the open communication channel of the board members and all the members of the lack part of the material and the review and the dissemination and many city partners.

Including folks from census who stepped in to help us, especially when it came to site outreach and visiting sites, as folks know, we are a very small team, so having this expanded, you know, professional community to help complement this program, helped make it a success and made it as smooth as it was.

Yes, but that's pretty much the overview of the implementation of the program in this past selection, I just want to open up any space for questions folks may have.

>> DONNA VERONICA GILL: This is Donna speaking.

>> GAGAN KAUR: Hi, Donna.

>> DONNA VERONICA GILL: How are you, my love?

>> GAGAN KAUR: I'm good.

>> DONNA VERONICA GILL: How did everything go and how do you see us doing a better job? Or a job and how do you think that everything went? That's the first question.

The second question was how was the BOE staff, were they very cooperative or did you find any resistance? You know, things like that, those are my questions.

>> GAGAN KAUR: Thank you, Donna. So, how did it go? It was a giant operation and I am so so grateful for Francis, Leslie, Daniel, everyone on the team for, you know, playing a role wherever they could to make it happen.

And that was also a really beautiful thing to see. Our tiny team coming together to run a city-wide program. That and I think that was part of the success and because of that, I think it went really well.

In terms of doing a better job, I think there are many areas? Which we can do a better job. So even starting out with the training materials that we used to train interpreters and supervisors, you know, of course we were developing these materials having never implemented the program before. So there was just a lot of, I think, Francis and I were both keeping a list that we need to add this to the training content. We need to add these questions to the FAQ document for supervisors, just, you know, just based on the type of questions and issues that were coming up during the operation

days. Other pieces that Francis and I have been working is streamlining the procurement process, we have been working with several vendors and that's a really -- we do have to be very organized with those time lines in order to make sure that everything is executed by the day we need.

And like I said, we have been thinking about how to streamline and make those processes just easier by communicating with our -- the agency that houses us to make sure that they're familiar with the project.

So we worked with a vendor who helped to deliver the transportation of interpreters and supervisors. Then we worked with a vendor that transported our materials, a vendor who delivered our materials, a vendor who delivered our furnitures, we had all of those and had to debrief how those pieces work together and it's not as confusing when we implement at the same scale for the June primary. Other areas of improvement... and I think this lends itself to the next piece on the agenda, you know, interpreter well-being, there are 3 experiences that we really care about are the voter experience, the interpreter's experience, and then the CEC staff experience, right?

We want to make sure that all of those lend themselves to a smooth and focused program. So the piece, I think, we were all struggling with was the -- having interpreters be outside and, you know, they were so willing and very focused on providing those services and very like, those were the values that they were operating from. But you know, there are moments where we have to make the call, no, there is crazy winds, and it's raining really hard, we really need to close the site.

The first day on -- I'm sorry, October 31st when it was really cold, we had interpreters. They were so dedicated, and wanted to like stay the whole day and we were like no, it doesn't make sense for you to get sick, especially with the layer of COVID-19 and the fact that these folks, you know, showed up and they were so dedicated to the work, that's 1 piece in our debrief, we need to make sure that this experience improves.

So the amendments that we will speak about in a few minutes are also ways that we see that we can make our methodology more clear and just improve the experience for folks like serving in the program in whatever capacity that they are.

>> DONNA VERONICA GILL: How was BOE?

>> GAGAN KAUR: Oh, yes. Thank you. Thank you. Sorry, I forgot that piece. So working with the BOE central team was very positive. It was like I said, for example, we had an issue on the first day, with a tiff with an interpreter and poll site staff and we quickly got on a call with Board of Elections and all of us talked about the issue and came to collaborative solutions in real-time.

And that was really -- that was the piece that helped make the program so smooth was our open communication and the board of election central team and the CEC central team were on an e-mail thread for the course of the 3 days. And like I said, their coordinator of their central team would respond immediately, we would raise an issue and they would respond immediately, we flag something and they respond immediately and they would flag issues to us and we would immediately either send a runner there or one of our folks who are doing the troubleshooting to resolve those issues so I would say that the experience and the collaboration fed into the success of the program.

>> DONNA VERONICA GILL: Thank you.

>> GAGAN KAUR: Thank you, Donna.

>> MURAD AWEWDEH: How many people used translation services in this round? And I know we shouldn't use this as a base because of COVID and the huge emphasis on mail ballot and early voting and everything else that has happened but do

we have a number of how many people we have served?

>> GAGAN KAUR: So yes, we do and like I said, we saw a drastic growth from the past iteration through the pilot and the CEC's first implementation and I'm working on a post report that includes utilization broken down by language and overview of the program and in addition, feedback from interpreters and supervisors that we gathered through surveyors that we will be sharing with commissioners. Yeah. But in terms of the actual number, we have the preliminary number. But are holding to release it.

>> SARAH SAYEED: All right, in the interest of time, I want to keep us moving along and if we have time at the end, we can come back to more questions on this piece but I do want to make sure that we get through some of the other things that we have to cover and one of them is, of course, the amendments to the methodology. As Gagan pointed out, there was a lot of learning that happened during this implementation and we -- it became pretty clear to us that we were dealing with scenarios that were not really covered in the methodology and that we needed to refine the methodology and I think we knew this at the beginning as well talking about how how we would provide these services that would have to be an iterative process and what we would like it do today is just take you through some of the methods of the methodology and our greatest intention is to try to hold a public hearing after this fiscal year to hear feedback on our operations as well as consider changes to the methodology with wider public input in the same way that we had in the initial hearing for the methodology.

So, to go to the amendments piece and a couple of things that we are trying to solve for, some of them Gagan already raised. One is that this program is dependent on appropriations and we are faced with a situation in which we have a limited amount of dollars allocated. We have a city budget crisis and we are in a situation where we are combined with a growing expanded number of elections.

Our methodology, so that is one challenge. And we have not just the general and the primary but we have several specials coming up.

Our contract -- our budget is currently for the general and the primary and one special. So that is an issue that we have to solve for. Our methodology also realized on city-wide data estimates for language communities, the special elections that we are currently talking about, are, you know, for council districts and those require estimates at the council district level and another challenge is that the methodology as approved of April does not offer an explicit formula or process for selecting which special election we're going to serve in.

If there are several. And given that there is going to be finite resources. And we know that, of course, for all the special elections, BOE will cover interpretation and the voting rights BOE languages in whatever council district there is a special election being held in.

The other challenges, the implementation as Gagan pointed out, some of the scenarios that we want to try to be explicit to solve for going forward. One is the methodology locks us into providing services on the last weekend of early voting. And maybe we want to think about moving those days, all right? So we can switch the first weekend oppose to last weekend and I believe this November's election, the last weekend was more utilized than the first but that is an area of question if we want more flexible and Gagan discussed the selection of poll sites as she pointed out, language assistants are stationed outside of the poll room and in order to gain access to the polling room, we need permission from the BOE and we are permitted to be in the polling room when accompanying a voter who has requested the assistance for language interpretation. And, no person can really enter the poll room except BOE officials and authorized poll watchers and NYPD voters and their children under 16 per

election law for voters and the assistance from the CEC, rather it's outside of the poll room and be mindful of the ADA guidelines to leave enough space for folks to move around and Gagan pointed out that there was not adequate space for interpreters to be stationed outside of the poll room.

But, yeah, there wasn't enough room. There was just like one, maybe it was one room and there was no room for them outside of the poll room. So we had to -- we ended up having to situate them outside and as you heard, you know, that was a challenge when it's cold, of course, there may not be an issue when it's in the middle of the summer with the primary but that is another thing that we are trying to solve for.

And the last piece is that the methodology asks us to cover the last weekend, this includes Saturday. And we had a challenge as Gagan mentioned recruiting for some languages, including Yiddish and we were also told because it was partly Shabbat and Saturday would be tough for folks to work and we wanted to think about whether we can build some flexibility around that. If there is a particular need, maybe what I think about like, you know, the Shabbat, do we want to offer services on another day to accommodate that, obviously that would be needed to be decided in consultation with the community. But as I said the methodology requires Saturday -- and I would like to go through? Of the changes and you have the amendments doc and it's also up on the screen.

And I would like to start from the beginning, Francis, if you could go to the top of the document. And we will, like as you know the underlined sentences are what is being amended. And the brackets show you what is being deleted. So, one is just saying that this is, you know, an amendment provided that it's approved today. And if we go to the second is just definitions and this is consistent with what we have. There is no changes there.

The third is covered elections, so here what we are seeing is the changes here is that we will be providing primary and general but special elections require further attention. So we are taking that and expanding on how we will serve special elections.

The underlined sentence points out that we will only be serving specials if the previous general election had at least one election day or early voting polling place designated for the special and in addition to that, we determined that the resources available to the commission allow for the provision of such services. So it's both things.

And what we are doing here is that we are explicitly stating that we can only cover specials when, you know, there is a previous in the general, there was a poll site covered in, you know, in that geography.

So, that is sort of implied right now. In the methodology since it is a city-wide estimate but here we are making that explicit. That is what number 3 does. And combines it with in the case of like 6 specials, we need to figure out how much we can cover.

>> MARK DILLER: We have questions. Do you want to hold until the end?

>> SARAH SAYEED: If maybe a quick question, we can deliver now but if not, let's hold until the end.

>> MARK DILLER: I'm not sure which it is so let's hold until the end.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Okay, number 6 makes again explicit the total number of polling places served for each general and primary, based on -- is adding those two elections in. Number 8 is spelling out that this is targeting the commission's formula that was included in the methodology resolution before. It's making explicit that that methodology is specific for general and primary and special elections.

And it is also for the early voting period for the general and primary elections. Before that was not explicit, it was just like targeting formula and part of why this is a

challenge, again, as I said, is that some of the specials that we are encountering in the immediate future are at the council district level.

Number 9, keep scrolling down and you might look at this on your own screen, I don't know if you can see the screen here. But targeting formula for special elections is new. And what this is saying, again, it's making explicit is that prior to every covered special election and associated early voting period, what we will do is that we will look at the election day and early voting polling places that are designated for that special and we will compare it to the election day and early voting sites that the commission served. And, the poll, if there is an example of a polling site, a poll site that appears on both list, in other words, BOE is providing services for a special in that poll site and CEC covered it in the general so we will consider those poll sites for services.

And, the last piece of it is that the early voting, if an early voting polling place, we will only serve it if the special election has a covered early voting period which is defined in paragraph 11.

So here, we are saying that we are not going to -- we will cover early voting for some specials and not every single special. Number 10 is the health and safety exception and it says -- this is also new, the Chair may exempt any polling place for a particular election if the Chair determines that there is no more space for interpreters and the stationed interpreters outside would be detrimental to their health and safety.

And the last piece is the covered early voting period. Here, we are allowing -- we're moving the clause on the last 2 weekend days to give us flexibility for which days of early voting, we will cover. We're also continuing here to talk about early voting for specials. We are saying that we will cover early voting for city-wide elective offices or a state-wide elective office or for a presidential.

For primary and general, and also a state-wide federal office. And, it also allows us to provide special election for city-wide and state-wide offices. Early voting based upon determination of resources. And that we will establish the -- the Chair will establish days and hours of early voting services based on the resources available to the commission for the provision of such services or the needs of the language community to be served in consultation with the language assistance advisory committee so that part refers to an example like the Yiddish we just talked about.

And, the Yiddish-speaking community. And then, the total number of early voting places served will depend on the total resources allocated to the program. Early voting polling places for the general and primary elections will be targeted pursuant to paragraph 8 on these procedures, early voting poll someplace places for special places will be targeted to pursuant of paragraph 9 of these procedures so it's saying that the council early election is not covered in the early provision and the council specials for election day will be covered when we meet those two conditions that we discussed earlier, that we served that poll site in the general and we have more resources to cover it and now I am opening to the floor for questions and for discussion.

>> MARK DILLER: So if I could jump in, what stood out to me was the infect blanket statement that we're not going to cover, special elections where the general didn't also involve some coverage. First of all, I have that more or less right, don't I?

>> SARAH SAYEED: Got it. I mean it's sort of implied in the methodology as we have it but now we are just seeing it.

>> MARK DILLER: Well, so let me distinguish two scenarios that are put together here that I think should be discussed separately, at least in my view. One of which is scarcity of resources and you can only cover so much and with that, I completely understand/agree with and would defer to the Chair's discretion on that, you have to balance a budget and you can only do so much. I think we just had a good

discussion about that when we talked about the choices of languages, too, once upon a time. That ideally, we have a dozen but it could easily be 24.

So some practical reality has to play. So I have no issue with adjusting the methodology and formula. To be dependent upon the deferral to the Chair's discretion on budgetary matters, what stood out to me in paragraph 9 and maybe applies to 11 as well. In paragraph 9, it essentially says that we don't cover a special if we didn't cover the general and that doesn't allow for the possibility that in the general, we may have learned there was a need that we weren't filling that would then be and assuming that funds are available that we would want to fill that need. But this would infect prohibit us from doing so.

I wouldn't necessarily say that we would be required to do it. Maybe because of budget and, B, perhaps of other logistical reasons but I would loathe to prohibit us from doing that other than than budgetary reasons and looking at paragraph 11, I will give you all of my notes. You talk about state-wide offices for elective office, whether state-wide, or federal or State, that is essential few offices, that is tenant governor, comptroller and the United States senator, it wouldn't be city council members, it wouldn't be assembly or state senators -- say again?

>> DONNA VERONICA GILL: Attorney general office.

>> MARK DILLER: Thank you, you got it. Attorney general. But those are just the handful, there are maybe 3 or 4 state offices that are city wide and with federal, maybe 2, that's it. So again, if it's a budgetary thing, I get it but why not just say that. And if it's not a budgetary thing, I'm curious as to why we are eliminating the senator state assembly members and city council and so forth, those are my notes, thanks.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Very good questions. I mean, I think that the major challenge we have here in addition to resources is how we determine which languages to target when it's not a city-wide election. Because, the estimates we have for languages spoken and how we even choose which languages we are covering are based on city-wide estimates, we are looking at, for example, how many people speak Russian across the entire city and that means that that is what determines that Russian is, you know, a language that is served as well as it determines a proportion of services that go to Russian.

Those are city-wide estimates. So those applying those estimates in an example that covers president or city-wide elective offices makes sense because it's like covering the whole city but for when it's another elective office like council or assembly, it's a little difficult to translate the city-wide estimate to that local area.

Like, we might not be accurate in -- there might be a large community -- a large number of people speaking on particular language in that council district but it's not covered in the city-wide estimate if that makes sense. And so we would get different estimates and I think the challenge here is that we need to find the estimates for each geographies of its assembly, for example, or if a state or state senate. We need to know the rank orderings of the languages is that area similar for council district, in order to have a mutual order of which languages to cover in that geography. So those are the challenges that we are facing right now and the language data that we have, we had to go through a several step process and Gagan can also speak to this more in order to figure out like how the language data actually maps on to election districts, because we don't have, you know, the only source of language data we have is the American community survey data.

And that's broken up by census tracked and you can map it onto election districts but the work of doing other geographies would be need to be done every time, we need to figure out the specials. Does that help answer your question? Not sure.

>> MARK DILLER: It does. If it suggests that special elections happen frequently and pervasively and that's not my experience.

>> SARAH SAYEED: That's true. That's very view.

>> JOSE HERNANDEZ: I would also like to comment, we didn't provide these languages at every single poll site, they were chosen specifically for the reason where the languages are predominant, wouldn't it be same if you provided Yiddish at this polling site and this happens to be the special election in that district and that's the polling site wouldn't be, you know, a language that would be served that community?

>> SARAH SAYEED: That's correct. So under the current methodology, if we did provide a language in a particular geography and that overlap with a council district, special election, we do have the discretion to service that particular poll site for election day in that special district. I mean, sorry, in that special election geography, if that makes sense.

>> JOSE HERNANDEZ: Yeah, that would be paragraph 3, right?

>> SARAH SAYEED: Yes.

>> DONNA VERONICA GILL: Sarah, this is Donna again, if anyone doesn't have any other questions. My question is regarding the interpreter. Being on the inside, is there some way that we can get this as mandate? I know we have it in our amendment. And I think that is a good thing but I'm thinking that there is someone that we need to go to so that we can get this as part of the laws for BOE? Because I feel that if we have it there, and we decide that, you know, if the space is not accommodating, we can decide not to have it. And there may be some push back and people not allowing us to be there at all for this very reason.

So I think if in some way we could get this or speak to someone to get it into where BOE would allow the CEC interpreter to be in the polling site, you know, if, I don't know how we would do that but I'm just thinking that there is some way to think about doing that so we don't have a problem with that outside in inclement weather and not having a good reception to the process.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Yeah, I appreciate that. Someone else have something to add there?

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: I was going to add. This is Lilliam. Can we even ask for those accommodations to take place? We can definitely formally send a letter. Signed by all of us or by you and happy to advocate however I can. Because for some reason, my assumption was that we were being treated as part of New York City staff, I think we are. I mean, your employees, I'm sure are. So any subcontracts that come out of this group should be respected and considered as they were a member of the New York City staff. So to me, this is really unacceptable. I mean, it goes to say also that our voters that are multi lingual in a language other than than English get a different treatment, outside of the polling site, that's a little bit worse to me.

>> AMY BREEDLOVE: Yeah, this is Amy, I wanted to jump on that, thank you, Lilliam, I was thinking that we are further underserving underserved polling sites it sounds like to me and that becomes a concern of mine.

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: So, Sarah, could you answer whether or not we have even tried to make a formal request for these accommodations?

>> SARAH SAYEED: I think that if you would like to send a letter, I'm open to doing that. I think that, you know, this is a matter of jurisdiction, right? And it's also a matter of elections are the purview of the Board of Elections and we are trying to think about ways to just be -- build a collaborative partnership with them to serve voters and I think they were -- they were generally sort of very helpful in terms of helping us to find other locations for where we could be stationed, right? And just had flagged for us

those few sites, but it certainly, I mean, it is their call.

So, I think, that, you know, we're indefinitely can talk about more how to make it more of a formal request if that is what folks would like to do.

>> MARK DILLER: Can I jump in on that?

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: Sure, go ahead, Mark.

>> MARK DILLER: Thank you. I have a clarifying question which is are our -- I'll call them our -- are our interpreters being treated differently in this regard than ones that are the general city interpreting provisions? And the second question is, is this a matter of Board of Elections rule-making or is it a statute that limits the access of our folks? And so, is it different for us than for other interpreters and whose rule is it? Those are the two questions because that goes to Lilliam's idea of sending a letter and would clarify to whom we would send that letter to, I would think.

>> SARAH SAYEED: If you mean other city interpreters serving other programs, is that what you mean?

>> MARK DILLER: What I mean is that there are certain -- there are certain languages that the city provides interpreter services for and then our group adds to those languages. So, Spanish, I believe, city-wide is one that the city already provides, is that interpreter inside and we're outside? Or both are inside?

>> SARAH SAYEED: The interpreters for VRA languages in the areas where they are being provided, the interpreters are inside the poll room.

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: Sorry, yes, I know that for a fact.

>> MARK DILLER: Okay, so then I joined in my colleague's expression of surprise and trouble with that result.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Yeah, and as to your question of rule verses statute, I'm not 100 percent. I don't know which it is.

>> MARK DILLER: But my guess --

>> SARAH SAYEED: But it is an interpretation of a legal, you know, law.

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: Maybe we could ask the primary of law or the city of New York to clarify, whether or not, we are prohibiting but someone should make a request. I mean, look, the Board of Elections for many, I mean, the behavior of the Board of Elections has been troubling. This is why the established settings exist and we as citizens, I can tell you many things that are troubling but I can tell that you separating the Board of Elections from any other city agencies as if it doesn't belong somewhere in the city of New York, it's wrong. It is also -- there is also a possibility for each of our board of Commissioners to make you bring to vote, each board has a commissioner on this board of the city of New York, a Board of Elections, and if what happened last time as my Chair from being on the board of the Bronx, to make this a fair game, I'm happy to do that.

>> GAGAN KAUR: I wanted to jump in for one second and just add the additional information that this is part of the election board that non-BOE staff be outside of the polling room or be outside of the guardrails. Unless there is approval or it's a, again, like that power lies within the Board of Elections but it's very much outlined in the election law that a non-BOE staff may not be within the polling room or the guardrail.

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: Yes, and no. Because each campaign is allowed. Poll watchers and lawyers to come in who observe the process. And collect data. So all I'm saying is I would like to entertain a partition formally on this body to one, explanation, two, advocate for this behavior to change.

You know, the other trouble (Static) -- I hear an echoing, I don't know why. The only trouble that I know happens -- the only troubling thing and I think illegal thing that

goes on inside of a poll site other than the general practice of running the election process is electioneering, campaigning.

And we are going to serve a certain additional services that is already going on which is providing interpretation services to those that are voting. We are not there to tell the voters anything other than that and if we are, tell me, I think the only thing we are doing is already being done for all the languages, I don't see a conflict or any illegal behavior here.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Okay, thanks for that. The answer to the question that Mark posed earlier about where it's coming from, it's election law. And I think it's A-1042 that talks about the guardrail of who can be inside the poll room. And that is a piece that we are working with as far as where our language assistants are stationed. And this is definitely a point that we need to, you know, figure out and I think that's given that that law is why we have this ability until we are able to address it and find a solution or not, you know, we do need to have the ability to make a call on where we're going to not possibly not serve a poll site because we can't have people, you know, there might be other ways to work around that. I do have like -- okay, I have a question for all of you right now. Which relates to our overall agenda and what we want to cover today and it's now 3 o'clock and I had said to myself that maybe we won't get through this amendment and discussion and vote today and maybe that's okay. We can calendar our meeting for early January to continue this conversation. And then keep going with other parts of the agenda. Or, we can just focus on this. For now. So I wanted to see if people had a strong opinion on continuing the conversation?

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: I really don't want to let this go, I think this goes to show our ability as a group to make an impact on policies or laws that are impeding access to our communities. And we're here for civic engage access for those that are voiceless and that have been given barriers.

I think that if it impedes a descent and respectful delivery of the services that we are trying to add to these communities, we should not move forward with anything than making sure that these people are being respected and just the image of one of our interpreters interpreting on the sidewalk --

>> SARAH SAYEED: To clarify, sorry, it's not the interpreter -- interpretation is happening inside the poll room. It's just where they are stationed as people are, you know, are waiting essentially. If they need the interpretation, they under the statute walk into the poll room with the person they are serving, they provide the interpretation and they leave.

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: But they have to basically engage the person first outside?

>> SARAH SAYEED: Yes. That would be correct.

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: That is what I'm troubled about.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Yeah.

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: So these interpreters have to be in freezing weather conditions, let's say we have a special election in February or January, let's say we do have the access to provide these very specific languages to these very specific communities, which happen very often, by the way, a lot of these specials happen in communities where there are huge concentration of immigrant communities that speak a language and there is no possible way to get it done. I've contained in the middle of snow storms in 0-degree weather on Long Island and we have to be honest with ourselves, here we are pushing something that seems second-class. Sorry, I get very emotional about this.

>> SARAH SAYEED: I think that everyone is. The concerns being voiced, we certainly share. Right? The team certainly shares that. And I think anyone who cares

about the health and safety of anyone would care.

So I certainly hear and we all share and that is exactly why we are trying to make this allowance for ourselves. It's not the best solution, right? But under the circumstances, when it is law and it is about a law that exists that is on the books that would probably, we would have to figure out how we would -- what to do about that. But given that, we're saying that in a very few cases and it was also very few cases where we had to be outside. We ought to allow ourselves to think ahead and say that place, that poll site might not be the best for us to situate our assistance and that we can then replace that.

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: I certainly want to make decisions about where we provide services based on physical accommodations that go -- our community should not have to suffer because of some stupid archaic law that was put in place before these communities became what they are. This is what this body is here for and if not, let me know because I feel like I'm not serving my community well.

>> MURAD AWEWDEH: Yeah, if I could jump in real quick, I have been trying to ask a question, I agree with Lilliam but I don't think we need to limit our services based on where the BOE decides to let our folks go into.

There was like a lawsuit in the agreement that happened between the BOE and the city and we should go back to that because when they first launched this program, they did not want translator inside that were not providing and they came to some form the resolution and that resolution should include our translators.

On the second piece of what I wanted to say is, you know, I understand that we were' in, you know, a really tight budget times right now. But I don't think that our democracy should be impacted by austerity measurements and I don't agree with these amendments and we have a long way to go, there are some that makes sense but I don't think us limiting language access in elections is going to justice for our democracy.

So I understand, again, that there are budget limitations but the city finds money for anything and everything that it wants to and this is really critically important and if we are not doing our job as stewards of expanding the democracy in our city, then I don't know what we are doing here.

That and then the last piece I'll say here is we should definitely not use any previous election as a standard barrier in how you provide services down the road because that is just not tangible way of assessing where need is and where it isn't. So for instance, if there is a candidate running in an immigrant-heavy district where there has been an incumbent who is not an immigrant and you have an immigrant candidate who does come out to run and vote, where is the language access there?

I think there is going to be a number of different hurdles here. I would like to have further conversations, we may not be able to have all of our conversations today, but I think that we need to have a specific meeting on this alone.

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: I agree 100 percent. This is not an easy issue to resolve in this meeting but I think it's one that could and I'm happy to begin to draft some like an advocacy plan if we need it that will include some steps to begin engaging about how do we resolve this barrier. And I agree 100 percent with you, Murad, I don't think -- I don't think we pick elections based on data because as you mentioned, in Washington Heights, this happened and the only reason we were able to elect the first Dominican Republican American there in the 90s because the community itself got out on the streets and translated and walk their mothers on the side, the city did not provide it but it has come aa long way and we are talking about our communities now and I would hate to be apart of this group that impedes other incoming immigrant communities and not allow them the democratic process to get their own people to get elected. That is not

what we are here for, we are here to provide extent and extent access, now pick and choose.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Okay, I totally appreciate everyone's comments and heart-felt feelings on this so what I'm gathering from this is that folks do not want to approve this amendment as it stands and may not even want an amendment at all. Is there anyone who feels otherwise? And if we want to just hold this conversation, that's perfectly okay with me. We can pick it up again in January.

But I just wanted to give the floor to anyone who wants to offer an alternative perspective on this? Okay. Hearing no one wanting to vote on this, we will just hold this and hold this amendment for now. And see where we can pick up on it again in January.

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: I would like to ask a question. So is there any way that we can begin from now to January, given all of the concerns you've heard, at least some of the members, maybe you want to take a vote on next steps or a motion on moving forward to put a letter together? Even if it's a letter to explore what we can and cannot do. But I don't want to wait for another discussion that happens in January that is going to be -- they're going to be things happening, elections and budget issues and you name it. I just don't want to wait.

>> SARAH SAYEED: If you would like to work on that, if everyone wants to write such a letter, does everyone here want to work on such a letter? Let me ask it another way. Is there anyone here who does not want to work on this letter?

>> MURAD AWEWDEH: Not that I don't want us to work on this letter but this is -- kind of just feels disrespectful that as a -- like this commission didn't come out of thin air, right? Voters voted for this commission. So there needs to be a level of respect that is received to this commission the commissioners and the people who are staffing this commission. That goes above and beyond. If the city already has an agreement with the Board of Elections on the more translators, what makes it different for us?

>> SARAH SAYEED: It's not different. It's actually exactly the same. You know under the Moyer program the language, the interpreters were stationed outside of the poll room, it's the same for us, it's only a small number of cases where there is no room outside of the polling site. But inside the polling place that we have to be outside. Our services are stationed in exactly the same way that Moyer's were. What I want to also point out is that the issue of health and safety and like the language assistance being stationed outside is 1 piece of the amendment, right? There are other questions in here that we, that I think Murad, you spoke to, not making decisions based on specials based on what happened in the prior election based on the general election which, again, we can get into more detail about that.

But I do want to remind everyone that why we are having this conversation relates not just to resources which is a real constraint but also the way in which we develop this targeting formula, the nature of the data and how it's, you know, how it's currently collected and also analyzed.

We do not have for the special elections that are coming up for a council level, we do not have estimates at the council level for which languages are predominant in that election district. Or -- sorry, in the council district, I'm sorry.

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: You mean to tell me that the city of New York doesn't know where this concentrated population resides? Let me rephrase it --

>> SARAH SAYEED: It knows --

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: Not just who goes to vote but where these individuals lives. Because I remember a point that some of us raised during the conversation about

which data we were using and we were using only the data of those that are eligible to vote but we can see the growth of how many of those individuals daily become US citizens so they are excluded from our plans. And this community will grow massively from 1 year to the next from one election cycle to the next. So is this something that we are flexible with? Or that we have to follow the data to be able to provide these services?

>> SARAH SAYEED: For this cycle and this fiscal year, we approved the methodology that uses the census data and it's collected at the census tract level, it can be analyzed and mapped onto council districts but that is not an analysis that we did when we were writing up this methodology, right? Like we were thinking about city-wide estimates. So, we can go -- we can --

>> MURAD AWEWDEH: We tried to include what Lilliam is saying but the city pushed back on it.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Sorry, we tried to include which piece? Can you repeat?

>> MURAD AWEWDEH: People into voting age as well as the estimate of people -- sorry, I'm eating. The people who then become US citizens.

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: Documented residents that will potentially become citizens in those communities because historically, we have seen this population grow from an influx of new immigrants to become new immigrant voters very rapidly. So if you know if there is a Haitian community in the Queens village and it's growing, don't base it those voting today, based it on the fact that there is a community that needs these services because we are cheating almost, I don't want to say 10 years but we are cheating at about 5 years of services.

>> SARAH SAYEED: That is a different question and Gagan may add more to this. This is a different question than the geographic nature of the estimate. Gagan, did you want to add something?

>> GAGAN KAUR: Yeah, I just wanted to say that, you know, we very much hear the points that are you raised around what the census, the ACS data captures and we of course don't want to use data that is 5 years behind, intentionally, in our methodology we require data that mandates the CEC to update the data manually and as soon as the 5-year ACS estimates are released, we must re-run the analysis to incorporate the that new data and the way that the ACS works is for the preliminary methodology, we use the 2013 to 2018 data, so as soon as the 2019 data is released and aggregated with the previous 4-year data, we will update the analysis to reflect the changes captured within the census. So we very much --

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: I get it but to go back to my original question, do we have to rely on this data to be able to provide these services or we are just following what the city wants us to do? Which is what they do. They only use the census data. I guess my point is, don't we try to get as many people as possible and not get caught up in the data discussion and we know where the people live and based on where the communities are based on many different data, do we have to.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Well, we need to -- sorry, Lilliam, sorry I spoke over you, we have to come up with a neutral methodology that relies on the census data in the new charter as a source of data so the answer to your question is yes the charter requires us to rely on that data and the methodology allows us to add new additional sources if we want to but it has to be a new process, Amy, you've got your hand up.

>> AMY BREEDLOVE: Yeah, I'm just thinking about being outside of the poll site and it is really troubling but at the same time, I'm thinking of creative ways that we can use that to our advantage. And I know that budget is an issue but I'm thinking immediately about a vehicle of some sort or an outdoor room that is -- that has heating

and electricity and A/C for the winter that advertises that we are the Civic Engagement Commission, we provide translation, it also plays, Lilliam, where community members can go into because it's not the polling site so they could go in there and discuss in their language, you know, what it is to vote or what information they need.

So I see it as a real opportunity in some ways to be outside of the polling site and I just -- I'm trying to take a negative in a way that maybe we could actually use this to our advantage so I just wanted to put that out there.

>> GAGAN KAUR: And this is Gagan, I just wanted to add 1 piece. For election day, out of the 52 sites, there were 2 where we were not sure if we could place interpreters inside. We had coordinators and for any site where we had folks outside, we had CEC staff there to make sure that the interpreters were okay to run coffee, to grab blankets and make sure to really take care of that relationship. But in terms of election day, we had 2 site that is were set to be outside but we were then able to work with the site on the day of to move folks inside.

So this language that we were' proposing and, of course, open to changing it is a fail-safe rather than when we are looking at the best case, worse case scenario, this is the worse case scenario where our goal is to make sure that our interpreters are inside and this will not be an issue for the June primary but it really was the language came more so from that fail-safe space.

Rather than a rule that the CEC will adhere to in the sense that every site will be outside that is not going to be the case. It's -- our goal is to have none outside.

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: I just think of when we only move to our next chapters or next duties, I don't want to leave this group without, you know, doing the best that I can to put something in writing in our, you know, resolution, in our books that states that we are treating these communities with respect and working hard to make sure that they are being treated equally.

And that that is what I see when I see myself as a leader in my community trying to be fair, you know, respecting all languages and respect all ethnicity and I personal do not feel comfortable that if not all voters are being graded the same. I mean, this year, Board of Elections' budget was huge. They spent a lot of money to make sure that voters were engaged and they got each a pen and each got handouts and I mean, for Christ's sake, we are not trying to defund the City of New York here, we are proposing dignity and fairness.

And I'm happy to speak to whoever I have to speak to in the city government to make sure that we are loud and clear and I work for a health system, we provide multiple services and it's great that you are trying to propose that, Amy, but that is a huge cost too. It's gas and insurance and it's heating -- I mean, I'll be honest with you, it's easier for us to build a clinic than to maintain mobile services. It's complicated work but I just wanted to and somewhere where this is all going to end, I want it to be loud and clear that we -- me and those that have expressed concerns about this have tried to make it fair and have tried to give everybody equal access and I personally, as a bilingual immigrant person would not be pulled on the side of the road to be asked whether or not I need additional services that should be given to me by my rights and in the middle of a snow storm or in the rain or anything else or attacked by those campaign workers, I have been in campaign work many times, it doesn't feel very respectful.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Absolutely. Sorry, I'm going to -- because we're approaching also the public comment period, so I want to be mindful of that as well. And figure out how we are going to use the rest of our time, I think we agree that we do not want to vote on this amendment today, we will come back in January and someone said

we should focus a meeting just on this. We can do that if folks want to do that. I do want to make a note that just so we are all really clear on the consequences of not doing voting on this today is that there is a special election on December 22nd in the Bronx. We did not serve any poll sites in that district. During the general, okay? So, we don't have a way to figure out which languages to serve in that district right now per our methodology, it doesn't give us any guidance about how to decide that.

So I just want everyone to know that, you know, we don't know how to do that election or that council district. And we will not be able to serve that council district, so Mark?

>> MARK DILLER: If I understood paragraph 3 correctly, if we didn't serve the proposed amendment, I'm sorry. So the consequence of not adopting the amendment, we don't get the current disclaimer but if I understand correctly, we wouldn't serve that special election anyway because if we didn't -- according to what I understood you just now to say that since which is that we didn't serve anybody in the general, therefore, under paragraph 3, we wouldn't serve the special, then the result is the same, is it not?

>> SARAH SAYEED: It is and yes, it is but the problem is that in our -- in the resolution that we voted on went into effect in April, we do not say that that is what we will do. We do not say in that resolution that the provision of services for specials will be decided based on what we did in the general. We just say that we will cover special. So that's what we are trying to --

>> MARK DILLER: So let me ask the next question then which is in the absence of the proposed amendment, what would you do?

>> SARAH SAYEED: We would have -- the implied -- we would imply the implied interpretation which is that we didn't serve that poll site or we didn't serve any poll site in that council district in the general. So we are not going to serve it in the special. But if there is nothing explicit in the methodology that tells us to do that so that challenges that we are offering a solution that we're not -- we haven't made -- we haven't publicly stated until this meeting.

Because it's not in the methodology, am I making sense?

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: Yeah, just a question of clarity, are we speaking about former council member King's district in Co-op City?

>> SARAH SAYEED: That's correct. That's correct. Mark, did I make sense on what I said about.

>> MARK DILLER: I think I understand. Essentially, there is an ambiguity that we are not -- that absent this amendment which I found controversial would not be clarified. My vote would be clarified in a different way. But so we're left where we were. And I don't know what -- so it sounds like there would be no practical difference, it's just that the answer would be based more on perhaps the Chair's discretion than the clear edict from a rule.

>> SARAH SAYEED: That's correct.

>> MARK DILLER: Okay. Since I'm an advocate for the opposite position, I'm happier with it being at the Chair's discretion than it would be with a rule that I don't support. So.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Okay, so to that point, I guess to clarify and build on what I was saying before. Then we -- it would be the Chair's discretion and that we would not serve in that election because according to the methodology as it's written, we didn't serve any poll site in that council district. So I guess I'm -- part of my saying this out loud is just to make it explicit that that is what is going to happen for the December 22nd special.

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: I just wrote in the chat that the elections are going on and

early voting is going on already and this is next week and even if we made the recommendation to move forward to provide the services is too late. So we are being faced with those challenges, so.

>> GAGAN KAUR: I just wanted to add one note and this goes back to the conversation on resources. The goal of the program is to continue to expand the number of poll sites that we serve in the general election and the primary. We were due to limited resources, we served 52 sites on election day, the goal is to continue to expand that to get 100 sites, to 150 sites and keep growing the program and as we keep growing the program, our city by denominator increases, the likelihood of serving more specials increases. And the other point is just like the nature of concentration of languages that are served within the program. Russian is very concentrated in South Brooklyn so when we are looking at in district 12 in the Bronx and looking at the -- how many Russian speakers there are, you come across, you know, 45 speakers in a geographic area that is larger than what we look at when doing the analysis at a city-wide level, so there are very few speakers.

So I think the other piece is just the resource's piece does play into the amount of services we provide for the special. And as we increase that denominator, there is more likelihood that we will just -- the based on this rule will be providing services in specials that had a poll site prior. But just looking at even the percentage allocation that is within our rule, I think that Russian gets 38.8 percent of the total services and that that piece that we have in the rule doesn't apply on a council district level. So I just wanted to add that piece. But I really appreciate all of the flags that you are raising, Lilliam.

>> LILLIAM PEREZ: Yeah, if I may, I'm speaking from a more political point of view. If we are trying to really protect our democracy and provide additional access through this new citizens, the impact of these communities will have at a city-wide election is way less than it could have at a city council. I'm talking politics now, if you are a community that has 40 thousand strong new voters that just became naturalized, will probably determine the candidate of a city council that will not surely impact the state-wide election at the city-wide or a state-wide election. So I'm trying to figure out if we are trying to do this the most democratic or fair way or we are just doing this because of our lack of data collection that has nothing to do with our control but that exists probably intentionally, many cases. Not to really count these communities properly.

So I want to put it out there when we determine how to serve these communities with the interpretation services and the real impact that our services will have on what they are trying to succeed is really at the end of the day is political power.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Thank you so much, Lilliam, and thank you, everyone, for really, I truly appreciate both the spirit and the letter of what you have said today about this amendment and I think, I would be very grateful if you continued to sit with it and think through what is it that we can do. I think I laid out to you some of the challenges that we have and that we need to solve for. In terms of how the methodologies are laid out and then we can schedule a time, very early in the December, we will send out a poll to continue the conversation on this piece.

We had a bunch of other things on the agenda that we have not gotten to and so what I would like to first ask Francis is there anyone signed up for public comment?

>> FRANCIS URROZ: Not at this time. However, I think we'll open the floor for participants who would like to offer public comment at this time. So I will unmute everyone. That is not a commissioner. Okay, so if anyone would like to offer public comments, you're welcome to.

>> SARAH SAYEED: And if there is, we can wait for like 1 or 2 minutes and if

there isn't, I would like to see if we can just try to possibly do some of the other things that were on the agenda, if that's okay with everyone.

>> MARK DILLER: I think that's fine.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Okay. Since there isn't anyone -- any member of the public who is currently speaking or who has not indicated through a chat or a text that they would like to speak if we could just move to the next item on the agenda which was a presentation sharing with you all where we are on the participatory budgeting platform. Or the participatory democracy platform that we are launching a use demonstration project through and I would like to invite folks from who are working on this program to take us through this and let's try to keep this, I think, relatively shorter so we can get through the rest of the stuff. So that would be Wendy, Daniela, and Francesca.

>> WENDY TRULL: Thank you, I will start us off and I know Sarah and the CEC have been keeping you all updated on the project and you received a communication from us on the status of our launch and were excited to see some of our members and some of our commissioners attended the demo and those that were not able to attend the demo, we will share a recording with you all and provide a deeper dive of the platform we chose and used for some of the other cities but for those that were not able to join and having you all together, we just wanted to provide you with a quick recap of the project and the platform.

A quick review of the process that we have developed on our site and how the site, the site is hosting this process and introduce some of the potential for how we anticipate the site to be used to support other initiatives in the city and for CEC in the future.

And also show you briefly a space we are creating for you as a group which we invite you to and it could be use to support communications and collaborations for you all as commissioners and again as a group. And then just as follow-up, we are going to ask you all to create an an account, at the least one of you made an account, it will take a minute, have a username and password and if you use your CEC e-mail address, we can show how to do that, you go through the NYC employee option, you should have an account and take us straight to our site and also for an offboard and onboarding site for those that want an orientation of how to use the group we just mentioned.

Q. Just a quick recap on the site and some context and background, we officially launched participate(dot)nyc(dot)gov last month and having launch indeed November, we became the first in the US to bring Decidim here and two other companies were behind. But supporting our participatory process and just as a reminder, this is our use process of community preference that we are running and it's our money and we put 100 K of our own funding to youth ages 19 to 24 to address their needs and interest.

And sharing a few goals of the project in addition to allow us to engage

people in this environment and also building infrastructure and laying ground work for other CEC initiatives including a city-wide process. And we have been deploying city strategies and relationships with agencies and networks and community-based organizations and as of today, we have had 74 community organizations that participate and our youth running our sessions have already run 31 sessions with young people as part of the first phase and as a reminder we are partnering with the Coro budget youth fellowship program and they have been providing a lot of capacity and design. And invitation, as well as helping us build our own internal capacity on using the tool.

So, and then, just some real brief context on the vision and purpose of this platform. Other cities have used Decidim as a way to transform the engagement for agencies and communities to build this as a front door to engage created by Barcelona in 2016 to engage residents in a community process and it can be used by anyone, it has been picked up by lots of cities in the world to support democracy to run and customize and configure a platform to support their participatory budgeting processes and also to support citizen assemblies and gathering input from communities on policy issues and the great thing about that is all the new features and the contributions that cities are making and they come up with are shared.

Because it's open source and free and as people make improvements, everybody benefits and these new releases are shared and the other advantages that I want to point out is the alignment of our charter which is about building trust and communities and the foundation and even the very coding is really built and operated on principles of democracy and coding, transparency, any edits we make to the content that residents put on our platform are traceable and again because it's free and all of these continuous improvements are made is part of the shared governance structure so as people change this platform and make them available, they are evaluated based on the shared principles on a contract that everybody signs as a social contract to be apart of the community and the other advantage is just that it's pretty easy to use and it's modular and flexible and we can support and one positive process on the site right now and we can support multiple processes and build spaces and we can show you one of those that can be used by the commissioners as a group.

And for all of these processes and all of these groups, we get to pull in features that are helpful and collaborating and getting input from proposals to surveys and events and surveys and meetings and again, we will show you that as well.

And we estimate that to create a new space for a group, it's about -- it takes about 30 minutes so again it's easy to use. And very flexible in our experience, once again, up and ready which we did. And I just want to turn over to my colleague Francesco that will give you a quick overview of the process that the PDD fellows helped us to design and support the site and Daniela, our participatory budget advisory will show you what a group looks like before we wrap up. So. Francis, if you want to turn over the share rights to Francesco.

>> FRANCESCO TENA: Thank you, so much, hi, everybody, my name is Francesco Tena, my pronouns are he, him, his, and I am the director of the Coro leadership and in charge of the participatory budget and I'm happy to working with what the team has been working on and I will share my screen. And what we will start on is our home page, and we will go right to join the conversation and I will do a quick refresher on what this process is. This participatory budgeting process is a little bit of an evolution from what folks are used to in the city council and before we collect ideas, we are in the process of young people saying what they need and our young people at Coro have designed an hour long interactive session where they facilitate a conversation with other young people across the city.

During this conversation, not only are they learning about participatory budgeting but they are having a discussion and describing what their needs are in this moment and also talking about potential solutions to their needs and that is the phrase we are in now.

And once we are done with this part of the process, the young people that I work with will publish a statement of needs and then will publish that on this platform for community-based organizations to respond to. It's almost as if young people themselves are writing the RFP here.

And so we have youth organizations in the next base and submit proposals on how they would spend \$20,000 address the needs that young people highlighted for themselves and that will be open for about a month and proposals will be open in a transparent way and young people can provide feedback and likes and dislike things in real-time and the organizations will be able to amend their proposals based on feedback from young people.

And once the proposals are finalized, we will publish them again onto this platform and young people will cast a deciding vote to decide which proposals get funded and which CBOs get funding to their project to make it a reality and young people design this process and one thing they did was lower the voting age from 18 to 9 years old and we have 9/10-year old making a consent and this is a youth process and young people thought it was important to have an age cap on this voting process so no one over the age of 24 will be able to cast a vote and once the votes are tallied up the 5 projects with the most votes will each get \$20,000 and the CBOs that received that funding will get other people to help them implement that process and that is what this process is in a nutshell and the process page on our platform on [participate\(dot\)nyc\(dot\)gov](https://participate.nyc.gov) and where everything is posted where anyone can see what happens.

And go to the main process page, we can show you a little bit about what this platform can do and we only have time to scratch the surface really quickly but on the process page, you'll find a quick summary of the process and on the right side you have very consistent design language that is on most process pages on this platform and any groups that get formed, again, a really quick summary on what is decided and who participated and how it's decided on the timeline of it, if you scroll down, this also allows you to attach files and documents and for example, we have facilitation guide so anyone can and do the hour-long session that our young people designed and it is plugged back into our platform.

So whether you do it with the young people that I work with or you are a youth organizer and you want to get friends together and run through this, everything will be cataloged onto the platform. I will go to our idea section. So if you click on ideas from youth platform, it takes you to the ideas that are getting submitted by young people and you will see that they all have their own little card, if you click into any one of them, it pulls up more information about that idea.

This one is express yourself, mental health and arts intersection and looks like a really cool and creative space for healing, we are hearing a lot of things from young people about mental health and there is no surprise that some of the ideas coming in address that need.

And then if I go right into guidelines, some other things you can attach here are the rules of the process so if people want to see any rules of what the process phrases will be like, and also what neighborhoods are our priority in terms of outreach and impact. Then they can go into our guidelines' page as well and so that is everything here on the process page. I will hand it off to Daniela to show case a little bit about

separate processes and how this platform can also be used to support groups such as the Civic Engagement Commission.

>> DANIELA: Hi, everyone, my name is Daniela, an advisor for this commission, as Wendy mentioned earlier, this platform will not only be used to host our participatory process but also we are looking to use it for some of our internal processes and that includes internal work collaboration between CEC staff as well as our advisory committees and hopefully for the group of commissioners.

Right now, what you are looking at is on the platform is called an assembly which means it's -- it only means that it's a group that can do, you know, a collaborative work on this platform. So I modelled what it would look like for the participatory budgeting advisory committee. They're currently not on the platform yet but we are looking as Wendy mentioned to host some onboarding exceptions and another -- some other trainings for staff as well.

So, if you can see that this is the main page for the group, it describes what this group is -- who participates in this group, 25 volunteer advisory committee members. What is it that this group is dedicated? You know, advising on the PDDD program design and the day it was created and how long the group is active on the website.

I actually posted -- I divided it into different halves because my internet is not running all that smoothly and I wanted to show you the different features I could do here on this platform, I could post the monthly meetings for the advisory committee, put up all the information and the Zoom link and I could post the agenda for the meeting and I could post minutes for the meeting and I could upload documents and other external links to the meeting agenda and it allows me to create as many meetings as I want and it allows me to post notices and I'm letting the assembly know that this meeting will be recorded and the video will be stipulated to members that did not attend the meeting.

This is a page of -- this is another group that we're drafting for the commissioners, every member or assembly of a group has their own profile, once you log in and create your account, you can edit all the information that is on this platform.

One thing that you should know is that these groups are private. So it's not like anybody can see the information that is posted and these collaborative groups. There is an option to make them public but nor now, this is all in our drafts and this is private for the moment.

So another feature that I could put on is the good thing about this tool being able to -- we can customize it is that for example, this module is called accountability and it's used to really track the progress of projects or proposals that have been passed using this tool. But, I was thinking of ways of how I could use it for my advisory committee. And I modelled it to give updates and model the task we have completed internally. And the next setting that I wanted to show you all is the module is called blog. And here, we can setup, you know, debates or topics for discussion.

Once people create accounts, people can post and comment on these blog posts. The next one is the debate feature, where you could post topics for closed debates and invite members -- specific members to comment and brainstorm in these groups and I can also set a time for when this discussion is open and when it closes.

And the next feature that it has is that it has a survey feature for when you need to collect, you know, different information from different advisory committee members. And you can modify this and customize it as you want and put all the information -- all the different information that is needed.

And yes, I think that, I believe that is what I wanted to show for this group.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Do the 3 of you have any additions before we quickly open to any clarifying questions on this?

>> FRANCESCO TENA: Yeah, I want to say one thing, right now this is totally branded for the one PDDD process that is happening in the Civic Engagement Commission as this fills out and gets folks use today this, the strength of having a reliable and consistent space for Civic Engagement Commission to take place in the city and Daniela mentioned that this is private right now but the idea is to make them public and translate and open up what interaction can look like and as much as this is a tool for Civic Engagement Commission and employees and this is a powerful tool for residents of New York City that are looking to make an meaningful impact for city government and collaborate with the community and the city government and that is really the strength here.

>> SARAH SAYEED: I really want to thank you all for that presentation, does anybody want to ask any clarifying questions on anything that was presented? I really encourage you all, if you haven't already to visit that platform. And the link was posted in the chat. We also sent you the announcement about it.

>> MARK DILLER: Hi, Mark. Having been a veteran of a lot of Zoom meetings since COVID hit, and experiencing both the beauty and the troubling aspects of community input in, for example, the chat which isn't always as responsible as it is as our chat here today. I'm wondering who moderates and how do we deal with folks who visit our sites, let's say not in the spirit of collaboration and cooperation that seems to be the premises of the platform as you have described it.

>> FRANCESCO TENA: Yeah, moderation happens a few different ways, there are a few built in mechanisms to prevent folks from typing in all caps are not contributing meaningful to the discussion but I think the other important piece is that any type of user generated comment, any comment or proposal, can be really purported by anybody that is using the site, so there can be flags, they could report hate speech or racism and the user of the site can get a quick notification to moderate the site, the moderation is done transparently, there is a moderation log in the back end so no one isn't moderating folks for no reason so that is in there as well.

And there is a lot of room here but the folks who have used this in Europe, the important thing or the interesting thing is that they have done -- they put whole countries do assemblies on here and they were surprised by how little they had to moderate even though thousands of folks with using it. I'm not saying that will hold true here, but

>> AMY BREEDLOVE: Well, I want to thank you all for your work and I tried to get on the December 1st walk through and I was having a little bit of a problem but I did noodle through the website and the graphics and the way that you laid things out, I really think that the work is really great and I know that we will have to hone in on some things and elaborate and things better. But I really want to say great work and really much appreciate it.

>> WENDY TRULL: Thanks so much, I want to give a shout out to folks that made this so beautiful and this is an opportunity for us and we want to see how this will evolve and we got interest from other city agencies and districts that this is an exciting idea and wants to know how to join and thinking of joining. And this is an exciting space.

>> DANIELA: I want to reiterate what Wendy said and I want to show you how to create an account for those that are interested and we encourage you to do so. So if you go to the home page at [participate@nyc\(dot\)gov](mailto:participate@nyc.gov), it should take you where to log in and click on NYC(dot)id, it will take you to different options and the commissioners have different nyc(dot)gov e-mail, you can click on city employees and it takes you to the box

where you can put your e-mail and the password that you use to sign in with your e-mail and it creates your account, you don't have to do anything else.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Did not get to this but I will reach out to folks. Some of you no longer have your government account because it was deprovisioned due to lack of inactivity.

So or a lack of activity, sorry. So if you do accessing your government account, please make sure that you use it at least once a month. To show that it's active, otherwise the system is set to default stop the account.

So I will be in touch with some of you about that. Because as I said, some of them have been deprovisioned. So if we want to re-activate them, we need to start a help ticket. And in the last minute that is left, I just really want to, again, thank you all for the very rich conversation we had today around the methodology and I think it connects to things that we didn't get to on the agenda but it was really a conversation about how -- what are our values as a commission, right? And what are the commitments that we want to demonstrate with how we operationalize our programs and that is something that the team is also engaging in and it is the conversation about what are our shared values so we wanted to talk about that today but have run out of time and we will find a way to bring that back on our shared discussion and the other pieces we didn't get to, updates on the community board and also updates on the public artist and residents program, I think we can send you a couple of updates by e-mail for those and the value of the conversation is a deeper conversation so we will bring that back as well. So, can I hear the next meeting, we will send you a poll for early January so we can continue this discussion. So at this point since it's 4 o'clock, I would like to see do I have a motion to adjourn the meeting?

>> MARK DILLER: Move.

>> JOSE HERNANDEZ: Second.

>> SARAH SAYEED: Okay. The motion to adjourn has been seconded. If not discussion, all in favor, say "I."

[All say "I"]

Okay, the motion has passed and I wish you all and your families the happiest of holidays and I look forward to see you all in the New Year, thank you all so much. Take care. Buh-bye.

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