

STATE OF NEW YORK

COUNTY OF ORANGE

-----X

CITY OF NEWBURGH

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

PUBLIC HEARING

regarding

GRAND STREET NEWBURGH PROPERTY CO., LLC

and

FSH NEWBURGH HOTEL, LLC

-----X

December 20, 2021
Newburgh, New York
Commencing at 6:00 P.M.

Laura Evans, Reporter

MINUTES

OF

PUBLIC HEARING

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CITY OF NEWBURGH IDA:

- Austin DuBois, Chairperson
- Nancy Thomas, Vice Chairperson
- Marlon Ramos, Treasurer
- Michael Kelly, Member
- Adam Pollick, Member
- Gregory Nato, Member
- Cherisse Vickers, Executive Director
- Robert J. McLaughlin, Esq., Counsel

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2 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

3 All right, good evening. Welcome
4 to the City of Newburgh IDA public
5 hearing on the Grand Street Hotel
6 project. We're going to start the
7 public hearing.

8 Anybody that might have come in in
9 the past minute or two, if you'd like
10 to speak, please come and sign the
11 sign-in sheet -- the one on your left
12 if you did not speak at the last public
13 hearing, the one on your right if you
14 did speak at the last public hearing.
15 Feel free to come up and sign in.

16 Cher Vickers, our Executive
17 Director, is going to kick it off with
18 the language.

19 IDA EXEC. DIR. CHERISSE VICKERS:

20 Good evening. My name is Cherisse
21 Vickers. I'm the Executive Director of
22 the City of Newburgh Industrial
23 Development Agency. Today, I am
24 holding a continuation of the public
25 hearing that was held on November 4,

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2 2021 at 1 p.m. to continue to allow
3 citizens to make a public statement on
4 the record relating to the involvement
5 of the Agency with the project, the
6 "Proposed Project," for the benefit of
7 Grand Street Newburgh Property Co.,
8 LLC, a New York limited liability
9 company, and FSH Newburgh Hotel, LLC, a
10 New York limited liability company,
11 each and collectively, the "Company."

12 In addition, the Agency is holding
13 this public hearing to consider written
14 and verbal comments on the request of
15 the Company for a Payment In Lieu Of
16 Taxes agreement, the PILOT request.
17 This PILOT request deviates from the
18 current uniform tax exempt policy, the
19 policy of the Agency, pursuant to
20 Section 874(4) of the General Municipal
21 Law, the "Act." In accordance with the
22 policy, prior to taking final action on
23 the PILOT request for a deviation from
24 the policy, the Agency must adopt a
25 resolution setting forth with respect

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2 to the proposed deviation: A, the
3 amount of the proposed tax exemption;
4 B, the nature of the proposed PILOT;
5 and C, indicating the reasons for the
6 proposed deviation.

7 At its regular meeting held on
8 November 15, 2021, the Agency approved
9 the issuance of a letter to the
10 affected taxing jurisdictions, setting
11 forth the reasons for the proposed
12 deviations from the policy as required
13 by the Act of the policy. This letter
14 was mailed to the affected taxing
15 jurisdictions on November 30, 2021.

16 The Proposed Project consists of
17 the following:

18 A, the lease of an interest in an
19 approximately 1.78-acre parcel of real
20 property located at 48-54-62 Grand
21 Street, Newburgh, New York, the "Land."
22 2, the occupancy of the improvements
23 made to the existing three buildings on
24 the land totaling approximately 79,072
25 square feet to consist of a hotel,

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2 events venue, spa, and dining facility,
3 the "Facility." And 3, the acquisition
4 and installation therein and thereon of
5 related fixtures, machinery, equipment,
6 and other tangible personal property,
7 collectively known as the
8 "Equipment" -- the Land, the Facility,
9 and the Equipment herein after
10 collectively referred to as the
11 "Project Facility."

12 B, The granting of certain
13 financial assistance within the meaning
14 of Section 854(14) of the Act, with
15 respect to the foregoing, including
16 potential exemptions from certain sales
17 and use taxes, real property taxes,
18 real estate transfer taxes, and
19 mortgage recording taxes, collectively,
20 the "Financial Assistance."

21 And C, the lease, with an
22 obligation to purchase, or sale of the
23 Project Facility to the Company or such
24 other person as may be designated by
25 the Company and agreed upon by the

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2 Agency. One Company, Grand Street
3 Newburgh Property Co., LLC, will lease
4 the buildings and the Land, and the
5 other Company, FSH Newburgh Hotel, LLC,
6 will operate the businesses located
7 thereat.

8 I intend to provide general
9 information on the Agency's general
10 authority and public purpose to provide
11 assistance to this Proposed Project. I
12 will then open up the comment period to
13 receive comments from all present who
14 wish to comment on either the Proposed
15 Project or the Financial Assistance
16 contemplated by the Agency with respect
17 to the Proposed Project.

18 The City of Newburgh Industrial
19 Development Agency is authorized and
20 empowered by the provisions of Chapter
21 1030 of the 1969 Laws of New York,
22 constituting Title 1 of Article 18-A of
23 the General Municipal Law, Chapter 24
24 of the Consolidated Laws of New York,
25 as amended in the Enabling Act, and

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2 Chapter 577 of the 1982 Laws of New
3 York, as amended, constituting Section
4 913 of said General Municipal Law, said
5 Chapter and Enabling Act having been
6 hereinafter collectively referred to as
7 the "Act."

8 The purpose of this hearing.

9 Pursuant to Section 859-a(2) of the
10 Act, prior to the Agency providing any
11 financial assistance as defined in the
12 Act of more than \$100,000 to any
13 project, the Agency, among other
14 things, must hold a public hearing
15 pursuant to Section 859-a of the Act
16 with respect to said project. Since
17 the proposed financial assistance to be
18 provided by the Agency with respect to
19 the Proposed Project may exceed
20 \$100,000, then prior to providing any
21 financial assistance, as defined in the
22 Act, of more than \$100,000 to the
23 Proposed Project, the Agency must hold
24 a public hearing on the nature and
25 location of the Project Facility and

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2 the proposed financial assistance to be
3 provided by the Agency with respect to
4 the Proposed Project.

5 Pursuant to Section 874(4) of the
6 Act, and according to the policy, prior
7 to taking final action on the PILOT
8 request for a deviation of the policy,
9 the Agency must adopt a resolution
10 setting forth the prospects of the
11 proposed deviation: A, the amount of
12 the proposed tax exemption; B the
13 amount and nature of the proposed
14 Project; and C, indicating the reasons
15 for the proposed deviation.

16 At its regular meeting held on
17 November 15, 2021, the Agency approved
18 the issuance of a letter setting forth
19 the reasons for the proposed deviation
20 from the policy, as required by the Act
21 and the policy. The proposed PILOT
22 agreement will be for a term of 12
23 years, with the Company making payments
24 in each year of the PILOT in accordance
25 with the schedule previously published

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2 by the Agency. That schedule provides
3 that, in years one through six of the
4 PILOT, the percentage of exemption
5 would be 90 percent of the amount
6 assessed on the improvements to be made
7 under the proposed project. In year
8 seven of the PILOT, the percentage of
9 exemption would be 80 percent of the
10 amount assessed on the improvements to
11 be made under the proposed project. In
12 year eight of the PILOT, the percentage
13 of exemption would be 70 percent of the
14 amount assessed on the improvements to
15 be made under the proposed project. In
16 year nine of the PILOT, the percentage
17 of exemption would be 60 percent of the
18 amount assessed on the improvements to
19 be made on the proposed project. In
20 year ten of the PILOT, the percentage
21 of exemption would be 50 percent of the
22 amount assessed on the improvements to
23 be made under the proposed project. In
24 year 11 of the PILOT, the percentage of
25 exemption would be 33.33 percent of the

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2 amount assessed on the improvements to
3 be made be under the proposed project.
4 In year 12 of the project, the
5 percentage of the exemption would be
6 16.67 percent of the amount assessed on
7 the improvements to be made under the
8 proposed project.

9 The Executive Director of the
10 Agency caused notice of this public
11 hearing to be, A, mailed on November
12 30, 2021 to the chief executive
13 officers of Orange County, the City of
14 Newburgh, and the City of Newburgh
15 School District, and B, published on
16 December 2, 2021 in the Times Herald
17 Record, a newspaper of general
18 circulation available to the residents
19 of the City of Newburgh, Orange County,
20 New York.

21 In addition, the Executive Director
22 of the Agency caused notice of the
23 public hearing to be hand-delivered to
24 each of the chief executive officers of
25 the City of Newburgh on November 29,

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2 2021, and posted on November 23, 2021
3 on the Agency's website and also on a
4 public bulletin board on November 29,
5 2021, located at City Hall, 83
6 Broadway, Newburgh, New York.

7 Now, unless there's any objection,
8 I'm going to suggest waiving the full
9 reading of the notice of public
10 hearing, and instead request that the
11 full text of the notice of this public
12 hearing be inserted into the record of
13 this public hearing as Schedule A.

14 The comments received today at this
15 public hearing will be presented to the
16 members of the Agency at or prior to
17 the meeting at which the members of the
18 Agency will consider whether to approve
19 the undertaking of the Proposed Project
20 by the Agency and the granting by the
21 Agency of any financial assistance in
22 excess of \$100,000 with respect to the
23 Proposed Project.

24 Written comments. The notice of
25 this public hearing indicated that

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2 written comments could be addressed to
3 Cherisse Vickers, Executive Director of
4 the Agency. Written comments have been
5 received by the Agency from about 50
6 different individuals. I will read the
7 comment that was sent to me by
8 Councilman Anthony Grice, who could not
9 be here tonight. He said, "I support
10 this project and the PILOT that is
11 being requested. It is the highest and
12 best use of the property that will have
13 a long-term positive impact on the City
14 of Newburgh.

15 "While the PILOT might seem high,
16 it is on a graduated scale, and based
17 on the data, in line with what is
18 needed to make this project work.

19 "While city council had no direct
20 input on this RFP, having at least one
21 hotel in the City of Newburgh has been
22 a plan of ours for a very long time
23 before this project.

24 "I do urge the developer to
25 strongly consider the need for a

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2 community benefit that is proposed by
3 residents, and to consider all ways
4 possible to include all of the
5 residents, displaying artwork on the
6 walls, hosting community events, and
7 other things, for example.

8 "I do urge the IDA, moving forward,
9 to please consider the impacts that
10 projects like these have on our city,
11 and to strongly consider collaborating
12 with the local elected officials,
13 having public meetings that are more
14 accessible than the last one, and,
15 knowing that you cannot control what
16 speakers say, that speakers are
17 politely corrected during the meeting
18 when presenting outdated or inaccurate
19 information. As I have stated before,
20 it is a whole different scenario to
21 state, 'The city is on the rise, and
22 this project will help,' as opposed to,
23 'The city is crumbling and must accept
24 this project.'

25 "I do urge the residents to please

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2 support this project. While the means
3 of the city are multiple, varied, and
4 diverse, this is certainly not the last
5 or only project that can handle some
6 those issues. This is the highest and
7 best use for these properties."

8 I will now read the names of those
9 who submitted letters, that I can
10 actually read their names. Some of
11 them are just signatures. Kathleen
12 Valentine, Craig Pelsue, Anthony
13 Vesnaver, Nina Horowitz, Christopher
14 Espinal, Paul J. Banks, Aaron
15 Lefkowitz, Clifton Patrick, Kenneth
16 Nelson, Theresa Kraft, Bobbie Jo Buel,
17 Barbara Duvekot Latham, Kristin Reilly,
18 Cynthia Corsiglia, Paula Tepedino, Cian
19 Robert Hamill, John Delk, Nicole
20 Nazzaro, Daniel Brown, Michele Basch,
21 Raymundo Enriquez, Alvaro Bustillos,
22 Tiera Johnson, Sheila D. Warren, Dale
23 Velazquez, Isabel Iannucci, Xavier
24 Boone, Jose Alfredo Olivera, Sean
25 Warren, Kathryn M. Vignogna, Theresa

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2 Vargas, Natascia Blanc, Assaf Leib,
3 Carlos Navarro Alvarez, Kabil and Noil,
4 and Ashley Lyon. And those are all the
5 ones I could read that I understand
6 their signature. But in total, there
7 are 50 letters that are in support of
8 the project.

9 Now I will open this public hearing for
10 public comment at 6:14 p.m. By way of
11 operating rules -- I'm sorry. Let me back
12 up. We will open the meeting at this moment,
13 and we will have the developer, Sims Foster,
14 present. And then afterwards, we will have
15 Michael N'dolo from MRB, who is the economic
16 analyst who did the independent cost-benefit
17 analysis and test of reasonableness. And
18 then after they're done, we will open it up
19 for public comment. So we will introduce
20 Sims to take the floor.

21 MR. SIMS FOSTER:

22 Thank you, Board, for your time. I
23 appreciate all that you're putting into
24 this. My name is Sims Foster. I'm the
25 applicant here for this project. And I

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2 want to make sure we leave plenty of
3 time for everybody to speak and I
4 appreciate everybody showing up. We
5 welcome this process. We know it's a
6 process, as an applicant, and are happy
7 to be here.

8 Just a quick background into who I
9 am, who we are. I grew up about
10 60 miles from here in Sullivan County,
11 was born and raised there, and spent my
12 career in hospitality. And about seven
13 years ago, my wife and I came back and
14 started with one hotel, and in the last
15 seven years have opened six hotels in
16 Sullivan County and two restaurants.
17 As we looked to expand, like many of
18 you, we were drawn to Newburgh, to the
19 energy and to what Newburgh is now, and
20 also the potential that it has in the
21 future. And came here and also saw
22 these amazing buildings --
23 unfortunately, it's the second shortest
24 day of the year -- but the American
25 Legion, YMCA, and the Masonic Temple

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2 right outside the window.

3 We are in contract with Orange
4 County for those buildings and are --
5 have received conditional planning
6 board approval. We still have to get
7 approval from the architectural -- the
8 ARC, but things are going well in that
9 process, and we looked forward,
10 hopefully, to having full approvals
11 very soon.

12 The project itself, we are
13 presenting the idea of doing up to 80
14 rooms, mostly in the American Legion
15 and YMCA buildings. In the Masonic
16 Grand Temple, there will be a 150-seat
17 ground floor restaurant, two large
18 event spaces, a second smaller
19 restaurant on the third floor, and a
20 rooftop enclosed bar as well. And
21 also, behind the American Legion, a
22 pavilion and gardens with a food truck
23 style seasonal venue. So that's what
24 the project is.

25 I think some attributes that we

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2 would just like to note, one, we're not
3 displacing anyone. The buildings are
4 currently empty except for the Boys &
5 Girls Club who are in the American
6 Legion, and we are working as hard as
7 we can to keep them there as long as
8 they can. As many of you know, they're
9 trying to move or are in the process of
10 renovating the building on the corner
11 here, on Broadway and Grand. So we're
12 working with them and working well.

13 Number two, the buildings currently
14 are not on the tax roll. In their
15 300-year plus existence combined, they
16 were only on the tax roll for less than
17 10 percent of that in the early 2000s.
18 So not when we're finished renovating
19 the project, but immediately if we take
20 possession of them, we'll put three
21 buildings on the tax rolls in City of
22 Newburgh.

23 I won't go into it too much because
24 I think Michael will next, but we'll be
25 creating jobs, both in the construction

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2 phase and predevelopment phase, and
3 also, of course, we'll be looking at,
4 stabilized, around 62 full-time
5 equivalent jobs, which really in our
6 industry equates to probably a lot more
7 than that, as there are some --
8 especially in food and beverage, some
9 part-time jobs that equate to one
10 full-time job.

11 We are very much looking forward to
12 partnering with SUNY Orange. That was
13 one of the first conversations we had
14 with Dr. Young, and we are looking
15 to -- well, I am the Chair of Food
16 Tech, which is a new committee, an
17 organization that will be looking to
18 help the college expand its culinary
19 and hospitality program, and also job
20 training for the hospitality sector.

21 I think the indirect value of this
22 is that -- and also one of the
23 challenges of this project -- is we
24 hope to not be the last hotel in the
25 City of Newburgh. There are so many

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2 reasons to attract visitors to come and
3 stay here in Newburgh, and Newburgh has
4 a rich history of hotels and
5 hospitality, so we are hoping that,
6 through this process, even though we'd
7 be the first to do a hotel of this
8 style in a generation or more, that it
9 will encourage others with the same
10 appropriate commitment to community and
11 to the betterment of Newburgh to come
12 and join us and to help start a wave of
13 tourism and overnight destination here
14 in the City of Newburgh.

15 We're applying for the PILOT not
16 because we think that our project, on
17 all the things that I just discussed,
18 deserves it because of merit. I'm not
19 applying for the PILOT through the IDA
20 because it's something that would be
21 nice to have. I frankly would prefer
22 that we weren't applying for the PILOT.
23 The reason we're applying for it is we
24 need it. The reason we need it is that
25 this project is highly likely to not be

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2 financed -- and by financed, I mean
3 through bank debt and also private
4 equity -- without the PILOT. The taxes
5 in the City of Newburgh, I just learned
6 this weekend, the rate has gone down
7 over the past few years, and that's
8 good progress, but the taxes themselves
9 I think are still very high, and I
10 haven't heard anybody in the City of
11 Newburgh argue with me on that. They
12 would be so high on this project on day
13 one that the risk profile on this
14 project would be put in a place that a
15 bank would not take the risk, and the
16 return on private equity would be so
17 long to return that it becomes largely
18 unfinanceable. So as the applicant
19 here, we are just availing ourselves to
20 the system that's been put in place by
21 the City of Newburgh through the IDA to
22 apply for this PILOT.

23 There are those that say they like
24 the project, but they don't like the
25 deal. I can understand that. What I

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2 can say is, what we ask for is what we
3 need in order to get this project done.
4 And we spent a lot of time on this
5 application and were very thoughtful
6 about it, and we understand there can
7 be opposite opinions of that, but I'm
8 standing here asking for what we need
9 to hopefully get this project financed
10 and get it open within two or so years,
11 and start bringing people to the City
12 of Newburgh.

13 I'm happy to answer any questions
14 afterwards, and I appreciate everybody
15 being here and I appreciate the time to
16 talk. So I'll turn it over.

17 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

18 Thank you, sir. Next, we'll
19 introduce Michael N'dolo. Again, he's
20 with MRB Group. He was hired by the
21 IDA to investigate the application, to
22 research the industry, to ask questions
23 of the applicant. Michael, I'll let
24 you elaborate and take it from here.
25 Thank you.

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2 MR. MICHAEL N'DOLO:

3 So tonight, I'll just introduce
4 myself a little bit, just so you know
5 my background and how I came into this.
6 But most of it's going to be about
7 financial analysis. I do like to try
8 to break it down. There is some
9 complexity to this, but I do try to
10 make is digestible for a non-technical
11 audience. So I will try and attempt to
12 do so again tonight.

13 So MRB Group, I will spare you the
14 sales pitch, but MRB Group is a
15 municipal services provider. We do
16 municipal engineering, municipal
17 architecture, municipal consulting.
18 Smarter Local Government is the
19 division I work for in MRB Group. So
20 we are speaking on behalf of the
21 community, not on behalf of the
22 developer.

23 I have worked in economic and
24 fiscal impact analysis for about 20
25 years. I've done projects in 25

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2 states. I've done over 300 analyses
3 for IDAs. I've worked with, I think,
4 essentially every active IDA in the
5 state at some time or another on every
6 different type of study you can
7 imagine, so I've seen just about every
8 iteration you can have.

9 We were asked to perform two types
10 of analyses, and I'll describe each of
11 them in kind here, in order: Test of
12 reasonableness and the cost-benefit
13 analysis. Both have been reduced into
14 writing and provided to the Board for
15 their contemplation during the
16 discussion here.

17 So test of reasonableness comes
18 first. We are asking essentially two
19 questions in the test of
20 reasonableness. The first one is, is
21 it necessary to provide an incentive?
22 And the second question is, is the
23 incentive requested reasonable? Does
24 it provide a return that is reasonable,
25 and specifically not in excess of a

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2 normal return on a project, right? A
3 developer needs to make a normal
4 return, and that's where we want them
5 to be.

6 We do two tests -- well, we do more
7 than two tests, but generally speaking,
8 we look at the debt-service coverage
9 ratio, and then we estimate their
10 pre-tax cash flow on an internal rate
11 of return basis. So how do we do this?
12 What was the method? We were provided
13 some financials by the developer about
14 operations and some ratios and expenses
15 and income. We asked for some
16 additional information, which we
17 received, about the capital structure
18 of the deal, how money's coming in,
19 what are the terms of that money coming
20 in, and then what's an overall profit
21 and loss. We had several discussions
22 with the developer team, and then we
23 took that data, we analyzed it, and we
24 benchmarked it against known market
25 benchmarks from reputable data sources.

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2 So this is some of the information
3 that we looked at. Average daily rate,
4 that's a hotel industry term for how
5 much they charge for a room on average.
6 Revenue per available room is not what
7 they charge, but what they actually
8 received for an average room. That has
9 to do with the occupancy rate as, of
10 course, some of the hotel rooms are
11 vacant from time to time. Cost of
12 goods sold, again, the financing terms
13 and conditions, and then we also asked
14 about other incentives and other types
15 of funding that might be coming into
16 the project. And we know the
17 \$1.25 million grant that was awarded
18 recently and was part of our test.

19 What we're trying to do on the
20 internal rate of return side is to say,
21 if you're an equity investor, right,
22 here's somebody who's going to be
23 participating in this deal. What is
24 the rate of return that you need to see
25 in order to put your money in this

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2 deal? Right? We call that the equity
3 dividend rate. We used the investor's
4 survey from RealityRates.com, and I
5 believe it was third quarter rates, and
6 you can see that the equity dividend
7 rate for full service hotels range
8 between 7 and 18 percent and averaged
9 about 12. I just note that the cap
10 rate that we saw was about 9.5 percent.
11 So that's what we're looking at in
12 terms of what the market considers a
13 reasonable rate of return.

14 Now we also have things like risk.
15 One of the things we considered is that
16 there isn't a comparable property right
17 now in the City of Newburgh, and
18 therefore, the developer is taking
19 additional risk because they can't look
20 at existing market data and know what's
21 possible. They have to guess. So
22 that's one aspect of the risk. We put
23 it together.

24 We looked at their profit and loss,
25 we looked at their capital structure,

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2 and we created a simplified
3 cash-on-cash return. You're the equity
4 investor, you put cash in, and in the
5 future you get cash out. Right? What
6 would that rate be? We calculated what
7 that rate is.

8 We looked at the PILOT payment
9 schedule that was requested. We asked
10 and discussed with the agency an
11 amendment to that PILOT request. It
12 was granted. The developer agreed to
13 it. And we are able to find that the
14 test of reasonableness passed. The
15 assistance is necessary and reasonable
16 for a risk-adjusted return. So that's
17 the test of reasonableness. The next
18 analysis -- that's answering the
19 question, do we need to give this
20 assistance, right? That's the first
21 question.

22 The second question really here is,
23 why should we consider this? That's
24 the cost-benefit analysis. So here are
25 some of the benefits and costs that we

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2 elaborated on from the application,
3 from other sources. Of a \$21 million
4 project, about 80 percent would be
5 spent in the county. That's
6 \$17 million. So you can see that top
7 table, construction, spending in county
8 is the top two lines of the summary.
9 So you have 67 direct jobs, that's
10 on-site jobs doing the renovations, an
11 additional 43 in the county, including
12 the city, for a total of 110 jobs.
13 That's what we're estimating during the
14 construction period. You can see the
15 construction wages totaling about \$9.5
16 million. We do that at a county level
17 because construction typically happens
18 at a broader geography. For
19 operations, we scaled down to look at
20 just the city. So ongoing employment
21 at the site, you can see there's a
22 combination of professional, skilled,
23 semi-skilled, and unskilled jobs,
24 totaling 61 jobs. Those 61 jobs are
25 the direct jobs occurring on site at

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2 the hospitality operations. We have
3 modeled this through an economic impact
4 modeling software system that tells us
5 this will result in an additional 13
6 jobs in the City of Newburgh, and that
7 has to do with business-to-business
8 purchases and with the portion of wages
9 being spent locally, creating other
10 jobs. You know, you have an employee,
11 they go out in the community, they buy
12 groceries, they go see the doctor, et
13 cetera, et cetera. That really creates
14 additional jobs in the community. So
15 we're modeling out ongoing jobs at
16 about 47 jobs and \$3.2 million in
17 wages. So this is the summary of the
18 economic impacts of the project, should
19 it move forward.

20 We then looked at the benefits
21 being provided, and we modeled out what
22 the costs of those benefits are. This
23 table is confusing, I understand, but
24 it's math, so I'm going to skip over
25 something here and just say, the

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2 estimated PILOT is in the far right
3 column. And it bears saying, of
4 course, that today, the project pays --
5 the property pays zero dollars in tax
6 because it's not on the tax rolls.
7 Should the project not proceed, it
8 would continue to pay zero dollars in
9 property tax. So the estimated PILOT
10 payment is calculated based on a base
11 current assessed value, which would
12 become taxable at 2.5 million, and the
13 improvement value of 10 million. The
14 estimated PILOT, based on the proposed
15 exemption schedule in year one, would
16 be 175,000; by year 12, the PILOT
17 payment has jumped up to 684,000; and
18 by year 13, it is back entirely on the
19 tax rolls and is paying about \$800,000
20 a year.

21 So what is the value of this PILOT
22 abatement? Again, the property's tax
23 exempt, so there's no tax currently.
24 The project will pay a total of
25 \$3.78 million in PILOT payments. So

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2 you either have zero dollars in tax, or
3 \$3.78 million in PILOT payments. The
4 most conservative estimate about the
5 value of the exemption is
6 \$4.51 million. This is the value that
7 we used in the cost-benefit ratio.

8 However, the city also has a 485-b
9 tax abatement. That is an as-of-right
10 tax abatement. Anyone who's a
11 commercial property owner can ask for a
12 485-b abatement. The project would
13 qualify for a 485-b abatement. If we
14 compare the 485-b abatement schedule to
15 the PILOT abatement schedule, the cost
16 is 3.26 million. There is an argument
17 to say that there is no cost to the
18 abatement, because if the abatement
19 doesn't occur, our test of
20 reasonableness has said the project's
21 not going to move forward, and the
22 payment's going to be zero. So this is
23 what we would call a hypothetical cost.
24 It's a cost if the project moves
25 forward without the abatement, which we

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2 have deemed not possible.

3 So here's the summary of the fiscal
4 impacts. You have a little bit of
5 sales tax during construction. This is
6 not construction sales tax, which is
7 exempt under the IDA PILOT, the
8 presumed IDA assistance; this is sales
9 tax coming off of earnings being paid
10 to workers being spent locally in the
11 county. During the 12 years of
12 operations, we estimate \$286,000 in
13 sales tax coming off of those economic
14 impacts I talked about before. On-site
15 retail sales at the facility will be
16 subject to the sales tax; that's an
17 additional 4.2 million. People staying
18 at the hotel will pay \$868,000 in
19 occupancy tax. And, as I mentioned
20 before, \$3.78 million in PILOT payments
21 over the 12 years. So in total, you
22 have total fiscal benefits of about \$9
23 million, \$9.2 million.

24 The exemptions, which again, could
25 be considered hypothetical costs, sales

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2 tax exemption of 433, mortgage
3 recording tax exemption of 91, and that
4 PILOT exemption of \$4.5 million, which
5 again, we said that's the conservative
6 way to look at it. It's actually
7 substantially less if you look at a
8 comparison to 485-b.

9 And then this final table, which
10 is, I know, impossible to read, it is
11 in the report, but I'll just tell you,
12 if you look at all the local costs of
13 about \$5 million, sales tax exemption,
14 mortgage recording tax exemption, and
15 real property tax exemption, that's \$5
16 million, there are total local benefits
17 of \$57 million. Most of that is
18 earnings to the jobs created during the
19 construction period and during
20 operations, but \$9 million of that are
21 all the tax revenues that I just
22 described.

23 So we like to come up with a
24 cost-benefit ratio. If you look at the
25 overall benefits, both to the public

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2 sector and to the private sector, the
3 wages being paid and the property tax
4 revenue versus the cost, we have a
5 benefits-to-cost ratio of 11 to 1. If
6 you look at just the tax benefit, tax
7 benefits to the public and tax costs,
8 the ratio is 1.832 to 1, which means to
9 say for every dollar of exemption you
10 give, you get \$1.83 back in future tax
11 revenue.

12 So I believe that's the end of my
13 slide show. Happy to answer questions
14 as they come up.

15 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

16 Thank you, Michael. We appreciate
17 it. At this time, we're going to open
18 it up for elected official comments and
19 questions, basically in no particular
20 order, except for the fact that,
21 because I'm sitting in his seat, I feel
22 it's appropriate for Mayor Harvey to be
23 first in line, if that's okay with you.
24 And then after that, those of you that
25 signed in, that's fine, but if you'd

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2 like to take the opportunity now to
3 speak, that's fine, too. So Mayor
4 Harvey, thank you.

5 MAYOR TORRANCE HARVEY:

6 So I want to first start off by
7 saying thank you to everyone who came
8 out. It's very important to have an
9 informed public. To Mr. Sims Foster.
10 The IDA Board, thank you all for what
11 you do for our community every day.
12 Thank you so much. And to my
13 colleagues, city government, elected
14 officials, thank you as well.

15 So I want to first say that there
16 was a lot of skepticism, a lot of
17 criticism on behalf of the city
18 council, you know, especially when we
19 looked at the PILOT request.
20 90 percent, you know. But the devil's
21 in the details. And so we had a series
22 of meetings with IDA, with Mr. Foster
23 and other persons, and I want to say
24 that I personally support this project.

25 And I want to start with a quote

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2 that says, high tides rise all boats.
3 And I looked at this project in that
4 sense because, when we look at the
5 current assessed value of these three
6 abandoned buildings, 2.5 million
7 roughly, the tax abatement is based
8 upon a graduated abatement for the
9 improvements that were estimated at
10 10.2 million. And just to put things
11 in context, these three buildings, as
12 was said before, have been abandoned
13 for a very long time.

14 And initially, the former city
15 manager and I found out that the county
16 had bought them and that they were
17 going to be gifted to the college, SUNY
18 Orange. And there were no discussions
19 with us, me as the mayor, SUNY Orange,
20 and the city manager -- former city
21 manager -- and we were like, whoa, wait
22 a minute. The college is a
23 not-for-profit. If those three
24 buildings are going to be gifted from
25 the county to the community college,

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2 there's not going to be any tax revenue
3 for the city.

4 And so we started making phone
5 calls and talking to potential
6 developers, et cetera, et cetera,
7 because we want tax revenue, obviously.
8 We want to continue to expand the tax
9 base. We want to continue to decrease
10 that milling rate and get the taxes
11 down in the City of Newburgh. And
12 that's something that I personally
13 committed to when I first got elected
14 in 2016, because I am a homeowner and
15 an educator in the school district. So
16 I was like, wait a minute. Okay. So
17 some things happened behind the scenes,
18 and the county was going to offer one
19 of the three buildings to a developer
20 who sent in a proposal, and then,
21 according to my knowledge, the
22 community college was like, wait a
23 minute. We don't get all three? And
24 then it became this debate behind the
25 scenes, and then that led to where we

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2 are now, to developers putting in for
3 these three buildings. And it went
4 through the process, through the IDA,
5 and Sims Foster's concept and
6 development was chosen.

7 And so, with that being said, I do
8 want to point out the fact that, in
9 year one, as was stated earlier, the
10 cost-benefit analysis, we're talking
11 about \$175,000 in the very first year,
12 with 2 percent increases starting in
13 year two, year three, all the way to
14 year seven. And then there's an
15 80 percent tax abatement, and then it
16 goes down to 70, and right on down to,
17 you know, full tax ratables after year
18 12, which is year 13.

19 One other quick point to put things
20 into context, in 2012 -- and I'm not
21 mentioning any names, I'm not
22 mentioning any developers' names -- but
23 in all transparency, in 2012, the city
24 council approved a project on Broadway,
25 and that was a 30-year PILOT with

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2 \$45,000 in tax revenue for 30 years.
3 Okay. And there's ongoing litigation
4 about that and I'm going to leave that
5 right there.

6 And then years prior, there was a
7 ten-year PILOT on that beautiful
8 waterfront and all those existing
9 waterfront properties. Because when I
10 arrived in the City of Newburgh as a
11 teenager in 1991, the first place that
12 my family lived was at 14 Washington
13 Place right behind the Newburgh police
14 department. And those condos were
15 there. Mr. Mandel was the owner, and
16 we rented from Mr. Mandel, who has
17 since passed away. But that waterfront
18 was barren land. All they had were
19 Gully's and the Front Street building,
20 which is now partly Billy Joe's. It
21 was barren land when I moved here in
22 1991 as a teenager. And that
23 waterfront that we all know and love,
24 and has the best view of the Hudson on
25 the west bank of the Hudson, those

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2 businesses had a ten-year PILOT. Zero
3 dollars for 10 years in tax revenue to
4 this city.

5 And so that kind of, you know, puts
6 things, I hope, in perspective of some
7 of the previous PILOTs that have taken
8 place in the history of Newburgh, and
9 recent history.

10 And then the last thing, we were in
11 discussion, the city council, myself,
12 and Sims Foster and the IDA and the
13 county, was that again, obviously,
14 there's going to be some more
15 employment opportunities. There's
16 workforce development. There's going
17 to be a partnership that was just
18 mentioned with the college for culinary
19 arts, for hotel management,
20 hospitality. And not just entry level
21 positions.

22 There's also discussion of tree
23 plantings, food for the food desert
24 that we have in the City of Newburgh.
25 Sims Foster has a not-for-profit

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2 organization that's doing a lot of
3 things with food. And the council and
4 I and the city government, we're very
5 much interested in large projects that
6 offer community benefits. What are the
7 community benefits coming to the City
8 of Newburgh? Again, preferences for
9 employment; trees, tree planting,
10 keeping things green; and addressing
11 the food desert that we have in the
12 City of Newburgh; job training; again,
13 employment; tourism; amenities that are
14 going to be on site at the campus of
15 the hotels if this project moves
16 forward. Those amenities at some of
17 those sites will be open to the public.
18 There was talk of a food truck, patio,
19 greens for the public. And then also,
20 if they move forward with the bowling
21 alley in the project, that the public
22 may have access to that, of course with
23 small fees to participate in something
24 like that. So, you know, that was a
25 lot of the focus, what we can do

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2 that's -- what they can potentially do
3 as community focus, community benefit
4 to the city. And also being an
5 attractor, an attractor for people
6 outside of the city to come to the City
7 of Newburgh for tourism, because from
8 my perspective, we want the world to
9 come to Newburgh. And that's part of
10 our master ten-year plan. It's also
11 part of our downtown revitalization
12 plan, to bring connectivity from the
13 foot of Broadway to the waterfront.

14 And lastly, I want to say, not only
15 do we have the best view of the Hudson
16 River, which is picturesque, but we
17 also have -- we're the only city of the
18 Hudson Valley river cities to have the
19 deep water ports. And if anyone
20 remembers from this summer, we had one
21 of the largest and most expensive
22 yachts docked at our city for weeks.
23 And that's a testament to what the
24 potential tourism opportunities are,
25 bringing the largest cruise ships into

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2 the City of Newburgh to see our
3 Hasbrouck House, to visit our small
4 businesses and shops on the Liberty
5 Street corridor and on South Street and
6 on Broadway and throughout the city.

7 This is a significant game changer,
8 if I will, and it has historic
9 potential. And again, myself and the
10 city council were very, very skeptical
11 when you first see the 90 percent
12 abatement, but until you get into the
13 real numbers as it was presented just
14 now, and look at the cost-benefit
15 analysis, this is going to be a great
16 thing for the City of Newburgh. And I
17 personally -- Sims, I personally
18 support this.

19 And lastly, I want to say, men lie,
20 women lie, but the numbers don't lie.

21 Thank you.

22 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

23 Thank you, Mayor. Any other
24 elected officials? Legislator Elect
25 Ramos.

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2 LEGISLATOR ELECT GENESIS RAMOS:

3 Good evening, everyone. Genesis
4 Ramos, lifetime City of Newburgh
5 resident and legislator elect for
6 District 6, representing parts of the
7 City of Newburgh.

8 I want to start by saying that, you
9 know, to piggyback off of what Mayor
10 Harvey just said regarding skepticism,
11 I'll be the first one to admit that,
12 you know, when I first heard about the
13 PILOT request, I was definitely
14 skeptical and I definitely had my
15 immediate doubts about it. But what I
16 did, and what I encourage -- it doesn't
17 matter for or against or however you
18 feel -- what I would encourage all of
19 us to do is to -- you know, what I at
20 least try to do and before I stepped up
21 here this evening is to be fact-based.
22 We all have our emotions. As someone
23 who has lived here and has seen the
24 marginalization of our community in
25 many ways, and many failed developer

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2 relationships of the past and how our
3 community has been taken advantage of
4 in the past, I most certainly don't
5 want that for our community going
6 forward. And I'll be the first to
7 admit that I wish we didn't need a
8 PILOT and that we had the leverage to
9 not have to have a PILOT. But it is
10 projects like this that I'm in full
11 support of that will get us to that
12 phase of giving us that leverage here
13 in our community. And I do believe
14 that.

15 But I also want to bring something
16 to the forefront. As someone who sits
17 on several boards, including a couple
18 of municipal boards, there is a big
19 disconnect between the municipal boards
20 and our city council with our community
21 at large. I think that we need to be
22 more intentional -- and I hold myself
23 accountable as well, not just as an
24 elected official, but also as someone
25 who sits on a municipal board -- that

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2 we need to do a better job of engaging
3 our community so that our community is
4 aware of the different processes and
5 the different things happening, and not
6 just when there's an issue at hand.
7 Because then, we're dealing with
8 contentious conversations and we're
9 dealing with damage control as opposed
10 to engaging everyone from the
11 beginning. So I think that's something
12 that every single municipal board needs
13 to look at and be more intentional
14 about, and so I really want to
15 encourage that.

16 However, to the developers and the
17 IDA who's handling this request,
18 transparency is extremely important.
19 We need to understand that the distress
20 is due to historical context, like
21 corruption, and we have an opportunity
22 here to change this narrative going
23 forward. But it's going to take a lot
24 of intention from the developer, from
25 the IDA, from city council, to work

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2 collectively and to be very intentional
3 about what that transparency looks
4 like. I hear equity investors being
5 thrown around. I would like to know
6 who those investors are.

7 This project is not going to fix
8 all of our problems here in the
9 community, but it can be the start of
10 diversifying our tax base here.
11 Ultimately, I want what's equitable for
12 taxpayers. Like, couldn't those
13 abatements be set at a lower number
14 sooner, for example? I don't know.
15 I'll be the first to admit I'm not that
16 smart. But I know that for most folks
17 in this room, they want our city to
18 move forward. We want what's best for
19 our community, but we also want what's
20 fair for our taxpayers. I think of my
21 mom and dad, who are taxpayers, my
22 brother and most of my family are
23 taxpayers here. We're all working
24 class folks. So, you know, we want
25 what's fair for us as well.

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2 I want to talk move heavily,
3 though, about community benefit. I
4 think it's a term that's being thrown
5 around, but I'll be the first to admit
6 that I'm going to take it a step
7 further and say that I really want to
8 hold that at a higher standard, one
9 where we can set the bar going forward,
10 because I think it's more than just
11 saying we want jobs, or more than just
12 saying this is what it can look like.
13 We need community benefits that are
14 enforceable and measurable, like how
15 many jobs, not just entry level jobs,
16 but giving people jobs here that are of
17 leadership positions that come with
18 higher salaries as well.

19 Being able to have community
20 events. Again, I think about being
21 able to set -- to have an opportunity
22 to set the standard going forward.
23 When I think of community benefit, I
24 want to see -- I want to see this being
25 part of the agreement in the contract.

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2 I want to see this being enforceable.
3 I want this to be measurable. I want
4 to see people from our community
5 working there. I understand when it
6 comes to construction and contracting,
7 that tends to be more widespread, but
8 when it comes to the daily operations
9 of that space, I would really want that
10 to be enforced and measured, and I
11 really am being upfront and vocal about
12 that.

13 I also want to say, you know, for a
14 plan of verification, occupancy taxes,
15 those get funneled to the county. They
16 don't come directly to the city. So I
17 request the Board diligently to ensure
18 that that is funneled back into our
19 community, and we get a clear agreement
20 on that. Because as it stands now, it
21 does not get funneled directly back to
22 the City of Newburgh. So that's
23 something that I do want to clarify for
24 optimizing taxes as well.

25 So that's all I have. Again, I

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2 really just want what's best for our
3 community on every level. But I will
4 be the first to say that I will be
5 holding accountable anything that's
6 promised, because we really need to
7 move past a place of saying, you know,
8 this is what we're going to do, and
9 then two, three, four years from now,
10 we don't hear from you guys again. And
11 again, when we walk into these spaces,
12 I really want it to be for our
13 community and by our community, while
14 inviting folks from outside of our
15 community to this city that I know I'm
16 proud to be from. I've always
17 mentioned it, I'll probably die here.
18 I think this is an opportunity for us
19 moving forward to be able to create
20 more deliberate processes around what
21 development in the City of Newburgh
22 looks like that's equitable and
23 intentional. Thank you.

24 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

25 Thank you. Senator Skoufis.

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2 SENATOR JAMES SKOUFIS:

3 Thank you, Chairman. Thank you,
4 Board.

5 I'm not going to repeat myself from
6 last time. I want to focus on some new
7 thoughts. And I will say, you know, on
8 a positive note to start, I do think
9 it's refreshing. I go to a fair number
10 of IDA Board meetings -- I don't just
11 pick on you here in the City of
12 Newburgh -- and weigh in on
13 applications that I think deserve
14 weighing in on. And often times at
15 these meetings, and often times when
16 there's a contentious application,
17 there is a schism. There is a fight
18 over the project itself. And in this
19 case, most, if not all the people I
20 speak to, are supportive of this
21 project. So we're starting in a better
22 place here. It's already in a good
23 place. I think that is something that
24 deserves to be pointed out.

25 That said, it is your job, as the

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2 applicant rightly noted. This is a
3 system that he did not set up. He is
4 simply applying to an existing system,
5 an existing structure. It is your job,
6 the IDA Board, to judge that
7 application. And it is your job,
8 fundamentally, to get the best deal for
9 the city. That ultimately is your job.
10 What is the best deal we can get from
11 this project for the city?

12 I have two questions, general
13 questions, before I make some remarks
14 to that point that I want to raise
15 about getting the best deal for the
16 city. The first question -- and I know
17 this is not a discourse, so these are
18 just questions I'm raising. Feel free
19 to answer them after my remarks if
20 you'd like, but I know you're not
21 obligated to. I understand that. My
22 first question is, is there any
23 iron-clad commitment that these
24 construction jobs are going to be local
25 construction jobs? It is my

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2 understanding that every other IDA in
3 Orange County has, in their bylaws, in
4 their policies, a very strong local
5 labor policy: Orange County IDA,
6 Montgomery IDA, Wallkill IDA. I am not
7 aware of a similar strong local labor
8 policy within the Newburgh IDA's
9 bylaws. So my first question is, are
10 these construction jobs that are on the
11 screen that we're all talking about as
12 a benefit, are these going to be cars
13 with out-of-state license plates on the
14 job? If that is the case, then that's
15 not a benefit.

16 The second genuine question I have
17 is, you know, it was mentioned before
18 that there were letters of support.
19 How many of those were form letters and
20 how many of those were simply signed by
21 someone -- here's, you know, basically
22 a petition. You get a 30-second sound
23 bite that's biased from whoever is
24 knocking on that person's door. Please
25 sign here. Versus how many of those

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2 were written by individuals from the
3 City of Newburgh? I think that is
4 something the Board ought to be mindful
5 of.

6 Now, to my comments about getting
7 the best deal for the city. We heard a
8 lot about need. This PILOT is needed
9 for this project to happen. And it
10 seems as though there has been a change
11 in opinions over what that means over
12 the past number of months. For
13 starters, it's my understanding that
14 conversations around PILOT began at 15
15 years. That's what was originally
16 needed for us to get financing through
17 the bank. Clearly, that's not the
18 case. Now we're at 12 years. That's
19 what we need to get financing. And
20 this is all about not what I need, it's
21 what the bank needs. Now it's 12
22 years. Now we have a consultant come
23 in, do a reasonable test, and, working
24 with the applicant and the Board, the
25 12 years, the depth of that 12 years,

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2 the depth of the subsidy was amended.
3 Now, believe me, this third iteration
4 is really what we need from the bank to
5 get financing. The only thing that's
6 changed from the last public hearing is
7 the applicant has received
8 \$1.25 million from the State of New
9 York. That is the only thing I know
10 that's changed from the last public
11 hearing as far as I can tell. That's
12 new money. As of the last public
13 hearing, the applicant did not have
14 \$1.25 million, but here's the 12-year
15 PILOT that I need at 90-percent
16 abatement for the first six years. So
17 one would think, here we are at a
18 public hearing, there should be an
19 amendment to that PILOT application. I
20 no longer need as much money in
21 subsidies because I just found
22 \$1.25 million from New York State.
23 Clearly, that has not happened. I
24 suggest to you -- I know that this is,
25 you know, something that you like but

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2 you cannot actually include in your
3 considerations, but I raise it because
4 I think it's worth being mindful of --
5 as all of these iterations of what is
6 needed have transpired, perhaps then we
7 should ask the applicant, well, if you
8 exceed, as part of that reasonableness
9 test, if you exceed what should be the
10 expected average return to your equity
11 partners and this hotel and this
12 restaurant and this ballroom is far
13 better than what your pro forma
14 documents show and what you are
15 attesting to this IDA Board, then
16 perhaps give back some of the subsidy.
17 That will never happen because we're
18 supposed to socialize risk and
19 socialize profits and not get the best
20 deal for the city if we ask the
21 applicant, whose assessment of the
22 needs has been changing left and right
23 over the past number of months. And so
24 what we need is the best deal possible.

25 And I would encourage each IDA

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2 board member respectfully -- and you
3 all have difficult and thankless jobs.
4 I hope everyone here who's in this
5 audience understands you are
6 volunteers. And so I recognize that
7 and I thank you for your service. But
8 I ask you and I encourage you that the
9 only question on the top of your mind
10 ought to be, what is the best deal we
11 can get for this city from this
12 project?

13 We talk about history. I've been
14 doing this for nine years in the state
15 legislature. And as I said, I pay
16 attention to all the IDA agendas. I
17 get all the IDA minutes from all the
18 IDAs that I represent. I have never
19 seen in my nine years a 90-percent
20 abatement for a PILOT. Never seen it.
21 I don't know what happened 30 years ago
22 or 50 years ago, like these projects on
23 the waterfront or elsewhere. In my
24 nine years, I have never seen it.

25 And so, everyone knows that we're

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2 hearing from the applicant, talking
3 about, well, the bank needs this. The
4 bank needs a PILOT. I assume and I
5 agree, the bank needs a PILOT,
6 something to do with the property taxes
7 to make this financially viable, this
8 project. What we're not hearing, or at
9 least I have not been told in my prior
10 conversations, in my conversations here
11 with the IDA Board, I have not heard
12 anyone say that the bank needs to see a
13 12-year PILOT specifically. The bank
14 needs to see a 90-percent abatement for
15 six years specifically. All I hear is
16 the bank needs a PILOT. I assume
17 that's true. Has the consultant spoken
18 with the bank and asked specifically,
19 do you need to see a 12-year PILOT, a
20 90-percent abatement for six years?
21 That's the third question. Did anyone
22 ask that? And so I suggest that there
23 is a better deal to be done.

24 As I mentioned before about
25 community benefit, I've seen lots of

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2 community benefit agreements throughout
3 the Hudson Valley throughout my years.
4 And I always raise an eyebrow whenever
5 I hear that. I would suggest, whatever
6 you're planning to say in the community
7 benefit agreement -- and they're
8 usually great, you know, I'll give a
9 quarter million dollars a year to
10 charity, and give \$300,000 for
11 different community groups -- keep your
12 community benefit and just take that
13 money and put it towards reducing the
14 subsidy. So I have no interest in
15 seeing a community benefit. In terms
16 of additional financial benefit,
17 certainly, I support keeping the
18 permanent jobs local, et cetera. In
19 terms of additional financial benefit
20 through a community benefit agreement,
21 CBA, that's silly. Take whatever
22 you're going to put there and put it
23 towards reducing your subsidy.

24 I thank you for your time. I hope
25 I was not repetitive. I think I raised

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2 new substance since the last time I
3 spoke. I thank each of you for your
4 time in hearing me out and for
5 volunteering your service to the City
6 of Newburgh. I know you have a
7 difficult decision to make, and I'm
8 optimistic that you will make the right
9 one. Thank you.

10 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

11 Thank you, Senator. Any other
12 elected officials? Legislator Lujan.

13 LEGISLATOR KEVINDARYAN LUJAN:

14 Thank you. Good evening. I want
15 to thank the Board, thank you so much
16 for everything that you're doing, and
17 the audience that has come out tonight.

18 We had a lot of great -- you know,
19 some really great comments, but I just
20 want to kind of add to some of the
21 things that I'm sure that some of the
22 audience might know, and some of the
23 audience might not know. It was
24 literally two of the previous projects,
25 the Innovation Grand Street project

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2 that was originally slated to be there.
3 A project that would have been really
4 focused on workforce development,
5 particularly on hospital jobs, trying
6 to develop that, trying to get more in
7 hospitality. Really a great project,
8 but again, not a project that would
9 have brought any tax revenue to the
10 city. And in many ways, it has some
11 great attributes, that project. It was
12 really focused on jobs. It was really
13 focused on, hey, what is the thing that
14 the City of Newburgh really needs? It
15 needs good paying jobs. You want to
16 make sure that people have careers that
17 they're proud of, that they continue to
18 live here and work here and raise their
19 families here. Because that's what we
20 all want, right? We want to be able to
21 make sure that our community members
22 have a living wage and they're happy
23 and they get to raise their kids here.

24 So workforce development is one of
25 the biggest things that we're seeing,

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2 and it's a great concept.

3 Unfortunately, that project didn't
4 happen. I want to say, full
5 disclosure, I was fully supportive of
6 that project, 100 percent. While it
7 had no taxes, it was a project that
8 really talked about every single person
9 in our community.

10 That being said, this project does
11 offer a lot. This project offers a
12 possibility of us boosting our
13 community and putting it in the place
14 that we all want it to be. We want to
15 make sure that we're attracting people
16 to our community. We have the most
17 beautiful waterfront in the region. We
18 have Washington's Headquarters. We
19 have a rich history, the largest
20 historic district outside of New York
21 City. This is a community that we
22 love. Everyone here, you're here
23 because you love this community.

24 I was brought up here most of my
25 life. My family has been here for over

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2 30 years. I can tell you, I've seen
3 the Newburgh of 30 years ago, and
4 I've -- we've all had this conversation
5 of what Newburgh used to be like. Some
6 of you have probably seen it way longer
7 than I have. Some of you started
8 businesses here long before, you know,
9 anyone really wanted to take a chance
10 on Newburgh. But you're here. You've
11 chosen to be here. And I'm happy. I'm
12 happy that you've chosen Newburgh. I
13 truly am. I'm excited about this
14 project.

15 This project, we had a moment where
16 we had three projects that were put
17 before Orange County. This project was
18 by far the best project. By far. It
19 had vision. It had a workforce
20 development, which they didn't need to
21 add workforce development. I was very
22 excited that they included the
23 hospitality piece. That is something
24 that showed that he was listening to
25 what was necessary, what we wanted to

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2 see in our community. I was happy that
3 he offered to give more money than the
4 other people. I really liked that. I
5 was glad.

6 But I will say that, that project,
7 or what Orange County has paid for
8 those projects over the course of the
9 years, when we bought these projects,
10 these three buildings, we bought them
11 from Orange County. We paid \$3.5
12 million approximately. That's not what
13 the Fosters are going to be paying.
14 But you know what? We also understand
15 that yesterday's prices and today's
16 prices, those are not the same things.
17 But to that point, that's where I'm
18 skeptical as well. And I wanted to
19 kind of echo some of the sentiments
20 that Senator Skoufis made a moment ago.
21 We need to talk about the best deal.
22 The best thing for the City of
23 Newburgh. The reality is, anybody who
24 works in real estate, you all recognize
25 that prices have gone up. We are

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2 definitely not the Newburgh of one year
3 ago, of two years ago, of five years
4 ago, of ten years ago. Newburgh is a
5 gem. Newburgh has the potential that
6 we've always known it could have, and
7 we're not at the price a year ago when
8 this property was sold.

9 And so I wanted to say, I know that
10 everyone here, you love the community,
11 and this falls on your shoulders. I
12 know it's not an easy thing to do. I
13 do support this project fully. I'm
14 excited about this project. I'm
15 excited about the jobs it's going to
16 create. I'm excited about the
17 businesses that are going to open
18 across the city. I'm excited about
19 people wanting to come here and wanting
20 to raise their families here after
21 visiting over a weekend or a week or
22 so.

23 But what I'm really concerned about
24 is still, what is this going to cost
25 us? Because I understand fully that

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2 this property has never been on the tax
3 rolls, but at the same time, this is an
4 opportunity for us to really also bring
5 more tax revenue to the community. So
6 12 years? I don't know what the magic
7 number is, but 12 years seems way too
8 long. I know we talked about 30 years
9 and I know we talked about 10 for
10 almost nothing, but 12 years seems like
11 a long time. So I just want to echo
12 and say we deserve -- Newburgh
13 deserves -- a better deal.

14 That being said, I do wish for this
15 project to continue. I wish you the
16 best of luck, and I look forward to
17 working with you and anyone else on the
18 Board to make sure that it happens.

19 Thank you.

20 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

21 Thank you, Legislator. Any other
22 elected officials? Okay.

23 IDA EXEC. DIR. CHERISSE VICKERS:

24 I just want to give some rules on
25 how we will be proceeding. So when we

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2 ask you to come and comment, we'll
3 recognize one person at a time. We
4 will be requesting comments from those
5 who did not speak first at the other
6 hearing. If you have not spoken,
7 you'll be asked to speak first, make
8 public remarks. And then we'll move
9 down the list. Please wait to be
10 recognized, and then please state your
11 name and address for the record.
12 Please specify if you are a City of
13 Newburgh resident for not. Again, the
14 purpose of this public hearing is to
15 solicit public comment. We're not here
16 to answer questions, however, we will,
17 during this public hearing, consider
18 questions if we have the information to
19 answer them. I will now ask if there's
20 anybody in attendance who wishes to
21 comment on either the nature and the
22 location of the project, or the
23 proposed financial assistance being
24 contemplated by the Agency with respect
25 to the proposed project. So again,

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2 just please state your name, your
3 address, whether you are a City of
4 Newburgh resident or not when you come
5 to comment. And our Chair, Austin
6 DuBois, will be the one calling names
7 going forward.

8 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

9 Thank you, Cher. Douglas Yaun.

10 MR. DOUGLAS YAUN:

11 Hello. I'm Douglas Yaun. I'm a
12 City of Newburgh resident at 6 Park
13 Place.

14 And like the officials, I think
15 you're going to be interested to know
16 this. This right here is a map of all
17 the PILOTs awarded by the City of
18 Newburgh that I know of. For instance,
19 it does not include the Broadway
20 property you brought up, Mayor Harvey.
21 The total number of units is 1,596
22 units from 23 locations. Many are for
23 40 years, like the Varick Homes. That
24 was in 2012 when you started your term,
25 Senator Skoufis. These PILOTs were

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2 awarded by the City of Newburgh without
3 significant public comment. Foster
4 Supply's PILOT immediately contributes,
5 as opposed to almost all the
6 before-mentioned 23 PILOTS, while
7 providing temporary historic trade
8 jobs, visitors to our district, and
9 culminating with full-time employment,
10 while also generating sales tax
11 revenue.

12 I am 100 percent for this project
13 and the help it can give to make up for
14 the 50-year deficit of tourism here
15 since the demolition of the Palatine
16 Hotel during the federally-funded urban
17 renewal program. I support Torrance
18 Harvey, Mayor, and Anthony Grice's
19 comments as read at the beginning of
20 this. Thank you.

21 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

22 Thank you. Michele Basch.

23 MS. MICHELE BASCH:

24 Michelle Basch, 87 Broad Street. I
25 also own the Warehouse Restaurant on

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2 Liberty Street, and I'm the Chair of
3 the ARC.

4 I want to thank the Board for doing
5 their due diligence. I know how
6 difficult it is. And I especially want
7 to thank the Board for coming to last
8 week's council meeting and explaining
9 to the public what a PILOT is, because
10 I'll be honest, I wasn't sure.

11 So a PILOT is basically that, for
12 the first half of the PILOT, you are
13 paying the taxes on the current value
14 when you start the PILOT. You're
15 paying that all along. What you are
16 not paying immediately is the
17 renovations, the value of the
18 renovations and the work that you're
19 doing on the building, which frankly,
20 are not done in the first few years.
21 So then when you get to the sixth year,
22 you hopefully have opened your doors,
23 you're starting business, and you start
24 gradually to increase the taxes paid on
25 the renovations you did. You

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2 continually pay the current value of
3 the buildings. That's important to
4 know. That is not something that I
5 knew, because the information given and
6 the information spoken about and what
7 made people so angry was, they're not
8 going to pay taxes for 12 years. That
9 is not correct.

10 Also something, and please
11 interrupt me if I'm incorrect in this,
12 I believe that the State of New York
13 would award a ten-year PILOT in any
14 case.

15 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

16 I'm going to interrupt you, because
17 actually, I was mistaken when I made
18 that presentation. It's a
19 50 percent -- and Todd, if I get it
20 wrong, let me know -- it's a 50-percent
21 abatement for five years, and then
22 five-percent phases in the rest for
23 over ten years. Is that correct?

24 UNKNOWN SPEAKER:

25 It's actually a 50-percent

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2 exemption the first year, and then it
3 reduces by five percent a year for the
4 next nine years.

5 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

6 Thank you.

7 MS. MICHELE BASCH:

8 Let's put it this way -- and thank
9 you for clarifying that, because it is
10 confusing. The state would award a
11 PILOT, not a 10- or 12-year PILOT, but
12 they would award a PILOT in any case.
13 The difference is that by increasing
14 the amount of time on the PILOT, the
15 city has the ability to control, to
16 talk to the developer, to work with the
17 developer. For me, that's very
18 important, because as far as the ARC is
19 concerned, we want a say so, we want to
20 be able to see. And we have seen the
21 plans and they are absolutely
22 spectacular. Everyone will be proud.

23 One of the biggest benefits of this
24 kind of project is that it will drive
25 pride of place, the pride of being in

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2 the City of Newburgh. Now, I'm not
3 from here. We moved here in '97. The
4 majority of people who have moved here
5 see the beauty. They are excited by
6 the potential. They see what can
7 happen. And sadly, a lot of the people
8 who are from here just don't see it.
9 This project will bring that pride
10 back. That is very important.

11 As far as jobs are concerned, yes,
12 I am sure that Mr. Foster will bring
13 people from the city, but they have to
14 know how to do the job. If you want,
15 in a kitchen, a baker, for instance,
16 that baker has to know how to bake,
17 otherwise, you can't just hire them.
18 That manager has to know how to manage.
19 They will train people in those
20 aspects, and that is very important.
21 And as you grow in those jobs and you
22 learn in those jobs, you will make the
23 money, very much like the film boot
24 camps are doing currently. These are
25 industries where you don't necessarily

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2 need a college degree, but you need to
3 know how to push up your sleeves and do
4 the work. That's what the film boot
5 camp is doing currently, and that's
6 what this project will do. So I thank
7 you very much for what you're
8 proposing. I am 100 percent for it.

9 And by the way, those letters,
10 although many of them are form letters,
11 each one was signed after a discussion
12 with the people who signed, so they
13 knew exactly what they were signing,
14 and some of those discussions were half
15 an hour to 40 minutes long. Thank you
16 very much.

17 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

18 Thank you. Peter Frase.

19 MR. PETER FRASE:

20 Hello. Thank you. My name is
21 Peter Frase. I live on Courtney Avenue
22 in the City of Newburgh.

23 And yeah, I'm here to say that I,
24 having read most of these
25 presentations, I do still have strong

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2 concerns about this project, which had
3 promises, speculative economic benefits
4 and jobs that may or may not
5 materialize, may or may not, as others
6 have said, actually benefit the
7 residents of Newburgh, and all at great
8 cost to taxpayers.

9 I have seen, through aid, that this
10 will be a good deal for the project's
11 investors, and that it will be a better
12 deal for the city than some of the
13 other egregious tax abatements that
14 have been made or attempted to be made
15 in the past, but I am not convinced
16 that it's a good deal for me as a
17 resident or a homeowner or a taxpayer
18 in the City of Newburgh.

19 Using PILOTs as a tool on a
20 development like this means
21 fundamentally that you're choosing to
22 starve the public sector, city
23 government, the schools, of money, in
24 order to get, hopefully, economic
25 development. And I am not convinced

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2 here that the extremely large property
3 tax discounts, you know, for a hotel
4 for tourists, is worth it, will pay
5 off.

6 We heard here that, you know, they
7 can't get financing if it doesn't get
8 this PILOT. Why is that? Well,
9 because property taxes are too high in
10 the City of Newburgh. Why are property
11 taxes so high? Well, I hear all the
12 time from officials and so on that,
13 well, there are all these people in the
14 city, all these buildings, all these
15 operations that don't pay taxes. So
16 then the solution to that is to allow
17 another private business to pay far,
18 far less taxes than they ordinarily
19 would. It is a sort of vicious cycle.
20 So I'm not convinced that this is the
21 best deal we can get.

22 I vote with Senator Skoufis that --
23 we know that developers are coming
24 here. I'm not convinced that this is a
25 good deal for us, the people of the

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2 City of Newburgh. So that's why I
3 cannot support this project as it is
4 currently constituted. Thank you.

5 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

6 Thank you. Daniel Atonna.

7 MR. DANIEL ATONNA:

8 Hi there. I'd like to spin this
9 around. My name is Daniel Atonna. I
10 no longer live in the City of Newburgh,
11 but I'm here as a resident of Orange
12 County, because this project also has a
13 discount from the county. It's also
14 got state grants, as you heard from
15 many of the speakers. This really
16 applies to everyone in the state. This
17 is a project that is in the process of
18 trying to get even more money out of
19 the state.

20 I've done a little work as an
21 activist in Newburgh, growing up in the
22 Mid Hudson Valley, including upcoming
23 coat drives. If you have any coats you
24 want to get rid of, let me know. And
25 when I do these events, I talk to

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2 people, and they tell me they are
3 concerned about jobs. They're
4 concerned about businesses coming to
5 Newburgh. But, you know, they're not
6 selfish. They want businesses that are
7 going to come here and pay their taxes
8 and actually invest in the community.

9 So a little history about Foster
10 Supply Hospitality. This is not a
11 struggling small business. They have
12 six hotels and two restaurants across
13 the state. They know how to squeeze a
14 government to get what they want. They
15 went to the county and said, we need a
16 \$2.3 million discount to buy the
17 buildings. They got it. They went to
18 the state and said they need a \$1.25
19 million grant. They got it. They have
20 another \$2.5 million grant with the
21 state, and can access 2 million more in
22 485-b subsidies. They will probably
23 get those as well.

24 Now they're coming to the city and
25 saying that we really, really, really,

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2 really need a PILOT, a tax break spread
3 over 12 years. This is information I
4 got out of the Times Herald Record and
5 from Senator Skoufis' statements, so
6 take it up with them.

7 Will they get the tax breaks
8 they're asking for? That's the
9 question right here. Foster Supply
10 Hospitality is a business. They're
11 going to try and get whatever they can
12 get to make as much money as possible
13 while paying as little as possible.
14 But that doesn't mean we have to
15 believe them when they say that they
16 need it. When will the state, county,
17 and city say enough is enough?
18 Companies cannot have it all. They
19 can't just get whatever they want.

20 I'm asking the IDA to be tough
21 negotiators. Don't just give them what
22 they're asking for. Don't let them
23 walk all over you, all over the City of
24 Newburgh residents. Thank you.

25 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

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2 Thank you. Councilwoman Elect
3 Martinez.

4 COUNCILWOMAN ELECT GISELLE MARTINEZ:

5 Thank you so much. I purposely
6 asked not to go during the elected
7 officials comments just because, again,
8 I want to -- I'm here tonight as a
9 lifelong City of Newburgh resident.
10 Again, I want to thank the IDA Board
11 for your time. I know that this takes
12 a lot of energy.

13 So I am here to ask the IDA Board
14 to consider a better deal, to consider
15 negotiating for a PILOT with a lower
16 property tax exemption, as well as
17 respectfully request that the numbers
18 for this project be accessible to the
19 public for full transparency.

20 I would like to start off by saying
21 that, again, I am in full support of
22 this project. I want Newburgh to
23 flourish and I am in support of
24 expanding our tax base. However, my
25 concern comes with this 12-year PILOT

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2 agreement that was presented, adding up
3 to 4.5 million in tax breaks. I know
4 that the buildings were previously not
5 on our tax roll, and I can definitely
6 see why this is a better option, to
7 receive something as opposed to
8 nothing. However, to exempt 90 percent
9 of the property taxes for six years is
10 excessive in my opinion. We should not
11 accept that these are our only options.
12 We should not settle for this amount
13 just because we have allowed other
14 PILOTs with higher property tax
15 exemptions in the past.

16 From my understanding, the
17 project's received -- again, I saw the
18 shaking of heads in the crowd when
19 these numbers were stated -- the
20 \$1.25 million economic development
21 grant from the state, the pending grant
22 application that can total up to
23 2.5 million. If this information is
24 incorrect -- again, this was released
25 by the press -- if it's incorrect,

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2 that's why I'm also asking for these
3 numbers to be accessible to the public
4 so we can be fully informed, and so,
5 you know, we can come with correct
6 comments.

7 And again, this comment isn't
8 directed towards the IDA, but more so
9 to the public, where Newburgh should
10 not be viewed or treated as a place
11 where we settle or just strike a deal
12 that's offered. We can ask for equity
13 with dignity. And the deal that may be
14 best for developers does not always
15 equate to being a good deal for
16 Newburgh.

17 I would like to ask that the IDA
18 consider negotiating a PILOT with a
19 lower property tax exemption, as well
20 as to make this information accessible,
21 and for future projects to make the
22 process more participatory.

23 I would also like to ask a few
24 questions regarding the jobs that will
25 be created on this project, and ask if

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2 they will be union jobs? If they will
3 prioritize Newburgh residents? And
4 what will happen if the jobs being
5 promised are not fulfilled?

6 I want to end my comment with,
7 again, just stating that we deserve a
8 better deal. And thank you for your
9 time and consideration.

10 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

11 Thank you. First and foremost,
12 thanks for mentioning it. I did mean
13 to say earlier that all the information
14 we have on the City of Newburgh IDA
15 website. If you Google Newburgh IDA,
16 it's part of the city's website, you'll
17 see all the documents. We have
18 Michael's analysis and reports. We
19 have the application. So hopefully,
20 that's been available for a number of
21 weeks now, so definitely check it out.
22 Feel free to call and ask me any
23 questions.

24 And as mentioned, we have been
25 discussing the local labor policy

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2 earlier this year, and then things --
3 I'm just going to say, Cher was part
4 time for a lot of time, and now she's
5 full time. That's one of those
6 priority items on our list, for local
7 labor.

8 And great question about what
9 happens if Sims doesn't fulfill his
10 promises. One of the things you get
11 with a PILOT agreement that you don't
12 get with a 485-b is the ability to hold
13 the developer accountable for all the
14 promises they make. Legislator Elect
15 Ramos brought it up, that she'd like to
16 see certain things in that agreement.
17 With a 485-b, you just get -- you apply
18 to the state with no conditions. With
19 a PILOT agreement, we can actually kind
20 of solve this skepticism problem by
21 holding Sims accountable for those
22 promises.

23 Fred Watson.

24 MR. FRED WATSON:

25 Good evening. Thank you to the

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2 entire Board. My name is a Fred Watson
3 and I'm an interested party.

4 I've been around Newburgh for the
5 past 30 years. Currently, I'm on the
6 Board of Trustees for SUNY Orange. I
7 just finished a three-year stint as the
8 Board Chair. I was appointed by the
9 former county exec, Eddie Diana, so
10 I've been on the Board for about nine
11 years. So I've seen this project
12 intimately through the years, from the
13 viewpoint of being a board member of
14 SUNY Orange. I've also seen this
15 project because I used to occupy the
16 space at 47 Grand Street for
17 approximately 15 years that Senator
18 Skoufis currently occupies. I've been
19 in the buildings numerous times over
20 the years. I've seen how the buildings
21 have deteriorated over the years, so I
22 respect it from that viewpoint as well.

23 My professional background is in
24 the area of food service management.
25 For the last 30 years, I've run

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2 contracts down at the US Military
3 Academy. I currently operate the crown
4 jewel of small business contracts
5 throughout this country, which is
6 serving the cadets down at West Point.
7 I do that with approximately 60
8 individuals that live in the City of
9 Newburgh proper. I've employed them,
10 I've watched them grow, develop, obtain
11 medical benefits, apply for mortgages,
12 get new cars. So the reason why I'm
13 here today is to talk about the jobs.
14 What we cannot miss, if we miss this
15 opportunity -- and I'm categorizing it
16 as an opportunity -- is the jobs. The
17 jobs are what's really important.

18 I happen to have been selected,
19 along with one of my contemporaries in
20 the room, Kevin White, by the county to
21 review proposals and serve on the
22 source selection evaluation board on
23 this particular project. I also sat on
24 the audit and finance committee at SUNY
25 Orange when we were discussing

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2 developing the very same buildings.
3 What we determined was, and Mayor
4 Harvey talked about this, that these
5 buildings are very, very expensive to
6 renovate. They're historic, they're
7 damaged, and they need a tremendous
8 amount of work.

9 I understand what we're talking
10 about, the size of the PILOT, who gets
11 what money, but what I want to talk
12 about is the opportunity. We have an
13 opportunity to change the face of
14 Newburgh from the waterfront and bring
15 it up to the city. We're talking about
16 money here. This project is not going
17 to happen unless we, the city, the
18 residents, make an investment. I'm
19 also a business owner. My wife and I
20 own a business at 88 Lake Street. We
21 own a daycare business, so we touch a
22 lot of communities. I was also
23 selected to be a part of the charrette
24 that we had in Newburgh about ten years
25 ago. We hired a Canadian firm to come

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2 in here and tell us how to develop
3 Newburgh, tell us what we're going to
4 do. We talked about it. We must have
5 had meetings for six months. Nothing
6 ever happened.

7 What I want to ask this Board is to
8 make a decision, and make a decision
9 that makes something happen in
10 Newburgh. Don't allow these buildings
11 to continue to deteriorate, because the
12 potential, if we miss this deal, for
13 you to find someone else another ten
14 years down the line is going to be
15 extremely difficult. We've got some of
16 those buildings around town. We've got
17 a church that won't get renovated
18 because it's just in a state of
19 disrepair.

20 So other things that I want to talk
21 to you about is, there's a tremendous
22 potential for collaboration on this
23 building. I also sit as the current
24 Chair of the Boys & Girls Club of
25 Newburgh, and many of you know, we're

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2 going to go in catty-corner right
3 across on Broadway. I see this as an
4 opportunity. We are going to have
5 event space. And if we get this hotel,
6 we can use some of our space to work in
7 conjunction.

8 Another point I want to bring up
9 is, I went to a meeting on the other
10 side of the county at the new Barn in
11 Middletown. No longer do we have
12 Anthony's Pier 9, so there's no large
13 meeting and event space on this side of
14 the county. This will be a tremendous
15 opportunity. Of course, we have space
16 at SUNY Orange. There will be event
17 space here, Boys & Girls Club of
18 Newburgh, and we will have galleries
19 and meeting spaces as well. So this is
20 an opportunity for us to attract that
21 hospitality business, that event
22 business, to the City of Newburgh.
23 Once again, don't miss this
24 opportunity. Let's figure out the
25 money, but let's get this done.

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2 The other thing is, this project is
3 transformative. I think the number is
4 around 60 employees on a full-time
5 basis. It's transformative for
6 employees. So think of that when
7 everybody talks about the money that
8 the city won't be getting. They will
9 be getting money, with jobs, with money
10 spent in the city. So try to keep that
11 in your consideration as well.

12 Take a long-term view of this
13 project. Don't just look at the PILOT.
14 Who would have thought that the
15 waterfront was going to develop and be
16 here as long as it has? And it
17 continues to have huge potential. We
18 do this right, and it lasts the way
19 that the waterfront has lasted. Think
20 about the change that makes for this
21 community.

22 So in closing, I would once again
23 say to this Board, I don't want to talk
24 about the financial aspects of this.
25 It's an expensive, expensive project

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2 just because of the nature of the
3 buildings. Give some consideration to
4 how we do this, how it's going to be,
5 but don't miss this opportunity. Thank
6 you.

7 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

8 Thank you. Martha White.

9 MS. MARTHA WHITE:

10 Hi, there. I'm Martha. My husband
11 and I have owned a unit in the Foundry
12 for, oh, my gosh, almost 17 years now,
13 and I just wanted to make a brief
14 comment.

15 I want to mostly talk about jobs,
16 but I also wanted to, in response to
17 the Senator's comments about maybe
18 nothing's really happened since the
19 last public hearing, I just wanted to
20 throw out there that lumber prices have
21 gone up 95 percent since November 15th,
22 and according to the producer price
23 index published last week, steel mill
24 products have gone up 142 percent over
25 the year. So sometimes things do

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2 change fast.

3 I mostly want to talk about jobs.
4 Very few people bring up jobs, and I
5 think that's an important component of
6 what we've got here. So I heard
7 some -- not during this meeting, but at
8 some other ones -- some people sort of
9 speak kind of disparagingly. Oh, a
10 hotel. Well, that's not going to be a
11 good job. It's not going to be a lot
12 of jobs. So I wanted to do a little
13 bit of math and throw a few numbers
14 out. I was taking a look at how much
15 hospitality workers make, and I don't
16 want to be cherry-picking, so I just
17 started with maids, figuring that's
18 the -- you know, maid/housekeepers as a
19 category, because that's probably going
20 to be among the lowest paid. I'm not
21 trying to be disingenuous and say, oh,
22 this is a \$70000-a-year job. That's
23 maybe one general manager. So as of
24 May 2020, the mean average hourly rate
25 for a maid in New York was about

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2 18-and-a-half bucks. Of course, we
3 know that the economy and the labor
4 market have changed a lot since
5 May 2020. Within the past year alone,
6 the leisure hospitality sector has seen
7 wages go up a little over 12 percent on
8 a year-over-year basis. So that's an
9 average hourly wage of about not quite
10 \$21 -- \$20.76.

11 I'll also throw in there that, some
12 of you probably know, hotels in the
13 State of New York are pretty heavily
14 unionized, which is good. We like our
15 union jobs. And the impact of unions
16 on what these hotel workers make can be
17 pretty significant. So I dug out the
18 data and did a little bit more number
19 crunching, and it winds up being -- you
20 wind up with an average of about \$24
21 and a half an hour. That's not
22 terrible. And just for -- I can send
23 you guys all the boring numbers that
24 are behind this if you want. This all
25 came from the Bureau of Labor

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2 statistics. I know there are, like,
3 private companies out there, like
4 Glassdoor and Salary.com, but I tend to
5 trust the BLS data a little bit more
6 because it provides a more complete
7 picture. So just in terms of the jobs
8 this would be bringing, I have to say
9 I'm pretty happy with what they seem to
10 offer. Thank you.

11 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

12 Thank you. Michaelangelo Pomarico.

13 MR. MICHAELANGELO POMARICO:

14 Hi there. My name is Michaelangelo
15 Pomarico. I am not a resident of the
16 City of Newburgh. I do live in Orange
17 County. I am the County Co-Chair for
18 Mid-Hudson Valley DSA, a volunteer
19 organization across Orange, Ulster, and
20 Dutchess Counties.

21 I am here tonight speaking in
22 opposition to the proposed PILOT for
23 the Sims Foster Hospitality project.
24 New York is the tenth largest economy
25 in the world, with a GDP greater than

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2 the entirety of Canada. I bring this
3 up because I think it's important for
4 residents of the city who are concerned
5 about their local tax rates to
6 understand why such a burden exists on
7 the middle and working class. And I
8 encourage people to contextualize these
9 systemic issues engaging on matters
10 tied to lower tax revenue, and how we
11 finance central services, as well as
12 taking agency as a New Yorker in
13 advocating for better financial policy
14 at a state level.

15 As we see increased levels of
16 gentrification threaten the ability of
17 so many to continue to go forward to
18 live in the city, it is a stark
19 reminder that the system we live with
20 in New York and across the country are
21 not built for working people. How can
22 we justify tax breaks for developers
23 and the wealthy while the working class
24 continues to shoulder the burden of
25 taxation and pay for essential

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2 services?

3 And very importantly, I want to
4 raise awareness on issues pertaining to
5 labor, which has come up tonight quite
6 a bit. You know, how can we justify
7 these giveaways with no guarantees of
8 project labor agreements, prevailing
9 wage, neutrality to unionization, card
10 checks, labor peace agreements, and
11 local hiring for this project before
12 and after its completion? When I hear
13 60 permanent jobs, I want to know if
14 that's a union job. I want to know
15 what that job pays. I really
16 appreciate the notes that were just
17 provided on the average pay, and I want
18 to emphasize that, of course, when
19 workers unionize, they stand to make a
20 lot more than if they are not. So the
21 question for tonight is, you know, I
22 want to know if these labor provisions
23 are not included in the proposed PILOT,
24 what is holding the developer
25 accountable?

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2 And so in closing, we cannot
3 continue to entertain such inequalities
4 in our decisions as policymakers and
5 officials when the outcomes so heavily
6 weigh on the lives of so many. And we
7 must break from the tradition of
8 economic planning that benefit the
9 wealthy few, and begin to do the work,
10 holding developers accountable and
11 making sure they pay their fair share.
12 Please say no to this PILOT and side
13 with the people of the City of
14 Newburgh, not with developer interest.
15 Thank you.

16 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

17 Thank you. Rudy Rubio.

18 MR. RUDY RUBIO:

19 Hi. Rudy Rubio from -- I live
20 here. Sorry, I'm a little bit out of
21 it since I didn't eat dinner, but 90
22 Wisner Avenue. Been there five years.

23 The thing that stoked me about this
24 place is it's got old history, right?
25 We always talk about that, but we also

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2 don't talk about the bad part so much.
3 We don't like to talk about that. But
4 there's a history of bad developers in
5 the city, of bad property owners in the
6 city. We're talking about it now with
7 another building in the city of an
8 absentee property owner. And
9 obviously, that's not exactly the
10 similar case here, but that's why we
11 are so skeptical about all of these
12 promises that everybody gives to the
13 city and why they want to not pay the
14 taxes for it. All of these promises,
15 people can -- some of the rules for the
16 rich ends up not being the same. So
17 they don't -- I suppose maybe there's
18 certain sets of rules and stuff.
19 They're going to figure their way out
20 of it. I'm not saying that you are
21 necessarily doing that. I'm saying
22 that we have a skepticism or a reason
23 here. We have been hurt before.

24 And I speak so passionately about
25 it because I love this city. My

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2 family's been here for generations and
3 I hope that I can stay here, but Jesus,
4 with rent coming up and everything, I
5 don't know. We'll see.

6 And so yes, the nature of
7 development in this city has been such
8 that it is extracted from the city. We
9 saw it with the neighborhood that got
10 demolished. The slum lord suggested,
11 like, hey, I'm going to take your rent,
12 and we're not going to fix these
13 buildings, and now they're gone. So we
14 saw that with so many buildings, where
15 they're not being kept up on. And
16 they're still being rented out in the
17 various conditions until they can just
18 be -- the money from the city gets
19 extracted.

20 And so I don't know the history of
21 Foster Supply Hospitality. I hope
22 whatever happens, we get a good deal
23 out of it. However, I just want to
24 note the feelings and sentiments that I
25 know a lot of us feel in the City of

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2 Newburgh who aren't business owners,
3 who aren't homeowners. We just feel
4 we've been getting a raw deal, and a
5 lot of us don't know if we're going to
6 be able to afford to stay here because
7 we keep getting a raw deal and such bad
8 deals, and we're treated so -- so much
9 like we should just take what we can
10 get here.

11 So I'm not coming at you with
12 numbers or anything like that. I'm
13 coming at you with the history that we
14 all unfortunately know, and the
15 feelings that a lot of us have here.

16 So thank you.

17 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

18 Thank you. Steve Strong.

19 MR. STEVE STRONG:

20 Good evening. Thanks for giving us
21 an opportunity to speak. I went to
22 Newburgh elementary schools and
23 currently live in Goshen. I'm a member
24 of the Mid-Hudson Valley DSA. And as
25 my comrade said, I think we all in the

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2 county and the state have a right to
3 speak on this because of the subsidies
4 and tax breaks.

5 We're in a period where, 40 years
6 of an overall falling rate of corporate
7 profits, de-industrialization, and
8 neoliberalism have accelerated the
9 assault on the living standards of the
10 working class as cities and countries
11 race to the bottom, bailing out and
12 subsidizing big business. The threat
13 of the authoritarian far right is still
14 large globally and nationally. In
15 cities like Newburgh, we must become
16 rebel cities, leading the construction
17 of a new golden age of social
18 democracy.

19 I worked for five years in a hotel
20 without a union, and still have health
21 issues from unsafe workloads. Cooks in
22 my hotel experienced racism from chefs,
23 low wages, wage an hour violations, and
24 unfair labor practices. And when we
25 tried to unionize, the company sold the

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2 hotel rather than give us a fair path
3 to unionization. So yes, housekeepers
4 can be paid well. They're the backbone
5 of the hotel. But dishwashers are
6 often paid less, just for the
7 statistics we heard before. And a lot
8 of those statistics include New York
9 City, which has over 80-percent union
10 density in the hotel industry, and we
11 don't have that in the rest of the
12 state.

13 It is very important that the
14 workers of the city benefit from these
15 hotel jobs, and that is only going to
16 be possible if they have a fair path to
17 unionization. As long we have a
18 senate, as long as we have a judicial
19 system that was created by a
20 slave-ocracy, as long as we have the
21 legislature of the plantations, it is
22 incumbent upon cities like Newburgh to
23 make sure that any development here
24 comes with card check neutrality
25 agreements. There will be no labor

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2 reform until there's revolution in
3 abolishing the senate, abolishing the
4 judicial system. You must take a stand
5 in cities like this.

6 I currently benefit from wages and
7 benefits of having a union job in the
8 public sector, and those of us in the
9 public sector want the same for our
10 brothers and sisters in the private
11 sector, where density is very low.

12 So my question is, has Foster
13 Supply Hospitality signed a card check
14 neutrality agreement to ensure hotel
15 workers have a fair process to form a
16 union without intimidation and
17 harassment? It doesn't matter the
18 size. We saw in Buffalo Starbucks
19 workers unionizing. Even if Local 6 in
20 New York City doesn't want to come up
21 here, there's plenty of people in the
22 DSA and other organizations that will
23 organize.

24 So the problem is not just having
25 union jobs. There's 8- to 10-percent

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2 unemployment in Newburgh, and
3 20 percent of local workers do not have
4 access to vehicle transportation. What
5 have we done to guarantee the hiring
6 from Newburgh neighborhoods with the
7 highest unemployment? The problem's
8 not just with cars coming in from other
9 states. We want black and Latino
10 workers hired to the best paying
11 construction jobs. We want project
12 favored agreements, prevailing wages,
13 and ensure all construction is done
14 with local unionized labor, with just
15 wages, benefits, and safety
16 protections. We want the community
17 benefits written into a measurable
18 enforceable legal agreement,
19 guaranteeing the working class of our
20 community these benefits. The way
21 you're talking about community benefits
22 is highjacking from our movement that
23 we started in LA, the hotel workers
24 union. That's how we started.

25 Capitalist developers lie,

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2 capitalist politicians lie, and the
3 parties lie. But our class, the
4 working class, will keep fighting back.

5 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

6 Steve Joseph Raymond.

7 MR. JOSEPH RAYMOND:

8 Good evening, everyone. I'm Joe
9 Raymond. I'm not currently a resident
10 of Newburgh, although I grew up here.
11 Class of '90 NFA. And I have deep ties
12 to the area.

13 As I look at all these numbers
14 here, the \$2.3 million discount
15 purchasing the property, \$1.25 million
16 grant from the state, asking for a
17 12-year PILOT that has \$4.5 million in
18 tax breaks, I'm going to ask some
19 questions. The Mayor mentioned that
20 the rising tide floats all boats. I'm
21 not too sure I agree with that
22 assessment. The reason I say that is
23 because, that's great if you're Jeff
24 Bezos cruising up the river here in his
25 \$45 million yacht. That's great if you

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2 own a boat and do this kind of thing.
3 That doesn't help the guy over there on
4 the raft, the guy who's struggling,
5 hanging off of an inner tube tire going
6 down the Hudson because of the current.
7 He just can't fight against that
8 current.

9 So the labor questions that my
10 comrades from the DSA have already
11 spoken of are very valid. We need to
12 hire -- make sure that we're holding
13 these fine gentlemen here accountable
14 for their promises. Make sure that
15 we're keeping labor in the city, if at
16 all possible, and unionizing that
17 labor. And finally, I just want to
18 have some assurances that that tide is
19 going to carry the working man. That's
20 what the city is here for. The city is
21 here to protect its citizens, its
22 people, the working class people, the
23 people who are starting to hope. Give
24 us some hope. Thank you.

25 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

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2 Thank you. Kevin D. White.

3 MR. KEVIN D. WHITE:

4 Good evening, everyone. My name is
5 Kevin White. I'm the Executive
6 Director of the Boys & Girls Club of
7 Newburgh. Our Board Chair, Fred
8 Watson, was up here. He mentioned that
9 the building on the corner, we
10 purchased, the old Key Bank building.
11 Hopefully, a year from now, we'll be
12 cutting the ribbon on that building.
13 The first floor is going to have a
14 literacy center for children in grades
15 K through 3 to make sure they're
16 reading at grade level by the time they
17 reach 4th grade. The second, third,
18 and fourth floors are going to be the
19 new home for the Newburgh Performing
20 Arts Academy, where we teach dance,
21 music, theater, and visual arts.

22 We're currently occupying the old
23 American Legion building. Been there
24 for almost 20 years. We got there, no
25 one wanted to be on the block.

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2 Everything was empty. I applaud
3 Senator Skoufis for moving into the
4 neighborhood. Thank you. It brought
5 the value up a little bit, and also
6 shows courage on your part to do this.

7 When we started registering
8 children for our programs, I would get
9 phones calls from parents that said,
10 where exactly are you? We're scared to
11 come. No one wanted to come to that
12 block because they were afraid. People
13 still come and they're afraid.

14 You got a high level overview of
15 the benefits of this project, the tax
16 benefits or the lack thereof, so I
17 didn't come to comment on that. I want
18 to give you a ground level view of what
19 I've seen for the last 20 years that
20 I've been here. I've seen project
21 after project come before the city that
22 they've turned down for God knows what
23 reasons. Remember the mall that was
24 coming to Newburgh? They said if you
25 don't give us a check, we're going to

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2 leave. We didn't believe them. They
3 left. I gotta go to Poughkeepsie to go
4 shopping, Middletown to go shopping.
5 We could have had a mall right here. I
6 think we're getting a casino now,
7 right? Okay, not knocking that.

8 But here's what I get now, and what
9 I've gotten for the last 20 years. We
10 encourage people to come, and they feel
11 better about coming here. The college
12 moved to that block, brought up the
13 quality of the neighborhood. This
14 project's going to do the same.

15 We still have difficulties in this
16 neighborhood. I just took some notes
17 on what I've experienced for the last
18 20 years here. I have to come to work
19 early to clean the neighborhood.
20 There's garbage in front of my
21 building, homeless people sleeping on
22 the steps and behind all of those
23 buildings. I got there one time at
24 three o'clock, people were having sex
25 under the awning of the YMCA building.

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2 I had to chase them away. You would
3 think they would have stopped when I
4 got there, but they didn't. Crack
5 heads steal the pipes that heat our
6 buildings, and so once or twice a year,
7 my kids are cold in the dance classes.
8 This is what happens when you have
9 vacant buildings. They get torn up
10 continually over time. Pedophiles
11 living in neighboring buildings, and I
12 have little kids coming in with tutus
13 on. I have to worry about who is on
14 that street.

15 And now we have this beautiful
16 project that want to come here that's
17 going to better this community, make it
18 a safer place. Because when you have
19 people walking down the streets, people
20 feel safe. This is going to make this
21 block better, it's going to make this
22 community better, it's going to make
23 this city better.

24 Those buildings haven't generated
25 revenue for what, 30 years? And you

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2 complain that it's going to be another
3 ten? Let's think about what it's going
4 to bring. It's going to bring
5 community safety; community
6 beautification; a job training program
7 with SUNY Orange; jobs. The kids from
8 the City of Newburgh, you know where
9 they come for jobs now? They come to
10 me. I got part-time jobs for them.
11 These are kids who are graduating from
12 high school -- or not -- and there's
13 nothing here for them. And it breaks
14 my heart when they come back and ask me
15 for a job, because I can't hire all of
16 them. And here comes somebody who
17 wants to offer an opportunity for our
18 kids. What is there to think about?
19 Why does this take so long?

20 We've still got an empty lot here
21 on Liberty Street, here on Broadway,
22 right? What happened to that? What
23 were the promises that were made for
24 that? And I watch people that haven't
25 been here that long to see the damage

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2 that broken promises do to the people
3 that live here, or what these debates
4 do to the people that live here. I've
5 been here 50 years, off and on, and all
6 I've seen is broken promises. The
7 paranoia you hear in here is
8 well-earned. I've never seen a city of
9 people jerked around as much as the
10 people I've seen in the City of
11 Newburgh. Broken promises, bad deals.
12 Anyway, I could go on and on. I think
13 I'm getting emotional.

14 But I've been working with kids
15 here for 20 years, and I wish I could
16 say it's getting better, but in a lot
17 of cases, it's getting worse. You guys
18 know the shootings we had a couple
19 weeks ago? I started a project at our
20 club about ten years ago for the same
21 reason. My kids were leaving the Boys
22 & Girls Club, walking down the street,
23 and they were getting shot. No one
24 lived on those blocks around the Boys &
25 Girls Club, and it makes it dangerous

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2 when no one is inhabiting these
3 communities.

4 And so I say again, we have a
5 project that's coming here that's going
6 to take over buildings that have long
7 been vacant, have attracted the wrong
8 people, and we're debating whether or
9 not we should do this. I don't care if
10 they never pay a dime in taxes. This
11 is the start of something bigger.

12 Every time someone comes and they build
13 something like this, it makes it more
14 attractive for the next group to come
15 in. Everything we've gotten here was
16 because somebody moved in and took a
17 chance. They take a risk and give it a
18 shot.

19 But I'll tell you something I know.
20 We started this project three years
21 ago. When COVID hit, we had to stop.
22 The price of materials for that project
23 raised the cost of our project by
24 \$1.2 million in one year. If you don't
25 do this now, it doesn't get cheaper.

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2 It gets more expensive for them and
3 whoever else comes after them. And you
4 might be getting a deal by doing this
5 project now, because it ain't getting
6 no cheaper. We almost had to walk away
7 from this. I was running out of
8 options, and I can imagine how
9 difficult it is for you. I'm a
10 non-profit. I got better shots than
11 you do at getting money, even though
12 it's hard for us, too.

13 So I'll end by saying, let's not
14 screw this up like we have almost every
15 other project that's come before the
16 City of Newburgh, by worrying so much
17 about the pennies we're stepping over
18 the dollars. This is going to help us.
19 This is going to make a difference.

20 Those kids that get those
21 hospitality jobs, they live here. I
22 teach at the college also. I teach the
23 young black and Latino residents, who
24 tell me they don't know what to do when
25 they graduate. They're going to have

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2 to leave Newburgh. There's no
3 opportunity for them. Somebody's
4 coming, offering jobs, and yet I can't
5 believe this, that we're debating
6 whether or not we're going to let them
7 come or give him the break they need to
8 make it successful. I know it makes a
9 difference because we had to get money
10 to make this project happen, and like I
11 said, we let a year go by, another
12 \$1.2 million. And I'm scared. And my
13 construction crew is here. What's it
14 going to be if it takes us another
15 month? You know what they tell me?
16 Kevin, I can't make any promises.

17 So what happens if we let this deal
18 go away? For the next person, it's
19 going to cost more. You know what
20 they're going to do? They're going to
21 ask you for more. This is easy, man.
22 This is a slam dunk. There's no way
23 you should screw this up. I get the
24 whole tax thing. I understand we
25 should get the best deal we can get.

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2 But don't blow this by asking for too
3 much, because they might walk away.
4 And I'm not saying to do this out of
5 fear, either. If the deal's bad, let
6 them walk away. So what? But what I
7 saw looked reasonable, based on the
8 numbers that I've seen. And yeah, the
9 bank's going to want to see guarantees.
10 Trust me. I know. The reason it took
11 so long was because the bank wouldn't
12 guarantee our money until we could
13 guarantee that we could cover the cost
14 of the project. I imagine that's the
15 same thing happening to you, right?
16 You've got to show them you can cover
17 the cost of the project or they'll walk
18 away.

19 Anyway, enough said. I apologize
20 for my passion. This means a lot to a
21 lot of people that live here. A lot of
22 people come and go. I've seen people
23 come in on their white horses. I was
24 here when they did charrette ten years
25 ago. Remember that one? Where are

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2 they? The empty lot on Broadway, where
3 are they? The Newburgh mall, where are
4 they? IBM? We could go on and on
5 about the people that came here, made
6 promises, and because we didn't do what
7 we should have done, then we lost it.
8 We've got this great opportunity in
9 front of us. They're going to work
10 with our kids, create jobs, and like I
11 said, I can't believe we're debating
12 this. It makes no sense at all. And I
13 hope it makes no sense to you, either.
14 Let's do the right thing and let's do
15 something to help our city, because the
16 result is more of the same. More of
17 nothing.

18 Right over there, I call it ground
19 zero, Broadway and South Street. If
20 you haven't been to my office, I have
21 bullet holes in my windows where I
22 work. And I don't fix the windows
23 because I want to be reminded of why
24 I'm here.

25 A project like this and the ones

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2 that come after, it will make this
3 community better, will change it for
4 the better, and will bring jobs and
5 people. This city is full of poor
6 people. And you know what stops them
7 from being poor? Jobs. You know what
8 they're offering us? Jobs.

9 I give out sandwiches and I hate
10 it. You know why? Because you're
11 giving a man a fish, and what happens,
12 he eats for the day. When you teach a
13 man to fish, he eats forever, right?
14 So we should stop giving people enough
15 to get by today and give them what they
16 need to build a great future, and
17 projects like this can do this. Thank
18 you.

19 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

20 Thank you. Mark Sanchez-Potter.

21 MR. MARK SANCHEZ-POTTER:

22 Hello. My name is Mark
23 Sanchez-Potter. I live at 84 Carpenter
24 Avenue.

25 I guess this is just a rhetorical

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2 question presented to Foster, but are
3 any of your other hotels unionized? I
4 ask that because I also think that if
5 this project is going to be approved --
6 and I hope that more negotiations will
7 be going on in regards to this PILOT --
8 but if it's approved, what will the
9 labor agreements be, both in
10 construction and local labor, building
11 trades, along with those that are
12 employed in the complex? Will those be
13 unionized jobs? And what is the
14 guarantee to this Board and to the city
15 that a union, you know, will be
16 allowed, I guess you could say, or will
17 happen? Those are my only questions,
18 the issue of organized labor in
19 relation to this. If the Board could
20 touch on that, I believe you did
21 earlier, I'm just putting the questions
22 out there. Thank you.

23 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

24 Thank you. Is there anybody here
25 that did not speak at the prior public

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2 hearing that would like to make a
3 comment? So we'll move on to -- so
4 Johanna Yaun.

5 MS. JOHANNA YAUN:

6 Hello, everyone. I'll be brief
7 because I did speak before. I wish
8 Rudy was still here. I think he left.
9 I could clarify some of the history for
10 him.

11 In 1958, the federal government
12 sent in federal appraisers to devalue
13 the land in what became the urban
14 renewal plot. So they sent in
15 appraisers who went to people's homes,
16 and they said, hey, we know you bought
17 your house for \$15,000, but it's only
18 worth 13,000, and we'll -- the federal
19 government -- we'll pay you \$13,000 for
20 it. Well, the program took a little
21 while to get off the ground, and these
22 people got really nervous and they
23 started to sell at very low prices just
24 to get out of the neighborhood quickly
25 because they could see the prices were

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2 plummeting. And it turned the
3 neighborhood into a ghetto overnight,
4 so about five, six, seven years later,
5 the place was visibly a ghetto. And
6 the people who couldn't get out, who
7 were stuck, really suffered the most.
8 A lot of them then had their homes
9 seized from them when the program
10 really got off the ground in 1970, '71,
11 '72. So anyway, just to clarify the
12 history, he had it all wrong. So I
13 think it needed to be stated.

14 And then I just wanted to tell you
15 a little about the history of the
16 buildings themselves. The Masonic
17 Temple is a really special building.
18 We in Newburgh have one of the oldest
19 Masonic Lodges. It goes back to the
20 Revolutionary War. Baron Von Steuben
21 was an original member our Masonic
22 Lodge. He serves a really important
23 place in history. He had several
24 buildings in Newburgh. One of them was
25 the Reeve House, which is on South

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2 Montgomery Street, and it still has
3 Masonic symbols on the building itself.
4 This building here, it's got a lot of
5 history itself.

6 The building next to it, the YMCA,
7 also in Newburgh, we were one of the
8 first cities to have a YMCA of our own.
9 It was paid for all by citizens of
10 Newburgh who wanted to do good things
11 for the young men and women who were
12 here. We've always been a working
13 class city in Newburgh, going way back
14 to the Revolution. And so things like
15 the YMCA and other charity groups were
16 really important to the community and
17 that building. It was also the second
18 major building that the YMCA occupied.
19 The first one was actually built by
20 Stanford White, the famous architect.
21 Unfortunately, that was torn down
22 during urban renewal and this is what
23 we have left.

24 And then the third building, the
25 American Legion, is also really

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2 special. It's named for Judson
3 Galloway. He was a World War I soldier
4 who lived in Newburgh as a young kid.
5 And while he was there in the trenches,
6 a French unit needed extra men. The
7 French were really decimated by the
8 time the Americans entered the war.
9 They were really hurting for soldiers.
10 So Judson Galloway heard that there was
11 a French unit that needed extra help in
12 the field, and he volunteered for
13 service, left the safety of the
14 trenches in order to go to battle. And
15 he was gassed in battle. And he was
16 the first person from Newburgh to die
17 in World War I. And that's why that
18 American Legion was built in his honor
19 with his name on it. It's something
20 really special.

21 If you go down to Washington's
22 Headquarters, look down by the entrance
23 of Hasbrouck House, his family went to
24 France, they took a piece of sod from
25 France from the battlefield, and they

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2 brought it here to Newburgh. They took
3 a piece of dirt from Newburgh and they
4 brought it to France to put a memorial
5 up there as well. So it's a very
6 interesting history.

7 These three buildings desperately
8 need help. They need attention. They
9 need millions of dollars of work. This
10 opportunity is a wonderful opportunity.
11 He wants to do the right thing by these
12 buildings. He wants to restore them to
13 their former glory, invest in them,
14 keep them beautiful and open.

15 He's already talked with me about
16 possibly working with me on some
17 history displays so we can have the
18 local people be able to come into the
19 lobby and read some of the history of
20 these buildings. And in 2019, I opened
21 a time capsule at the Masonic Lodge,
22 and we found a copper box full of
23 treasures, so we're really excited to
24 be able to put them in the lobby for
25 people to be able to come in and see

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2 and learn about the history of the
3 Masonic Lodge.

4 I'm very happy that Sims Foster has
5 offered us this great project and I
6 hope that it goes through. Thank you.

7 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

8 Thank you. Bill Fioravanti.

9 MR. BILL FIORAVANTI:

10 Thank you. I did speak at the last
11 hearing, so I just -- I think everyone
12 knows I support this project. I think
13 it's a great thing for Newburgh. I
14 want to see it happen for Newburgh.

15 I want to apologize to the young
16 man who was speaking before. Out of
17 frustration, I had a kind of personal
18 outburst. It was really not towards
19 that young man. It was really towards
20 the source of the disinformation,
21 unfortunately, that's been coming out.
22 So I just want to clarify a few of
23 those things up.

24 First of all, Foster Supply did not
25 get a discount from the county. They

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2 bid. There was an open bidding
3 process, a request for proposals. And
4 we received two proposals, one was for
5 affordable housing, and the other was
6 the Foster Supply project. And Foster
7 Supply had the bigger bid. They also
8 had a chance to negotiate with the
9 county, and this was the price they
10 came up with. They didn't get a
11 discount. This yielded the best offer.
12 I want to be clear about that.

13 Also, Foster Supply did earn a
14 \$1.2 million CFA grant. I don't know
15 of another \$2.5 million grant they're
16 working on. Is there one, can I ask
17 you? Okay, that's a fallacy.

18 Also, there's talk about they can
19 get this PILOT and then they can get an
20 845-b, more money. That's a complete
21 fallacy also. You cannot get both.
22 They would get this in lieu of the
23 845-b. So that's the map, the funding
24 map, unfortunately.

25 Also, the idea of starving the

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2 school district -- these buildings are
3 a combined 311 years old. They were on
4 the tax rolls, I think it was, 26 years
5 total. They have never generated
6 taxes. They're called the Masonic
7 Temple, YMCA, and American Legion, so
8 that kind of tells you something. So
9 this is not money that's being taken
10 away. This is actually a little less
11 of new revenue that you'll be getting.

12 And of course, they're going to be
13 providing bed tax, sales tax. And they
14 are going to be -- in two short years,
15 they'll be one of the highest paying
16 commercial properties in the city. So
17 the idea that they're taking something
18 away, that's not what's happening at
19 all. It's 80 percent of something
20 versus 100 percent of nothing.

21 Again, as the Mayor pointed out,
22 Innovation Grand Street was a wonderful
23 project that I supported and worked on.
24 That would have been zilch for return
25 in terms of property taxes.

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2 Let's see, local labor. I don't
3 know why the Senator -- I wish he had
4 stayed because I wanted to introduce
5 him to -- can you just raise your
6 hands, the Amend brothers? These are
7 the gentlemen from StandBack General
8 Contractors. They are related, by the
9 way. Can you tell? They put the new
10 roof on Safe Harbors. They are going
11 to be building the new Boys & Girls
12 Club, and yes, they are going to be
13 building Foster Supply Hospitality's
14 hotel. They're local, from
15 Washingtonville. They're incredibly
16 ingrained in Orange County. Why there
17 was a suggestion that they're going to
18 get labor from outside the area,
19 especially outside the state, is
20 ridiculous. It's just creating
21 falsehoods in order to make it sound
22 better. So that's why I -- that's it.

23 And the last thing -- this is most
24 important to me. Absolutely, I know
25 Newburgh's history. This is one of the

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2 reasons I'm proud to do this work in
3 that building, because there were a lot
4 of bad deals for this city.

5 Absolutely, that's the case. That's
6 not what's happening here. That's not
7 what these folks are. Ask anyone in
8 Sullivan County, in the community,
9 leaders, economic development,
10 municipal leaders, they love the
11 Fosters. They're honored all the time.
12 They're crazy about them. And by the
13 way, it's not just, yes, they've
14 created jobs. They helped save the
15 Catskills, bring a new reason for
16 people young and old to come to the
17 Catskills. Yes, that's great, but
18 they're also good people. The last
19 thing I want to let you know is, again,
20 the idea that they're bad people.

21 They also have a non-profit called
22 A Single Bite. It's something they
23 developed years ago to help educate
24 young people in Sullivan County, the
25 second least healthy county in New York

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2 State. They educate people about
3 putting good things in their body,
4 natural foods as opposed to processed
5 foods. And that's a great thing. Mr.
6 Foster himself went into plenty of
7 schools in Sullivan County, educating
8 young people.

9 Well, then COVID happened and they
10 had to pivot that work, and they found
11 that young people weren't getting the
12 meals they'd get at school and things
13 like that, so they completely pivoted.
14 Their hotels were slower, no question.
15 They weren't serving as many meals, so
16 they had their staff start preparing
17 meals that they delivered all around
18 the county to young people. Just a
19 week ago -- I follow their social
20 media -- I saw they passed 90,000 meals
21 served in Sullivan County because of
22 kids not eating because of the
23 pandemic. So that's what we're talking
24 about. I just wanted to clear that up.
25 Thanks so much.

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2 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

3 Our list is through. Is there
4 anybody what has not yet had an
5 opportunity to speak who would like to
6 speak? Okay.

7 MS. ELIZABETH VEGA-LEBRON:

8 My name is Elizabeth Vega-Lebron.
9 I live here in Newburgh, 284 Liberty
10 Street. And I wouldn't be here if it
11 wasn't for a PILOT. Not because I
12 started a business, but because I
13 bought a home that needed extraordinary
14 work. We actually did it ourselves.
15 And we would not have been able to make
16 it work had we not had some form of
17 exemption. We estimated a certain
18 amount, which is what happens with most
19 of these buildings, but it takes you
20 twice as long and twice as much money.
21 So you're taking a huge risk.

22 When we get an opportunity for
23 either someone like me or a business
24 that's willing to take that risk, we
25 really have to consider that. I

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2 support this project because I think
3 that our greatest opportunity for
4 growth is tourism. I came for the
5 history. I came for the community.
6 And there's one thing we need to build
7 and expand -- and I've seen your hotels
8 and I've spoken to people in Sullivan
9 County, because we used to have a home
10 there, and I'm very excited about it.
11 Run, don't walk, and get this done,
12 please. Thank you.

13 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

14 Thank you.

15 MR. TOM AMEND:

16 Hi, everyone. My name is Tom
17 Amend. My address is 110 Moffat Road.
18 I live in Washingtonville, own a
19 business in New Windsor. My brother,
20 right over there, we were lucky enough
21 to go to Bishop Dunn Memorial School,
22 so we're very aware of Newburgh. We
23 played baseball at Delano Hitch. We
24 played basketball in a lot of the local
25 areas. So we are well-versed in the

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2 local area. So we went away and came
3 back. That's one of the things that's
4 important for people to remember. We
5 want people to come back, right?

6 So like an army, we want an arsenal
7 of weapons. In this instance, I'm not
8 talking about weapons of destruction,
9 I'm talking about weapons that Newburgh
10 and the surrounding areas can use to
11 benefit themselves. We have Safe
12 Harbors, the Boys & Girls Club, the
13 college, the hospital, these are all
14 weapons that Newburgh has to better
15 themselves, right? So it is my opinion
16 that this project is another weapon to
17 add to the arsenal.

18 I'd also like to point out that
19 there was much talk about labor,
20 prevailing wage, and things of that
21 nature. In my business, I'm very aware
22 of the wages. And so my experience is
23 not unions against non-unions or the
24 prevailing wage against the
25 non-prevailing wage. It's a team

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2 effort. We have to do it together. We
3 have to have a reasonable operation of
4 some union, some not union, some
5 prevailing wage, some not. As a
6 business owner, when you do something
7 like this, you're taking risks, and
8 that risk comes with a reward, but it's
9 a big risk. And when you have to pay
10 prevailing wages, it's an even bigger
11 risk. And that's why a mixed batch
12 that everybody gets a piece of the
13 puzzle is the best.

14 So I just ask everybody that, in
15 order to add this weapon to the arsenal
16 of Newburgh, that we all consider what
17 it takes to do that, so that we can
18 come here and make not just Newburgh,
19 but the entire surrounding area,
20 better.

21 IDA CHAIRPERSON AUSTIN DUBOIS:

22 Thank you. Anybody else that
23 hasn't spoken? All right.

24 IDA EXEC. DIR. CHERISSE VICKERS:

25 After requesting if there were any

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2 more public comments, I close this
3 public hearing at 8:19 p.m. Thank you
4 for attending.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF NEW YORK)
)SS:
COUNTY OF ORANGE)

I, LAURA EVANS, a Court Reporter and Notary Public within and for the State of New York, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the minutes recorded by me and reduced to typewriting under my supervision to the best of my knowledge and ability.

X 

Laura Evans

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