



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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BURT LAZARIN
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

June 11, 2019

Hon. Bill de Blasio
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Community Board Budget Increases for Fiscal Year 2020

Dear Mayor de Blasio,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) writes to express its support of the City Council's decision to increase each Community Board Other Than Personal Services (OTPS) budget by \$42,500 for fiscal Year 2019. MCB4 now asks you to continue this important support by baselining this increase so community boards can operate and plan strategically. Baselining last year's increase is the only way our community will be able to effectively plan for initiatives improvements and expansion of services. MCB4, at its June 5, 2019 meeting, by a vote of 45 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote, approved the following letter.

As you know, for most people who live and work in this city the Community Board is the gateway to the municipal government. Everyone from the wealthiest land development corporation to the small mom and pop business needs to come through our doors in some way if they plan to work within the city bureaucracy. Community Boards by law are required to review and make recommendations related to land use, licensing, transportation planning, and waterfront uses. Community Boards must also participate in the budget process and the capital program. Community Boards are responsible for maintaining communication with the people of the district and consistently conduct board business in a transparent process. Community Boards are also considered city agencies that must follow the same protocols as large city wide agencies in terms of FOIL requests, inventory, billing, and record keeping.

Similar to many Community Boards, MCB4 finds itself in a reactive position to the varying issues impacting the neighborhoods it represents. The increase in the OTPS budget allows MCB4 to transition away from simple reactionary responses to re-zoning proposals towards a proactive approach to ongoing challenges, such as gentrification and neighborhood stabilization.

For example, for over a decade, the community of Hell's Kitchen has advocated for the creation of a Hell's Kitchen Historic District. This district highlights the rich immigrant history of the

neighborhood and preserves the tenement and row-house built environment. Over the years, MCB4 has worked to organize the material needed for a formal preservation report to be submitted to LPC. With the increase in OTPS funds, MCB4 hired an outside consultant to produce a report to be reviewed by the community and eventually be submitted to the Landmarks Preservation Commission to help preserve the vital history of our community.

Community Boards are many times a city resident's initial resource to resolve housing problems, mitigate quality of life issues, and manage inter-agency coordination. In addition, Community Board district offices organize community events and host task forces on a host of issues. These initiatives require Community Board district offices to have both the technology and the services to meet those needs. With that goal, the OTPS funds were used to purchase new computers for the staff and other essential office services.

For these reasons MCB4 urges you to baseline the additional funding that City Council originally provided for Fiscal Year 2020.

Thank you for your attention and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Burt Lazarin
MCB4 Chair

cc: Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker, City Council
Hon. Helen Rosenthal, New York City Council
Hon. Fernando Cabrera, City Council
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President