

## New York City Council Votes to Allow Members, Mayor to Run for 3d Terms

BY TED PHILLIPS

The New York City Council yesterday voted 29 to 22 to overturn voter referendums and allow themselves and Mayor **Michael Bloomberg** to run for third terms.

Proponents argued that the city's fiscal crisis required overturning voter-approved term limits to allow continuity of leadership, but a certain amount of continuity has been maintained at the city's budget and finance agencies for decades.

Case in point, the city's budget director **Mark Page** has been a fixture at the office of management and budget under four administrations and deputy director for finance **Alan Anders** has served at the agency under three.

Speaking generally, New York City Independent Budget Office chief of staff **Doug Turetsky** said in an e-mail that key positions in city budget and finance offices are "often staffed by people dedicated to public finance issues. Their knowledge and skills lie outside the politics of changing administrations."

The Citizens Budget Commission, a business-oriented fiscal watchdog organization didn't take a position on term limits. However, CBC president **Carol Kellermann**, said that leadership at the top is important.

"Of course it matters who the mayor is," Kellermann said. "The executives definitely set the tone of the culture."

Staff at OMB and the New York City comptroller's office may stick around, but "we don't really have a permanent government," she said. "We have a government with the key top leaders, the deputy mayors, the heads of agencies that are chosen by the chief executive, it makes a difference."

The city comptroller's office also boasts a roster of veterans. When Comptroller — and 2009 mayoral candidate — **William Thompson Jr.** chose **Marcia Van Wagner** to serve as deputy comptroller for budget in 2005, she came with years of experience working on city budget issues at different city and state agencies, as well as the Citizens Budget Commission, since the mid- 1990s.

Deputy comptroller for public finance **Carol Kostik** had worked in public finance at **Merrill Lynch & Co.** and at the **New York City Housing Development Corp.** and the **Nassau County Interim Finance Authority** before taking on her current role in 2006.

Page joined OMB as a deputy counsel back in 1978 under Mayor **Ed Koch** while the city was still recovering from a deep fiscal crisis. He stayed on as deputy budget director and general counsel at the budget office under Mayor **David Dinkins**.

As the city's executive branch shifted from Democratic to Republican with the election of Mayor **Rudolph Giuliani** in 1993, Page remained. In January 1994, Giuliani's budget director **Abraham Lackman** told The Bond Buyer he wanted to keep Page and then-director of finance and policy **Alan Anders** around. "If I could, I would list Mark Page in my inventory of major fixed assets," Lackman said at the time.

While term limits forced Giuliani from office, Page and Anders continued on an upward trajectory under a new boss, Mayor Bloomberg. In 2002, Bloomberg tapped Page to be his budget director and Anders, who joined OMB in 1990, to become deputy director of finance.

"The personnel at OMB doesn't necessarily change a lot," said **James Parrot**, deputy director and chief economist of the **Fiscal Policy Institute**, a left-leaning think tank. "Certainly you would expect there to be a different director but it's not clear if there would be any changes beyond that ... there's never going to be a wholesale change so there's going to be a lot of institutional memory there."

The way budget staff see the issues is likely to stay relatively constant, he said.

"On the other hand, the person on the top does get to make the final decision," he said. "So the advice they get from OMB may be the same but [a different mayor] may for whatever reason reach a different conclusion as to what to do on any given decision point." □

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