

June 17, 2026

Mr. Wilfredo Melendez
City Manager
City of New Rochelle
515 North Avenue
New Rochelle, NY 10801

Re: Robert Cox Complaint dated June 6, 2026

Dear City Manager Melendez:

The City of New Rochelle Board of Ethics recently received a letter from Robert Cox, dated June 6, 2026 (the "Complaint"). The Complaint alleges that Mayor Yadira Ramos-Herbert has failed to deliver an annual State of the City message for the calendar year 2026, in violation of City Charter Article III, Section 10. It is further alleged that the Mayor has demonstrated a pattern of delay in delivering the State of the City address over her tenure as Mayor. The Complaint alleges that this failure constitutes willful neglect of a mandatory charter duty and requests referral to the Westchester County District Attorney's Office.

New York General Municipal Law and New Rochelle City Code set forth the Board of Ethics' jurisdiction. Under New Rochelle City Code Section 33-11(a)(5), the Board of Ethics has the power to, "Receive complaints alleging a violation of this article or a violation of the criteria for reporting requirements established by this article, any Code of Ethics of the City of New Rochelle, local law, ordinance or resolution regarding the filing of the completed statements with the Board of Ethics." City Code § 33-11(a)(5). General Municipal Law § 808(2) provides that a board of ethics "shall render advisory opinions to officers and employees" of the municipality "with respect to this article and any code of ethics adopted pursuant hereto." Gen. Mun. L. § 808(2). Such advisory opinions can only be rendered "[u]pon written request from any person who is subject to the jurisdiction of the Board of Ethics." City Code § 33-16. Section 33-17 provides for "Additional powers and duties of Board of Ethics" including the power and duty to "[a]dminister and enforce all the provisions of this article" and "[c]onduct any investigation necessary to carry out the provisions of this article. . . ." Code § 33-17(A), (B).

The Board of Ethics is without subject matter jurisdiction to receive this Complaint, conduct an investigation, or render an advisory opinion related to this Complaint, as the Complaint does not concern a matter covered by City Code Section 33-11(a)(5), nor does it constitute a request for an advisory opinion by someone with standing to make such a request.

This document may be signed in counterparts and an electronic signature is the same as an original signature.

Very truly yours,

City of New Rochelle Board of Ethics

Signed by:



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Wilbert Ortiz, Chairman

Signed by:



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Yehudah L. Buchweitz

DocuSigned by:



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William V. Slade

Cc: Dawn Warren, Esq.
Corporation Counsel
City of New Rochelle
515 North Avenue
New Rochelle, NY 10801

Mayor Yadira Ramos-Herbert
City of New Rochelle
515 North Avenue
New Rochelle, NY 10801

Robert Cox
Emmet House, Clyde Road
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4 | D04 PD65
Ireland
robertcox@talkofthesound.com

New Rochelle Board of Ethics
City of New Rochelle
515 North Avenue
New Rochelle, NY 10801

Robert Cox
Emmet House, Clyde Road
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4 | D04 PD65
Ireland
+353 (89) 972 0669

June 6, 2026

Ethics Complaint — Mayor Yadira Ramos-Herbert

Dear Chairman Ortiz,

In the course of my reporting on the City of New Rochelle, it has come to my attention that Mayor Yadira Ramos-Herbert has failed to deliver an annual State of the City message for the calendar year 2026, in violation of a mandatory duty imposed by the New Rochelle City Charter.

Charter Requirement

City Charter Article III, Section 10 states, in relevant part:

“He or she shall preside over the Council, represent the City in intergovernmental relationships, present an annual State of the City message and perform other duties specified by the Council as allowed by the Charter.”

The word “shall” imposes a mandatory, non-discretionary duty. The Mayor is required by law to present an annual State of the City message.

The Violation

As of June 6, 2026, Mayor Ramos-Herbert has not delivered a State of the City address for 2026. No date has been announced. No public statement has been issued indicating any intention to deliver such an address.

A Pattern of Progressive Delay

Talk of the Sound has covered every State of the City address since the site launched on September 1, 2008. The complete record is as follows:

- 2009 — March 19, New Rochelle City Hall
- 2010 — March 11, New Rochelle City Hall
- 2011 — March 10, New Rochelle City Hall
- 2012 — March 2, New Rochelle City Hall
- 2013 — March 18, New Rochelle City Hall

- 2014 — March 20, Davenport Club
- 2015 — March 24, Davenport Club
- 2016 — March 7, Davenport Club
- 2017 — March 9, New Rochelle City Hall
- 2018 — March 2, New Rochelle City Hall
- 2019 — March 21, New Rochelle City Hall
- 2020 — Scheduled March 5; cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic; never delivered
- 2021 — Announced as postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic; never delivered
- 2022 — February 28, Mayor's Office (video only)
- 2023 — March 9, New Rochelle City Hall
- 2024 (Ramos-Herbert Year 1) — April 11, Remington Boys & Girls Club
- 2025 (Ramos-Herbert Year 2) — May 8, New Roc City
- 2026 (Ramos-Herbert Year 3) — Not delivered; no date announced; no statement of intent

This record establishes several important facts. First, the State of the City address has historically been delivered in February or March. Under Mayor Noam Bramson, it was delivered in the first quarter of the calendar year in every year it was given. The sole exceptions — 2020 and 2021 — were both directly attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic, a documented force majeure circumstance affecting public gatherings citywide.

Mayor Ramos-Herbert has deviated from this established practice in each year of her tenure, with the delay growing longer each year:

- **2024 (Year 1):** April 11 — five to six weeks late by historical standards
- **2025 (Year 2):** May 8 — approximately two months late by historical standards
- **2026 (Year 3):** Not delivered as of June 6 — no date announced, no explanation offered

There is no COVID-19 pandemic in 2026. There is no force majeure. There is no announced reason for the failure to deliver the address. The progressive pattern of delay — April, May, nothing — is not a matter of scheduling discretion. It is a documented escalation culminating in apparent abandonment of a mandatory charter duty.

Prior Notice

On May 28, 2026, I wrote to Mayor Ramos-Herbert directly at her official email address, on behalf of Talk of the Sound, advising her that Section 10 requires the annual message and posing the following questions:

1. Does the Mayor plan to deliver a State of the City address in 2026?
2. Why has no address been delivered or scheduled to date?

3. If an address is planned, when will it be delivered?
4. Is the Mayor aware that delivering an annual State of the City message is a mandatory duty under the City Charter?

As of the date of this complaint — nine days later — Mayor Ramos-Herbert has not replied.

Legal Significance

The Board may consider whether the Mayor retains discretion over the timing of the annual message. The historical record answers that question. For fifteen years under her predecessor, the message was delivered in the first quarter of the calendar year. The only exceptions were pandemic-related. No such circumstances exist in 2026.

A mandatory duty that is indefinitely deferred without announcement, justification, or response to direct inquiry is, in effect, a duty abandoned. The progressive pattern of delay across Mayor Ramos-Herbert's three years in office, culminating in complete failure to act by June 6, 2026, establishes that this is not inadvertence but a willful course of conduct.

Willful neglect of a mandatory duty imposed by the City Charter constitutes misconduct in office. Under New York State Public Officers Law §36, willful neglect of duty by a public officer is a misdemeanor. A finding by the Board of Ethics that Mayor Ramos-Herbert has willfully neglected her mandatory charter duty should result in a referral to the Westchester County District Attorney's Office.

Conclusion

Mayor Ramos-Herbert has now gone more than five months into the calendar year 2026 without delivering a State of the City message, without scheduling one, and without acknowledging a direct written inquiry on the matter. The documented pattern of escalating delay across her three years in office — April, May, nothing — combined with the absence of any force majeure explanation, supports a finding of willful neglect of a mandatory charter obligation.

Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Robert Cox
Publisher, Talk of the Sound
robertcox@talkofthesound.com
+353 (89) 972 0669