

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Best Western Syracuse Downtown

Saturday, January 27th, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Judge James Cecile (President & Development Chair), Eric Caballero, Nicholas DeMartino, Paula Freedman (via Zoom), Steven Hodgens, Pastor Phyllis Lee-Williams (EEO/Personnel Chair), Christopher Montgomery, Erich Shafer, Jason Wallace (via Zoom), DJ Williams

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Shirley Copes (Planning Chair), Edward Perry, Robert Tackman (Finance Chair), Patricia Usherwood Fitzpatrick

STAFF PRESENT: Carolyn Brown, Maribel Arce, Todd Goehle, Eddy Luce, Kathleen O'Brien, Nancy Turo

CALL TO ORDER:

The Board of Directors meeting was called to order by President Cecile at 9:39am.

ROLL CALL:

President Cecile noted for the record that a quorum was participating either in person or via Zoom.

MOMENT OF SILENCE:

Board members observed a moment of silence.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The President requested a motion to approve the December Board Meeting minutes;

Mr. Nicholas DeMartino moved to approve the December Board Meeting minutes;

Mr. Steve Hodgens seconded the motion;

The motion carried unanimously.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Cecile introduced the following resolution for the Board to consider:

The Finance Committee requests Board approval to amend the 401(k) Profit Sharing Plan for Employees of PEACE, Inc (the "Plan") to (1) eliminate the Eligible Automatic Contribution Arrangement ("EACA") and (2) eliminate the escalation of amounts automatically deferred under the EACA, and that the officers of PEACE, Inc. are hereby authorized to execute any and all documents, including amendments to the Plan, necessary to carry out the intent of this resolution.

Ms. Brown clarified that this amendment would not impact plan eligibility, and that the intent is to get 100% of employees to respond that they will either initiate or decline 401(k) deductions. She noted that the agency will continue to encourage staff to participate in the 401(k) plan, and will provide information on the plan at new hire orientations as well as annually when employees get their benefits enrollment packets.

***The President requested a motion to amend the 401(k) plan as noted in the resolution;
Pastor Phyllis Lee-Williams moved to amend the 401(k) plan as noted in the resolution;
Mr. Erich Shafer seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

President Cecile reported that a draft of the revised Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual was distributed to the Board for their review. CFO Kathleen O'Brien discussed the key revisions:

- a) Titles of some staff performing tasks has changed;
- b) The purchasing procedures for items \$250,000 or more were modified to stipulate that before contacting any vendor, a plan of how vendors will be evaluated will be established, and a reasonable value for the work contracted will be determined;
- c) Updates were made to reflect the transition to the new DATIS payroll system.

***The President requested a motion to approve the proposed revisions to the Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual;
Mr. Steve Hodgins moved to approve the proposed revisions to the Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual;
Pastor Phyllis Lee-Williams seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT:

President Cecile reported that the committee voted to designate Ms. Tonia Thornton as a Board Member Emeritus.

***The President moved to approve the Emeritus designation of Ms. Thornton;
Mr. Eric Caballero seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

President Cecile reported that the Development Committee voted unanimously to approve Pastor Phyllis Lee-Williams for a new term as a Board member.

***The President moved to approve the appointment of Pastor Lee-Williams for a new term as a Board member;
Mr. Nicholas DeMartino seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

***The President requested a motion to accept the Development Committee report;
Mr. Christopher Montgomery moved to accept the Development Committee report;
Mr. Erich Shafer seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:

President Cecile asked CFO Kathleen O'Brien to present the monthly financial statistics. Ms. O'Brien reported that the net income before depreciation as of December 31st is \$337,118 versus a budget of \$1,269,867, and that the net income after depreciation is (\$218,415). Ms. O'Brien also reported that the current ratio of assets over liabilities is 150%, that the line of credit balance was at \$0, and that the net income from normal operations is (\$109,793) reflecting timing differences of fixed asset purchases, revenue recognition grants and donation cost centers.

Ms. O'Brien reported that the indirect rate was at 23% as of December 31st, and that for fiscal year ending 1/31/24 the agency was approved for a maximum rate of 24%. She reported that a request by the agency to increase the maximum to 26% for the new fiscal year was approved by HHS.

Ms. O'Brien reviewed highlights of the proposed budget for the fiscal year ending 1/31/25, which had previously been provided to Board members for their review.

***The President requested a motion to approve the budget for FYE 1/31/25;
Mr. Eric Caballero moved to approve the budget for FYE 1/31/25;
Mr. Steve Hodgins seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

Ms. O'Brien noted that VP of Finance Nancy Turo has done tremendous work during the changeover to the new DATIS payroll system.

***The President requested a motion to accept the Finance Committee report;
Mr. Christopher Montgomery moved to accept the Finance Committee report;
Mr. Nicholas DeMartino seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

EEO/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

Chair Phyllis Lee-Williams reported that the committee discussed the recent 401(k) plan review and the proposed resolution to amend the plan.

***The President requested a motion to accept the EEO/Personnel Committee report;
Mr. Jason Wallace moved to accept the EEO/Personnel Committee report;
Ms. Paula Freedman seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT:

President Cecile asked Ms. Freedman to present the committee report. Ms. Freedman reported that HS/EHS Child Development and Health Services Manager Holly Hastings presented a summary of results from the Fall 2023 *Teaching Strategies GOLD* child outcomes report, which will provide baseline aggregate data for the Winter and Spring checkpoints in the current school year.

Ms. Freedman reported that the committee also discussed the grant summary report, with particular focus on the Micron grant for the Early Childhood Career Pathway program, and the growth of the Free Tax Prep program following its expansion from a seasonal to a year-round operation.

***The President requested a motion to accept the Planning Committee report;
Mr. Jason Wallace moved to accept the Planning Committee report;
Ms. Paula Freedman seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE REPORT:

Chair Erich Shafer reported that the agency fundraising event is scheduled for May 22nd at the new Syracuse University resource center whose mission is to allow CBOs to hold events with catering provided. He reported that sponsorship packages will be sent out within a week, and asked for input of any additional organizations that should be approached.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Ms. Brown provided updates on the facilities assessment, meetings with elected officials, the agency fundraising event, the Celebrating Black Excellence event at the Eastside FRC, and the upcoming Childcare Advocacy Day event.

Ms. Brown announced that the Free Tax Prep program Super Saturday at Key Bank will be held on February 3rd.

Ms. Brown reported that Mr. DeMartino is now representing the Board in the Foster Grandparent Program Advisory Committee, and noted that it honors our program directors to have Board member participation.

2024 – 2027 STRATEGIC DESIGN AND DEI VISION STATEMENT:

Ms. Brown reported that information on the 2024 – 2027 Strategic Design has been provided for review in the Board Retreat packets. She reported that the proposed strategies focus on developing leadership, producing a culture of belonging, and modernizing our technology platforms. She noted

that one such initiative was the following proposed DEI Vision Statement, which was developed with staff input and was presented to the Board during the Retreat the previous day:

Our vision is to cultivate a workplace where excellence and social responsibility thrive in an environment that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. We commit to an organizational culture that creates a sense of belonging, promotes personal and professional growth, and where everyone feels seen, heard, valued, and respected. We will work toward building an organization that is culturally competent and visually reflective of the community it serves.

Ms. Brown noted that a plan on implementing these strategies has also been outlined, and invited Board members to offer any input.

The President requested a motion to approve the 2024 – 2027 Strategic Design and DEI Vision Statement;

Mr. Steve Hodgins moved to approve the 2024 – 2027 Strategic Design and DEI Vision Statement;

Mr. Nicholas DeMartino seconded the motion;

The motion carried unanimously.

PROGRAM REPORTS:

Monthly program updates for Big Brothers Big Sisters, Family Resource Centers, Senior Services, and Head Start/Early Head Start were distributed to all Board members in meeting packets for review.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

It was announced that videos would be presented following the adjournment of the Board meeting showing television news reports about the agency and a compilation of program success stories.

ADJOURNMENT: President Cecile adjourned the Board meeting at 10:34am.

2024-2027 PEACE, Inc. Strategic Design

Why this Strategic Design now? PEACE, Inc. needs to meet a Moment...

Micron, I81, and a rebuilt Syracuse Public Housing brings unprecedented promise for economic opportunity, social opportunity, and racial justice in Central New York. **And yet...**

The city of Syracuse has the second highest rate of childhood poverty in the nation, with nearly 1 out of 2 youth under the age of 18 living in poverty.¹ Syracuse has also experienced a 26% increase in census tracts that have racially and ethnically concentrated poverty in the last decade.² More broadly, many low-income Onondaga County residents continue to face barriers when accessing quality education, health, housing, transportation, work, and more.

What can PEACE, Inc. do?

Founded in 1968, PEACE, Inc. is the federally designated Community Action Agency (CAA) for Syracuse and Onondaga County. The agency also serves portions of Oswego County. Our mission is “to help people in the community realize their potential for becoming self-sufficient.” By enhancing our programs and operational capacity, by driving inclusion and leadership development, and by elevating community voice, the agency can provide CNY with the anchor partner that it needs to navigate a rapidly changing future.

How will PEACE, Inc.’s Strategic Design do this? It’s all about the Process...

For more than a year, the agency conducted research, engaged conversations, and tested potential ideas across multiple levels to reach our 3 Strategies.

Our 3 strategies are living, breathing things. They inspire workable solutions to current challenges. They also can adapt to meet future barriers and opportunities. Transparency, accountability, and comprehensive communication throughout the entire agency are all key ingredients for success.

PEACE, Inc.’s 3 Strategies to meet the Moment...

Strategy 1) Develop current and future leadership for our agency and community

Strategy Champion: HR Committee

We will create and execute an agency-wide leadership approach that increases cross-program coordination, employee mobility, and professional skills development.

Strategy 2) Further a culture that champions diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging

Strategy Champion: DEI Committee

We will strive to be an agency that embraces and reflects the diversity of the communities that the agency serves as well as the workforce that it employs.

Strategy 3) Modernize technology platforms to securely meet the needs of our staff and community

Strategy Champion: Data and IT Committees

We will analyze, create, and update technology systems that better secure, measure, and respond to emerging agency and community needs.

How will PEACE, Inc. implement its 2024 to 2027 Strategic Design?

Each strategy is only as good as its execution. To embed our strategic design process, goals, and outcomes,

A committee will champion each strategy. Each committee consists of staff members who are knowledgeable about the strategy. Nearly all of the assigned committees have met for more than a year and have grown in participants. Many have already begun plans for their respective focus. Matrixes and milestones for success will emerge from these committees. So too will the suggestions of the agency's staff be incorporated here. Towards these ends,

Oversight will be collaborative. Working with each committee, PEACE, Inc.'s Vice President of Operations and Strategy will monitor each strategy's progress and update the PEACE, Inc. Executive Director/Board of Directors accordingly. The strategic design steering committee and the agency's leadership team (CLP) will also convene monthly to review, support, and execute strategies. As these and other staff members serve on the HR, DEI, IT, and Data committees, communication should be organic, structured, and evolving. Towards these ends,

Materials and workplans will be accessible to all. Accountability stems from transparency. Visual workflows will be used to plan and to track each strategy. Committees will report out monthly minutes. The agency's community engagement team will circulate updates and will post across multiple media and forums to engage staff and community alike. Towards these ends,

Open communication and direct participation will further cultures of inclusion. A spirit of inclusion drove this journey. The 3 strategies emerged from staff of different responsibilities, backgrounds, and experiences. Many responded via online surveys. When technology and schedules were barriers, written responses were sought, and small group conversations were held. Initial strategies were returned and refined. Clarity. Accountability. Meeting people where they are at." These ideas grounded the strategic design. The strategic design is the staff's design. Its success will also be the staff's success.

Want to learn more? Contact Todd Goehle, Vice President of Operations and Strategy, at Todd.Goehle@peace-caa.org.

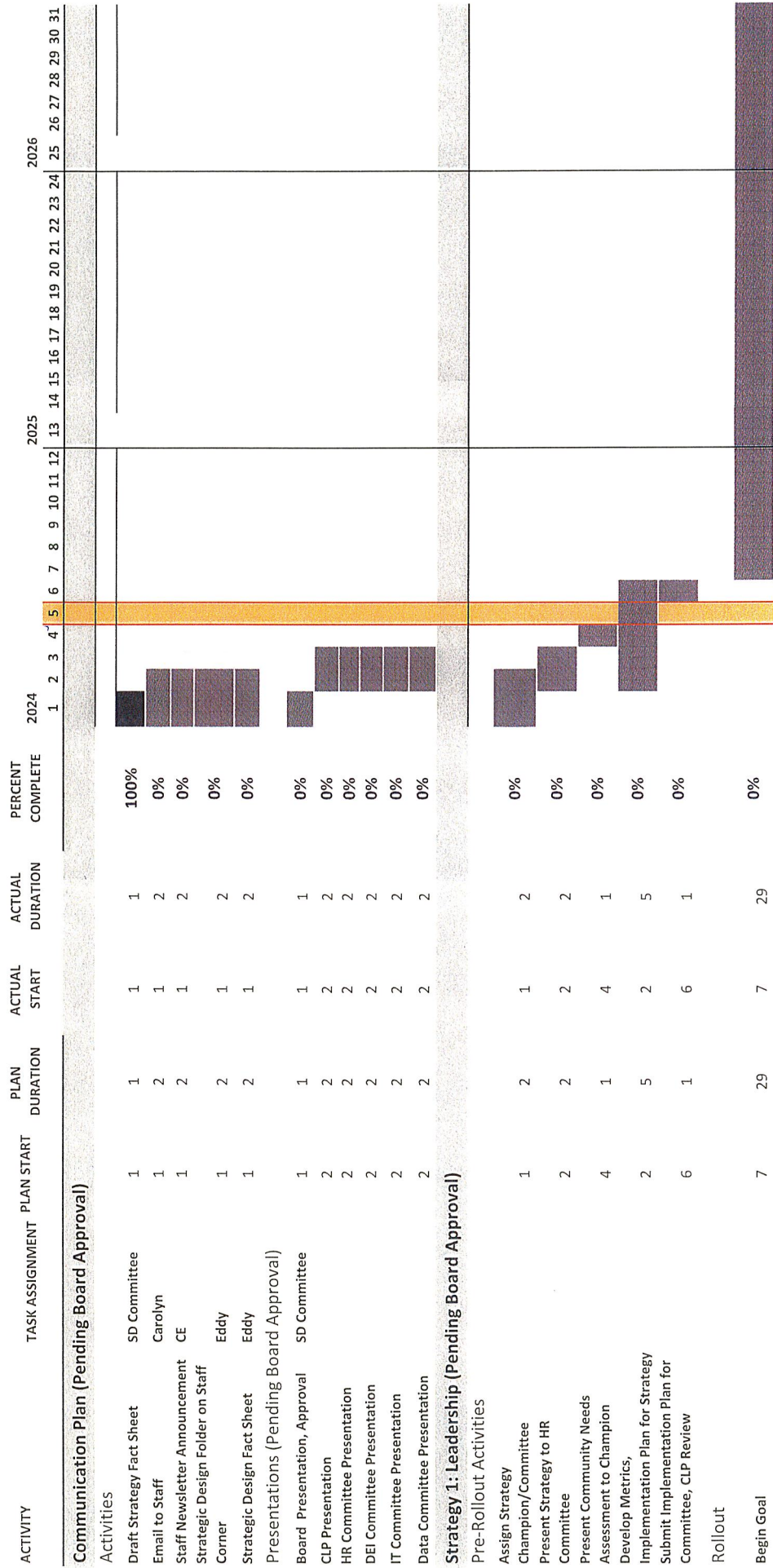
¹ Kevin Tampone, "Syracuse Ranks No. 2 among Big US Cities for Child Poverty even as Rate Falls," *Syracuse.com*

<https://www.syracuse.com/news/2023/12/syracuse-ranks-no-2-among-big-us-cities-for-child-poverty-even-as-rate-falls.html>, (7 December 2023).

² CNY Fair Housing, "Zoning and Segregation in Syracuse, NY," *CNYFairHousing.org*.

https://www.cnyfairhousing.org/_files/ugd/2c7046_221e088431c24c35b285e3ca0e909cc0.pdf.

Select a period to highlight at right. A legend describing the charting follows.



'beyond plan';

2027

32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Summary for 2023

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to share a progress report on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiative for 2023. A professional consultant conducted a comprehensive analysis of both our internal and external functions. Based on their findings and input from the DEI committee, we established a framework and decided to move forward with recommendations from the analysis.

This report summarizes the agency's achievements in fostering a workplace culture that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive, as well as the opportunities for future growth.

Proposed Vision Statement

Our vision is to cultivate a workplace where excellence and social responsibility thrive in an environment that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. We commit to an organizational culture that creates a sense of belonging, promotes personal and professional growth, and where everyone feels seen, heard, valued, and respected. We will work toward building an organization that is culturally competent and visually reflective of the community it serves.

Accomplishments:

- Completion of a professional comprehensive equity assessment and analysis
- Formation of the *Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee*
- Creation of proposed organization-wide DEI vision statement
- *DEI is 1 of 3 strategies within the Strategic Plan Design for 2024-2027*
- DEI certification training is underway for the newly appointed *DEI Coordinator*
- Workshop for committee members with Associate Professor Tony Scott, Syracuse University
- Improved our employee orientation to include our commitment to DEI
- *DEI presentation/training* for all employees, with ongoing individualized presentations

Key Challenges/Opportunities

The importance of gaining buy-in and commitment to embrace change is significant. This requires clear communication of the benefits of DEI, engagement of key stakeholders, allocation of resources, and establishment of expectations and metrics for success.

What are our Next Steps?

Moving forward, the committee plans to work on a concrete action plan with the Strategic Design Plan team. These actions will foster diversity, equity, and inclusion within the organization and our community. We aim to include awareness campaigns and additional training sessions to continue educating all employees on the fundamental importance of DEI. We intend to identify areas within the company that could benefit most from the concepts implemented by DEI; this will include partnering with Human Resources to improve our employees' work experience and working closely with the Community Engagement Department.

Conclusion:

Our agency strongly believes a diverse and inclusive workforce leads to innovation, better decision-making, and improved employee/community engagement and retention. The agency will continue to monitor and assess our progress as we strive toward positive, sustainable change.

DEI Committee Members

Kim Barone - Associate Director of Head Start/Early HeadStart
Stephanie Bingham - Associate Director of Family Services
Carolyn Brown - Executive Director
Dawn Engel - Disabilities Coordinator
Irena Felty - Data Storyteller
Todd Goehle - Vice President of Operations and Strategy
Mandy King - Director of Human Resources
Nichole Rivera - Resource Family Center Coordinator – Westside
Liz Tillotson - Nutrition Program Specialist
Sally Ward - Director of Energy and Housing Services

