

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Via Teleconference

Monday, March 24th, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Judge James Cecile (President/Development Chair), Eric Caballero, Nicholas DeMartino, Paula Freedman, Steven Hodgins, Tysha Martin, Christopher Montgomery, Edward Perry, Erich Shafer, Patricia Usherwood Fitzpatrick, Jason Wallace (EEO/Personnel Acting Chair)

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Shirley Copes (Planning Chair), Pastor Phyllis Lee-Williams, Robert Tackman (Finance Chair)

STAFF PRESENT: Carolyn Brown, Jamie Colucci, Todd Goehle, Rebekkah Heberle, Mandy King, Kathleen O'Brien, Nancy Turo

CALL TO ORDER:

The Board of Directors meeting was called to order by President Cecile at 4:50pm.

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 February Board Meeting minutes;
Ms. Paula Freedman moved to approve the February Board Meeting minutes;
Mr. Steve Hodgins seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.*

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Cecile asked HS/EHS Director Rebekkah Heberle to review the proposed Change of Scope, which would be submitted to the Head Start Regional Office to address concerns about low enrollment, by allowing for a reduction of 170 Head Start slots and 39 Early Head Start slots. Ms. Heberle explained that these 209 slots would be comprised of: 40 currently vacant home-based slots, 13 vacant slots from a double-session classroom at the Sumner site which is being converted to a full-day classroom, and 156 slots at partnership sites that would remain available for children but would no longer have additional services provided by our program. She noted that this approach would allow funds to be reallocated to

address ongoing staffing challenges by increasing some wages, and that not pursuing this approach would likely result in having to return funds that would be unspent due to under-enrollment.

***The President requested a motion to approve the HS/EHS Change of Scope request;
Mr. Nicholas DeMartino moved to approve the HS/EHS Change of Scope request;
Mr. Eric Caballero seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT:

President Cecile reported that the committee interviewed the new HS/EHS Policy Council President, Mitayah Donerlson, and unanimously approved to recommend her as a new Board member and as the HS/EHS program representative to the Board.

President Cecile reported that the committee received letters from Foster Grandparent Advisory Council members nominating Mr. DeMartino to a new three-year term as a Board member following the end of his current term on March 31, 2025, and unanimously approved to recommend him as a new Board member.

President Cecile reported that the committee is expecting a formal letter nominating Mr. Perry to a new three-year term as a Board member following the end of his current term on April 30, 2025, and unanimously approved to recommend him as a new Board member.

***The President moved to approve Ms. Donerlson, Mr. DeMartino, and Mr. Perry each to be appointed for a three-year term as a member of the Board;
Mr. Christopher Montgomery seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

***The President requested a motion to accept the Development Committee report;
Ms. Tysha Martin moved to accept the Development Committee report;
Ms. Patricia Usherwood Fitzpatrick seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

EEO/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

President Cecile asked Mr. Wallace to present the monthly committee report. Mr. Wallace reported that the committee discussed new protocols for potential ICE visits or queries, the 401(k) plan transition to Voya, the proposed HS/EHS Change of Scope, and the applicant pool report.

***The President requested a motion to accept the EEO/Personnel Committee report;
Mr. Erich Shafer moved to accept the EEO/Personnel Committee report;
Mr. Eric Caballero seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

FINANCE/AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT:

President Cecile asked CFO Kathleen O'Brien to present the monthly financial statements for February 28th. Ms. O'Brien noted that some items are not traditionally reported for the first month of a fiscal year. She reported that the net income before depreciation is \$24,499 versus a budget of \$24,074, and that the net income after depreciation is \$25,344. She also reported that the net income from normal operations is \$27,428, that the line of credit balance is \$0, and that the capital improvement account is steady.

Ms. O'Brien also discussed total fundraising revenue, the indirect rate, the Head Start administrative rate, the Captive Health Insurance reserve account, and the annual audit process.

Ms. O'Brien noted that risk tolerance and annual growth goals for investment opportunities will continue to be discussed further in committee meetings, and that she is researching bank fees among Head Start programs. Mr. Caballero asked for Board members to continue to provide comments and suggestions about the agency investment policy going forward.

***The President requested a motion to accept the Finance/Audit Committee report;
Ms. Paula Freedman moved to accept the Finance/Audit Committee report;
Ms. Tysha Martin seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT:

President Cecile asked Mr. Hodgins to present the committee report. Mr. Hodgins reported that Director of Grants and Planning Maribel Arce provided an overview of the report that stemmed from the Whole Family Summit held in November, and that VP of Operations and Strategy Todd Goehle presented client satisfaction survey data from the Free Tax Prep and Senior Nutrition programs.

Mr. Hodgins reported that Ms. Brown and Mr. Goehle proposed an amendment to one of three Strategic Design goals to comply with recent Presidential Executive Orders, changing "further a culture that champions diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging" to "foster an environment where staff and clients alike feel seen, heard, value, and respected". He reported that this amendment was approved by the committee.

***The President requested a motion to approve the proposed revision to the Strategic Design;
Mr. Eric Caballero moved to accept the Planning Committee report;
Mr. Jason Wallace seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

***The President requested a motion to accept the Planning Committee report;
Mr. Nicholas DeMartino moved to accept the Planning Committee report;
Mr. Edward Perry seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

CHAMPIONS OF DIVERSITY:

Mr. Goehle reported that for the first time in the history of the annual fundraiser, a majority of sponsorship requests was made via email, and that many donations have been made by new and previous sponsors.

Ms. Brown reported that the Board event committee has been meeting regularly, and Mr. Goehle confirmed that tickets will be available for purchase within a week.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Ms. Brown discussed succession planning initiatives that are taking place to identify potential future leaders across the agency.

Ms. Brown reported that the continuing resolution that was recently passed and signed into law provides federal funding for programs through the remainder of the fiscal year at current levels.

Ms. Brown discussed the inventory and upgrades being performed by the IT Department, and noted that Haylor, Freyer & Coon donated 40 laptops to the agency.

Ms. Brown reported that she has been recording monthly video messages to staff from various agency sites.

Ms. Brown reported that the agency is testing for lead in tap water at all of its sites, and that a few faucets were identified to be replaced and retested.

Ms. Brown reported that Mr. Goehle recently attended the National Community Action Foundation Advocacy Day for Community Action event in Washington D.C., and that he and Ms. Arce will give a presentation on community-based research at a National Community Action Partnership event in Detroit this August. Nancy Turo and Ms. Brown will also be attending the conference.

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:

President Cecile reported that an Executive Committee meeting was held on March 20th to conduct the annual review of the Executive Director, including progress made toward previous goals and proposed new goals. The Board then convened an Executive Session to discuss the annual review further with Ms. Brown.

ADJOURNMENT: President Cecile adjourned the Board meeting at 5:25 pm. to go into an Executive Session to discuss the annual review of the Executive Director

Board of Directors Meeting Executive Session Minutes

March 24, 2025

On March 24, 2025, the Board of Directors met for their regularly scheduled monthly meeting. A quorum was present for the meeting. After the regular agenda of the meeting was completed, the staff was excused. At 5:25 p.m. Nick DeMartino made a motion to enter Executive Session, the motion was seconded by Paula Freedman, the motion was carried and the Board entered Executive Session.

The Directors discussed Carolyn Brown's performance for 2023 and 2024 as well as proposed goals for 2025. The Directors were unanimous in their approval of Carolyn Brown's performance in leading the agency. The Directors also discussed 12 goals for the Executive Director in the coming year. The Directors were unanimous about establishing the 12 goals for the Executive Director:

Goals for 2025 are attached to these minutes.

It should be noted that before entering the Executive Session, Carolyn Brown addressed the board and expressed her desire to remain the Executive Director and made no other requests. After a very positive discussion concerning Carolyn's performance and compensation, a motion was made by James Cecile and seconded by Tysha Martin to recommend to the Board of Directors that Carolyn's base salary be increased in the same amount of the COLA, if any, given to the PEACE Inc. staff. This increase would be retroactive to February 1, 2025. The motion was approved unanimously.

At 5:44 p.m. a motion was made by Eric Caballero and seconded by Erich Shafer to exit the Executive Session. The motion was approved unanimously.

At 5:45 p.m. the Board of Directors meeting was adjourned.

It should be noted that the following Directors were present for the Executive Session:

President Jim Cecile

1st Vice President Paula Freedman

Secretary Erich Shafer

Jason Wallace

Nicholas DeMartino

Steve Hodgins

Eric Caballero

Ed Perry

Patricia Usherwood Fitzpatrick

Tysha Martin

Chris Montgomery



PROPOSED GOALS FOR 2024 - 2025

- 1. The Executive Director will continue to closely monitor the captive health insurance program and attempt to manage the plan such that the employees' contributions will be minimized.**
- 2. The Executive Director will work to ensure PEACE, Inc. regains its status as a Low Risk Auditee.**
- 3. The Executive Director will work to develop a leadership development plan for current PEACE, Inc. staff with a focus on a diverse merit-based senior leadership.**
- 4. The Executive Director will utilize the Facilities Assessment to explore opportunities for new funding regarding capital projects.**
- 5. The Executive Director will attend one national conference to learn new approaches for programming regarding individuals with low incomes.**
- 6. The Executive Director will facilitate the renovations of the PEACE, Inc. Westside Family Resource Center, 200 Wyoming St, for completion by December 2026.**
- 7. The Executive Director will continue to work with the Board of Directors and the CFO to develop a plan for the best use of the proceeds from the sale of the building at 811 E. Washington Street.**
- 8. The Executive Director will continue to support the growth and development of PEACE, Inc. programs in accordance with emerging community needs.**
- 9. The Executive Director will continue to prepare for the 1115 Medicaid Waiver which may provide funding to Community Based Organizations to work in partnership with hospitals and healthcare providers to increase wellness outcomes and address social determinants of health.**
- 10. The Executive Director will continue to explore and implement partnerships with groups/agencies that are trying to decrease the poverty rate in Syracuse.**
- 11. The Executive Director will continue to closely monitor the 401(k) program for employees.**
- 12. The Executive Director will continue to closely monitor the federal Executive Orders and Federal Budget as they relate to P.E.A.C.E, Inc. programs.**

PEACE, Inc. Board of Directors

1 message

Carolyn Brown <carolyn.brown@peace-caa.org>

Fri, Mar 21, 2025 at 5:05 PM

To: james cecile <jcecile@yahoo.com>, Paula Freedman <freedmanassoc@yahoo.com>, Shirley Copes <shirlgram08@gmail.com>, "Robert T. Tackman" <bobtoddtack@aol.com>, Erich Shafer <eshafer@greenlakeassociates.com>, Patricia Usherwood Fitzpatrick <pushfitz@gmail.com>, Eric Caballero <ejtcaballero@outlook.com>, Steve Hodgins <hodgens.steve@gmail.com>, Tysha Martin <tmartin@cnyfairhousing.org>, "Montgomery, Christopher A." <montgoca@morrisville.edu>, "Nicholas J. DeMartino" <njdemartino@hotmail.com>, "Jason J. Wallace" <jasonwallace1144@gmail.com>, Edward Perry <e-clipzbarbershop311@hotmail.com>, Pastor Phyllis Lee-Williams <sandpiper116@hotmail.com>

Cc: Rebecca Heberle <rheberle@peace-caa.org>, Kathleen O'Brien <KOBrien@peace-caa.org>, Nancy Turo <nturo@peace-caa.org>, Caleb Keane <caleb.keane@peace-caa.org>, Todd Goehle <todd.goehle@peace-caa.org>, Mandy King <mandy.king@peace-caa.org>, Connie Magunga <CMagunga@peace-caa.org>

Good Afternoon and Happy Spring,

I am writing to provide detailed information relating to a proposed application for a Head Start Change of Scope that will be discussed at the PEACE, Inc. Board meeting on Monday, March 24th. The suggested changes result in minimal contraction to existing PEACE, Inc.-operated slots instead, focusing on collaborations.

In keeping with shifting family needs for full day, site-based opportunities, we propose to decrease 40 currently vacant home visiting slots and change one split session classroom to a full day which results in the removal of 13 half day slots. The remaining 156 slots slated for elimination are operated by collaborations and currently receive add-on services (such as nutrition, health, and family support services) so families would still maintain their daycare or preschool placement.

As described in more detail in the attached memo and charts from Becky Heberle, PEACE, Inc. Head Start Director, these changes are necessitated by enrollment considerations and encouraged by the Office of Head Start.

I apologize for the short turnaround time; please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Thanks,
Carolyn

+++

Carolyn D. Brown | Executive Director
PEACE, Inc.

phone: 315.634.3737 || fax: 315.688.0309

address: 217 South Salina Street, Syracuse, NY 13202

pronouns: She, Her, Hers



2 attachments

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Becky Heberle
DATE: March 21, 2025
RE: Head Start Proposed Change of Scope

PEACE Head Start and Early Head Start has been underenrolled since September of 2020, as a result of COVID. Prior to 2020, HS and EHS were always fully enrolled with a waiting list. Over the past five years, we have struggled to fill staffing vacancies and some classrooms with children. HS has been working with our Regional Office on a plan for full enrollment for over a year now. We have increased our enrollment numbers over these past several years from 77% enrolled in October 2020 to 91% enrolled in February 2025. This large increase in enrollment was partly due to the first Change of Scope awarded last year. The funds saved were used to increase direct service staff salaries, allowing us to fill some vacant positions and enroll more children.

Despite our progress and because we did not get to 97%, we received notice from the Office of Head Start in February 2025, informing us that they are designating us as "Chronically Underenrolled" (DCU). Given our measurable progress, Office of Head Start (OHS) will not reduce us at this time, but they anticipate that we would have unspent funds to return. In addition, they reminded us of the option to apply for a Change of Scope to reduce our funded enrollment and apply the funds to the other budget line items that will address under-enrollment, such as compensation for staff. This letter also stated that over the next 12 months OHS can review and adjust the funding and enrollment of the grant recipient that is Designated Chronically Under-enrolled. The OHS has looked back at our history and is aware that this is a direct result of societal shifts relating to the initial outbreak of COVID. They are allowing us a grace period of 6 months before they will look at recapturing, withholding or reducing our enrollment and funding. In a meeting with our Program Specialist at the HS Regional Office, she advised us to submit a Change of Scope (COS) reduction ASAP. She feels that her office will move quickly on our request and we will be able to reduce by the 6 month mark which is August 2025. Time is of the essence.

The Head Start Executive team has worked swiftly to prepare a proposed COS reduction, carefully considering the families, the staff, and the program. We have prepared this plan for a reduction of 209 total slots (170 HS and 39 EHS). The breakdown of the slots is 156 slots (many vacant) would be eliminated from our partnership sites, 40 vacant homebase slots would be eliminated and 13 vacant double session slots will be reduced from Sumner. The partnership slots would

continue to remain as open slots in the community, just without the partnership of Head Start. The homebase slots are currently unfilled due to vacant home visitor positions. The 13 double session slots would allow the morning session to become a full day for 17 children, and the 13 slots would be reduced from the community. The savings created by this reduction will allow us to increase all direct service staff by one dollar an hour. Given that Head Start will not be funding a cost of living adjustment this year, this increase will likely help us retain staff.

The breakdown of reduction is shown in the attached charts.

Head Start

		Proposed Reduction	
Center Name	Enrollment Slots Fall 2025	Slots to Reduce By	New Enrollment Slots
Atonement	9	9	0
Baldwinsville JE	34	0	34
Children's Consortium			
Dr. King	47	47	0
Dr. Weeks	44	27	17
Elmcrest	5	0	5
Franklin	54	18	36
Genesee	71	0	71
Home Base	22	12	10
Grant	25	0	25
Hawley	13	0	13
James St.	34	0	34
Jamesville			
Lafayette	17	0	17
Liverpool	64	0	64
Lydia's	3	3	0
Merrick	105	0	105
OCC	10	0	10
CAP (Pompei)	41	41	0
Cab Horse	15	0	15
North Syracuse	36	0	36
Sumner	97	13	84
Total	746	170	576

Early Head Start

		Proposed Reduction		
Center Name	Enrollment Slots Fall 2025	Slots to Reduce By	New Enrollment Slots	
Atonement				
Baldwinsville JE				
Children's Consortium	14	0	12	2 slots move to Home Base
Dr. King				
Dr. Weeks				
Elmcrest	7	0	7	
Franklin				
Genesee				
Home Base	53	16	37	Includes 2 slots from CC
Grant				
Hawley				
James St.				
Jamesville	22	12	10	
Lafayette				
Liverpool				
Lydia's	11	11	0	
Merrick	32	0	32	
OCC	3	0	3	
CAP (Pompei)				
Cab Horse				
North Syracuse				
Sumner	32	0	32	
Total	172	39	133	