

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Department of Energy & Housing, 717 Erie Blvd. West

Monday, December 15, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Judge James Cecile (President/Development Chair), Eric Caballero – via Zoom, Shirley Copes – via Zoom (Planning Chair), Nicholas DeMartino, Mitayah Donerlson, Steve Hodgens, Michael LaFlair, Tysha Martin, Christopher Montgomery – via Zoom, Edward Perry – via Zoom, Erich Shafer – via Zoom, Robert Tackman (Finance Chair), Patricia Usherwood Fitzpatrick

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Paula Freedman, Jason Wallace (EEO/ Personnel Chair)

STAFF PRESENT: Carolyn Brown, Jamie Colucci, Brenda Curinga, Todd Goehle, Mandy King, Kathleen O'Brien, Doug Thomas, Sharon Thompson, Nancy Turo, Mary Beth Welch

CALL TO ORDER:

The Board of Directors meeting was called to order by President Cecile at 4:52pm.

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 minutes of the November Board Meeting and the December 2nd Special Board Meeting;

Mr. Michael LaFlair moved to approve the minutes of the November Board Meeting and the December 2nd Special Board Meeting;

Mr. Steve Hodgens seconded the motion;

The motion carried unanimously.

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT:

President Cecile reported that at the end of the year Shirley Copes will end her term as the representative of outgoing Syracuse Common Council President Helen Hudson, and that the new President Rita Paniagua will be approached to nominate a representative of her office to the Board.

President Cecile reported that the committee discussed the upcoming Board Retreat, committee assignments for new Board members, and the unexpected loss of United Way funding.

***The President requested a motion to accept the Development Committee report;
Mr. Nicholas DeMartino moved to accept the Development Committee report;
Mr. Robert Tackman seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT:

President Cecile asked Mr. Hodgens to present the committee report. Mr. Hodgens reported that HS/EHS Family & Community Support Specialist Emily Thompson presented a brief overview of the eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance (ERSEA) procedures for families. He also reported that VP of Operations & Strategy Todd Goehle gave updates on recent Community Engagement initiatives with the Syracuse-Onondaga Food Systems Alliance and FOCUS Greater Syracuse.

***The President requested a motion to accept the Planning Committee report;
Mr. Nicholas DeMartino moved to accept the Planning Committee report;
Ms. Patricia Usherwood Fitzpatrick seconded the motion;
The motion carried unanimously.***

EEO/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

President Cecile reviewed the items covered in the committee minutes, including a complaint filed with the NYS Division of Human Rights by a former employee who was terminated for insubordination. HR Director Mandy King added that a response to that complaint was recently filed by the agency.

***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 COMMITTEE REPORT:

Mr. Tackman reported that the committee discussed proposed revisions to the Fiscal Policies & Procedures Manual, the RFP process for the annual audit of the financial statements and 401(k) plan, and the possibility of utilizing the agency line of credit pending awaited funding.

Mr. Tackman asked Ms. Turo to present the monthly financial statements. Ms. Turo reported that the net income before depreciation as of November 30th is (\$70,391) versus a budget of \$289,598, that the net income after depreciation is (\$550,590), and that the net income from normal operations is \$49,554,

reflecting timing differences of fixed asset purchases, revenue recognition grants, grants with revenue based on headcount, and donation cost centers. Ms. Turo also reported that as of November 30th the current ratio of assets over liabilities is 166%, the line of credit balance is \$0, the indirect rate is 23.9%, and the Head Start in-kind rate is 34.0%.

Ms. Turo reported that discussions are taking place with Haylor, Freyer & Coon regarding possible approaches to reduce and address the shortage in the Captive Health Insurance reserve balance. Mr. Tackman added that the Finance and EEO/Personnel Committees are actively involved in these discussions.

Ms. O'Brien reviewed the highlights of the proposed Corporate Budget for FYE 1/31/2027, which had been previously reviewed and unanimously approved by the Finance Committee. She noted that this budget reflects a vacancy rate of 7.0%, an approved indirect rate of 26%, no cost-of-living adjustments to wages, and a decrease in revenue mainly due to realignment of HCR grants.

The President requested a motion to accept the Finance Committee report;

Ms. Tysha Martin moved to accept the Finance Committee report;

Mr. Michael LaFlair seconded the motion;

The motion carried unanimously.

The President requested a motion to approve the Corporate Budget for FYE 1/31/2027;

Mr. Robert Tackman moved to approve the Corporate Budget for FYE 1/31/2027;

Ms. Shirley Copes seconded the motion;

The motion carried unanimously.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Cecile reiterated the planned agenda for the upcoming annual Board Retreat.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Ms. Brown reported that HHS released anticipated CSBG funding to New York State.

Ms. Brown reported that Vera House made an overdue payment of \$434.70 to the agency, with over \$800.00 still outstanding.

Ms. Brown reported that the federal government added work requirements to some benefit programs, and that the CDBG and Free Tax Prep programs may be affected.

Ms. Brown reported that the total household income eligibility threshold for the Free Tax Prep program in 2026 will be \$69,000.

Ms. Brown discussed the Leadership Pathways staff development initiatives.

Ms. Brown reported on the reboot of the Give-A-Holiday program, which limits items to be donated in order to serve more families. Mr. Tackman asked for a one-page recap of this year's program.

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.

President Cecile highlighted the November Westside FRC report of Thanksgiving dinners that were provided to families in collaboration with Brady Market; ten families received complete dinners, and six families received uncooked turkeys with cooking utensils.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Goehle discussed plans by the Syracuse ON-RAMP job pathways program to develop the former Sears building near the Southside FRC into a workforce training center.

ADJOURNMENT: President Cecile adjourned the Board meeting at 5:26pm with wishes to all for a happy holiday season.