

MINUTES

NEW HIGHMARK STADIUM COMMUNITY BENEFITS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

May 12, 2025

Isaias Gonzalez-Soto Branch Library
280 Porter Ave, Buffalo, NY 14201
Monday, May 12, 2025

The CBOC convened for its 12th meeting on Monday, May 12, 2025, at the Isaias Gonzalez-Soto Branch Library in Buffalo, NY. The meeting was conducted in person and via videoconference and public notice was posted in accordance with NY Open Meetings Law.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 Call to Order, Roll Call and Establish Quorum

In the absence of Chairman Blue and per CBOC bylaws, the meeting was called to order by Member Semaia at 11:04 AM ET. Member Semaia established that a quorum was present.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mo Sumbundu, Franchelle Parker, Penny Semaia, and Toni Cannady – 5

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chairman Mark Blue, Todd Starowitz, Erich Weyant and Maria Whyte – 4

Member Semaia closed Agenda Item No. 1.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 14, 2025, CBOC Meeting (Action Item)

Member Semaia requested a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the committee's prior meeting on Monday, April 14, 2025. Upon a motion by Member Sumbundu, seconded by Member Parker, and without opposition, the CBOC approved the meeting minutes.

Member Semaia closed Agenda Item No. 2.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 Old Business

Member Semaia opened the floor for committee members to discuss old business.

Member Parker led a collective moment of silence in memory of those affected by the tragedy of May 14, 2022.

Member Semaia closed Agenda Item No. 3.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 Community Benefits Updates

As part of the Community Benefits Update, Member Semaia, in his capacity as Community Benefits Director on behalf of Developer, provided a community benefits update.

Member Semaia provided a brief construction update, highlighting several key milestones. He noted that, as part of National Construction Safety Week, a safety stand-down, reported to be the largest of its kind in the country, was held on-site to emphasize the importance of safety, mental health, and overall workforce well-being. He acknowledged investments made by Gilbane | Turner and the Buffalo Bills to support workers, including the construction of a dedicated breakroom designed to create a welcoming environment, along with on-site mental health support services and resources to help workers navigate challenges and access care as needed. Member Semaia reported that overall construction progress has surpassed 50%, with more than 1,300 tradespeople currently working on site daily, a number expected to increase to 1,500 during the summer months. Over 2 million work hours have been completed to date. The precast seating bowl is now fully complete, the first stadium seats have been installed, and installation of exterior precast panels will continue through the spring and summer.

BUSINESS PARTICIPATION AND WORKFORCE HOUR OBJECTIVE UPDATES

Member Semaia provided an interim update outlining Developer's progress regarding the MWBE/SDVOB business participation and workforce hour objectives relating to the new Highmark Stadium. ***Member Semaia reported as follows:***

- Workforce Update:
 - As of March 31, 2025, Developer has exceeded its minority and apprentice workforce hours, reporting (i) 23.62% for minority work hours (which exceeds the 15% goal) and (ii) 16.53% for apprentice work hours (which exceeds the 10% goal). Developer also reported the following percentages with respect to non-minority women work hours: 3.64% for non-minority women work hours (which falls just below the 5% target).
 - Currently exploring opportunities to collaborate with NYS DOL, Erie County, SUNY Erie, and GT to host an event this summer focused on recruiting women and highlighting construction job opportunities available throughout the region.

Category	Goal	Through 3/31/2025
Minority Work Hours	15%	23.62%
Non-Minority Women Work Hours	5%	3.64%
Apprentice Work Hours	10%	16.53%

- Business Participation Update:
 - As of Q4 2024, Developer has awarded a total of 324 MWBE/SDVOB contracts or OCSD-4 commitments. 193 of the awarded MWBE/SDVOB contracts or OCSD-4 commitments have been made to Regional MWBE/SDVOBs. 146 of the Regional MWBE/SDVOB contracts or OCSD-4 commitments have been made for a value less than or equal to \$1,000,000, representing results of the Developer's efforts in defining, segmenting or sizing bid packages at levels to increase the likelihood MWBE firms are reasonably able to successfully undertake such projects and to ensure MWBE contractors and/or subcontractors retained for the Project shall come from the Western New York Region.

- MWBE/SDVOB Contracts or OCSD-4 Commitments: 324
- Regional MWBE/SDVOB Contracts or OCSD-4 Commitments: 193
- Regional MWBE/SDVOB Contracts or OCSD-4 Commitments <= \$1,00,000: 146

Regional MWBE/SDVOB Contracts or OCSD-4 Commitments	
< \$24,999	39
\$25,000 – \$49,999	12
\$50,000 – \$99,999	16
\$100,000 – \$249,999	29
\$250,000 – \$499,999	25
\$500,000 – \$1,000,000	25
Total <= \$1,000,000	146

*CBA Section 1.(n) defines Region as the geographic area within the State of New York comprising a 100-mile radius from Orchard Park, New York



- Solely with respect to proposal releases #1-4, Developer has exceeded its business participation commitment goals with respect to MBEs at 16.8% (which exceeds the 15% goal) and WBEs at 16.1% (which exceeds the 15% goal). Developer also reported the following percentage with respect to SDVOB business participation goals: 5.8% SDVOB participation (which falls below the 6% goal).

Category	Goal		Through Proposal Release #1-4
Minority-owned Business Enterprise	\$231,000,000	15%	16.8%
Women-owned Business Enterprise	\$231,000,000	15%	16.1%
Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business	\$94,400,000	6%	5.8%
MWBE & SDVOB Total	\$554,400,000	36%	38.7%

- Member Semaia provided the following list of prime contractors:
 - PJP Installers, Inc. (MBE)
 - **Mark Cerrone, Inc.**
 - **Ferguson Electric / E-J Electric JV**
 - **Ferguson Electric / E-J Electric JV**
 - **Pinto Construction Services, Inc.**
 - **Union Concrete & Construction Corp.**
 - Schindler Elevator Corporation
 - Source Blue
 - **SubAir Systems**
 - Baker Concrete Construction, Inc.
 - **Cives Steel Company**
 - R. W. Sidley, Inc.
 - Crown Corr
 - High Concrete Group
 - **Union Concrete & Construction Corp.**
 - Roger & Sons Concrete, Inc. (MBE)
 - Celtic Sheet Metal, Inc. (WBE)
 - Celtic Sheet Metal, Inc. (WBE)
 - F. W. Sims, LLC
 - **Ferguson Electric / E-J Electric JV**
 - **Ferguson Electric / E-J Electric JV**
 - **John W. Danforth Company**
 - **D.V. Brown & Associates**
 - Rael Automatic Sprinkler Co., Inc.
 - George M. Raymond Co.
 - William H. Lane Inc.
 - Irwin Seating Group
 - Island International Enterprises, LLC
 - Sightline Commercial Solutions LLC
 - Crystal Steel Fabricators, Inc. (MBE)
 - Crystal Steel Fabricators, Inc. (MBE)
 - **Thomas Johnson, Inc.**
 - SwimEx, Inc. (WBE)
 - SCG Fields, LLC
 - **Jameson Roofing**
 - MTN Inc.
 - **Hamburg Overhead Door, Inc. (WBE)**
 - Builders Hardware
 - Executive Group
 - Allegheny Millwork Inc.
 - **Tiede Zoeller (SDVOB)**
 - FCS Group (MBE)
 - **R.W Painting (WBE)**
 - **Superior Steel Door and Trim Co., Inc. (WBE)**
 - **GP Flooring Solutions (WBE)**
 - **Heritage Contract Flooring, LLC**
 - Rommel Fence, LLC (WBE)
 - **Billitier Electric, Inc.**
 - Design Communications, Ltd.
 - **Scrufari Construction Co., LLC**
 - **Union Concrete & Construction Corp.**

*BOLD = Regional

For List of Awarded Contractors and Package Descriptions, please visit www.buffalobillsnewstadium.com/contracting-opportunities

POST CONSTRUCTION OPERATION

Member Semaia highlighted the Maintenance and Operations as well as Concessions goals outlined in the CBA:

- “Developer shall use commercially reasonable efforts to implement initiatives for maximizing participation in the maintenance and operation of the New Stadium, including, without limitation, aiming to achieve the following goals:
 - 30% and 6% of all retailers, vendors, and service companies used in stadium maintenance and operations to be MWBE and SDVOB firms, respectively
 - 30% and 6% of all monies paid to retailers, vendors, and service companies used in stadium maintenance and operations be paid to MWBE and SDVOB firms, respectively
 - 30% of the food products used by the concessionaire to be purchased from Erie County certified MWBE food service companies
 - Preference given to food and beverage items for sale at New Stadium produced and/or manufactured in New York State
 - Require the concessionaire to administer food and beverage service mentorship programs for MWBEs”

Member Semaia highlighted the ongoing efforts in by Developments by JEM, which has now conducted two workshops with participation from 50 minority and women owned businesses. DBJ continues to assist businesses in completing applications for New York State and Erie County MWBE certifications. The participating businesses represent a range of industries, including food, construction consulting, art consulting, coaching/motivational speaking, health and wellness, and financial coaching.

Member Semaia noted that he and Developments by JEM were invited by County Legislator Dupre to participate in the District 1 Block Club Brunch held at the William-Emslie YMCA. They engaged in direct dialogue with community members, sharing information about available opportunities and receiving valuable feedback on the project.

Member Semaia next provided an update regarding Developer’s ongoing meetings with Legends, along with continued planning and research (including via NYS and Erie County databases of certified firms). Additionally, Legends has posted the General Manager and Executive Chef positions, both critical roles in the planning and preparation for the 2026 opening and is actively moving forward with the hiring process.

Member Semaia shared a high-level timeframe for Legends’ concessions planning and implementation:



ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY BENEFITS UPDATES

Next, Member Semaia discussed the Bills and Developer’s various initiatives over the prior month, including:

- The Bills are recognizing Mental Health and Wellness Awareness Month by promoting healthy habits and emotional well-being, while highlighting local resources like BestSelf Behavioral Health, ECMC Health Services, Crisis Services, Mental Health Advocates of WNY, and Let’s Talk Stigma
 - Bills RB Ray Davis was honored with the 2025 Advocacy Award for Mental Health Awareness – “I will continue to make strides and impact this city. Children need to be loved, they need the foundation.”
- The Bills and Wegmans teamed up to support local food-insecure families with food allergies and special diet needs, donating \$20,000 to FeedmoreWNY
- The Bills partnered with the Bandits, Sabres, and Seneca Gaming Corporation to host Seneca Sports Day for Seneca Nation Youth

Member Semaia then shared updates on the Public Art Program, which will feature talented artists from across the region. The first panel review is underway for submissions related to the hanging ceiling art. The pool includes both world-class artists and emerging artists who have not previously had a platform of this scale. Selection panels are being finalized and future updates will be provided to the CBOC. The goal is to highlight the region’s unique strengths and culture through various forms of public art, including hanging ceiling installations, wall art, and murals.

Member Semaia also highlighted the Bills' dedicated webpage for the Community Benefits Agreement, which serves as a central hub where anyone in the community can access information about the CBA. The

page includes links to the CBA, the CBOC, the annual report, and details on how to submit community vulnerabilities and priorities, request donations and sponsorships, and funding from the Bills Foundation. Member Semaia reiterated that the CBA is an aggregation of various ways the Bills invest in the community. In addition to public CBOC meetings, the Annual Public Hearing, and contacting Penny Semaia directly, the website also provides a submission form for the community to share their vulnerabilities and priorities. The website is <https://www.buffalobills.com/new-stadium/community-benefits-agreement>.

To conclude his presentation, Member Semaia highlighted methods of outreach for information pertaining to the CBOC, including physical and online postings to buffalobills.com and erie.gov, as well as distribution to papers of record such as the *Buffalo Challenger*, *The Criterion*, *Grand Island Dispatch*, *East Aurora Advertiser*, and *Lancaster Bee*. Additionally, information is shared with news media outlets like WUFO, *Buffalo News*, WIVB, WKBW, WGRZ, and Spectrum News. Further community outreach by the Bills includes flyers being placed in community centers by community engagement coordinator Developments by JEM. Meeting Notices, Meeting Minutes, Meeting Agendas, Meeting Materials, Annual Reports, and the CBOC Directory are all made available to the public.

Comments by committee members :

- **Member Sumbundu** inquired whether the art installations would be interior or exterior. He also asked about the composition of the selection committee, and requested information on the submission deadlines.
 - In response, **Member Semaia** commented that the public art program is intended to enhance the new Highmark Stadium through hanging ceiling art, wall art, and murals located throughout the stadium. He said selection panel requests were sent to all public art and institutional groups across the region and recommendations were collected. From recommendations, diverse selection committees are being formed including representatives and faculty from institutions such as the University at Buffalo, Buffalo State, Buffalo AKG Art Museum, and the Burchfield Penney Art Center. Submission deadlines for artists vary by category and are posted on the Buffalo Bills website. Two informational sessions have been held with interested artists, each drawing over 100 participants, reported to be some of the highest attendance for such sessions in the NFL to date.
- **Member Sumbundu** noted that, regarding the concessions and post-construction schedule, key positions and contacts, such as those for security contracts and HR, will be awarded soon. He specifically inquired about the anticipated timeline for rolling out the security contract and how minority-owned firms and groups in the area can be included in the conversation and the RFP process.
 - **Member Semaia** responded, clarifying that Legends handles the concessions, while security falls under the Bills' operations. He noted that there are ongoing internal discussions to ensure CBA opportunities are addressed.
- **Member Frederick** noted that during the annual public hearing in December, Member Semaia shared his personal email and phone number with the public. She asked how that outreach has been going and whether there is awareness of the official website.

- **Member Semaia** responded that he believes providing his contact information has worked. He said he addresses inquiries on a case-by-case basis, sometimes requesting follow-ups and other times respectfully declining while thanking individuals for their interest.
- **Member Parker** noted that the website looks great and expressed appreciation that it is live. She asked whether there is a plan for data collection and whether that information could supplement the annual town hall meeting and whether CBOC members would have access to that information.
 - In response, **Member Semaia** said that he keeps track of all submissions. If the submissions are relevant to the CBOC, he will bring forward key themes to support priority setting.
 - **Member Cannady** added that since submissions are made through the Bills website, there may be privacy considerations, and the Bills must be careful in how information is distributed.
 - **Member Frederick, Member Parker, and Member Sumbundu** each agreed that sharing information in the form of themes would be sufficient for the CBOC to support priority setting.
- **Member Sumbundu** noted that **Member Semaia** had mentioned a career fair being planned and asked for additional details about the plans.
 - **Member Semaia** responded that the Bills, Erie County, ESD, NYS DOL, Gilbane|Turner, and DBJ are focusing on opportunities for job seekers in the region. He said the group is working with Paul Brown and the Buffalo Building Trade unions to ensure broad participation. The NYS DOL will provide extensive resources for both new and seasoned job seekers. The event is expected to take place in mid-to-late July with the location being centrally located for easy access to parking and transportation lines.
- **Member Cannady** inquired whether dates for June and July had been finalized.
 - **Member Semaia** responded that he is waiting for confirmation from one individual on the CBOC.

Chairman Blue closed Agenda Item No. 4.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 New Business

No new business was brought forth by CBOC members.

Chairman Blue closed Agenda Item No. 5.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 Public Comment

Member Semaia opened the meeting for public comment, which is limited to three (3) minutes per commenter.

- **Connie Irvin** – Ms. Irvin commented that she believes small businesses and MWBEs need clearer processes to access economic opportunities related to concessions. She noted that there is confusion about whether vendors and suppliers should apply through ASM Global, Legends or Highmark. She also noted that job listings are difficult to find and she has concerns that time may be running short for small businesses to prepare without more support. Irvin added that the milestones and

timelines provided focus primarily on employment rather than vendor inclusion and that training is needed for wider participation.

Chairman Blue closed Agenda Item No. 6.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 Adjournment

Member Semaia adjourned the meeting at 11:33 AM ET, upon motion by Member Sumbundu and seconded by Member Frederick.

The next CBOC meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 9, 2025.