

MINUTES

NEW HIGHMARK STADIUM COMMUNITY BENEFITS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

June 23, 2025

SUNY Erie – North Campus – Gleasner Hall Auditorium
6205 Main St., Williamsville, NY 14221
Monday, June 23, 2025

The CBOC convened for its 14th meeting on Monday, June 23, 2025, at SUNY Erie – North Campus in Buffalo, NY. The meeting was conducted in person and public notice was posted in accordance with NY Open Meetings Law.

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

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Blue at 11:03 AM ET. Chairman Blue established that a quorum was present.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rhonda Frederick, Chairman Mark Blue, Penny Semaia, Todd Starowitz, Maria Whyte, Franchelle Parker, Erich Weyant and Toni Cannady – 8

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mo Sumbundu – 1

Member Semaia closed Agenda Item No. 1.

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

Chairman Blue requested a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the committee's prior meeting on Monday, May 12, 2025. Upon a motion by Member Frederick, seconded by Member Whyte, and without opposition, the CBOC approved the meeting minutes.

Member Semaia closed Agenda Item No. 2.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 Old Business

Chairman Blue opened the floor for committee members to discuss old business. No old business was brought forth by committee members.

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 noted that there were not significant reporting changes from last month's update. He shared a time-lapse video capturing construction progress from the start of construction through the June 5th groundbreaking anniversary. Member Semaia noted construction is now over 50% complete, with approximately 1,400 to 1,500 workers on site.

Additionally, Member Semaia highlighted that the Bills invited and hosted CBOC members on the construction site for an in-depth experience. A key highlight was the opportunity for attending members, which included Member Frederick and Member Sumbundu, to sit with Bills COO Pete Guelli and receive a presentation from VP of Stadium Development John Polka, who shared the conception of the stadium and how design ideas were inspired by the rich architecture of buildings in Buffalo. Members toured the site and experienced the environment and workforce firsthand, including the accommodations and resources provided by Gilbane|Turner to workers, such as break rooms, mental health and safety services, and other supports aimed at promoting well-being on the jobsite. Member Frederick highlighted that the stadium will have great accessibility updates, including a sensory room.

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) 23.73% for minority work hours (which exceeds the 15% goal) and (ii) 16.46% for apprentice work hours (which exceeds the 10% goal). Developer also reported the following percentages with respect to non-minority women work hours: 3.59% 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 a workforce career fair at KeyBank Center on July 19th with focus on recruiting women and highlighting construction job opportunities available throughout the region. The event will begin to be advertised and open for registration the week of June 23rd.

Category	Goal	Through 4/30/2025
Minority Work Hours	15%	23.73%
Non-Minority Women Work Hours	5%	3.59%
Apprentice Work Hours	10%	16.46%

- **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 <= \$1,000,000: 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). Member Semaia noted that next month's updates will include hard dollar spends from the construction project toward MWBEs and SDVOBs.

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 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). He shared that 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 advancing to the final stages of the hiring process. In Q2, Legends will also post and hire for other key leadership positions, including the Director of Sales and Director of Human Resources, both of which are vital for the next phases of the project.

Member Semaia highlighted the ongoing proactive efforts 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. Developments by JEM also held its first “Certified, Now What?” session, focused on supporting businesses newly certified by the State and County with their capability statements and RFPs. The series is ongoing, with additional sessions planned in the coming weeks.

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:

- Full Team Community Takeover: The Bills participated in a one-of-a-kind event as the entire team visited 12 local schools across Western New York simultaneously for a surprise community initiative which impacted over 6,000 students across the region.
- The Bills partnered with the American Heart Association, UBMD, and Buffalo Public Schools to help provide CPR Training at the Buffalo Public School Summit at All High Stadium.
- The Bills and Highmark BCBS staff participated in the 2025 Buffalo Pride Parade.

Member Semaia then shared updates on the Public Art Program, which will feature talented artists from across the region. Member Semaia shared that the region boasts phenomenal artists, including globally renowned talents as well as others who may lack prior experience but are equally gifted. A call for artists

was issued for paid opportunities, with regional recruitment underway for both artists and panelists. Member Semaia will provide updates as available. He noted the volume of interest has been remarkable, about triple the team's expectations, and the project's art consultant, who has worked with a dozen NFL stadiums and teams, called it one of the most robust responses she has seen for public art. The goal is to showcase 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>.

Member Semaia noted that only a handful of submissions have been received, with just one specifically related to the CBA; other submissions have been forwarded to the appropriate department leads. One comment emphasized that building a beautiful Buffalo requires involvement of MWBEs, to which Member Semaia responded directly.

Next, 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, including the Delevan Grider Community Center, Buffalo's Golden Corner Store on Jefferson Ave, Frank E. Merriweather Library, Golden Cup Coffee on Jefferson Ave, and Mandella Market on E. Ferry, 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.

To conclude his presentation, Member Semaia noted that the Annual Public Hearing is to be held in September per the CBOC's bylaws, and that the committee needs to identify and schedule a date.

Comments by committee members:

- **Member Frederick** shared that regarding the CBOC tour, she was impressed by the accessibility features of the stadium, including the inclusion of sensory room and the thoughtful design for all users. She noted that it was a wonderful tour that provided great insight into all that has gone into the project.
- **Member Whyte**, regarding the workforce career fair, suggested that Member Semaia and the planning team connect with and share information with the Buffalo Futures group.
 - In response, **Member Semaia** agreed, noted that the group is already on the team's list, and thanked Member Whyte for the introduction. He shared that he has followed up with the group consistently and will have additional meetings with them.

- **Member Whyte**, regarding the Hands-Only CPR training, noted that her understanding is the region needs to train approximately 150,000 people annually, or about 15% of the population, to be designated as a Heart Smart Community. Member Whyte asked whether the numbers of individuals trained have been pulled into that overall count.
 - **Member Semaia** responded that he recalls the Bills helped train approximately 70,000 people last year alone.
- **Member Whyte**, regarding the concessions slide, expressed appreciation for the timeline of positions to be employed by Legends. She asked about the CBOC's focus not only on employees working on site but also on diversity among vendors, noting that vendor announcements are not reflected in the timeline. She inquired about the process for vendor selection, including whether there will be an RFP and if vendors will be invited from the community to respond.
 - **Member Semaia** responded that filling key leadership positions is critical to advancing that process. He explained that the current Legends leadership has been educated on the CBA, including its expectations and priorities. Once leadership positions are filled, a timeline for vendor opportunities can be developed and communicated. The vision is for this process to be similar to that used in construction, including public notices and community meetings with DBJ.
 - **Member Whyte** then asked if DBJ will be retained to assist and support Legends.
 - **Member Semaia** noted that DBJ remains involved with the project through construction, with preparation for post-construction activities occurring during this timeframe.
- **Member Whyte** asked if per the timeline provided, that the RFP process for vendors would realistically begin in Q1 2026 or later.
 - **Member Semaia** responded that he would not say that definitively.
 - **Member Whyte** emphasized there is a degree of responsibility by the CBOC to help spread the word about available opportunities at the new stadium and expressed that the CBOC does not want to miss any critical moments in time to engage with the community and vendors. She stressed the importance of making information available so the CBOC can support the effort effectively.
 - **Member Semaia** acknowledged Member Whyte's comment and agreed.
- **Chairman Blue** asked for clarification on the actual dates for Q1, Q2, etc. **Member Semaia** explained that Q1 refers to January through March of the calendar year, with each quarter spanning three months.

Chairman Blue closed Agenda Item No. 4.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 New Business

Member Whyte asked if the 2024 annual report is still anticipated to be received next month in July. Member Semaia confirmed the report is due July 29th, following the July 23rd meeting.

Member Whyte emphasized that the FY 2024 report should include a greater level of detail, going at least one or two layers deeper than what was presented for FY 2023. She appreciated that the report was structured to mirror the CBA but noted it would be important to specify the portion of contributions that were cash versus in-kind.

She also commented on the section titled “Upward Mobility.” She acknowledged the Community Foundation’s work on best practices in this area. However, she noted that food security, while very important, was included under Upward Mobility but does not align with the current definition of upward mobility, which generally focuses on career success, economic advancement, increased power and autonomy, and community belonging and contribution. She suggested that food security be addressed separately rather than within an Upward Mobility section.

Member Semaia responded that all community investments, including both in-kind and cash contributions, are included in the Community Investment. Regarding upward mobility, he recalled earlier comments and committed to ensuring the section aligns with the working definition of upward mobility.

Member Starowitz suggested reviewing potential dates and location for the Annual Public Hearing. Member Whyte proposed scheduling the event after the September 8 CBOC regular meeting, suggesting the week of September 15th or 22nd, and presumed it would be held in the evening. The CBOC identified 6:00 p.m. on September 25th as the date for the Annual Public Hearing, with the location to be determined.

Chairman Blue closed Agenda Item No. 5.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 Public Comment

Chairman Blue opened the meeting for public comment, which is limited to three (3) minutes per commenter. No members of the public provided comment.

Chairman Blue closed Agenda Item No. 6.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 Adjournment

Member Semaia adjourned the meeting at 11:28AM ET, upon motion by Member Whyte and seconded by Member Semaia.

The next CBOC meeting is scheduled for July 23, 2025 at the Lackawanna Public Library.