

MINUTES

NEW HIGHMARK STADIUM COMMUNITY BENEFITS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

August 11, 2025

SUNY Erie – South Campus – Room 5102
4041 Southwestern Blvd, Orchard Park, NY 14127
Monday, August 11, 2025

The CBOC convened for its 16th meeting on Monday, August 11, 2025, at SUNY Erie – South Campus in Orchard Park, 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 11:07 AM ET. Chairman Blue established that a quorum was present.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Erich Weyant –1

Member Semaia closed Agenda Item No. 1.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 23, 2025, CBOC Meeting (Action Item)

Chairman Blue requested a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the committee's prior meeting on Wednesday, July 23, 2025. Member Sumbundu noted that the July 23 minutes should be amended to reflect his attendance at the meeting. Upon a motion by Member Frederick, seconded by Member Parker, and without opposition, the CBOC approved the amended 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.

- In response to a question raised by community member, Kyria Stephens, at the last CBOC meeting regarding how organizations can become involved and get in touch with the CBOC and Bills, Member Semaia reiterated that his contact information had been provided to facilitate further outreach and communication.
- In response to Member Whyte's question from the previous meeting regarding how many Erie County MWBE-certified firms exist, Member Semaia reported that the Developer identified 10 Erie County-certified businesses specifically with food service-adjacent language in their scope of service descriptions.

- In response to a previous question regarding how impact is tracked, Member Semaia noted that several new programs created under the CBA, such as the career fair, Developments by JEM workshops supporting Erie County businesses, and other initiatives aligned with CBA objectives, have associated metrics in place to evaluate outcomes and community impact.
- Member Semaia also reported that, upon reviewing the website, there is language addressing various types of requests, including donations, events, sponsorships, and a dropdown menu for other areas that any group or organization may wish to request. He reiterated that his direct contact information is available, and emphasized the importance of maintaining open lines of communication and encouraged more individualized discussions around community impact and engagement.
 - Member Whyte acknowledged Member Semaia's input and suggested that a future meeting includes a walkthrough of the website. She suggested showcasing where users can find options for other types of requests (e.g., non-event-related CBA support) would be helpful to the public. She recommended dedicating time to an upcoming meeting to review this information for clarity and accessibility.
 - Chairman Blue suggested that this type of presentation might be better suited for a public hearing where there would likely be greater attendance.
 - Member Semaia and Member Whyte agreed. Member Semaia stated that he would be glad to proactively demonstrate the website's functionality again, ensure his contact information is prominently displayed, and highlight the CBA-specific communication line.

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 reported that stadium construction has continued to progress rapidly since the last CBOC meeting held a few weeks ago. Ongoing work includes advancement on interior spaces, the seating bowl, field technology, and the exterior façade. Current installations include perforated metal panels, elevators and escalators, lighting, drywall, painting, masonry, ribbon boards, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEPs), as well as Family Circle site preparation.

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 June 30, 2025, Developer has exceeded its minority and apprentice workforce hours, reporting (i) 23.99% for minority work hours (which exceeds the 15% goal) and (ii) 16.71% for apprentice work hours (which exceeds the 10% goal). Developer also reported the following percentages with respect to women work hours: 4.23% for women work hours (which falls just below the 5% target). Member Semaia noted that, at the request of the Erie County compliance team, the women work hours now include non-minority women, consolidating all women's work hours into a single category.

Category	Goal	Through 6/30/2025
Minority Work Hours	15%	23.99%
Women Work Hours	5%	4.23%
Apprentice Work Hours	10%	16.71%

- Business Participation Update:
 - As of the Q2 2025 quarterly update from Empire State Development's Office of Contractor and Supplier Diversity, the Developer has a paid-to-date utilization of \$163,248,786 toward Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (MBEs), \$136,810,935 toward Women-Owned Business Enterprises (WBEs), and \$46,765,361 toward Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses (SDVOBs), for a collective total of \$346,825,082 paid toward MWBE and SDVOB participation. This reflects utilization progress of 10.6% toward the 15% goal for MBEs, 8.9% toward the 15% goal for WBEs (which is 19.5% of the 30% total MWBE goal), and 3.0% toward the 6% goal for SDVOBs.

Category	Goal		Paid-to-Date Utilization of Total Contract Q2 2025	
MBE	\$231,000,000	15%	\$163,248,785.86	10.6%
WBE	\$231,000,000	15%	\$136,810,935.18	8.9%
MWBE	\$462,000,000	30%	\$300,059,721.04	19.5%
SDVOB	\$94,400,000	6%	\$46,765,361.12	3.0%
MWBE & SDVOB Total			\$346,825,082.16	



- 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



○ 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 proactive efforts by Developments by JEM (DBJ), which has conducted two workshops with participation from 50 minority- and women-owned businesses. DBJ continues to assist these businesses in completing applications for New York State and Erie County MWBE certifications. The participating businesses represent a wide range of industries, including food, construction consulting, art consulting, coaching and motivational speaking, health and wellness, beauty salons, and financial coaching. Since the last CBOC meeting, DBJ has held three additional “Certified, Now What?” sessions to support newly certified State and County businesses with developing capability statements and responding to requests for proposals (RFPs), with another session currently being planned.

Member Semaia provided an update on the Developer’s ongoing meetings with Legends, including continued planning and research using New York State and Erie County databases of certified firms. He reported that the Bills have met with Legends Hospitality’s new General Manager and Regional Vice President. Legends is currently laying out a plan for upcoming opportunities, with more details to be shared in future updates. Legends is also in the process of hiring key leadership positions, including the Director of Sales and the Director of Human Resources, which are essential for the next phases of the project. Member Semaia further noted that additional roles have already been publicly posted by Legends. He also shared a flyer and QR code linking directly to these job opportunities. Finally, Member Semaia clarified that no Requests for Proposals (RFPs) or Requests for Qualifications (RFQs) have been issued to date.

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:

- **Training Camp, Return of Blue and Red, and Preseason:** A number of community groups participated and attended these events, per the CBA Section 5(i).
- **Shadow Program:** In collaboration with Say Yes Buffalo, a pilot program was conducted where five young men were given the opportunity to participate in guided behind-the-scenes tours to experience what it's like to run and operate an NFL club and stadium. Participants met with the Senior Vice President for Venue Operations and Fan Experience, the Head of HR Talent Acquisition, and the Vice President of Hospitality. Workshops are underway to present and engage on curriculum development, with ongoing measurement and follow-up. Feedback from this pilot will help grow and improve the program moving forward, with plans to expand the shadow pilot into different areas and include additional participants. This initiative serves as the foundation for a broader program launch.

Member Semaia noted that elements and information of the art program will begin to be unveiled in the near future.

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>.

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.

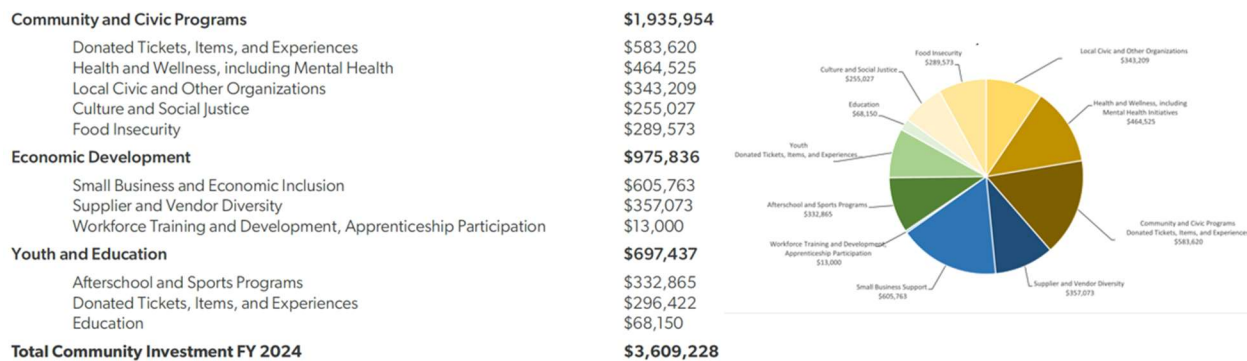
PRESENTATION OF CBA ANNUAL REPORT FY 2024

Member Semaia presented the Community Benefits Annual Report covering Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. He noted that the CBA reflects the Bills' ongoing commitment to enhancing community well-being and creating a lasting positive impact on Erie County and Western New York. The report covers the period from April 1, 2024, through March 31, 2025 and covers only the categories specific to the CBA and does not include all of the Bills' work, donations, and community investments in totality.

- In FY 2024, the Bills' CBA-related Community Investment totaled \$3,609,228. To date, the cumulative CBA-related investment over the first two years totals \$7.3 million, which exceeds the goal commitment by \$1.2 million:

Fiscal Year	Goal	Community Investment
2023	\$3,000,000	\$3,682,553
2024	\$3,060,000	\$3,609,965
Total	\$6,060,000	\$7,292,518

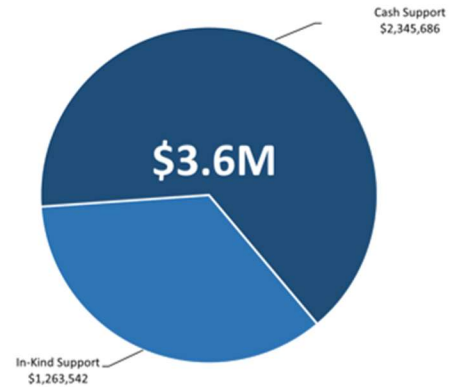
- The total Community Investment of \$3,609,228 for FY 2024 is categorized according to the objectives of the CBA as follows:



Member Semaia highlighted the role of sports in uniting communities and strengthening bonds across Western New York. As part of the FY 2024 Community Investment, the Bills provided \$1,263,542 in in-kind contributions to support various causes and community organizations. These contributions included both tangible resources and impactful experiences, such as youth programming at Highmark Stadium and various engagement initiatives. The goal of these efforts is to increase access, build relationships, and support underserved areas, reinforcing the team's commitment to creating meaningful impact beyond the field:

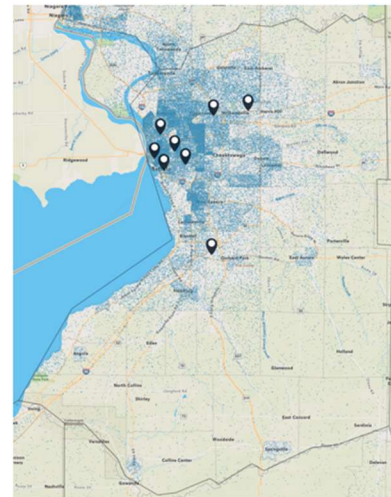
In-Kind Support includes:

Donated Tickets	\$748,077
Donated Experiences and Events	\$383,500
Donated Items	\$131,965



- Member Semaia highlighted the CBOC's recommendation to distribute meetings across Erie County and noted that most have occurred in densely populated areas, sharing the following map to illustrate this distribution:

- April 22, 2024 – Downtown Central Library, Buffalo, NY 14203
- July 8, 2024 – Downtown Central Library, Buffalo, NY 14203
- August 12, 2024 – SUNY Erie North Campus, Williamsville, NY 14221
- September 9, 2024 – SUNY Buffalo State University, Buffalo, NY 14222
- October 15, 2024 – Highmark Stadium, Orchard Park, NY 14127
- November 12, 2024 – Downtown Central Library, Buffalo, NY 14203
- December 9, 2025 – SUNY Erie North Campus, Williamsville, NY 14221
- December 10, 2025 – Frank E. Merriweather Jr. Library, Buffalo, NY 14208
- January 13, 2025 – SUNY Erie South Campus, Orchard Park, NY 14127
- February 24, 2025 – Downtown Central Library, Buffalo, NY 14203
- March 17, 2025 – Matt Urban Center, Buffalo, NY 14212



Comments by committee members:

- Regarding the business participation update now that we are a year out from construction and entering the final phase, Member Sumbundu inquired whether any change orders are currently being made to increase participation and ensure the final goals are met by the end of next summer.
 - In response, **Member Semaia** explained that the process is fluid. Every step of compliance and good faith efforts is being tracked, monitored, and measured both internally and in coordination with the Empire State Development compliance group. They continuously assess their current status, identify opportunities, navigate challenges, and make progress accordingly. The primary focus and goal remain to meet the targets by putting forth and tracking all good faith efforts as required by the CCA.
- Member Sumbundu** indicated that he understands the SDVOB goal is a lot harder to get to. He asked how the team plans to meet it within the next year and inquired about what remains to be completed in terms of construction.

- **Member Semaia** clarified the percentages, noting that the project is already 65% toward the MWBE goal. He explained that while about a year's worth of work remains, there is still a high volume of work to be completed.
- **Member Whyte** asked if Member Semaia was saying they are 4.4% away from meeting the MBE utilization goal and 6.1% away from the WBE goal. **Member Semaia** confirmed both figures.
- **Member Whyte** then asked what percentage of the total project budget remains to be expended and how likely it is to close the gap based on the remaining expenditure, noting that this information would help to better assess the situation.
 - **Member Semaia** replied that the compliance team is managing this but he did not have the data available.
- **Member Sumbundu** emphasized the importance of setting expectations with the community about what work remains in terms of construction to help the Developer meet the goals outlined in the project agreement.
 - **Member Semaia** reminded the group that there is plenty of work to be done. He noted that Empire State Development, as the overseeing compliance body, is focused on this and that he will follow up with the team to see what additional information can be provided.
- **Member Frederick** asked if any more RFPs are expected to be issued.
 - **Member Semaia** responded that all RFPs were presented early in the meetings and project, and are posted separately on the stadium website.
- **Chairman Blue** inquired what Member Semaia meant by community investments in totality and whether the Bills have invested more than the \$3,000,000 outlined in the CBA.
 - **Member Semaia** clarified that the Bills' overall investment exceeds the \$3 million specifically attributed to the CBA. He explained that only the portion directly contributed by the Bills organization under the CBA is counted toward that figure, while the broader impact of initiatives such as Give 716 extends beyond what is reflected in that amount.
- **Member Sumbundu** thanked Member Semaia for the breakdown of in-kind and cash value contributions. He pointed to page 12 of the report, under Small Business Support and Economic Inclusion, which lists \$605,763 allocated in that category. He suggested that a significant portion was spent to help MWBEs and SDVOBs get certified. From his understanding, these funds were used to help the Bills meet participation goals for the stadium set by the State and County and he asked why this spending is being counted toward community benefits.
 - **Member Semaia** explained that when they invested in the economic impact team, the goal was to broadly support the region's economy and small businesses. For example, Developments by JEM helps extend community benefits beyond stadium-related businesses to a variety of local businesses. Many workshops focused on helping businesses in areas such as tax support, grant writing, and industries like hair salons that are not connected to the stadium. The intent has been to create opportunities for a wide range of businesses, not only those directly involved with the stadium project. Non-stadium focused businesses who become certified should now have the opportunity to use certifications to open doors and access more opportunities through county and state certification programs.

- **Member Whyte** expressed appreciation for the extensive work that went into preparing the report. She noted there is certainly a lot to celebrate and thanked the Bills for clearly highlighting both in-kind and cash contributions. After reviewing the numbers, she observed that about one-third of the total contributions are in-kind. However, when adding Donated Tickets, Items, and Experiences under both Community and Youth, the total does not match the approximately \$1.2 million reported in in-kind contributions. There is a difference of \$383,500. She asked for more details on how that remaining amount is distributed across the different subcategories. She appreciated that the Bills identified specific categories but would like a clearer understanding of the remaining amount.
 - **Member Semaia** said he will follow up to get the full details and report back to Member Whyte. He believes much of the remaining amount comes from donated use of spaces free of charge and the costs associated with operating and hosting those events.
- **Member Whyte** asked how the Bills identified the specific organizations that received cash contributions. She wondered if it was simply based on organizations emailing and following the process and requested an explanation of how any of the listed organizations came to receive funding.
 - **Member Semaia** responded that there are a multitude of ways. There are established relationships with organizations, and the CBA clearly states that continued work is expected, including some scopes explicitly written in the CBA. There are also scopes in which the Bills have not yet participated. For example, programs like Be Your Own Hero, which focus on youth career readiness, align with their commitment to workforce development. He added that the answer is multi-faceted: outreach happens through the CBA website, recommendations from the CBOC funnel individuals and groups, and ongoing relationships with those they have already met. The goal is to start and continue building relationships that support and invest in the community.
 - **Member Whyte** noted the importance of demonstrating to the public that the outreach efforts are meaningful and that individuals and organizations have real opportunities to connect with the Bills and build relationships.
- **Member Whyte** commented on the looking forward section of the report, which includes the Bills sharing the community vulnerabilities and priorities set by the CBOC. She asked how the FY 2025 report might reflect those priorities.
 - **Member Semaia** said the Bills are actively working on this. They want to ensure the report captures and memorializes how they identify specific actions based on vulnerabilities and priorities. He added this will be an addition they plan to include while also reiterating the agreed upon importance of consistent year-to-year reporting.
- **Member Whyte** expressed to Chairman Blue that she hopes the report could remain on the table for potential discussion at next month's meeting, noting this was the first time it was publicly presented and emphasizing the importance of keeping it open for further conversation. **Chairman Blue** agreed.
- **Member Sumbundu** emphasized the importance of hearing directly from organizations benefiting from the agreement, such as BestSelf. He suggested inviting these organizations to share the impact and benefits of their work at one of the meetings. He noted this would be very helpful for the committee, the Bills, and the general public.

- **Member Sumbundu** said that at one of the meetings it would be helpful to discuss women and minority work hours. He noted there is uncertainty about meeting the goals and said it would be useful to dive deeper into that.
 - **Member Semaia** said he will take this back to the compliance team.
- **Member Frederick** asked about the economic impact and the role of the economic impact manager under small business and economic inclusion
 - **Member Semaia** explained that a full-time impact manager role was established through a partnership with Gilbane Turner to help identify opportunities not only in workforce development but also for growing regional businesses. He added that the role was created to provide focused support across the board.

Chairman Blue closed Agenda Item No. 4.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 New Business

Chairman Blue noted scheduling conflicts among CBOC members and proposed rescheduling the originally planned Annual Hearing on September 25th to Tuesday, September 9th, and cancelling the regular meeting scheduled for September 8th. After discussion, CBOC members agreed to cancel the September 8th meeting and instead hold the Annual Public Hearing on September 9th at 6:00 p.m. The location will be determined by Erie County.

Chairman Blue noted that, typically during public comment, questions are received but not immediately answered. However, if a response can be provided at the time, the committee will do so to offer clarity. Questions that cannot be addressed during the meeting will be tabled and responses will be provided after further review.

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. The following members of the public made comment:

- **Al Eichberg, President of AWE Concrete**, raised concerns about concrete quality issues in the inner bowl and asked how repairs, including sandblasting and patching, are progressing. He also inquired about material composition and whether any of the issues could result in additional costs to taxpayers.
- **Michael Bogucki, Venue Strategies**, shared that Buffalo Public Schools is promoting a graduation impact program, including an eligibility policy adjustment and a plan to provide academic advisors for student-athletes and extracurricular participants. A full rollout was proposed last year but has since been scaled to 2–4 pilot schools. He asked if the program aligns with community investment in youth and education, and whether there is openness to revising and resubmitting it. In response, **Member Semaia** noted he is happy to reconnect with Mr. Bogucki.

Chairman Blue closed Agenda Item No. 6.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 Adjournment

Chairman Blue adjourned the meeting at 12:02PM ET. The next CBOC meeting will be the Annual Public Hearing, scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on September 9, with the location to be determined by Erie County.