

MINUTES

NEW HIGHMARK STADIUM COMMUNITY BENEFITS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

January 12, 2026

Isaias Gonzalez-Soto Branch Library
280 Porter Ave, Buffalo NY 14201
Monday, January 12, 2026

The CBOC convened for its 20th meeting on Monday, January 12, 2026, at 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

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Blue at 11:07 AM ET. Chairman Blue established that a quorum was present. Chairman Blue then invited CBOC members to provide brief introductions for the audience.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Penny Semaia, Todd Starowitz, Toni Cannady, Rhonda Frederick*, Chairman Mark Blue, Franchelle Parker, Mo Sumbundu* – 7

MEMBERS ABSENT: Erich Weyant, Maria Whyte – 2

*Members Sumbundu and Frederick were present via videoconference, which per NY OML and the CBOC's video conferencing procedures (available here: <https://www3.erie.gov/eeo/sites/www3.erie.gov.eeo/files/2024-08/cboc-written-procedures-regardingvideoconferencing-due-to-exigent-circumstances.pdf>) shall not count toward a quorum of the CBOC (although Members Whyte and Weyant were able to participate and vote, given that a quorum of members were present at a physical location open to the public).

Member Semaia closed Agenda Item No. 1.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 8, 2025, CBOC Meeting (Action Item)

Chairman Blue requested a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the committee's meeting minutes on December 8, 2025. Upon a motion by Member Semaia, 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

Chairman Blue opened the floor for committee members to discuss old business.

1. **Resolution Regarding Community Vulnerabilities and Priorities.** In introducing the agenda item, Member Semaia noted that the CBOC hosted its annual public hearing the evening of

September 9 at the Agustin-Olivencia Community Center, as well as an additional extended evening CBOC meeting on November 19 at Enterprise Charter School. A draft resolution was distributed to CBOC members in advance for review and was presented today for discussion and a vote for approval. Upon a motion by Member Semaia, seconded by Member Parker, and without opposition, the CBOC passed the resolution. Before being brought to a vote, Member Whyte and additional CBOC members provided comments pertaining to the resolution (see below).

Comments by committee members

- **Member Sumbundu** thanked the committee for genuine community participation and commended the well-drafted resolution. They noted that while the resolution clarifies that prioritizing youth does not exclude continued investments, it does not address how recommendations will be measured.
 - **Member Semaia** responded that the Bills measure progress through existing programs that align with CBOC objectives, and that under the CBA, any new programs are required to include measurable outcomes. As new programs are developed and implemented, tracking mechanisms will be incorporated.
- **Member Frederick** Member Frederick asked whether the committee could receive interim updates throughout the year, noting that the annual report contains extensive information. She asked if updates could be included regularly on the agenda and whether a similar resolution would be adopted each year.
 - **Member Semaia** responded that Community Benefits Updates are included at each meeting, that the annual report fulfills the CBA's reporting requirement, and that a resolution will be established annually to reflect community vulnerabilities and priorities.
 - **Member Cannady** noted that a resolution was also adopted last year and that the current resolution is largely based on it, and Member Frederick thanked her for the reminder.
- **Member Parker** noted that the small working group also reviewed data from sources such as Cornell, Open Buffalo, and the Community Foundation to ensure a fact-based approach, and that copies of those reports are available. She thanked the CBOC for coordinating the second public hearing and emphasized the importance of strong attendance. Member Parker asked what additional steps could be taken to encourage participation from community groups and residents.
 - **Chairman Blue** responded that holding an evening meeting helped provide equal opportunity for those who can only attend during the day or only in the evening.
- **Member Sumbundu** suggested that it should become standard practice to expand outreach to additional community groups and to include presentations at meetings from organizations benefiting from CBOC-related initiatives.
 - **Chairman Blue** agreed, noting that accountability goes both ways and should include hearing from groups that have received opportunities through the CBA.
 - **Member Cannady** added that the committee must be mindful that participation in meetings should not and cannot be perceived as a condition of receiving funding from the Bills.

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. Ongoing work includes advancements in interior spaces to ensure successful opening.

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 November 30, 2025, Developer has exceeded its minority and apprentice workforce hours, reporting (i) 24.16% for minority work hours (which exceeds the 15% goal) and (ii) 17.13% for apprentice work hours (which exceeds the 10% goal). Developer also reported the following percentages with respect to women work hours: 4.51% for women work hours (which falls just below the 5% target). Outreach and engagement efforts will be made throughout March for Women in Construction month.

Category	Goal	Through 11/30/2025
Minority Work Hours	15%	24.16%
Women Work Hours	5%	4.51%
Apprentice Work Hours	10%	17.13%

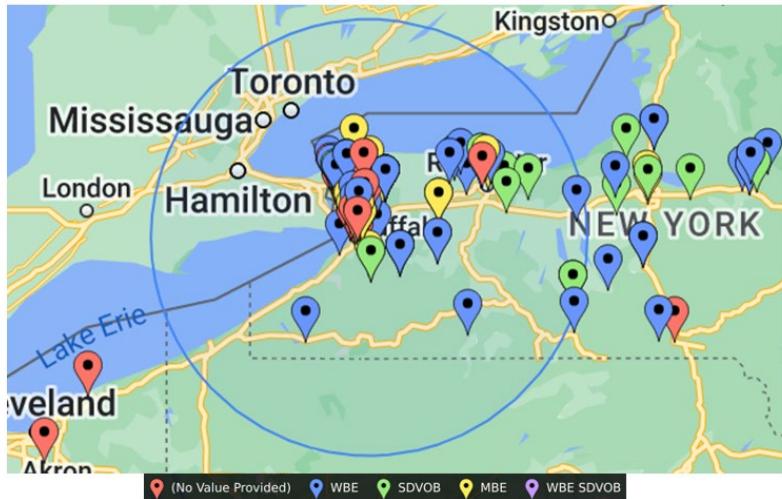
- Business Participation Update:
 - As of the Q3 2025 quarterly update from Empire State Development's Office of Contractor and Supplier Diversity, the Developer has a paid-to-date utilization of \$191,966,854 toward Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (MBEs), \$171,737,900 toward Women-Owned Business Enterprises (WBEs), and \$56,905,624 toward Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses (SDVOBs), for a collective total of \$420,610,378 paid toward MWBE and SDVOB participation. This reflects utilization progress of 12.5% toward the 15% goal for MBEs, 11.2% toward the 15% goal for WBEs (which is 23.6% of the 30% total MWBE goal), and 3.7% toward the 6% goal for SDVOBs. Additionally, the demolition scope provides additional opportunity to close remaining .1% gap for SDVOB participation.

Category	Goal		Paid-to-Date Utilization of Total Contract Q3 2025		Commitment Through Proposal Release #1-4
MBE	\$231,000,000	15%	\$191,966,854	12.5%	16.9%
WBE	\$231,000,000	15%	\$171,737,900	11.2%	16.5%
MWBE	\$462,000,000	30%	\$363,704,754	23.6%	33.4%
SDVOB	\$94,400,000	6%	\$56,905,624	3.7%	5.9%
MWBE & SDVOB Total			\$420,610,378		

- Developer has awarded a total of 363 MWBE/SDVOB contracts or OCSD-4 commitments. 221 of the awarded MWBE/SDVOB contracts or OCSD-4 commitments have been made to Regional MWBE/SDVOBs. 166 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: 363
 - Regional MWBE/SDVOB Contracts or OCSD-4 Commitments: 221
 - Regional MWBE/SDVOB Contracts or OCSD-4 Commitments <= \$1,000,000: 166

Regional MWBE/SDVOB Contracts or OCSD-4 Commitments	
< \$24,999	48
\$25,000 – \$49,999	18
\$50,000 – \$99,999	17
\$100,000 – \$249,999	31
\$250,000 – \$499,999	26
\$500,000 – \$1,000,000	26
Total <= \$1,000,000	166

*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**
- **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

*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 and Concessions goals outlined in the CBA, noting ongoing collaboration with state stakeholders, including the Erie County Stadium Corporation, on related processes:

- “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 provided an update on the Developer’s ongoing meetings with, and the efforts being made by both the Developer and Legends Global in support of CBA goals:

- Continued planning and research using New York State and Erie County databases of certified firms
- Legends has contacted 100% of known Erie County certified MWBEs with directory descriptions related or adjacent to food products, with initial discussions held with approximately 75%
- Legends has met with or sampled products from seven additional minority and women-owned businesses that may qualify for Erie County MWBE certification
- Legends is working with the Erie County Office of Agriculture to identify and schedule visits with regional and MWBE food producers and growers
- The Legends local leadership team participated in the MWBE Certification Informational Session for WNY food growers, producers, and processors and will also participate in the December 11 session
- Additional hires and positions continue to be made by Legends, including a full time Community Benefits representative
- Legends has established a dedicated email address, BillsHospitality@legends.net, for vendors interested in submitting inquiries related to concessions
- Legends is launching a free food and beverage and facilities service mentorship program, the Legends Global Supplier Development Series, a six-week business incubator for certified or eligible diverse-owned businesses, with applications closing February 7

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:

- Holiday Season activities and distributions
- Inspire Change initiatives: Code Blue donation, Buffalo Public School scholarship program
- CPR Training and Play 60 events

Additional organizational highlights include:

- Give716 raised \$1,443,689 in donations benefiting charitable organizations in WNY
- Huddle for Hunger reached 65,100 pounds of food
- Bills Foundation reached \$2 million milestone in community grants distributed to nearly 50 WNY organizations

Next, after an in-depth live demonstration at the November 2025 meeting, Member Semaia briefly shared the Bills' dedicated webpage for accessing resources related to the Community Benefits Agreement, Donation Requests, and the Bills Foundation:



- The Community Benefits Agreement page serves as a central hub where community members can find a copy of the agreement, the most recent fiscal year's Annual Report, CBOC meeting information, Member Semaia's contact information, and a Community Benefits Information

Submittal Form designed specifically for the community to share their community vulnerabilities and priorities with the Bills. The website is available at <https://www.buffalobills.com/new-stadium/community-benefits-agreement>.

- The Donation Requests page provides an opportunity for community members to submit a donation or sponsorship request through a dedicated form. Member Semaia noted that if a request is not tied to an event, applicants may select the “Other” dropdown. The form allows attachments and space to describe the request.
- The Bills Foundation page includes its own Grant Interest Form for requests related to the foundation’s mission and focus of food insecurity.

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.

Comments by committee members:

- **Member Sumbundu** asked whether utilization goals apply to the demolition of the existing stadium and whether they carry over to the existing stadium demolition even if goals are met during new stadium construction.
 - **Member Semaia** responded that the goals do roll over into the same goal space.
- **Member Sumbundu** requested an update on how community engagement coordinator Developments by JEM is assisting companies with certification and whether they have ultimately been selected.
 - **Member Semaia** noted that the process and data are still being reviewed and that updates will be provided at the next meeting.

Chairman Blue closed Agenda Item No. 4.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 New Business

- Member Semaia noted that the frequency of meetings has been a recurring topic, explaining that updates, including those from external stakeholders and overseeing agencies, are typically available quarterly, while the committee meets monthly, which has resulted in shorter updates. Chairman Blue stated that the committee should review meeting frequency but emphasized that there are questions that need to be addressed next month. He said he is not opposed to quarterly or bi-monthly meetings, with committees working between sessions, and suggested considering a date change for February. Member Cannady noted that some participants may not be able to attend from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and that adjusting the time or moving to every other month could improve attendance. Member Parker expressed concern about quarterly meetings, noting that attendance could taper off, and asked what strategies could be used to increase engagement. Member Semaia added that, in coordination with Erie County, there may be a need to consider a

change in the meeting day, as several community locations are consistently unavailable on Mondays. Tuesdays may be more feasible. He suggested a small informal working group could evaluate this and report back to the full committee.

- Member Parker relayed a question from Black-owned MWBE media businesses regarding paid engagement opportunities beyond advertising, including how to participate in the CBA process or pursue other opportunities with the Bills. She noted the inquiries stemmed from conversations with NYS Senator April Baskin and that she shared Member Semaia's contact information with them.

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.

- **Dennice Barr** stated that she heard about the meeting through OpenBuffalo and suggested that more publicity is needed, with regular coverage in the media. She asked whether, once everything is planned around the new stadium opening, there will be participation from the Fruit Belt community.
 - **Chairman Blue** responded that the committee has been posting and advertising through WUFO, Criterion, Challenger, and a variety of other outlets, and that meetings are normally held every second Monday. He added that advocates and community support are needed, and that information is also available on the CBOC website and at libraries with internet access.
 - **Member Parker** added that the small working group has considered Jefferson Avenue based on prior public comments.

Chairman Blue closed Agenda Item No. 6.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 Adjournment

Chairman Blue adjourned the meeting at 11:48 AM ET.

The next CBOC meeting is tentatively scheduled for Monday, February 9, 2026, with the location to be determined by Erie County.