

## Minutes of the UREC Board Meeting for January 20, 2026

Attendance: David Hochfelder, Ren Lee, Leon Walker, Brenda Twiggs, Matt Kirk, Joan Rogers, Nancy Delane, Jennifer Burns, Paul Stewart, Mary Liz Stewart

The meeting was convened by David Hochfelder in Ron Gardner's absence.

Joan Rogers, in observing information on the agenda regarding the Journey to Freedom Walk, asked about the group "Coming To The Table". Paul explained that the walk program was to take place in May, June, and July and that Tony Cohen was leading and organizing it. The event was to be sponsored by the Menare Foundation and "Coming To The Table". The Manare Foundation has been organized by Tony Cohen. The group "Coming To The Table" was a race relations and social justice group.

Peter needed us to talk about the Over the Edge (OTE) Fund Raiser early in the meeting as he had to leave early for his teaching responsibilities. He spoke about moving the date of the event to April 27, 2027. He had to make several calls to try to contact the OTE organization. He felt we needed to FedEx a letter to them about our position on the date. They had been resistant.

Dave called the meeting to order at 5:52pm. Peter pointed out that moving the date from the fall to spring created an "event deficit" with regard to fund raising. He noted that the YWCA was open to providing some of the proceeds from their September fund raiser to UREC. Peter presented a list of questions gathered from his survey of the board with the idea that we would talk about them. This would help us get on the same page. Peter read through many of the questions so people could hear them. The idea of a phased fundraising effort was introduced. Ren asked about the time limits on grants we have received. Mary Liz noted getting extensions was not hard. Paul noted the conversation with the architect and contractor about segmenting the project of the Interpretive Center. Dave noted that it was common to do projects in segments or phases. Peter noted the discussions with George Hurst and that he might be persuaded to provide \$50,000 that could be used to staff the Capital Campaign. Ideas were tossed about regarding possible Capital Campaign Cabinet participants. One mentioned was Wally Altes. Mary Liz noted Ron's conviction that this would get us closer to the community. Ren asked about the list of questions Peter had drawn up and Peter said he would share the questions with the board members.

Dave asked people to review the minutes of the last and previous meetings as there had not been a quorum at a couple of the prior meetings.

Paul presented the financial report. A balance sheet and profit and loss statement was presented. A proposed 2026 Budget was presented. Leon moved to approve the draft budget and Ren seconded. All approved.

Maryliz presented the Executive Director's report. Amelia Paul has submitted a resignation letter, so, her position is open. Amelia said she had enjoyed working at UREC but other issues in her life required her to use her time differently. Paul raised the idea of the Stewart's daughter Sarah being a subcontractor. Dave said he did not have a problem with it. Dave asked Nancy for an opinion as a lawyer. Nancy deferred and said she would give an opinion later. Yvonne Abunaw asked for a leave of absence as a board member. Maryliz noted the kiosk near the Cheese Cake Factory at Colonie Mall – we would have an advertisement there. Paul noted the Black Mariner's exhibit at the Pine Hills Library and the Empire state Plaza Concourse which was researched and designed by Carmen Bivens, of UREC staff.

The Governance Committee hasn't met but Ren Lee, Matt Kirk and Dave Hochfelder are the members. They have reviewed the by-laws and plan to present some small changes. Joan asked about the annual meeting. Dave explained that it was a special board meeting where officers were re-elected. Nancy also commented on the annual meeting requirements.

Paul noted there had been some interest in doing a new strategic plan. Dave asked about the purpose. Several board members addressed the need to strategic planning. Dave also noted the need to think about succession planning.

Dave offered for new business he was in possession of an exhibit on the history of Urban Renewal. It is 4 panels. Dave said he would look for a response from Paul and Maryliz. Joan suggested it might be displayed at Juneteenth and July 4<sup>th</sup>. Maryliz indicated she would offer it for discussion at a staff meeting.

The conflict-of-interest form was distributed and discussed. Board members will be completing these in the coming days and weeks.

No other new business. Leon moved to adjourn. Matt seconded it. All voted in favor.

Minutes by Paul Stewart