

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting for UREC for March 18, 2025

Attendance: Officers – Ron Gardner, President; David Hochfelder, Vice President. Other board members present – Yvonne Abunaw, Nancy Delaine, Sam Fein, Darius Shahinfar, Cecilia Tucker, Paul Stewart

Absent: Matt Kirk (Treasurer), Celeste Knight, Jennifer Burns, Brenda Twiggs, Leon Walker, Angelo Maddox, Steven O'Connor, Lisbeth Calendrino

Staff: Mary Liz Stewart, Executive Director

The meeting was called to order by Ron Gardner at 5:41pm Ron asked if there was anyone who had reviewed the minutes of the February 18, 2025 meeting who had comments or questions. Hearing none, it was moved by Nancy to approve the minutes and seconded by Yvonne. All voted in favor.

There were guests that needed to be introduced. Tayana Taylor was visiting the meeting. She is from Schenectady, works for a social service agency and was interested in what we do. Joan Rogers was also present. She is a prospective board member. She has an MSW and has volunteered for Troy Area United Ministry. She has previously worked for Equinox, First American Bank and the Worker Compensation board. Her strengths are in project management.

It was agreed that given we had guests for the meeting that the finances would be shifted to the end of the meeting for discussion in executive session.

La-Meik Taylor was also present. He is a prospective board member. He introduced himself. He is an Albany resident who has been incarcerated and turned his life around. He now works for a state agency and holds a degree from Bard College. There was a question from Yvonne regarding what he felt he would bring to the board. He mentioned being able to galvanize resources and contact the community.

Maryliz was asked for the Executive Director's Report. Among things mentioned in the report were weekly planning sessions with staff on Voices and Votes and the Interpretive Center. We have received an IMLS grant for \$33,000. IMLS is one of the agencies the Trump administration is trying to close. We don't know at this point how this will affect our grant. The grant supports the Museum Studies Teen Program. Also, our funds through EPA for the Interpretive Center Project have been frozen. That is a \$3.63 million amount. There was discussion of the Over the Edge Fundraiser, Freedom Con 2025, the Hoop House being dismantled and donated, work with the Albany symphony and Friday Folklore program and much more.

There was a motion to approve securing a loan from Pioneer Bank for addressing an arrears bill with our architectural firm. There were two proxy votes also to be counted from Steven O'Connor and Celeste Knight. It was moved by David and seconded by Darius. All approved.

Our guests were asked to leave. The financial report was given. There was discussion of Lacey's position and shifting her to work on the Advance Albany grant until better funding can be secured for the Museum studies Teen Program. We are also anticipating funding through the state Cannabis Grant program. These funds would also be used for the Museum Studies Teen Program. Nancy and Yvonne asked about the long-range plans given the cuts and the need to trim back. Yvonne also voiced a concern for a contingency plan regarding the Interpretive Center.

It was moved by Nancy and seconded by Cecelia to adjourn.