

**Minutes of the Meeting
of the
Board of Directors
of
Buffalo Urban Development Corporation**

***95 Perry Street—4th Floor Vista Room
Buffalo, New York 14203***

**January 27, 2026
12:00 p.m.**

Directors Present:

Scott Bylewski
Daniel Castle
Janique S. Curry
Dennis W. Elsenbeck
Darby Fishkin
Thomas Halligan
Elizabeth Holden
Jenna Kavanaugh
Thomas A. Kucharski
Kimberley A. Minkel
David J. Nasca
Karen Utz

Directors Absent:

Mayor Sean Ryan (Chair)
Thomas Baines
Joel Feroletto
Grant Loomis
Dennis M. Penman (Vice Chair)
Nolan Skipper

Officers Present:

Brandye Merriweather, President
Rebecca Gandour, Executive Vice President
Mollie Profic, Treasurer
Kevin J. Zanner, Secretary

Guests Present: James Bernard, BUDC Project Manager; Jonathan Epstein, *The Buffalo News*; Alexis M. Florczak, Hurwitz Fine P.C.; Brian Krygier, Director of IT, ECIDA; and Angelo Rhodes II, Northland Project Manager.

- 1.0** **Roll Call** – The meeting was called to order at 12:16 p.m. by Ms. Minkel, who served as chair of the meeting. The Secretary called the roll of the Board of Directors and a quorum was determined to be present. Ms. Curry joined the meeting during the presentation of agenda item 4.9. Mr. Baines joined the meeting during the presentation of item 4.10.
- 2.0** **Approval of Minutes – Meeting of December 16, 2025** – The minutes of the December 16, 2025 meeting of the Board of Directors were presented. Mr. Castle made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Utz and unanimously carried (11-0-0).

3.0 Monthly Financial Reports

3.1 Finance Update & Audit Plan for Year Ended December 31, 2025 – Ms. Profic reported that the 2025 year-end audit is underway. Withum presented the audit plan to the Audit & Finance Committee members on January 8, 2026. Draft audited financial statements will be reviewed by the Audit & Finance Committee in March before being presented to the BUDC Board of Directors later that month.

4.0 New Business –

4.1 Appointment of Mayor Sean Ryan to Chairman of the BUDC Board of Directors – Mr. Nasca made a motion to appoint Mayor Ryan to serve as Chairman of the BUDC Board of Directors. The motion was seconded by Mr. Halligan and unanimously carried (11-0-0).

4.2 Appointment of Thomas Baines to BUDC Downtown Committee – Ms. Merriweather reported that Thomas Baines, Deputy Mayor and Executive Director of the office of Strategic Planning has expressed interest in serving on the BUDC Downtown Committee.

4.3 Appointment of Thomas Baines to BUDC Real Estate Committee – Ms. Merriweather reported that Mr. Baines expressed interest in serving on the BUDC Real Estate Committee.

4.4 Appointment of Thomas Baines to BUDC Governance Committee – Ms. Merriweather reported that Mr. Baines expressed interest in serving on the BUDC Governance Committee.

At the conclusion of Ms. Merriweather's presentation of items 4.2 through 4.4, Mr. Kucharski made a motion to appoint Thomas Baines to the BUDC Downtown, Real Estate, and Governance Committees. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fishkin and unanimously carried (11-0-0).

4.5 Appointment of Nolan Skipper to BUDC Downtown Committee – Ms. Merriweather reported that Nolan Skipper expressed interest in serving on the BUDC Downtown Committee. Ms. Utz made a motion to appoint Nolan Skipper to the BUDC Downtown Committee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Elsenbeck and unanimously carried (11-0-0).

4.6 Appointment of Darby Fishkin to BUDC Audit & Finance Committee – Ms. Merriweather reported that Darby Fishkin expressed interest in serving on the BUDC Audit & Finance Committee. Mr. Nasca made a motion to appoint Darby Fishkin to the BUDC Audit & Finance Committee. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kavanaugh and unanimously carried (11-0-0).

4.7 Northland Central – 2nd Amendment to Short Term Lease with Professional Culinary Academy, LLC – Ms. Gandour presented her January 27, 2026 memorandum regarding the 2nd amendment to the short term lease with Professional Culinary Academy, LLC. Following the presentation, Ms. Holden made a motion to: (i) authorize 683 Northland LLC to enter into the second lease amendment and extension with Professional Culinary Academy, LLC upon the terms outlined in the Board memorandum; and (ii) authorize the President or Executive Vice President of BUDC to execute the second lease amendment and extension on behalf of 683 Northland LLC and take such other actions as are necessary and appropriate to implement this authorization. The motion was seconded by Ms. Minkel and (with Ms. Fishkin abstaining), carried with ten affirmative votes (10-0-1).

4.8 Northland Central – Community Outreach – Marketing Services Agreement – Ms. Merriweather presented her January 27, 2026 memorandum regarding the community outreach and marketing services agreement for the Northland Corridor. Following the presentation, Ms. Fishkin made a motion to: (i) approve BUDC entering into a consulting agreement with Mustard

Seed Consulting at an hourly rate of \$100 per hour, with total payments not to exceed \$25,000; and (ii) authorize the President or Executive Vice President to execute the consulting agreement and take such actions as may be necessary to implement this action. The motion was seconded by Mr. Elsenbeck and unanimously carried (11-0-0).

4.9 Northland Corridor Project Update – Mr. Rhodes presented the following updates regarding the Northland Corridor:

Phase 3: Mr. Rhodes reported that structural steel work is ongoing at 541 E. Delavan Avenue and curtain walls have been installed at 612B Northland Avenue. In response to a question from Mr. Elsenbeck, Ms. Gandour reported that the substation design is under review by National Grid and will be updated during BUDC's weekly call with National Grid later this week. Mr. Elsenbeck offered to join the meeting with BUDC staff.

Phase 4: BUDC was awarded a grant from National Grid's economic development program. Mr. Rhodes thanked Ms. Kavanaugh for her assistance. The window mock-up for 631 Northland Avenue, as required by SHPO and NPS, has been delivered and is under review by BUDC. Ms. Gandour added that BUDC staff has been working with its tax credits team regarding tax credits and bridge loan financing, which will be reviewed with the Audit & Finance Committee at its February meeting.

741 and 777 Northland Avenue: LiRo Engineers completed a survey of the site and contour mapping.

4.10 Ralph Wilson Park Project Update – Mr. Bernard and Gilbane Building Company provided an update regarding the Ralph Wilson Park construction project. An aerial view of the Park's construction phases were shared with the Board. Work on the south lawn has been completed. Work on the athletic fields is mostly completed and will be finished this spring. Approximately 750 trees have been planted around the sled hill. The GMP contract for Phase 2C of construction is in the process of being finalized. It is anticipated that this work will start this spring and be completed in Spring 2027.

4.11 Race for Place Project Update – Ms. Merriweather presented the following updates regarding the Race for Place project:

Temporary Intersection Redesign Work: BUDC held a kickoff meeting with its consultant, MIG and representatives from the Office of Strategic Planning and Department of Public Works to discuss goals, timeline and final site selection.

Queen City Pop-Up: Holiday programming has wrapped up for the season, which included a weekly music series at Fountain Plaza, the Downtown Dollars Sweepstakes, and paid media featuring downtown small businesses. BUDC's consultant, Ari Parson PR, is reviewing feedback from community members regarding the programming, and Ms. Merriweather noted that feedback received was very positive. On February 26, 2026, the Black History Month Black Business Expo will be held in partnership with the City of Buffalo and The Exchange at Beverly Gray.

Waterfront Coordination Update: A waterfront coordination meeting was held January 8th. The next meeting will be held in early February to discuss design elements for the temporary intersection improvements work.

4.12 Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park – Project Update – Ms. Gandour presented an update regarding Buffalo Lakeside Commerce Park. Marketing materials for remaining parcels were shared with the BUDC Board. BUDC is awaiting feedback from the NYSDEC regarding LaBella's draft variance and remedial action plan for 193 Ship Canal Parkway. There is a light pole down at

the Park which has been submitted for repair through the City's 311 system. End of year invoices for the POA have been sent to property owners.

5.0 Late Files – None.

6.0 Tabled Items – None.

7.0 Executive Session – None.

8.0 Adjournment – There being no further business to come before the Board, on motion made by Mr. Castle, seconded by Mr. Kucharski and unanimously carried, the January 27, 2026 meeting of the Board of Directors was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin J. Zanner, Secretary