



Wednesday, August 19, 2026

VIA ZOOM

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present:

Daniel Castle (Erie County), Kevin Kelly (Olmsted), Thomas Baines, Esq., Jason Paananen (City of Buffalo) and Carol Jasen Sampson (NYPA)

Also in attendance were:

Michelle Urbanczyk, Explore & More Children's Museum

Matt Sutton, Town of Tonawanda

Ba Zan Lin- Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

Jean McKeown - Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

1. Call to Order

Chair Castle called the meeting to order 1:04 pm.

2. Roll Call and Remarks

Secretary Sampson took roll call.

3. Approval of the March 13, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Chair Castle asked if there were any amendments to the minutes.

Motion made by member Kevin Kelly and seconded by member Jason Paananen, the March 13, 2026 meeting minutes were adopted unanimously (4-0).

4. Public Comment (reserved for agenda items only)

NONE

5. Explore & More Demolition of Moving Water Exhibit

Chair Castle asked Michelle Urbanczyk, President 7 CEO Explore & More Children's Museum, to provide an update on the closure of the Moving Water exhibit that was awarded Greenway funds.

Ms. Urbanczyk stated the waterfall was supposed to be a sealed water system, but the manufacturer could never get the flow and return pressure equal so it became an open system and through evaporation and leakage we must top the water tank in the pump room daily. This also requires additional water monitoring and testing resulting in buying and

adding of necessary chemicals to keep the water conditioned so we don't have legionella or other waterborne issues/illnesses.

The water tables and waterfall have leaks going to buckets/pans underneath them and we must use a shop vac to suck out the water daily. When new leaks develop or leak, we cannot stop with pans the water runs through the floor into our Gathering Hall B ceiling causing ceiling tile water damage.

The three tier water table interactives are beyond repair and is basically a tiered waterfall table. We've been buying and replacing expendable manipulatives for play in the tiered sections on a regular basis.

The electronics and magnets on the hand pumps are all bad and are no longer available, we'd need to fully redesign this interactive.

The electronic pumps and valves on the locks are also at their end of life and are intermittently working which is not a good experience.

The Archimedes screw is still functioning well; we plan to make this a standalone exhibit and repurpose it in another museum area.

Other exhibit parts of the water area we plan to repurpose in other areas of the museum are the hand crank light generators (Tinkering), Knot tying challenge (3rd floor boat/fishing area), and possibly the barrel blowers and wall (location to be determined).

Overall, this exhibit is now 7 years old, has seen a lot of play and enjoyment from our guests, but it is really beyond its useful life. We have spent considerable time on it and maintained it very well; it still looks decent, but what most don't know is that there are a lot of hidden intricate parts, mechanical systems, and workings within and underneath the tables, it is at a point where these all require constant maintenance and upkeep from our staff which is no longer sustainable.

6. Signage Manual Updates

Chair Castle asked Jean McKeown the signage process for the grantees to follow. She provided an overview of the Signage Guidance and recommended manual updates.

Signage Manual Updates

The BECGFSC signage guidance (see attachment) addresses two primary types of signage:

- acknowledgement signage; and
- project signage

Recommended Manual Updates:

Because the manual was finalized more than ten years ago, it may be appropriate to consider revisions that reflect current practice, vendor availability, pricing, and signage durability.

- Clarify whether and when vendors outside the existing list may be used.
- Require confirmation that any vendor can meet the manual's graphic design standards.
- Confirm whether three quotes are required when using vendors outside the listed options.
- Review the competitiveness of existing vendor cost structures.
- Evaluate the durability of signage types, including concerns raised by a previous City of Buffalo voting member regarding a sign in Delaware Park that was reportedly destroyed three or four years after installation.
- Add signage references, where appropriate, to eligibility requirements, guidelines, priorities, schedule, and application materials.

Chair Castle indicated that he would discuss the proposed updates with Mark Rountree, Senior Planner Erie County.

7. Update Open/ Delayed Projects

Chair Castle asked Jean McKeown to provide an update on the Open and Delayed Projects and she provided the following:

Update Open Awarded Projects

The following projects were presented as Open:

1. Citizen Coalition for Wildlife and Environment Alt Nature Trail
Forthcoming reuse request
2. Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association: North End Break Wall
Extension request through year end-12/31/26 Delays due to USACE permitting process.
3. City of Buffalo Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Park
Anticipated close out Q2 2027
4. Rotary of the Tonawanda's: Erie Canal Historic Revitalization-Tonawanda Canal Park
Anticipated close out Q4 2026
5. Town of Tonawanda: Riverwalk Parkway Multiuse Trail
Anticipated close out Q4 2027

6. Buffalo Lighthouse Association: South Buffalo Lighthouse Roof Replacement
Anticipated close out Q4 2026
7. Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper: Blueway/Greenway Connections through the Buffalo Niagara Blueway, Phase 3
Anticipated close out Q3 2028
8. Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy: South Park Clubhouse Enhancement. Phase 2
Anticipated close out Q4 2026
9. County of Erie: Isle View Enhancement, Design & Construction
Anticipated close out Q2 2027
10. County of Erie: Two Mile Creek & Sherwood Trail Renovation
Anticipated close out Q2 2027
11. NFTA Bicycle & Pedestrian Access DL&W Station via Shoreline Trail
Anticipated close out Q3 2028

Delayed Projects

The following projects were presented as Delayed:

1. Erie County Department of Environment & Planning: Isle View Enhancement Project
Delays in acquiring required permits and required design changes extended the design and bidding timeline, which in turn delayed construction start date.
Anticipated Closeout: Q4 2026
2. Erie County Department of Environment & Planning: Signage Implementation
Content for Pedestrian Orientation Signs with interpretive panels designs completed and provided to subcontractor. Panels should be completed around the end of July with final installation in August.
Anticipated Closeout: Q3 2026
3. Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy: Wayfinding and Signage Phase 2 (Riverside, Delaware Lake & Meadow, Cazenovia)
Waiting for approval on verbiage by the City. There has been some staff turnover that has contributed to this delay.
Drafting verbiage for interpretive signs.

Designing graphics for interpretive and orientation signs.

Sign production and installation to be completed by year end.
Anticipated Closeout: Q1 2027

4. Buffalo & Erie County Naval and Military Park: Master Plan

As planning progressed, additional coordination with City stakeholders was identified as necessary to ensure alignment with long-term lease and site considerations.

As part of ongoing coordination with the City of Buffalo, and following a change in City administration, additional planning considerations were identified to ensure the Master Plan reflects current municipal context and long-term operational conditions. These considerations were incorporated through an approved change order.

Anticipated Closeout: Q3 2026

The TOTAL Grants Approved (in millions) 2007-2025: \$37.7M Awards-122 Projects.

Matt Sutton, Town Engineer, Town of Tonawanda was asked to provide an update on the awarded Town of Tonawanda: Riverwalk Parkway Multiuse Trail project. At the request of DOT an updated signal warrant analysis was conducted. The findings determined that a signal was not warranted and DOT would not support the traffic signal installation, resulting in a pedestrian crossing to the road to connect the Isle View Park project to the trail project. At some point in the future, if it is warranted, a traffic signal permit will be requested. With this change, the project plan will need to be modified.

Jean McKeown informed the Committee on the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association (BSRA) extension request. BSRA is requesting a one-quarter no-cost extension through December 31. Project delays related to the coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on their permitting issuance will result in a one-quarter extension.

Chair Castle asked for a motion to approve the one-quarter no-cost extension for the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association.

Motion made by member Kevin Kelly and seconded by member Jason Paananen, BSRA project extension adopted unanimously (4-0).

8. Other Business

The Committee was apprised of Jean McKeown's upcoming retirement, effective the end of December 2026.

9. Next Meeting

Chair Castle stated that the next meeting date has yet to be determined and anticipates that it will be held late fall.

10. Adjournment

Chair Castle requested a motion to adjourn.

A motion was made by member Jason Paananen and seconded by member Kevin Kelly to adjourn today's meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 2:07 pm.

