



THE CITY OF NEW YORK

BOROUGH OF THE BRONX

COMMUNITY BOARD #5

Honorable Vanessa L. Gibson, *Bronx Borough President*

Chairperson
Angel Caballero

District Manager
Kenneth Brown

Bronx Community Board 5 General Board Meeting Notes February 26, 2025

Public Hearing for the FY 2026 Preliminary Budget Minutes

Time start: 5:09pm

- The public hearing did not have any speakers.

General Board Meeting Minutes:

Meeting start: 6:01 pm

Quorum reached: 6:10 pm

Attendance (27/41): Mario Acosta, Chantal Allison-Konteh, Yazmin Benitez, Eloise Bennett, Phyllis Bowdwin, Erachie Brown, James Coger, Carrie Cuthbertson, Catherine Cudjoe, Roxana Gonzalez-Jimenez, Osiris Guzman, Tisha Hatch, Marlene Jimenez, James Lin, Maribel Maria, Nanette Matthews, Theresa Mims, Robert Nieves, Juan Parra, Dilletta Pina, Benjamin Richardson, Shenja Rudolph, Charles Shorter, Beverly Smith, Carlos Veras, Cheryl Westbrook, Chef Geneva Wilson

Absent: Bakary Camara, Julian Cleveland, Gail Hill, Tierra Pais, Argenis Santiago-Payamps

Excused/Leave: Nekeisha Afful, Bobby Akumah, Angel Caballero, Annette Dejesus, Lucia Deng, Michele Heath, Stacy Infante, Brenida Parsons, Patricia Rojas

Resigned: Wilfrido Bonilla

Welcome from First Vice Chair, Cheryl Westbrook

- Thanks to Bronx CB5 Office staff Kenneth Brown and LaShawnda Dodson for their work in supporting the Board and the entire community.
- Especially wants to celebrate the members of CB5 who went up to Albany to advocate for the community.
 - Members championed several issues, including housing, fentanyl abuse, and Opioid Settlement Fund relief funds. We appreciate these members' dedication to the community.

Chairperson's Report

- There is no Chairperson's Report for this month. Chair Angel Caballero is excused from this meeting and will deliver a report during the March 2025 General Board meeting.

District Manager's Report

- The Family Enrichment Center had its official Grand Opening on February 1. Its name is now The Harmony Hub
- Met with the interim Manager of the Francis Martin Library to discuss attracting residents to the library.
- Attended a Community Roundtable Discussion on Problem Gambling. There is the possibility of a casino opening in the Bronx, although there is currently only one in Queens. Casinos present a challenge for the neighborhoods they are in.
 - Casinos need to request a letter of support from whatever Community District they are trying to set up business in.
- CM Feliz is sponsoring a bill to prevent mobile syringe distribution programs from operating in proximity to playgrounds or schools. There will be a hearing on February 28 at 10am.

Voting Item: City Preliminary Budget

- The Board reviewed and voted on this list during the 10/23/2024 General Board Meeting. It was reviewed again during the February 12, 2025 Executive Meeting.
- Roxana motions to approve the City Preliminary Budget. Dilletta seconds the motion.
 - The motion passes as follows: Yes- 24; Abstaining- 1

Public Session

- Ms. Sallie Smith:
 - Regrets having to speak about the same issues time and again but feels that not enough is being done.
 - Bus Stops on either side of the Grand Concourse and Burnside. She has a petition she would like signed by the public.
 - Vendors: Trucks are parked permanently to sell food. It causes a lot of waste and congestion.
 - Was also able to visit Albany and speak about the conditions of the unhoused population in Echo Park and other parks/playgrounds
- Melissa Mejias and Erika Diaz, The Harmony Hub Family Enrichment Center
 - Address: 2001A Creston Avenue
 - Contact Melissa: 929-731-9673
 - Introduced the Community Liaison, Erika.
 - Upcoming event: Community Boutique on February 27, 11am – 2pm– will distribute gently used clothes and shoes
 - Contact Samantha: 929-703-0139
 - Instagram: fec_fordham_universityheights
- Marielena Mercado, Hope + Healing Program
 - About services: Program with Catholic Guardian Services, Domestic violence services for families and survivors
 - Will host event at Harmony Hub: “Igniting the Love Within” on March 14- redefining self-love. Connect with local families and hear stories about nurturing self-love. Breakfast will be served.
 - Contact: 929-206-3893
- Kimberly Troncoso, Oyate Group
 - Brandon Hendricks Scholarship program – applicants must be from the Bronx.
 - oyategroup.org/brandon-hendricks-scholarship
 - Beyond Rising Summer Internship Program – workforce development program for undocumented students 16-20 years old. Oyate Group recognized the need for students, as SYEP requires an SSN.
 - Applications close April 7: oyategroup.org/beyond-rising
- Nesauly and Raymi: Teaful Tea House
 - Would like to welcome members of the community to their Tea Shop
 - Address: 1780 Grand Concourse / Instagram: teafulnyc
 - Hours: Monday to Friday, 8am-5pm, Saturdays by appointment

- Sheila Felix, CASA
 - There has been an increase in evictions, up by 300%. It's something very serious; tenants have rights but are not finding representatives when they must appear in court. Inspired CASA's "Stay and Fight" Campaign.
 - Eviction Free Bronx Campaign meeting: March 6, 6pm-8pm, 35 Marcy Place Dinner and childcare will be provided.
 - Know Your Rights workshop on March 29, 12-2pm, 35 Marcy Place. Breakfast and childcare will be provided.
 - For more information: 585-895-7154
 - A calendar with other events in March will be in the back of the Davidson Center.
- Julia Marciano, 1520 Sedgwick Avenue
 - Has ongoing concerns about BX18A and B bus line
 - Called 511, has a case number, but nothing has been done. Left her contact information with the CD office.
 - These bus routes run through a loop after 170th Street. The Bx18A goes through Undercliff Avenue while the Bx18B follows Sedgwick Avenue until turning back to 170th Street. Bx 18A- Fine, gets you to University and West Tremont. Jerome and Grand Concourse.
 - But there is no bus that gets you back to Sedgwick. Unless you take a roundabout way. The steps in this area are dirty and dangerous. Very concerned about the elderly population and people with disabilities navigating these steps.

Elected Officials Reports

- Ciara Gannon, Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson
 - Alexis from the BP office has reached out to all members whose term is about to expire regarding applications and interviews
 - Applications for Community Boards are due March 9
 - State of the Borough: March 20. Doors open at 5pm. Registration will open soon.
- Miguel Pena, Councilmember Oswald Feliz (District 15)
 - Updates on legislation
 - [Intro 1169](#) - Requires that syringe exchange providers ensure syringes provided by each program are collected and safely disposed of following their use.
 - [Intro 0868](#) - Would prohibit the distribution of syringes within 450 feet of schools and playgrounds.
 - A hearing will take place on 2/28, 10am at City Hall: The meeting is open to the public

- Members of the public looking to testify:
 - <https://council.nyc.gov/testify>
 - Services include free tax prep services for constituents
 - Office: 718-842-8100 / Address: 573 East Fordham Road
- Gabriella Santana, Assemblymember Yudelka Tapia (District 86)
 - Updates on the State Budget Process: Is calling for \$30 million for removing unsafe lithium batteries off the street. \$15 million for expanding mental health clubhouses
 - Address: 2175C Jerome Ave / Office: 718-933-6909
- (AB) Abou-Bakhr Meite, Assemblymember Landon Dais (District 77)
 - Constituent Services include: help landlord disputes, rent, other legal support
 - 2/27 Dominican Heritage event at the Bronx Museum (1040 Grand Concourse), 5pm
 - Office: 718-538-2000
- Lia Guzman Genao, State Senator Gustavo Rivera (District 33)
 - Encourages everyone to sign up for the newsletter, sent out every Friday
 - Constituent Services include: Monthly Housing and Immigration Clinics. Call the office for details
 - Know Your Rights Prompt Cards
 - More copies are in the back of the Davidson Center
 - Created in collaboration with advocacy groups and lawyers.
 - More copies can be provided by request: 718-933-2034
- Maximo Javier, Congressman Adriano Espaillat (District 13)
 - Phone: 646-740-3632, call or text
 - Email: Maximo.Javier@mail.house.gov
 - Have been hosting or participating in Know Your Rights clinics around the district
 - Highlights: don't need to open the door to an ICE agent.
 - Budgetary matter: Threat of Medicaid and Medicare cuts. Many in our communities rely on Medicaid and Medicare. Many hurtful proposals – including these budget cuts- are being put in motion in order to afford tax breaks for the very wealthy.
 - Hosted a Black History Month event on February 23 - Showcase of Black Talent and Culture: Celebrating Harlem's Influence Around the World
- Trevon Blondet, District Attorney Darcel Clark
 - Prom collection and giveaway: Collecting gently used suits, dresses and shoes. Can drop-off at the office
 - Youth Summit in May. More details closer to the event.
 - Cell: 917-946-3438 / Address: 198 East 161st Street

- Edgar Tavaréz, State Senator Robert Jackson (District 31)
 - The senator will be coming to different community boards and committees to discuss suspensions for kindergarten and elementary school students.
 - Has also been involved in many Know Your Rights clinics. Hosted own last week in Washington Heights. Playing a role in making sure organizations are connecting to collaborate.
 - Constituent Services include: Assistance for tenants
 - Office: 212-544-0173 / Address: 5030 Broadway Suite 701

Committee Reports

- All committee meetings take place at the Davidson Community Center.
- Health and Human Services: Chef Geneva Wilson
 - Upcoming meeting: 2/27 at 6pm- The agenda will focus on EBT benefits and how beneficiaries can lock their cards. There will also be a presentation by Venture House, an organization focused on mental health support, education, jobs.
- Youth Committee: Eloise Bennett
 - Announced that the New York Yankee Community Council Youth Leadership Award is now accepting nominations. A memorandum with more details, including what zip codes are eligible, and the application form are in the back of the room.
 - The candidate must be between 12-25 years old. Applications must be typed and submitted by March 28th, 5pm. Deliberations will be March 31
 - You cannot nominate a family member.
 - Applications must be typed.
 - SYEP deadline is 2/28
- Veterans Committee: Juan Parra
 - Recent meeting discussed the harsh reality of the PACT Act. Despite the Act's intentions, there is a pattern of errors among claim processors, and the VA Office of the Inspector General found that claims processors sometimes request unnecessary exams, which cause delays and burdens to veterans.
 - Incorrectly processed claims need urgent attention and corrective action, as they negatively impact veterans' well-being and create financial and medical access challenges.
 - Listened to the 2/19 Committee on Veterans Oversight Hearing, which discussed the topic of homelessness in the Veteran community.
 - Next meeting: March 11
- Cultural Affairs: Robert Nieves

- Met on 2/25. Held a presentation from the PW School of Art, an independent art school in the Bronx.
 - The committee is looking to showcase the work of youth, senior citizens, people of all ages and backgrounds. The committee continues to discuss the possibility of an event that can activate the local community.
- Parks Committee: Erachie Brown
 - The committee continues to discuss how to best prioritize parks, gardens, and playgrounds for beautification and repairs in 2025.
 - It also discussed Bean Morris Garden's budget and needs.
- Governance Committee: Cheryl Westbrook
 - Cheryl has stepped in as Chair of the Governance Committee.
 - Next meeting: March 11

Old Business

- No old business

New Business

- No new business

Meeting End: 7:17pm