



Buffalo Convention Center
Annual Members Meeting
Wednesday, February 18, 2026
Buffalo Convention Center

PRESENT: C. Abbott-Letro, T. Beauford, M. Brown, A. Chase, M. Chiazza, M. Glasgow, P. Kaler, B. Karmazyn, G. Loomis, K. Minkel, M. Urbanczyk

ABSENT: T. Alford, M. Alnutt, D. Castle, T. Long, W. Paladino, S. Patch, M. Roberts, D. Schutte, S. Ranalli

STAFF: J. Bialek, J. Calkins, K. Fashana, D. Marzo, L. Mueller, H. Nowakowski, R. Toney

CALL TO ORDER: Board Chair Cindy Abbott-Letro called the Annual Members Meeting of Visit Buffalo to order at 4:32 PM.

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS: Ms. Abbott-Letro reported that David Schutte and Steven Ranalli have stepped down from the Board. The Executive Committee, which also serves as the Nominating Committee, recommended the following individuals to join the Board:

- Paris Roselli, President of the Richardson Olmsted Campus and Executive Director of the Lipsey Architecture Center Buffalo
- Gary Siddall, President & CEO of the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences, overseeing both the Buffalo Museum of Science and Tiff Nature Preserve

Ms. Abbott-Letro then presented the full proposed slate of directors for 2026:

Representatives of the Hotel Industry:

Matt Chiazza
Thomas Long
Bob Karmazyn

At-Large Directors

Terry Alford
Kimberley A. Minkel
Shannon Patch
Paris Roselli
Gary Siddall
Michelle Urbanczyk

A motion was made by Mr. Chase and seconded by Mr. Karmazyn to approve the slate of directors as presented. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Mr. Karmazyn and seconded by Ms. Minkel to adjourn the Annual Members Meeting. Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by J. Bialek

Approved: /s/ CindyAbbott-Letro
 Cindy Abbott-Letro, Chair



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CALL TO ORDER: Board Chair, Cindy Abbott-Letro, convened the meeting of the Buffalo Convention Center Board of Directors at 4:33 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made by Ms. Minkel and seconded by Mr. Karmazyn to approve the November minutes as presented. Motion carried.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Ms. Abbott-Letro reported that her term as Chair has concluded and she will now serve as Immediate Past Chair. The Executive Committee recommended the following slate of officers for the 2026 term:

Chair – Thomas Long
Vice Chair – Kimberley A. Minkel
Treasurer – Matt Chiazza
Secretary – Thomas Beauford, Jr.
Immediate Past Chair – Cindy Abbott-Letro

A motion was made by Mr. Loomis and seconded by Mr. Karmazyn to elect the 2026 slate of officers as presented. Motion carried.

2026 BUSINESS PLAN: Jeff Calkins reviewed the 2026 Business Plan for the Buffalo Convention Center, noting that it is organized into four primary categories.

A key focus for 2026 is revenue growth and business development. Mr. Calkins reported that the Convention Center is transitioning from the Ungerboeck/Momentum CRM to ConventionSuite, an Oracle-based platform. This more robust CRM system will allow the Convention Center to expand its business footprint, better categorize events, more accurately isolate labor costs, and improve analytical decision-making related to bookings and facility rentals.

Mr. Calkins explained that the new system will also bring all departments into a single, real-time platform rather than operating in separate systems. This integration will improve coordination across

operations, accounting, food and beverage, and sales, while also creating new opportunities for ancillary revenue generation, including electrical, internet, and other client service offerings.

He also noted that the sales team is continuing to utilize tools such as the MINT database and AI-supported prospecting to identify new business opportunities. These efforts have included revisiting turned-down business from the past five years and reintroducing Buffalo as a destination option. These strategies have already helped generate two RFPs for future years. Mr. Calkins reported that eleven new conventions have been booked for 2026, including eight that are new to the market and three returning after an absence from Buffalo.

Sustainability efforts will also continue as part of the Convention Center's ongoing operational initiatives.

A motion was made by Mr. Loomis and seconded by Mr. Karmazyn to approve the 2026 Business Plan as presented. Motion carried.

2026 OPERATING BUDGET: Mr. Marzo presented the proposed 2026 Buffalo Convention Center Operating Budget. He noted that the budget was reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee at its February 9 meeting.

On the revenue side, the Convention Center is budgeting approximately \$4.6 million in earned revenue for 2026, an increase of about 5% over 2025. Mr. Marzo explained that the earned revenue projection is based on a review of definite, tentative, and possible bookings, along with historical performance and realistic expectations based on building availability and client demand.

Although food and beverage revenue is expected to decrease slightly, that decline is anticipated to be offset by additional rental revenue. Mr. Marzo noted that the building will continue to evaluate food costs and pricing levels throughout the year to adjust for market conditions.

While overall hotel tax revenue is expected to decline in 2026, the Convention Center's Erie County grant will remain at \$2.35 million, ensuring adequate working capital to maintain service levels and building operations.

Food and beverage costs, including wages and related expenses, are budgeted at approximately \$2 million, consistent with historical percentages of total food and beverage revenue. Personnel costs will increase over 2025 levels and are projected to account for approximately 45% of the overall budget, which Mr. Marzo noted remains within industry norms for convention centers.

Professional fees are expected to increase due to implementation of the new CRM, sales booking, and accounting software, as well as ongoing legal matters. Occupancy costs, including utilities, building repairs, and insurance, are expected to remain relatively flat with 2025 levels. Mr. Marzo noted that utility costs remain stable due to long-term contracts and that liability insurance has improved significantly compared to prior years.

Mr. Marzo stated that the Convention Center is budgeting to break even in 2026.

A motion was made by Ms. Urbanczyk and seconded by Mr. Karmazyn to approve the 2026 Operating Budget as presented. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Mr. Marzo reviewed the financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2025.

Balance Sheet: The Convention Center finished the year with approximately \$790,000 in total assets, primarily consisting of cash and receivables. Liabilities consist mainly of trade payables and advance deposits on future events. Mr. Marzo noted that the building's current ratio remains solid and that year-end net assets totaled approximately \$450,000, which is in compliance with Erie County grant requirements.

Statement of Activities: The Convention Center finished 2025 with a deficit of approximately \$238,000. On the revenue side, results came in below budget due to several groups and events performing below expectations, including the February and July bar exams, UB Dental, Maritime Heritage, Bennett High School, and the loss of the 2025 police exam.

On the expense side, total expenses increased but remained below budget. Personnel costs were under budget due to open positions, delayed hiring, and the successful completion of collective bargaining agreements at rates lower than originally budgeted. More efficient scheduling also contributed to savings.

Professional fees remained elevated due to ongoing staff litigation, though they were lower than the prior year. Occupancy costs, including utilities, building insurance, and building repairs, were all lower than expected, largely due to favorable contractual utility rates. Other expenses remained generally in line with prior years.

A motion was made by Ms. Minkel and seconded by Mr. Chase to approve the fourth quarter financial report as presented. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS: Mr. Marzo presented two resolutions requiring Board approval in accordance with procurement policies applicable to public authorities. He noted that the resolutions were reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee at its February 9 meeting.

The first resolution authorized an agreement with Oracle NetSuite to provide software and related services for a 60-month term at an expected cost of approximately \$214,000. The second resolution authorized an agreement with NewGen Business Solutions to provide ConventionSuite subscription software and services for a 60-month term at an expected cost of approximately \$111,000.

Mr. Marzo explained that together, these systems will provide a fully integrated CRM, sales, booking, and accounting platform for the Convention Center. He also noted that formal Board approval was not obtained in advance of signing the contracts as the deadline to qualify for significant discounts was set to expire. Knowing that formal approval had not yet been received, after signing the contract, work on the project was paused until Board approval could be received.

A motion was made by Ms. Minkel and seconded by Mr. Karmazyn to approve the Oracle NetSuite resolution. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. Chiazza and seconded by Mr. Karmazyn to approve the ConventionSuite/NewGen Business Solutions resolution. Motion carried.

During discussion, Mr. Beauford asked whether the bylaws allow for electronic votes in situations where action is needed between meetings in order to secure time-sensitive discounts. Ms. Abbott-Letro noted that the bylaws are somewhat antiquated and that the Executive Committee will review potential updates, including provisions related to electronic voting and increased virtual participation.

