

MINUTES

Meeting of the MCB9 Health and Environment Committee

February 2, 2026

6:30 pm

PRESENT: Co-Chairs: Hon. Cameron Clarke, MPH, Hon. LaQuita Henry **Committee Members:** Hon. Elizabeth Eastman, Hon. Monique Hardin-Cordero, Hon. Heather Jason, Hon. Lenna Nepomnyaschy, Hon. Jordan Scherer, Hon. Janaira Ramirez

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Hon. Victor Edwards

PUBLIC MEMBERS PRESENT: Monica Dula, Esq. (ZOOM), Dr. Edwin Torres (*on ZOOM*)

Call To Order

The Health and Environment Committee Meeting was called to order by Co-Chair, LaQuita Henry and Cameron Clarke, Co-Chair at 6:39 pm. The Committee convened to discuss pressing public health concerns, community services, and safety initiatives. The committee heard from community partners and specifically those awarded grants to improve residents quality of life. The body highlighted ongoing challenges and proactive steps aimed at improving health and safety within the community. LaQuita confirmed the addition of nurses Simone Way and Tonya Fisher-Morales to represent the nurses currently on strike at New York Hospitals. By 7pm, with a quorum achieved, the meeting formally approved the agenda and Minutes of January, with amendments.

Harlem FIFA Fan Village Proposal

The meeting began with Danielle McLaurin presented her proposal for "Uptown is Poppin'," a fan village initiative for the FIFA World Cup, aiming to bring events and commerce to Harlem and Washington Heights. LaQuita suggested presenting the proposal to the Economic Development, Youth Education, and Parks Committees for joint support, and Danielle agreed to reach out to the Committee Chairs and to attend their upcoming meetings. Cameron Clarke requested additional information on the proposal to better support it, and Danielle agreed to share her presentation materials immediately after the meeting.

Trauma-Informed Yoga Expansion Plans

Sophia presented Exhale to Inhale's work providing trauma-informed yoga services to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, highlighting their 90% decrease in stress and anxiety, and their partnership with various community organizations in Community Board 9. Victor offered to connect them with NYCHA developments and tenant leaders to expand their reach, while Cameron inquired about pipelines to formal therapy and opportunities for trained professionals to support their work.

Environmental and Nurses' Strike Resolutions

The committee discussed two main resolutions: one regarding environmental issues with trucks parked overnight in Community Board 9, and another supporting nurses in their strike action. Cameron and Lenna agreed to revise the environmental resolution into a stronger policy statement, while Edwin shared his draft resolution about the nurses' strike which will include language supporting the Safe Staffing Hospitals Act. The committee agreed to expedite the nurses' strike resolution through an emergency Zoom meeting of the executive committee, aiming to complete it by Thursday, and Monique moved for unanimous consent to adopt the resolution with the amendment supporting the Safe Staffing Act.

Public Health Updates and Vaccinations

The meeting covered updates on public health matters, including the current flu season, COVID-19, and vaccination rates. Cameron provided information on the high number of flu cases and encouraged vaccinations, while also discussing the importance of public health measures like handwashing and mask-wearing. LaQuita raised concerns about misinformation regarding childhood vaccinations, particularly the recommended schedule for newborn babies, and suggested seeking expert opinions to address these issues. She informed recent pronouncements from current federal officials (notably silent heretofore) desperately urging parents to vaccinate their children against the measles which had become widespread. Cameron explained the impact of recent changes to the CDC's vaccination recommendations and the potential risks of decreased vaccination rates leading to outbreaks of preventable diseases.

Nurses' Strike for Safe Staffing

The meeting focused on the nurses' strike at New York Presbyterian Hospital and other area hospitals, with nurses Tonya Fisher-Morales and Simone Wray explaining their demands for better staffing, workplace safety, and protection against AI replacement. They highlighted that the strike is not primarily about wages but rather addresses unsafe staffing levels and workplace violence, with hospitals currently operating under chronically short staffing that compromises patient safety. The nurses appreciated the committee's anticipated public statement or resolution recognizing unsafe hospital staffing as a patient safety issue and via Dr. Torres' reminder to the Committee of the current State supportive legislation named the Safe Staffing Act.

The nurses detailed the importance of the Safe Staffing Act, emphasizing that it is a public health issue affecting the entire community, not just a nurse/employer concern. They highlighted the dangers of overworked nurses and the impact on patient care, with Dr. Torres sharing personal experience about nurse workload in the emergency room. Cameron requested information on the

Safe Staffing Act and discussed the possibility of including specific patient ratios in the resolution, to which Simone agreed to provide the necessary details. LaQuita offered to forward the draft resolution to Simone and Tonya for their review, and Edwin suggested creating a separate resolution focused on patient ratios. The conversation ended with Heather expressing concern about the potential loss of healthcare for striking nurses, which Simone clarified was due to hospitals cutting off healthcare benefits during the strike.

The group discussed healthcare benefits for striking nurses, where the hospital chose to cut off their healthcare coverage on the first day of the strike despite it being already paid for that month. Simone explained that while the hospital could have extended coverage for the 30-day strike period, they instead proposed major cuts to the healthcare plan, including significant premium increases and removal of dependents, which nurses could not accept. The discussion highlighted that while other hospitals had reached contract agreements, these three major hospitals remained in negotiations, with Edwin noting that the hospitals' stance on salary was a distraction from the core issues of patient ratios and safe staffing.

The group discussed a proposed resolution drafted by LaQuita and Dr. Torres highlighting the strike concerns: nurse salaries, emphasizing that the issue was not about pay alone but rather addressing the staffing concerns and benefits raised by nurses. LaQuita requested input on the resolution via email, in order to present it to the Executive Committee at its meeting on the second Thursday of the month, followed by the General Board vote the following 3rd Thursday. There was an unanimous acceptance to move forward with that plan.

Community Health Research Initiatives

The meeting then shifted to a discussion about the proposed *Public Health Forum*, where the LaQuita and Dr. Judy Gomez of the CUNY School of Medicine proposed a collaboration to address public health issues in light of where it stands today as the nation is about to recognize 250 Years after signing the Declaration of Independence: including the movement of skepticism about vaccinations, the dangers of maternal health and other risks in women's health, sexual health and the LGBTQ community, and youth mental health. The Public Foun will have a focus on community engagement and research. It will seek language translators.

Dr. Gomez and LaQuita discussed the mission of their community engagement core, which centers on amplifying community voices and expertise. They highlighted ongoing clinical trials, including studies on Parkinson's in the Latinx community, adolescent mental health among Asians, and kidney health, as well as collaborations on colorectal cancer screening and medication management for breast cancer patients. LaQuita emphasized the importance of addressing community mistrust in clinical research, particularly among marginalized groups, and mentioned the well-received past efforts to educate the community about clinical research through its 2024 public forum and health discussions. The event is expected to take place at The CCNY campus in CB9

Next steps

Cameron to research and prepare a more detailed presentation on childhood vaccination schedules and public health concerns for next month's meeting.

Cameron to investigate measles vaccination rates for the first quarter/semester for next meeting.

Danielle to present the proposal to Economic Development Committee, Youth Education Committee, and Parks Committee.

Danielle to send presentation deck to Cameron/LaQuita. LaQuita to send committee meeting links to Danielle for Fan Village proposal support.

Sophia to email LaQuita with questions about community group connections

Simone/Tonya to provide their contact information in the chat for resolution distribution.

Edwin to review and incorporate Safe Staffing Act information into the resolution

LaQuita to forward resolution draft to Simone/Tonya.
and parking fines issue.

Victor attends the Legionnaires disease meeting at 3333 and LaQuita will try to provide committee representation.

LaQuita to send meeting notice to committee members about the Legionnaires disease meeting

Edwin to send resolution to Simone and Tonya for review

Simone and Tonya to review and provide feedback on the resolution via email

Nurses' union members to email LaQuita any additional union contacts to be included in the resolution

LaQuita to forward resolution to Executive Committee for discussion at next Thursday's meeting

LaQuita to forward resolution to General Board for vote on the third Thursday

Edwin to compile and share data on truck idling impacts and previous presentations.

Edwin to follow up with Council Member Shaun Abreu's office regarding the truck idling

LaQuita to coordinate with CUNY School of Medicine for public health forum venue at City College.

Respectfully submitted,

LaQuita Henry

Co-Chair, CB9 Health and Environment Committee
