THE CITY OF NEW YORK
COMMUNITY BOARD 9
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STRATEGIC PLANNING TASK FORCE
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Tuesday, Feb 24, 2026

CALL TO ORDER
Co-Chair Chris Johnson, called the regular meeting of the CBM Strategic Planning Task Force to Order at 6:36 p.m. EST, on Tuesday, February 24, 2026. The meeting was held exclusively via Zoom conferencing.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND MINUTES: The agenda was adopted by the co-chairs.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT:
Co-Chair Hon. Dejon Delphino, Co-Chair Hon. Christopher Johnson

COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
Hon. Walter T. Alexander, Hon. Greg Brito, Hon. Victor Edwards, Hon. Monique Hardin-Cordero and Hon. Heather Jason

GUESTS PRESENT:
Hon. Hakeel Ellison, CB9

MEETING SUMMARY:
The Strategic Planning Task Force meeting began with introductions and attendance updates, including Greg Brito joining the committee. Chris J. outlined the agenda focusing on Columbia University and WHDC grants, and requested any additions to the agenda. The group agreed to adopt the agenda as is, and Chris J. mentioned the minutes from prior meetings for Greg B. to review and reference. The meeting was set to discuss the Columbia University CBA, West Harlem Development Corporation's role as a grant administrator, and the review of task force bylaws.

The task force meeting covered two main topics: bylaws review and grant monitoring. For the bylaws, they agreed to organize a reading session with students and senior members like Ted K. to evaluate and update the CB9 version, which hasn't been updated since 2018. They also discussed comparing best practices from other community boards' bylaws. Regarding grants, Chris J. presented analysis of West Harlem Development Corporation's grant data showing an average grant of $15,000 (down from $28,000 in 2016) and identified concerns about unspent funds, with approximately $54M in net assets. The board discussed the need to categorize grants by purpose and monitor grantee performance, with Victor E. noting that some categories like arts and culture have been well-represented while others like housing have been underrepresented.

MEETING NOTES:
Dejon D. discussed the collaboration and involvement of college interns participating in the bylaws review and update process. She mentioned bylaws from several community boards have been collected and will be reviewed as part of the process. A meeting to review the various bylaws will likely be scheduled sometime shortly. Victor E. suggested also having a tenured community board member possibly Ted K. attend the meetings.

Chris J. talked about the working group and briefly overviewed two of the worksheets/reports that have been created relating to WHDC and the distributed grants. Since 2016 the WHDC has provided funding

to approximately 188 grant recipients. The task force intends to schedule an in-person for sometime next month to review and discuss the preliminary worksheets and receive feedback. He also mentioned consideration for a presentation to the general board relating to the current status of the CBA, CBF and in-kind assistance from WHDC and Columbia University.

Additional Items and activities discussed:

- Strategic Planning Task Force to develop a survey tool for grant recipients and applicants
- Strategic Planning Task Force would like to have the categories associated with the grants awarded by West Harlem Development Corporation
- Strategic Planning Task Force to create a quarterly report tracking space usage at the Forum
- Strategic Planning Task Force to investigate why some grant applications were not funded
- Chris J. to find out the exact amount received by Polante and how it was spent
- Strategic Planning Task Force to develop a monitoring system for space requests and approvals
- Greg B. to explore potential small business marketing companies for outreach about community services
- Chris J. to investigate creating a catalyst/accelerator program involving Columbia undergrads for promoting community programs

Legal Services Funding Shortfall -
The group discussed the funding status of legal services in West Harlem, where Polante received $200,000 but has exhausted their allocated funds, with approximately $4.4 million total having been spent on legal services. Manhattan noted concerns about the lack of funding and mentioned previous issues with Manhattan Legal Services, while Chris clarified that Polante received funding to operate but may not have been adequately staffed, suggesting they might need additional funding to maintain proper attorney staffing.

Benefit Programs Outreach Improvements -
The group discussed the effectiveness of benefit programs, particularly educational scholarships, noting that they primarily benefit students from elite schools rather than local community students. They explored ways to improve outreach, including partnerships with organizations like the Boys and Girls Club, and emphasized the need to better understand why some community organizations are not receiving funding or space allocations. Chris mentioned that the West Harlem Development Corporation, rather than Columbia, sets the rules for event fundraising at the Forum.

Columbia University Forum space usage, Oversight Discussion -
The task force discussed the use and oversight of the Columbia University Form spaces with concerns raised about the lack of visibility into who requests space and how it's used. They explored the idea of implementing monthly or quarterly reports to track space usage and fundraising activities, with a particular focus on ensuring community board involvement and transparency in the approval process.

The discussion also covered the $76 million community benefits agreement, with Greg B. suggesting the creation of a marketing initiative to promote available services and opportunities and working with the 125th St BiD. Chris noted that the Bid would be unable to operate outside its district under state law.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 21, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.
ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m. EST.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Dejon Delpino and Chris Johnson