

Syracuse Housing Strategies Corporation

One Park Place
300 South State St., Suite 700
Syracuse, New York 13202

MINUTES

Annual Meeting
January 26, 2026
2:00 p.m.

An annual meeting of the Syracuse Housing Strategies Corporation (the “*Corporation*”) was convened in public session on January 26, 2026, at 2:00 p.m., in the Burnet Conference Room, One Park Place, 300 South State Street, Suite 700, Syracuse, New York 13202.

Board Members Present: Rasheada Caldwell, Stephanie Pasquale, Patrick Hogan, Hon. Rita Paniagua, Karen Schroeder, Patrona Jones-Rowser, Robert Simpson, Katelyn Wright, Donald Radke

Excused Members:

Staff Present: Michelle Sczpanski

Others Present: Hannah Garty, George Lynch, Kaylin Hubbard

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Member Wright called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Member Wright acknowledged the board members present and noted no absences.

III. PROOF OF NOTICE

Member Wright acknowledged that notice of the meeting had been duly and properly provided.

IV. MINUTES

Member Wright noted the November 24, 2025, and December 11, 2025, Meeting Minutes. There being no questions or comments, Member Wright asked for a motion to approve the November 24, 2025, and December 11, 2025, Meeting Minutes. Member Hogan made the motion. Member Schroeder seconded the motion. Member Pasquale and Member Paniagua abstained.

ALL OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT APPROVED A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 24, 2025, AND DECEMBER 11, 2025, MEETING MINUTES.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Resolution to Appoint Board Officers

Ms. Sczpanski stated that the annual appointment of officers is required per the bylaws and procedure for filling vacancies. It was noted that mirroring the officer structure used in the previous term would result in the Mayor, or their designated delegate, serving as Board Chair. The Vice Chair position would be held by the Common Council President, or their delegate, and the Secretary would continue in their current role.

The Treasurer position was identified as open to any board member. Absent any objections or preference from the board to pursue an alternative structure, staff recommended proceeding in alignment with the prior model. Based on this approach, it was proposed that Member Pasquale serve as Chair, Member Paniagua serve as Vice Chair, and Member Wright continue as Secretary.

Ms. Sczpanski asked for motions to approve the appointment of Member Pasquale as Chair, Member Paniagua as Vice Chair, and Member Wright as Secretary.

The first motion was moved by Member Hogan and seconded by Member Radke, and the vote was unanimously approved.

ALL OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT APPROVED A RESOLUTION TO APPOINT STEPHANIE PASQUALE AS CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF THE SYRACUSE HOUSING STRATEGIES CORPORATION.

The next motion was moved by Member Hogan and seconded by Member Radke, and the vote was unanimously approved.

ALL OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT APPROVED A RESOLUTION TO APPOINT HON. RITA PANIAGUA AS VICE-CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF THE SYRACUSE HOUSING STRATEGIES CORPORATION.

The first motion was moved by Member Hogan and seconded by Member Radke, and the vote was unanimously approved.

ALL OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT APPROVED A RESOLUTION TO APPOINT KATELYN WRIGHT AS SECRETARY-TREASURER OF THE BOARD OF THE SYRACUSE HOUSING STRATEGIES CORPORATION.

2. Resolution to Appoint Members to Various Committees

Chair Stephanie Pasquale outlined required committees per bylaws: Governance, Finance, and Audit. Due to quorum requirements, independent members Pat Hogan, Donald Radke, Robert

Simpson, and Katelyn Wright must serve on all three committees. The Board Chair will serve ex officio on each committee.

Discussed continuation of previously held committee assignments: Councilor Caldwell on the Governance committee, Councilor Jones-Rowser on the Finance Committee, and Vice Chair Paniagua on the Audit committee. Chair Stephanie Pasquale noted the current practice of running committee meetings interchangeably, convening joint finance and governance meetings as they work through programming discussions. She predicted that this will continue to be necessary for the next 2-3 months, until the launch of the Homeowner Grant Program.

Frequency of committee meetings was confirmed as monthly. The next committee meeting was set as joint finance-governance and scheduled for the second Tuesday of the month, February 10, 2026. Board members were asked whether they feel strongly that they would like to attend or participate in any specific committee. Adjustments were requested regarding assignments, and Member Caldwell was assigned to both finance and governance. Ms. Sczpanski asked for a motion to approve the committee composition. The motion was moved by Secretary Wright and seconded by Member Hogan, and the vote was unanimously approved.

ALL OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT APPROVED A RESOLUTION TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE, AND FINANCE COMMITTEES.

3. Resolution to Reappoint Corporate Officers

A resolution was presented by Chair Pasquale to reappoint corporate officers, the first being to reappoint Michelle Sczpanski as Executive Director. The motion was moved by Member Hogan and seconded by Member Radke. The motion was unanimously approved without objection.

ALL OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT APPROVED A RESOLUTION TO APPOINT MICHELLE SCZPANSKI AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE SYRACUSE HOUSING STRATEGIES CORPORATION.

Another resolution was introduced to reappoint Mike Cannizzaro, the city's Chief Financial Officer, as the corporate officer. The motion was moved by Member Hogan and seconded by Member Radke. The motion was unanimously approved without objection.

ALL OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT APPROVED A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE MICHAEL CANNIZZARO AS CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER OF THE SYRACUSE HOUSING STRATEGIES CORPORATION.

4. Review of Mission Statement and Performance Metrics

Chair Pasquale next directed the Board to the page in the packet outlining the organization's mission statement and performance metrics. She reviewed the specific targets with the group, noting that the metrics call for 100 percent of properties to be in average condition or better, 25

percent of baseline average properties to be improved to above-average condition or better, homeownership in target areas to reach at least 50 percent, and for average home sales prices and median household incomes in those areas to move toward parity with county averages. Board members acknowledged that these were ambitious and aspirational goals and asked whether there were any immediate edits or concerns. Member Hogan suggested that, while driving out “bad market activity” is an important aspiration, the organization should consider connecting that goal more directly to measurable outcomes within the strategy. Ms. Sczpanski explained that this would involve tracking indicators such as code violations, illegal setouts, gun violence, and other quality-of-life issues, all of which can serve as proxies for neighborhood stability. She noted that the team has baseline data for these measures and is developing user-friendly dashboards so that progress can be reviewed regularly, at minimum annually, and in some cases quarterly where data is available.

Member Wright asked for clarification on the distinction between two of the metrics related to property condition. Ms. Sczpanski explained that the first metric focuses on bringing properties currently in below-average condition up to at least average condition, effectively eliminating the worst properties on a block through targeted interventions. The second metric, by contrast, focuses on moving properties already in average condition to above-average condition or better. She further reviewed the additional metrics for distressed neighborhoods, which include targets such as 70 percent of properties in average condition or better, 100 percent of vacant parcels under sustained positive management, poverty rates under 30 percent, homeownership rates of at least 40 percent, and annual declines in crime, tax delinquency, and code violations affecting quality of life.

Discussion then turned to the metric regarding average home sale prices and median household incomes moving toward county parity. Several members expressed concern that there is a significant difference between city and county medians and questioned whether this comparison was realistic or appropriate. Secretary Wright raised the issue of potential accusations of gentrification if such parity were achieved. Ms. Sczpanski responded that the intent of the metric is not to reach full equality with the county immediately, but rather to demonstrate consistent annual progress in that direction. She emphasized that preventing displacement remains a core principle of the housing strategy and that safeguards, particularly around affordability requirements for landlords receiving grants, would be essential. Board members suggested that tracking tenure and length of stay could help address displacement concerns, allowing the organization to monitor whether residents are remaining in place as neighborhoods improve. It was agreed that no single metric would define success, and that progress should be evaluated holistically across multiple indicators. Chair Pasquale confirmed that many of these data points could be reviewed quarterly, while others tied to census information would be assessed annually. Ultimately, the Board agreed to review actual sales and income data before making any changes to the metric, and no formal vote was required on this item.

5. Review of Property Disposition Guidelines

The Board then considered a resolution to adopt formal Property Disposition Guidelines. Chair Pasquale explained that, as a public authority, the organization is required to have such a policy on file and to review it annually. She noted that this policy is largely a procedural requirement

and mirrors policies used by other city public authorities. Importantly, under the organization's articles of incorporation, it is not permitted to own real property without prior authorization from the Common Council, meaning the policy would rarely, if ever, be utilized in practice. Several Board members requested that the document be simplified and shortened, particularly to focus only on personal property rather than real estate and asked that a Word version be provided for easier review and editing. Chair Pasquale agreed to prepare a revised version. The Board determined that action on the resolution would be postponed until the February meeting to allow members additional time to review and suggest changes.

6. Resolution to Authorize FY2026 Budget

Ms. Sczpanski presented the proposed 2026 budget and explained that several revisions had been made since the prior discussion. Anticipated revenues were updated to reflect funds currently committed, and a number of administrative and staffing line items were refined based on updated information. She noted that final confirmation of 2026 audit services costs came in significantly lower than previously budgeted. In response to questions, Ms. Sczpanski provided an update on Empire State Development (ESD) funding, explaining that all major milestones have been met and that only final paperwork remains pending. She also emphasized that the organization will continue pursuing additional funding opportunities as part of a broader resource strategy.

The Board discussed a \$15,000 placeholder for umbrella insurance included in the budget. Ms. Sczpanski explained that this amount was added conservatively while the organization seeks quotes and confirms whether additional coverage will be required. Questions were also raised regarding the indirect cost allocation included in the budget. Ms. Sczpanski clarified that the 30 percent administrative allocation reflects a portion of existing staff time devoted to Housing Strategies Corporation work and is drawn from the \$2.5 million in authorized city funds. She confirmed that this allocation does not create new salary costs but instead offsets a portion of the city's general fund expenses and remains within the required 10 percent cap on administrative spending.

Ms. Sczpanski noted that a line item for minor exterior grants was included under homeowner program costs but may be adjusted depending on final program design decisions. After all questions were addressed, a motion was made by Member Simpson and seconded by Member Schroeder to approve the 2026 budget as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

ALL OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT APPROVED A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE FY2026 BUDGET OF THE SYRACUSE HOUSING STRATEGIES CORPORATION.

7. Block Challenge Program Activity Report

Ms. Sczpanski provided an update on the Block Challenge Program, reporting that the initiative continues to perform strongly. As of the meeting date, anticipated homeowner investments have surpassed \$1 million, reflecting steady growth in participation. The program currently has 209 applications in progress, with 34 projects completed to date. Disbursements continue to move smoothly through the existing reimbursement process with Home Headquarters, and there have

been no significant cancellations. Ms. Sczpanski noted that many exterior projects are seasonal in nature, particularly those involving painting, driveways, and similar work, and that additional progress is expected once weather conditions improve. Staff will begin following up with applicants who have not yet moved forward to confirm continued participation, with flexibility to extend deadlines beyond June 2026 if needed.

Board members expressed enthusiasm about the program's impact and the level of homeowner engagement. Member Schroeder reported that the reimbursement process has been functioning well and that homeowners have responded positively, with few issues related to the reimbursable structure. Members discussed the program's return on investment, noting that it operates on a dollar-for-dollar match and that many homeowners are investing beyond the required match amounts, further leveraging program funds. It was also highlighted that participation teams have been organizing successfully, demonstrating strong community collaboration. The Board requested that before-and-after photos of completed projects be shared with the Common Council to help illustrate the program's neighborhood impact.

8. Homeowner Renovation Program

Chair Pasquale introduced a discussion regarding the proposed Homeowner Renovation Program and recommendations for sub-area boundaries and phased implementation. Updated maps were distributed showing revised boundary groupings that simplify earlier consultant recommendations and better reflect current neighborhood conditions and program readiness. She explained that the proposed approach organizes target areas into four phases, with work beginning in areas that appear most prepared for large-scale participation based on property condition data, prior engagement in the Block Challenge Program, vacancy levels, and attendance at community meetings. Areas shaded in yellow on the maps were identified as predominantly commercial or large multifamily zones and therefore outside the scope of direct homeowner programs.

The Board discussed how to balance limited organizational resources with the desire to maintain momentum across all neighborhoods. Chair Pasquale emphasized that while the organization cannot work everywhere at once, the Block Challenge Program will remain available citywide, and staff will continue providing outreach and technical assistance in all areas.

Members raised questions about equity and prioritization, particularly whether beginning in higher-value or more stable neighborhoods could create perceptions of unfairness. Chair Pasquale explained that the proposed pacing reflects where homeowners currently appear most ready to proceed and where early successes can be achieved, while acknowledging that more intensive code enforcement and engagement will be needed in other areas. She clarified that homeowners in any area would remain eligible to apply, but that interior renovation grants would require exterior conditions to be addressed first to ensure neighborhood-wide benefit.

The Chair recommended that staff prepare detailed term sheets outlining proposed program options, match requirements, and phased boundaries for further review at the February meeting. Staff agreed to circulate updated maps, participation data, and draft program materials to support continued discussion.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the Board confirmed that the next meeting would be held on February 10, 2026. A motion to adjourn was made and approved.

ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 3:02 p.m.

DRAFT