

CITY OF BOSTON
Office of Participatory Budgeting External Oversight Board Meeting

Tuesday, June 17th, 2025

EOB members present:

Jim Kennedy, Marilyn Forman, Lisa Hy, Esther Weathers, Carla Pantaleon-Stovell

OPB staff present: Renato Castelo, Director; Blanca Teixeira, Finance and Contracts Manager

Board Chair Jim Kennedy called to order the External Oversight Board meeting and conducted a roll call. Mr. Kennedy then called for a motion and Board members approved to adopt the minutes. Director Castelo provided an overview of the agenda and schedule for the next meetings.

Director Castelo shared a budget update for FY 2026. He announced that as part of the City's budget process for Fiscal Year 2026, the City Council, in an effort to increase the amount of funding for PB projects, moved \$200,000 from the Office's Contract Services line to the Special Appropriation line. This internal transfer reduces the dollars available to run the PB process during the upcoming Cycle Two and the beginning of Cycle Three. Director Castelo mentioned that the Office plans to maintain its contractual commitments for evaluation, communications and community engagement for Cycle Two, but will likely have to reduce the amount of funding reserved for partnerships with community organizations for the proposal development and voting phases. For the initial phase of Cycle Three, the Office will have to minimize the amount of spending on evaluation and communications/marketing prior to July 2027, the start of FY27.

Director Castelo shared implementation updates from Cycle One winning proposals. The office is shepherding the six winning projects into implementation in partnership with other city departments. Four initiatives are already moving from planning into implementation in the summer/early fall, while two of the proposals are still defining their scope to ensure the best use of resources. The Office will continue to update the Board and the public on these projects.

Board member Lisa Hy inquired about outreach responsibilities. Mr. Castelo shared that once projects are awarded, the respective departments handle outreach, leveraging their networks. The office will distribute updates via the department newsletter. Ms. Hy suggested sharing updates with community partners involved in the process. Director Castelo agreed, mentioning that this is something the Office will do. Ms. Hy also asked who is responsible for awarding the

grantees. Mr. Castelo mentioned that departments create an application review committee, and they are the ones who make recommendations to be presented to the Mayor's team. Once we are at this stage of the process, the Office will provide updates to our Board members about which organizations will be receiving funding.

Finance Manager Blanca Teixeira shared the Office's outreach and engagement plans for the Idea Collection phase, highlighting new partnerships with ten BCYF Community Centers that will host PB Corners in July, in addition to BPL Library Branches. Also, nineteen organizations will be hosting activities like workshops, focus groups, and tabling at events across the city. Director Castelo thanked Board member Lisa Hy for connecting the Office with the Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center, and encouraged attendance and feedback on upcoming events, which will be listed in a shared spreadsheet.

Board Chair Jim Kennedy shared an update about the External Oversight Board Annual Report. He mentioned that the final draft is available for Board Members to add edits or comments; but otherwise, the report will be ready to be published and shared with City stakeholders. About the final evaluation report created by Data + Soul, he shared that all edits suggested by the subcommittee had been incorporated. Board member Jarrett Wright appreciated all of Mr. Kennedy's work on this report, commenting on the importance of maintaining the strategic oversight role of the Board. Mr. Kennedy agreed to further clarify that language in the report.

There were no public comments. Board Chair Jim Kennedy adjourned the meeting at 7:02 PM

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