

City of Boston BERDO Review Board
Public Meeting Minutes
Zoom Virtual Meeting
July 13, 2026, at 4:30 pm
[View recording here](#)

Board Members in Attendance: Jessica Boatright, Samira Ahmadi, Stephen Ellis, Hessann Farooqi, Lori Ferriss, Gail Latimore, Reginald “Reggie” Stovell Jr, and Councilor Brian Worrell.

Board Members not in Attendance: none.

Staff Present: Diana Vasquez, Dr. Claudia Diezmartínez, and Zengel “Ziggy” Chin.

Others: Approximately three (3) members of the public attended this meeting.

Call Meeting to Order

4:40 pm: A meeting of the Review Board for the Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance, hereafter referred to as BERDO, was called to order on July 13 at 4:40 pm. This meeting was held virtually.

Roll Call

4:41 pm: The following BERDO Review Board members were in attendance: Chair Jessica Boatright, Samira Ahmadi, Stephen Ellis, Hessann Farooqi, Lori Ferriss, Gail Latimore, and Reginald “Reggie” Stovell Jr.

The following Environment Department staff were in attendance: Hannah Payne, Diana Vasquez, Dr. Claudia Diezmartínez, and Zengel “Ziggy” Chin.

Others: Approximately four (4) members of the public attended this meeting.

First Agenda Item: Hardship Compliance Plan Hearing for Catholic Memorial School

4:42 pm: Catholic Memorial presented information on their long-term Hardship Compliance Plan application.

5:09 pm: City staff presented staff comments.

5:11 pm: Councilor B. Worrell joined the meeting.

5:14 pm: Board Q&A Session

- J. Boatright asked what the funding sources for these projects will be and whether the funding will come from the existing donor base.
 - B. Palm answered that the school's newly operational advancement team recently achieved a 30% to 40% increase in the annual fund, though sustaining that growth poses a challenge given the institution's limited alumni history. Upgrading facilities to remain competitive is essential, yet capital projects directly compete with the school's top operational priority: securing student financial aid. Without a fully realized capital plan or an established mega-donor pipeline, leadership is focusing its fundraising efforts on current parents, re-engaged alumni, and Boston-area foundations aligned with their mission.
- J. Boatright asked about the relationship between Catholic Memorial, the Archdiocese, and the Boston school district.
 - B. Palm explained that the school operates as an independent, donor- and tuition-funded Catholic school governed by its own board rather than the Archdiocese, though it collaborates and aligns with the Archdiocese on specific initiatives. Rather than belonging to independent school associations such as the Independent School League, the school competes in a public school athletic conference, maintaining its identity as an independent institution while navigating a distinct competitive landscape.
- S. Ahmadi asked if Catholic Memorial has considered incentives through the MassSave program.
 - B. Palm answered that because tax incentives don't directly benefit non-profits, the school faces unique funding barriers when evaluating options such as ground-source (geothermal) and air-source HVAC systems. Beyond upfront costs, leadership is weighing long-term maintenance and the reliability of climate control to ensure the chosen system adequately supports building occupants year-round. To move forward, the school needs dedicated funding for detailed engineering studies to define the project's technical scope and navigate a challenging incentive landscape.
 - C. Lewis added that the school is evaluating Mass Save incentives and federal Investment Tax Credits, accessible to non-profits through direct-pay provisions, to offset the higher upfront capital costs of high-efficiency HVAC systems. While a full engineering analysis has yet to determine the single

best solution, leadership favors these systems for their long-term lifecycle and cost-of-ownership benefits. However, to remain adaptable alongside ongoing planning and fundraising efforts, the team keeps options open for alternative or phased configurations, such as air-source heat pumps.

- S. Ellis asked whether Catholic Memorial's energy use has remained consistent in previous years.
 - C. Lewis answered that Catholic Memorial has updated the application with complete 2025 emissions data, confirming that projected emissions remain within the requested limits and align with baseline performance trends established in prior years.
- H. Farrooqi asked if Catholic Memorial has considered BCCE.
 - B. Palm answered that the school currently purchases power from a third-party supplier under a contract that runs through 2028 or 2029, but leadership remains open to re-evaluating its setup. Ultimately, the primary driver is securing the lowest possible energy rates. When forced to choose between spending \$10,000 on utility costs or using those funds to educate another student, the school will always prioritize student financial aid and enrollment.
- L. Ferriss asked about the implementation stages for the decarbonization projects.
 - B. Palm explained that although ideal building science practices call for upgrading the building envelope before replacing heating and cooling systems, the school lacks a dedicated alumni "green fund" to finance standalone sustainability initiatives. Consequently, leadership relies on an opportunistic, phased strategy that bundles critical building-envelope upgrades, such as targeted window or roof repairs, into broader, program-driven campus renovations, such as the planned Academic Resource Center project.
- G. Latimore asked about Catholic Memorial's MWBE utilization policy.
 - B. Palm explained that while the school does not currently have a formal Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) utilization strategy, the core goals of such a policy strongly align with its foundational commitments to access, equity, and belonging. Consequently, leadership is open to establishing a formal agreement and moving in that direction to better align its procurement practices with the school's mission.

5:35 pm: Board Member G. Latimore left the meeting.

5:40 pm: Chair J. Boatright opened a public comment period.

5:41 pm: Chair J. Boatright closed a public comment period.

5:41 pm: Board Member R. Stovell made a motion to approve Catholic Memorial's long-term Hardship Compliance Plan application with standard conditions, and City Staff recommended special conditions. Chair J. Boatright seconded the motion. All board members in attendance (7) voted in favor. The motion carried at 5:42 pm.

Second Agenda Item: Discussion and Vote on 2026 BERDO Reporting and Verification Extension Procedures

5:43 pm: H. Payne presented information about the proposed 2026 BERDO reporting and verification extension procedures.

5:49 pm: Board Q&A Session

- S. Ellis requested an update on reporting, including the number of extension requests.

5:52 pm: Board Member G. Latimore joined the meeting.

5:55 pm: Board Member S. Ellis made a motion to delegate authority to the Environment Department to approve up to a 60-day extension, with an optional additional 30-days, request for building owners facing extenuating circumstances, contingent upon adherence to the outline filing process. Board Member S. Ahmadi seconded the motion. All Board members in attendance (8) voted in favor. The motion carried at 5:56 pm.

Third Item: Approval of Meeting Minutes.

5:56 pm: The Review Board voted to approve the [June 22 Meeting Minutes](#). Board Member G. Latimore made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Chair J. Boatright seconded the motion. All Board members in attendance (8) voted in favor. The motion carried at 5:57 pm.

Fourth Agenda Item: Administrative Updates

5:58 pm: Z. Chin shared the following updates:

One new resubmission for a hardship Compliance Plan has been received.

Dylan Grant has joined the BERDO team as the new Analytics Project Manager.

29% of BERDO IDs have completed their reporting and third-party verification, and the BERDO team sent an email blast on Friday reminding everyone in Touchstone about the August 15 deadline

The BERDO team is still working on the legal review of the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund applications and hopes to share them soon with the Review Board.

The BERDO team created a Streamlined Short-term HCP quick guide that breaks down the eligibility requirements, relief provided, and conditions of approval. It can be found on the Review Board website under the Resources section in the 'asset library'. It can also be found on the BERDO website on the right-hand side under "Need Help?".

The BERDO team launched a new Building Decarbonization Webinar Series. This webinar series will introduce the City of Boston's Building Decarbonization Guides, a new resource for building owners and property managers to learn about their buildings, understand how they use energy, and identify the most impactful upgrades to improve energy efficiency, reduce emissions, and support BERDO compliance

The next meeting is scheduled for July 27, 2026.

Meeting Adjournment

6:04 pm: Board Member S. Ellis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Board Member R. Stovell seconded. All board members in attendance (8) voted in favor. The motion carried at 6:05 pm.