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Minutes of
The City of Yonkers IDA
Regular Meeting
May 29, 2025 - 3:50 P.M.

At
470 Nepperhan Avenue, Suite 200
Yonkers, New York 10701-3892

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B E F O R E:

- MAYOR MIKE SPANO - Chairman
- DEPUTY MAYOR SUSAN GERRY - Member
- MELISSA NACERINO - Treasurer
- CECILE SINGER - Member
- VICTOR GJONAJ - Member
- HENRY DJONBALAJ - Member
- ROBERTO ESPIRITU - Member

I D A S T A F F:

- JAIME MCGILL - IDA Executive Director
- SIBY OOMMEN - IDA/YEDC Chief Fiscal Officer

O T H E R S:

- ADRIANA BARANELLO, ESQ. - IDA Counsel
- LARRY SYKES, ESQ. - IDA Counsel

1 MAYOR SPANO: Good afternoon,
2 everyone. Let's do the roll call.

3 MR. OOMMEN: Mayor Mike Spano.

4 MAYOR SPANO: Here.

5 MR. OOMMEN: Deputy Mayor
6 Gerry.

7 DEPUTY MAYOR GERRY: Here.

8 MR. OOMMEN: Melissa Nacerino.

9 MS. NACERINO: Here.

10 MR. OOMMEN: Cecile Singer.

11 MS. SINGER: Here.

12 MR. OOMMEN: Henry Djonbalaj.

13 MR. DJONBALAJ: Here.

14 MR. OOMMEN: Roberto Espiritu.

15 MR. ESPIRITU: Here.

16 MR. OOMMEN: Victor Gjonaj.

17 MR. GJONAJ: Here.

18 MR. OOMMEN: Mayor, we have a
19 quorum.

20 MAYOR SPANO: All right. Thank
21 you, and good afternoon everyone. We
22 have the minutes for the March 27th.
23 Everyone should have them in front of
24 them. Are there any questions?
25 Hearing no questions, somebody want

1 May 29, 2025

2 to make a motion we accept? Cecile's

3 made a motion, seconded by Melissa.

4 All in favor?

5 (A chorus of ayes.)

6 MAYOR SPANO: Any negatives?

7 Hearing none, the minutes have been

8 approved. Now we have the financials

9 for January and February 2025. Siby.

10 MR. OOMMEN: For the months of

11 January and February we received

12 agency fees of \$35,000. Hard cash on

13 hand at the end of February was

14 \$5.5 million. Thank you.

15 MAYOR SPANO: Thank you. Are

16 there any questions? Hearing none.

17 Cecile?

18 MS. SINGER: Yeah, I have a

19 question about item 9210 and 9220

20 about the Pier projects and the

21 expenditures.

22 MAYOR SPANO: Did you hear

23 that?

24 MS. MCGILL: 9210 and 9220?

25 MR. OOMMEN: Yes, relating to

1 May 29, 2025

2 the Pier?

3 MAYOR SPANO: Yes, she has
4 questions about those two items.

5 MR. OOMMEN: Sorry, what is the
6 question related to the Pier?

7 MS. SINGER: So what do they
8 represent?

9 MR. OOMMEN: So those are the
10 -- we have the 108 loan and we had a
11 NYPA loan related to the Pier. Those
12 are now in 2025 -- as of 2025 they
13 are now no longer payable so they
14 will be coming off of our books. So
15 they were related to a NYPA loan and
16 a 108 loan.

17 MS. SINGER: All right. So --

18 MAYOR SPANO: So it's paid off?

19 MR. OOMMEN: They're all paid
20 off.

21 MS. SINGER: We know there are
22 a lot of other things going on down
23 over at the Pier and so at some point
24 we'll get an outline of exactly
25 what's involved?

1 May 29, 2025

2 MR. OOMMEN: Right. As of the
3 current day they've all been paid
4 off, so they're no longer --

5 MAYOR SPANO: So these are the
6 loans that came previous to us being
7 here.

8 MR. OOMMEN: Yes, correct.

9 MAYOR SPANO : Remember, these
10 were the two loans that were here
11 when they got here and now they're
12 paid off.

13 MR. OOMMEN: They're paid off,
14 they'll come off the report.

15 MS. SINGER: All right, very
16 good. Thank you.

17 MAYOR SPANO: Thank you. Any
18 other questions?

19 MS. SINGER: Motion.

20 MAYOR SPANO: Cecile's made a
21 motion, seconded by Victor. All in
22 favor?

23 (A chorus of ayes.)

24 MAYOR SPANO: Any negatives?
25 The financials have been approved.

1 May 29, 2025

2 Jaime, resolutions for consideration.

3 MS. MCGILL: Our only
4 resolution today is an authorizing
5 resolution for the Yonkers Pier
6 preservation facade restoration
7 project. That's at 71 Water Grant
8 Street. This is for structural and
9 capital improvements down at the
10 Pier. I know Deputy Mayor Sue Gerry
11 can add some more detail.

12 MAYOR SPANO: Deputy Mayor?

13 DEPUTY MAYOR GERRY: So as
14 everyone's aware, the city regained
15 control of the Pier restaurant
16 facility after 20 years. There's a
17 new restaurant coming in, the
18 Benjamin's Group is opening the Sea
19 Fire Grill. They're putting in one
20 to two million dollars in renovation.
21 You're all going to be very excited
22 to see what they're doing on the
23 inside. It's beautiful, completely
24 reimagining it inside and out.

25 In the process of their

1 May 29, 2025

2 renovation on the inside, a number of
3 items were revealed that needed
4 really some attention on the outside.
5 So what we have done is to talk with
6 the Benjamin's Group. Their team has
7 helped us to identify the work on the
8 exterior. It includes things like
9 when they were trying to get their
10 water running and all of the water
11 valves in the restaurant into the
12 curbing and the street were broken,
13 so we had to have engineers come in
14 and work on refurbishing all those
15 water line connections.

16 In addition there was some
17 leaking in the flashing on the roof
18 and the front sort of deck of the
19 restaurant that was causing pooling
20 of water on the underside of the Pier
21 itself where we had just done a
22 million dollar renovation to put in
23 all new utilities. That has to be
24 done.

25 In addition, it hasn't been

1 May 29, 2025

2 painted in 30 years or 25 years.
3 There's a need for lighting, all new
4 lighting, all new painting, and as
5 well as management of the pigeon
6 issue, which is really kind of
7 devastating on the second floor
8 restaurant level. And they believe
9 they can correct it through the
10 installation of soffits with lighting
11 that won't interfere in any way with
12 the historical view of the restaurant
13 and the building and the structure,
14 but it will address the birds kind of
15 living up in the eaves of the awnings
16 that surround the building. And also
17 the lighting that will -- they will
18 also light up the Yonkers sign and
19 there will be new signage for the new
20 restaurant.

21 So given the iconic nature of
22 the Pier and that it's kind of the
23 city's waterfront showcase, it's kind
24 of delayed maintenance and
25 improvements that the city should

1 May 29, 2025

2 have -- would be responsible for
3 anyway. And so we've been doing a
4 lot of work with Benjamin's inside
5 and out. And the 1.2 million here
6 represents a not to exceed amount.
7 They're still getting quotes
8 together, and they will help us get
9 the work done and there will be an
10 arrangement between the IDA and the
11 Benjamin's Group to get this work
12 done before they open at the end of
13 the summer.

14 MS. SINGER: All right. And
15 are there other things we're doing
16 for the restaurant?

17 DEPUTY MAYOR GERRY: Well,
18 we're working with them to get them
19 some sales tax incentives through the
20 IDA. We meet with them almost weekly
21 with our engineering team, our DPW
22 team to make sure the water is
23 working, the connectivity to the
24 outside, fire alarms, the
25 electricity. We just recently got

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2 approval from NYPA to take the whole
3 Pier back under a NYPA electrical
4 account which will -- we're told the
5 result will be that the electrical
6 bills will be two-thirds less than
7 they have been.

8 Benjamin's is also redoing the
9 entire air-conditioning system which
10 is was a big cost for electricity
11 usage, so we're working in
12 partnership for that. And NYPA said
13 they were fine and happy we had a
14 private vendor. That private vendor
15 could also get the government rates
16 which is really nice. So it's really
17 been a nice partnership and we're
18 just eager for them to open.

19 MS. SINGER: Right. So some of
20 the problems that Peter experienced
21 certainly will also be problems for
22 the new restaurant. And the problem
23 is that you can attract people once,
24 but to bring them back is a totally
25 different thing, so if you want a

1 May 29, 2025

2 restaurant to survive, you have to be
3 able to have that recurrence.

4 So what were the factors? So
5 the factors were that we asked for
6 additional police support on the
7 weekends and was never adequate at
8 all there. And we've -- they also
9 found that the parking situation was
10 also something that made it difficult
11 for people because you had to give
12 them your car, they took it up to the
13 garage, then when you came out then
14 you had to -- if there were a lot of
15 people, there was a long wait.

16 So there were all of those
17 things. And then Peter felt that
18 when the city began the concerts on
19 the weekend and drew so many people,
20 there was so many undesirables that
21 came that it was another deterrent,
22 and they found that there were so
23 many people that wandered in that
24 also had problems and would approach
25 the people coming and going.

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2 So those of us who have lived
3 through all of those problems are
4 aware of what it means in operating a
5 restaurant, and our job is to make
6 sure that we remove all the barriers
7 to success so that we don't have a
8 repetition of the same problems. So
9 at some point we have to sit down
10 with Benjamin's and go over all those
11 things and see what can be done to
12 mitigate the problems before they're
13 exacerbated.

14 MAYOR SPANO: And you're a
15 hundred percent right, and thank god
16 -- and as you know, this is what
17 precisely we've been working on. We
18 are putting in foot patrol there so
19 by the summertime there will be a
20 foot patrol along the water's edge.

21 We're going to do a number of
22 things in terms of -- especially our
23 entertainment venue that we think
24 will enhance the experience down
25 there, enhance what's happening.

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2 We're going to have cops who are
3 going to be walking a beat down
4 there. We are making investments in
5 the structure because we own the
6 structure and we have to, and to
7 expedite it we're going to work with
8 the new developer so he can take care
9 of everything he needs to take care
10 of on the inside and the outside and
11 kind of partner with us to make it
12 happen, and so that's going to save
13 us a tremendous amount of money.

14 We had long exhausted
15 conversations with them about parking
16 because they do have a great parking
17 deal, they do, both the restaurants
18 there have -- were given quite the
19 deal in terms of parking. It just
20 never worked. Frankly, I think it's
21 never worked because they never got
22 the right people to do the job. You
23 know, Zuppa has the right people,
24 they're the same distance between
25 Zuppa and the parking garage that we

1 May 29, 2025

2 have and this restaurant and the
3 parking garage. They just haven't
4 been able to get the right group
5 there to do the work.

6 So we have worked with -- we're
7 working with them. We expect that a
8 restaurant like Benjamin's will be
9 able to hire the right people just
10 like they do in New York City. In
11 New York City you don't even know
12 where they park their damn cars
13 because it's so far away. So we are
14 working with them on that as well.

15 And so everything you just
16 described, Cecile, is stuff that we
17 are in the middle of working on, and
18 yeah, because we don't want to see --
19 we don't -- obviously we don't want
20 them to fail. We have a five-star
21 restaurant that wants to come to
22 Yonkers to replace what was a
23 five-star restaurant, but we also
24 know that as much as I love Peter,
25 there were some issues there as well

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2 that we couldn't control and he
3 obviously couldn't control because we
4 saw what the final markup was for all
5 his restaurant chains. But we're on
6 top of it and we'll continue to
7 update you and, you know.

8 MS. SINGER: And the public
9 safety issues.

10 MAYOR SPANO: And the public
11 safety, like I said, I'm putting
12 police officers on the ground there
13 so on the weekends, especially
14 Thursday, Friday, Saturday we will
15 have cops that will be walking the
16 beat there, all right? And we're
17 going to enforce the dusk laws on the
18 park, you know, so when it gets dark,
19 our parks close, and so will our --
20 so will that walkway.

21 MS. SINGER: Thank you.

22 MAYOR SPANO: Any other
23 questions? But thank you. You had
24 it spot on like you always do. This
25 is what --

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2 MS. SINGER: You can get rid of
3 me on --

4 MAYOR SPANO: But Sue's been
5 working on it and she --

6 MS. SINGER: I was --

7 MAYOR SPANO: -- because we
8 lived this whole thing with Peter --

9 MS. SINGER: I was very close
10 with it, I tried to help Peter and so
11 on.

12 MAYOR SPANO: Yeah, we changed
13 the tear drop for him, we did a lot
14 of different things and we just
15 couldn't seem to make it work for
16 him. But like I said, that was --
17 this group seems to be more
18 aggressive and they also seem to be a
19 group that's from the city and
20 they're used to --

21 MS. SINGER: That's very good.

22 MAYOR SPANO: -- they're used to
23 the environment they're coming in
24 into, right? So I feel good --

25 MS. SINGER: Right. So we have

1 May 29, 2025

2 to make sure that they have recurring
3 customers because that's the only way
4 that a restaurant can survive.

5 MAYOR SPANO: And they're going
6 to pay us a pretty significant rent.
7 What's the amount there?

8 DEPUTY MAYOR GERRY: During --
9 so as soon as they open they start at
10 \$200,000 a year and each year it
11 increases. The first year while
12 they're building out, that's their
13 rent, their investment of 1.5, so
14 maybe a little bit more than a
15 million into the infrastructure. So
16 it's really been -- and, you know,
17 even the things that they brought to
18 light that are our responsibility and
19 having their vendors identify that
20 has been really helpful and saved us
21 month and months of work.

22 MS. SINGER: Right. All right.
23 So, look, because we had a restaurant
24 where somebody had it for a long
25 period of time and struggled to break

1 May 29, 2025

2 a deal to make it successful, we
3 really have to be aware of what's
4 happening there and have more of a
5 partnership in making sure that the
6 resources that are available in the
7 city are utilized and are available
8 to them because it's -- that was a
9 very big issue.

10 MAYOR SPANO: Yeah, it was, it
11 was, it was -- well, like I said, we
12 really tried very, very hard to work
13 with Peter, and we were successful in
14 some ways, not in others. But like I
15 said, at the end of the day it really
16 wasn't about X20 because I think that
17 out of all of his businesses, the
18 last one, the last was X20, so that
19 was the most successful of all his
20 restaurants. It just didn't work.

21 So we think we have a very -- I
22 mean this is a company that does
23 \$60 million a year, right,
24 Benjamin's. So they're a pretty
25 successful chain, they're not going

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2 to come here if they don't think
3 they're going to be successful, and
4 we're going to do everything we can
5 to make sure they are. And it's one
6 of those restaurants that you know
7 when they talk about the tide going
8 up in the harbor and all the boats
9 coming up with it, that is the kind
10 of restaurant.

11 But I do hear what you're
12 saying in terms of what we need to do
13 in terms of quality of life down
14 there. We're going to continue and
15 we're going to up our efforts and
16 I'll come back to the IDA to see what
17 more we're going to do.

18 MS. SINGER: Right. And we
19 should be alert if they draw from all
20 the new housing that we built around
21 the waterfront because that's a
22 tremendous resource, and how you get
23 them to utilize some of the things in
24 the city is another thing, so thank
25 you.

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2 MAYOR SPANO: Thank you,
3 Cecile. Yes, Henry?

4 MR. DJONBALAJ: No. Are they
5 going to open up before July 4th
6 hopefully?

7 MAYOR SPANO: They're not.
8 They don't see it happening before
9 July 4th, though we were hoping for
10 that. But they are going to cater a
11 party for us on -- because as you
12 know, we'll be having a 4th of July
13 celebration down there, so they feel
14 they'll be done enough that they can
15 have an event there.

16 MR. DJONBALAJ: Okay, that's
17 great.

18 MAYOR SPANO: Okay.

19 MR. GJONAJ: Can't wait.

20 MAYOR SPANO: Deputy Mayor's
21 made a motion, seconded by Henry.
22 All in favor?

23 (A chorus of ayes.)

24 MAYOR SPANO: Any negatives?
25 Hearing none, the item is passed.

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2 Thank you, Jaime.

3 Is there any legal?

4 MR. SYKES: I have nothing.

5 MAYOR SPANO: Nothing for us.

6 Thank you. Someone want to make a
7 motion we adjourn?

8 MS. NACERINO: Make a motion.

9 MAYOR SPANO: Melissa's made a
10 motion we adjourn, seconded by Cecile
11 Singer. All in favor?

12 (A chorus of ayes.)

13 MAYOR SPANO: Any negatives?

14 We're adjourned.

15 (Whereupon, at 4:08 P.M., the
16 above matter concluded.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF NEW YORK)

: SS.:

COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER)

I, NATHAN DAVIS, a Notary Public for
and within the State of New York, do hereby
certify:

That the above is a correct
transcription of my stenographic notes.

I further certify that I am not
related to any of the parties to this
action by blood or by marriage and that I
am in no way interested in the outcome of
this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
set my hand this 11th day of June 2025.

<%24408,Signature%>

NATHAN DAVIS