

David C. Schopp
Chief Executive Officer

Rebecca L. Thayer
Chief Financial Officer

Nadine E. Patterson
Deputy Executive Director – Civil Practice

Ian M. Harrington
Deputy Executive Director – Criminal Practice



Lisa M. Patterson
President

Craig R. Bucki
First Vice President

Timothy Murphy
Second Vice President

John T. Kolaga
Secretary

Bryan Donohue
Treasurer

September 12, 2025

Ms. Olivia M. Owens
Clerk of Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street, 4th Floor
Buffalo, NY 14202

EC LEG SEP 12 '25 AM 11:49

Re: Bi-Annual Report of the Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo, Inc.
Pursuant to Resolution 233 of May 6, 1975

Dear Ms. Owens:

Pursuant to the above-referenced Resolution, enclosed please find a copy of our organization's financial report for the period 01/01/2025 to 06/30/2025. Also enclosed is a roster of Legal Aid's Board of Directors, as well as a synopsis of meetings of the Board of Directors conducted within the six-month specified period of the report.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rebecca L. Thayer", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Rebecca L. Thayer, CPA
Chief Financial Officer

Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo
Report to Clerk of Erie County Legislature
Preliminary Unaudited Financial Summary
Period 1/1/25 -6/30/25

Source of Funds	
Federal	
State	43,847
City of Buffalo	
Erie County	2,555,825
State/ County Grants	3,245,767
Other:	
Cattaraugus County	32,216
Genesee County	52,246
Niagara County	16,394
Ontario County	278,310
Chautauqua County	1,708
Cayuga County	
Orleans County	12,329
Total Funding	6,238,643
EXPENSE	
Personnel Expense	
Salaries	3,493,495
Fringe Benefits	1,154,580
	33.0%
Supplies/Equipment/ Services	
Space Rental	171,034
Utilities/telephone	37,435
Office Supplies	9,604
Office Equipment Rental	1,398
Postage/Postal Box Rental	4,307
Security/Maintenance	-
Travel	21,271
Insurance	10,793
Legal/accounting	32,560
Dues & Association / Membership fees	20,162
Office printing copying	-
Service contracts	2,035
Interest Paid on Operating Loans	-
Training	23,306
Equipment Purchase	496,367
Professional Fees	32,256
Subscriptions	49,837
Translation	2,954
Client Assistance	10,573
Transcripts	-
Experts	-
Administrative Expense	556,443
Miscellaneous	11,145
IT Services	97,088
TOTAL EXPENSE	6,238,643

Unaudited Financials

THE LEGAL AID BUREAU OF BUFFALO, INC.

Board of Directors
2024-2025 (Revised 6/17/25)

1. LISA M. PATTERSON, Esq. (645-6262) (Fax 645-7336) President
University at Buffalo School of Law
518 John Lord O'Brian Hall, North Campus
Buffalo, NY 14260 lpatter@buffalo.edu
2. CRAIG R. BUCKI, Esq. (847-5495) (Fax 852-6100) First Vice-President
Phillips Lytle LLP
One Canalside
125 Main Street
Buffalo, NY 14203 cbucki@phillipslytle.com
3. TIMOTHY P. MURPHY, Esq. (845-1925) (Cell 417-7455) Second Vice-President
Federal Public Defender's Office
300 Pearl Street, Suite 200
Buffalo, New York 14202 timothy_murphy@fd.org
4. JOHN T. KOLAGA, Esq. (854-3400) (Fax 332-0336) Secretary
Rupp Pfalzgraf
1600 Liberty Building
Buffalo, NY 14202 kolaga@ruppbaase.com
5. BRYAN DONOHUE (416-7100) (c 465-4562) Treasurer
Tracsis US
1387 Fairport Rd., Bldg 900A
Fairport, NY 14450 bryan.donohue@tracsis.com
6. JESUTOWO "KOLA" ADENIJI, Esq. (423-834-3512)
Erie County
Edward A. Rath County Office Building
95 Franklin Street, 6th Floor
Buffalo, NY 14202 Jesutowo.adeniji@gmail.com
7. MICHAEL AINA (853-9555 ext 625)
Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo
290 Main Street, Suite 300
Buffalo, NY 14202 maina@labbuffalo.org
8. FARINA BARTH, Esq. (645-2885)
University at Buffalo School of Law
623 John Lord O'Brian Hall
Buffalo, NY 14260 fariname@buffalo.edu

THE LEGAL AID BUREAU OF BUFFALO, INC.

Board of Directors

2024-2025 (Revised 6/17/25)

9. SHERENE BENNETT
Service Link Stop
Buffalo, NY
sherenebennett@gmail.com
10. REV. MARK E. BLUE
NAACP
18 Church Street
Lackawanna, NY 14218
(826-4940) (Fax 826-6069)
rev.markblue@buffalonaacp.org
11. MEGHAN A. CORCORAN, Esq.
National Fuel
94 Liberty Terrace
Cheektowaga, NY 14215
(857-7064)
corcoranm@natfuel.com
12. THOMAS DIINA
Erie County Sheriff's Office
2433 King Fisher Lane
Niagara Falls, NY 14304
(725-2024)
tidiina@gmail.com or Thomas.diina@erie.gov
13. CHARLES J. ENGLERT III, Esq.
Barclay Damon LLP
208 Winterbrook Drive
Amherst, NY 14228
(553-2622)
cenglert@barclaydamon.com
14. RYON FLEMING, Esq.
NYS Supreme Court
Genesee County Court
1 West Main Street
Batavia, NY 14020
(585-201-5722)
rfleming@nycourts.gov
15. BRADLEY A. HOPPE, Esq.
Bond, Schoeneck & King
Avant Building – Suite 900
200 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14202-2107
(716-416-7025)
bhoppe@bsk.com
16. KATHLEEN KUGLER, Esq.
Niagara County Assigned Counsel
219 Hawley Street
Lockport, NY
(471-0377)
LockportLawyers@gmail.com
17. JAMILA A. LEE, Esq.
University at Buffalo School of Law
317 John Lord O'Brian Hall
Buffalo, New York 14260
(716-645-6205)
jamilale@buffalo.edu

THE LEGAL AID BUREAU OF BUFFALO, INC.

Board of Directors
2024-2025 (Revised 6/17/25)

18. JENNIFER REALE, Esq. (716-853-9555 x518)
Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo, Inc.
290 Main Street, Suite 300
Buffalo, NY 14202 jreale@labbuffalo.org
19. JILL ROBINS (698-0047)
University at Buffalo Foundation, Inc.
Buffalo, NY jillrobins12@gmail.com
20. DAVID C. SCHOPP, Esq. (853-9555 ext. 451) (Fax 853-3219)
Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo
290 Main Street, Suite 400
Buffalo, NY 14202 dschopp@legalaidbuffalo.org
21. ERIN WHITCOMB, Esq. (307-8884)
Cattaraugus County Dept. of Social Services
PO Box 875
Ellicottville, NY 14731 elwhitcomb@cattco.org

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE LEGAL AID BUREAU OF BUFFALO, INC.
January 21, 2025

PRESENT:

Kola Adeniji
Michael Aina
Sherene Bennett
Rev. Mark Blue
Craig R. Bucki
Meghan A. Corcoran
Thomas Diina
CJ Englert
Ryon Fleming
Thomas Hare
Bradley Hoppe
Kathleen Kugler
Jamila Lee
Timothy Murphy
Lisa M. Patterson
Erin Whitcomb
David C. Schopp, Chief Executive Officer
Steve Leonardo, Temporary CFO
Amy Jeanty-Blum, DEI & HR Director

NOT ATTENDING:

Farina Barth
Bryan Donohue
Roland Hayes
John T. Kolaga
Jill Robins

President Lisa Patterson began the meeting. Since this was not a regularly scheduled Board meeting, we did not follow our usual meeting outline and only discussed three items.

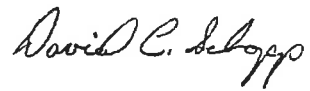
The first topic was the discussion of the CEO/Executive Director salary for David's successor. After discussion and review of other CEO salaries from across New York and the country, it was suggested that we lower the low end of the range to be closer to David's current salary. This will be discussed with the Search Committee at their meeting scheduled for January 30th.

The second topic was an update regarding the interim report received from the Erie County Taskforce in Indigent Defense. This initial report suggests an institutional provider instead of a County-created office would be in the County's best interest.

Lastly, a vote was taken to approve the 2025 Management salary increases. This included a 3% COLA increase as well as a step increase for 8 eligible employees to keep in line with the County. All in attendance approved the increases.

At this time, Lisa Patterson adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "David C. Schopp".

David C. Schopp
Assistant Secretary

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE LEGAL AID BUREAU OF BUFFALO, INC.
February 18, 2025

PRESENT:

Kola Adeniji
Michael Aina
Farina Barth
Sherene Bennett
Meghan A. Corcoran
Thomas Diina
Ryon Fleming
John T. Kolaga
Kathleen Kugler
Jamila Lee
Timothy Murphy
Lisa M. Patterson
Jennifer Reale
Erin Whitcomb
David C. Schopp, Chief Executive Officer
Steve Leonardo, Temporary CFO
Nadine Patterson, Deputy Executive Director – Civil Practice

NOT ATTENDING:

Rev. Mark Blue
Craig R. Bucki
Bryan Donohue
CJ Englert
Thomas Hare
Bradley Hoppe
Jill Robins

President Lisa Patterson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from December 16, 2024 and January 21, 2025 meetings. A motion was made by John Kolaga, seconded by Meghan Corcoran, and was unanimously approved.

Reports of Committees

Governance Committee

Tim Murphy, chairperson of the Search Committee, introduced Sherry Ettleson from DRG Search, LLC. This firm assisted the Legal Aid Society of New York in hiring their CEO, and we are looking to do the same for David Schopp's successor.

At this time, Kathleen Kugler and Kola Adeniji joined the meeting.

Discussion regarding the recruitment and hiring process was had, with assurances that they will assist in the search for a new CEO if the hired candidate is terminated within 12 months of hire.

At this time, Sherry Ettleson left the meeting.

A motion was made by Tim Murphy for the Board to approve the contract with DRG Search LLC, seconded by Meghan Corcoran, and unanimously approved.

Tim Murphy will be in contact with Sherry Ettleson to let her know we will be moving forward with the contract.

Finance Committee

The committee met today to review the 401(k) investment options. The committee will consider different options for our staff.

Development Committee

Legal Aid has received \$8k more in donations this year than last year, not including two significant donations. We will be sending letters to previous donors that have not yet donated. Michael Pace is creating a newsletter to send to donors and interested parties. He is also working on a possible fundraising event for the Bureau to be held in the fall.

Reports of Officers

Treasurers Report by Steve Leonardo

Estimated 2024 Statement of Activity Summary:

As of 12/31/2024 (\$ 000's)

Total Revenue	\$ 19,919
Total Expenses	<u>19,887</u>
Net Assets	\$ 32

- *The above is consistent with November estimate and will change based on adjustments made for funding reports prior to final close out of the books before audit. Expect final results prior to next Board meeting.*
- *\$1M Cash on hand 12/31/24 with no balance on Line of Credit*
 - *Cash on hand as of 02/14/2024 approximately \$150,000 with \$1.12M extended on \$2 Million Line of Credit.*
 - *Erie County (\$2.3M) and 2024 ILS HH2 (\$3.2M) should lead to no balance needed on Line of Credit through summer 2025*

Current Funding Highlights:

- *Erie County*
 - *2025 contract was received and signed two-weeks ago. \$4,533K funding plus utilize \$820K prior deferred revenue for \$5,353K total.*
 - *First advance of \$2,266K (50%) is pending*
 - *Still working to Finalize two other contracts with Erie County for Harm Reduction and Discovery*
- *NYS United Court Systems*
 - *Three contracts spending down for contract periods ending 03/31/2024*
 - *Funding levels for 2025-26 still unknown – budget assumes slight increase over 2024-25*
- *NYS Indigent Legal Services - Hurrell-Harring Funding – Erie County*
 - *HH2 Three-year contract from 04/01/24 - 03/31/27. Still awaiting final ability to voucher April-December 2024.*
 - *Original HH contract extension – Erie County Courthouse construction. Will voucher after construction completion (3/31/25)*
- *NYS Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance*
 - *New contract started 10/01/2024*
 - *Reduced from Submitted \$650,000 to \$420,000 for a year*
- *Interest on Lawyer Accounts*
 - *Finalizing five-year contract for \$4.634M to begin 4/1/25*
 - *Year one \$618K doubling to \$1,235K in year five*

2025 Budget Statement of Activity Summary (\$000's):

Total Revenue	\$ 21,472
Total Expenses	<u>21,414</u>
Net Assets	\$ 58

- *Bottoms up budget by cost*
 - *Labor and fringe costs by employee on staff with assumed openings*
 - *Rent is known*
 - *All other costs estimated by funding source.*
 - *Admin Budget assumes ~\$40K placeholder for CEO placement fees in 2025*
- *Funding sufficient on Criminal and Appeals side*
- *Civil and Attorneys for Children funding is slightly lower than current assumptions -*
 - *This is something to keep an eye on – but not over-concerning because the budget model always assumes full employment for all people. In reality, we often have employees on leave. Or, we have attrition with GAPS/delays in hiring.*

- *Also, possibility that funding for UCS programs is higher than assumed.*

Other Items:

- *Accounting Staffing*
 - *Bookkeeper hired November 2024*
 - *Accountant/Analyst started 2/4/25*
 - *Working to finalize permanent CFO*
- *Audits – looking to engage with EFPR in April for 2024 audit*
- *Retirement plan – still working with outside counsel and Vanguard for potential retroactive plan modification to allow for retirement contribution on retirement incentive. This is an open item from the 2023 Plan Compliance test with Vanguard.*

CEO Report by David Schopp

David Schopp gave a brief update on the County Working Group. There has not been a final determination at this point, but there is an upcoming meeting with Judge Eagan, John Flynn, David and Michelle Parker, Director of the Assigned Council Program.

Renovations at Buffalo City Court got a later start than hoped, but should still be completed on time for our ILS funding.

Even without the possible County expansion, we are running out of space. There is a possibility to move the Attorneys for Children Unit, but there is currently no space available in this building.

Nadine Patterson gave an update on the Civil Practice. Russell Fox, Managing Attorney in the Attorneys for Children Unit, is stepping down to become a Staff Attorney. The unit is holding second interviews for his vacant position next week, with 6 internal candidates. JCLS has a 6% increase in funding and IOLA has a 60% increase in funding for next year. Last week we held our annual all-staff training and we will hold another in October.

Old Business – none

New Business – none

At this time, Lisa Patterson adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



David C. Schopp
Assistant Secretary

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE LEGAL AID BUREAU OF BUFFALO, INC.
April 15, 2025

PRESENT:

Michael Aina
Farina Barth
Sherene Bennett
Craig R. Bucki
Thomas Diina
CJ Englert
Ryon Fleming
John T. Kolaga
Kathleen Kugler
Jamila Lee
Timothy Murphy
Lisa M. Patterson
Jennifer Reale
Jill Robins
Erin Whitcomb
David C. Schopp, Chief Executive Officer
Rebecca Thayer, CFO
Steve Leonardo, Temporary CFO
Nadine Patterson, Deputy Executive Director – Civil Practice

NOT ATTENDING:

Kola Adeniji
Rev. Mark Blue
Meghan A. Corcoran
Bryan Donohue
Thomas Hare
Bradley Hoppe

President Lisa Patterson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from February 18, 2025 meeting. A motion was made by John Kolaga, seconded by CJ Englert, and was unanimously approved.

David introduced Rebecca Thayer, the new Chief Financial Officer. She has been the Controller of Legal Aid for the past 8 years.

David introduced Jonathan Choi, the new Managing Attorney in the Attorneys for Children Unit. Jonathan has worked in both the Attorneys for Children Unit and Criminal Defense Unit at Legal Aid. He is focused on Juvenile Defense in his position and would like to assist Legal Aid in securing the contract to represent clients in Youth Part so there can be a continuity of representation.

Reports of Committees

Governance Committee

Lisa Patterson reported that the Governance Committee met on April 1st. A board resolution was created for the Indigent Defense Task Force and sent to the County Executive. The announcement of Legal Aid becoming the public defender for the County will be April 30th.

Tim Murphy, chairperson of the Search Committee, gave an update. The committee had an initial meeting with DRG last week. The discovery phase is next, and a survey will go out to all staff, with responses kept anonymous.

Finance Committee

The committee reviewed the 401(k) plan and added withdrawal provisions for domestic abuse, terminal illness and natural disasters.

Discussion was had regarding the upcoming expansion and how we afford these added services. In the preliminary analysis by Steve Leonardo, ILS is supporting the initial start-up costs this year, as well as possible incremental funding from the County.

At this time, Tim Murphy left the meeting.

Development Committee

Michael Pace reported a 22% increase in year-end donations as well as 60 first-time donors. Social media interactions have doubled in the past year. Michael has been working on quarterly appeal letters to increase donations throughout the year, and there will be another mailing once the County Executive makes the announcement regarding our expansion. He has also been working on finding funding to expand our Project Thrive.

The newsletter will be relaunching soon and will be sent out quarterly thereafter. Give 716 is coming up, so there will be more communication coming up.

There may be a fundraising event this fall, with a date to be determined. It may possibly be a trivia night.

Reports of Officers

Treasurers Report by Steve Leonardo

Current Funding Overview:

- *Erie County*

- 2025 contract - \$4,533K funding plus utilize \$820K prior deferred revenue for \$5,353K total.
- First advance of \$2,266K received March 17.
- Still working to finalize two other contracts with Erie County for Harm Reduction and Discovery
 - Harm Reduction - \$250K over five years starting 1/1/25 that can be executed in less than five years. LABB signed final contract 4/7 - awaiting Erie County execution.
 - Discovery – no new communications from Erie County
- NYS Indigent Legal Services - Hurrell-Harring Funding – Erie County
 - HH2 Three-year contract from 04/01/24 - 03/31/27.
 - Contract finalized by Erie County in March 2025.
 - Submitted three invoices for 2024 activity totaling \$3.2M. First invoice for \$895K paid 4/10. Expect remaining invoices no later than early May.
 - Original HH contract extension – Erie County Courthouse construction.
 - Construction leaking into April 2025
 - Confirmed with ILS office ability to invoice for all costs upon completion of construction in April
- Erie County Expansion
 - Completed preliminary cost assessment and reviewed with Finance Committee on April 9
 - Initial Funding Sources look sufficient:
 - ILS added \$3.027M additional funding to HH2 contract ending 4/1/27. This should be enough to cover start-up and the 2026 ramp.
 - There could be incremental Erie County Funding in 2026/27 previously directed to ACP. Obviously, it is expected that there is a net savings.
 - Potential to utilize Discovery funding yet to be allocated from Erie County
- NYS United Court Systems
 - Three main contracts ended 3/31/24. Attorneys for Children (AFC) Child Welfare, AFC Juvenile Defense and Judiciary Civil Legal Services (JCLS)
 - Funding levels for 2025-26 still unknown. LABB internal budget assumes slight funding increase over 2024-25. As discussed at February meeting, this likely results in Civil and Attorneys for Children funding lower than current assumptions of cost on board.
 - Potential for JCLS to receive higher funding which could mitigate Civil funding shortfall.
- NYS Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance
 - New contract started 10/01/2024
 - Reduced from Submitted \$650,000 to \$420,000 for one year
- Interest on Lawyer Accounts

- Five-year contract for \$4.634M began 4/1/25
- Year one \$618K doubling to \$1,235K in year five

2025 Financial Activity Summary (\$000's):

Total Revenue Budget	\$ 21,472
Total Expenses Budget	<u>21,414</u>
Change Net Assets Budget	\$ 58

- No significant change in details since February meeting. Will provide detailed Latest Revised Estimate with comparison to initial budget at June meeting.
- Cash
 - \$510K cash on hand as of 4/11/25
 - After receipt of remaining HH2 2024 invoices, do not foresee any significant borrowing against Line of Credit for at least several months
- Working alternatives to close potential AFC funding GAPS
 - Pursue new/alternative funding sources
 - Explore allocation of current part-time FTEs to alternative sources.
 - Attrition / leaves materializes. Do not backfill attrition
 - Reductions in OTPS/Equipment Assumptions
 - Indirect allocation reduction as direct cost close to budget
 - Transfer full FTEs to other programs

Estimated 2024 Statement of Activity Summary:

As of 12/31/2024 (\$ 000's)

Total Revenue	\$ 19,919
Total Expenses	<u>19,887</u>
Net Assets	\$ 32

- The above is consistent with November estimate.
- Finalizing changes based on adjustments made for funding reports prior to final close out of the books before audit. Major report to ILS submitted 4/1 (ILS-195)
- Report out at June meeting

Other Items:

- Finance/Accounting Staffing
 - Rebecca (Becky) Thayer promoted from Controller to CFO
 - Bookkeeper hired November 2024
 - Assistant Controller to start 4/28
 - Posted Controller replacement. Upon hire, Becky fully transitions to CFO role
- Will begin in engagement with EFPR in May for 2024 Financial audit

- *Retirement plan*
 - *4/8 Finance Committee reviewed withdrawal provisions that are encompassed in Secure 2.0 Legislation recently enacted into the Retirement plan.*
 - *Adopted three provisions*
 - ***Domestic Abuse:*** *Withdraw up to \$10,000 or 50% of the account, penalty-free. Repay within 3 years to avoid income taxes.*
 - ***Terminal Illness:*** *Penalty-free withdrawals. No repayment needed.*
 - ***Natural Disaster:*** *Up to \$22,000 penalty-free. Repay within 3 years.*

CEO Report by David Schopp

David Schopp reported that he had been contacted again by the Buffalo News regarding the upcoming announcement but declined to comment. The article indicated that we will also be taking cases from Family Court, but that has not been confirmed by the County. Nadine Patterson gave an overview of what it would entail if we did receive the Family Court cases, as our Attorneys for Children Unit may need to be restructured.

There is a need for more committee members on various committees, but David and Lisa will follow up with individual Board members.

At this time, Lisa Patterson left the meeting.

Legal Aid will have a need soon for additional office space. Ellicott Development has indicated that there will be additional space in our current building at the end of the year.

Our Buffalo City Court renovations are almost complete.

We have started discussions with the Attorneys' Union regarding the addition of violent felony cases.

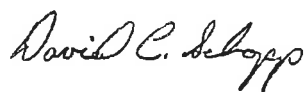
Legal Aid is in discussion with the Niagara County Public Defender office regarding contracting with us to assume the appellate representation for Niagara County.

Old Business – none

New Business – none

At this time, Craig Bucki adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



David C. Schopp
Assistant Secretary

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE LEGAL AID BUREAU OF BUFFALO, INC.
June 17, 2025

PRESENT:

Kola Adeniji
Michael Aina
Farina Barth
Sherene Bennett
Thomas Diina
Ryon Fleming
Bradley Hoppe
John T. Kolaga
Kathleen Kugler
Jamila Lee
Timothy Murphy
Lisa M. Patterson
Jennifer Reale
Jill Robins
David C. Schopp, Chief Executive Officer
Rebecca Thayer, CFO
Nadine Patterson, Deputy Executive Director – Civil Practice
Ian Harrington, Deputy Executive Director – Criminal Practice

NOT ATTENDING:

Rev. Mark Blue
Craig R. Bucki
Meghan A. Corcoran
Bryan Donohue
CJ Englert
Erin Whitcomb

President Lisa Patterson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from April 15, 2025 meeting. A motion was made by Farina Barth, seconded by Thomas Diina, and was unanimously approved.

David introduced Ian Harrington, the new Deputy Executive Director of the Criminal Practice. Ian brings nearly 20 years of experience in criminal defense and public service, most recently serving as the Attorney in Charge of the Western New York Regional Support Center at the New York State Office of Indigent Legal Services. He is working closely with our Chief Attorneys and Legal Director on the upcoming expansion project.

Reports of Officers

CEO Report by David Schopp

David Schopp reported that County Executive Poloncarz made the announcement during his State of the County address on April 30, 2025 that the Legal Aid Bureau will be expanding to take violent felony cases starting in July. Our expansion plans are well underway, and we have started hiring for these new positions. There will be a gradual transition of most of the representation from County and Town Courts from the Assigned Counsel Program to Legal Aid over the next year.

The current focus of the Indigent Defense Working Group is now Family Court. Legal Aid currently represents children, but we are planning to expand to Family Court as well. This could mean a possible spin-off of the Attorneys for Children Unit to resolve the conflict issue.

With the expansion coming, we will soon be out of office space. We have been working with Ellicott Development, the owner of the current space we lease, to look for additional space in Cheektowaga and possibly more space in the downtown area.

Legal Aid recently signed a two-year contract with Niagara County for appellate representation. We received their files yesterday and are currently prioritizing the cases.

With the addition of higher-level felony cases and keeping parity with the County in mind, our plan is to pay the attorneys hired for these positions at a higher grade than our current attorneys. There is a higher level of expertise, and more time required, so the higher group includes a clause that comp time will not be available. Selected internal applicants will go from group 14 on the salary scale to group 15.

A motion was made by John Kolaga to adopt the proposal of moving the major crimes attorneys to group 15 on the salary scale. Jamila Lee seconded and it was unanimously approved.

Legal Aid has contracted with HR Works to assist us with hiring a new HR Director, as Amy Jeanty-Blum left the organization in May. HR Works will also be assisting us with structuring the HR department in a way that will better meet our needs.

Deputy Executive Director – Civil Practice Report by Nadine Patterson

Nadine Patterson gave an overview of the conversations regarding the Family Court Working Group, indicating that Legal Aid is better equipped to train and supervise the attorneys representing clients in Family Court than the Assigned Counsel Program. Legal Aid can also offer a holistic approach in representation, as we have full civil legal services available to assist clients.

Nadine also reported on our improved intern program, which is now organized in a way to allow experience in areas of law other than where they are primarily scheduled. Every Friday, all interns meet with a different Legal Aid Managing or Chief Attorney to discuss what happens in the different units. Legal Aid has also invited interns from other local agencies to join our intern in the Criminal Courts because we are the only agency that does this work.

Deputy Executive Director – Criminal Practice Report by Ian Harrington

Ian Harrington reported that July 1st we will begin receiving C felonies and January 1st we will begin B violent felonies and everything down. Conflict cases will still go to the Assigned Counsel Program, and we have had productive meetings with the ACP to ensure a smooth transition. Every few years the Working Group will reassess the process and potentially add other town courts as well as murder cases. Staffing will be staggered as the cases come in.

Treasurers Report by Rebecca Thayer

2024 Close-out

- *2024 Preliminary results compared to prior estimates (detail attached)*

	Preliminary Results	Estimate at Nov 2024 BoD	Original Budget Dec 2023 BoD
Total Revenue	\$ 20,752	\$ 19,919	\$ 20,301
Total Expenses	20,673	19,887	20,283
Change in Net Assets	\$ 78	\$ 32	\$ 18

- *2024 Preliminary results compared to 2023*

Preliminary 2024 Results	2023 Results	\$ Inc / (Dec)	% Inc / (Dec)
\$ 20,752	\$ 15,802	\$ 4,950	31%
20,673	15,717	4,956	32%
\$ 78	\$ 84	\$ (6)	-7%

- *2024 Financial Audit*
 - *First data requests started in May and completed W/E June 6*
 - *Realistic objective to complete by end of July*

Funding Highlights:

- *Erie County*
 - *2025 contract - \$4,533K funding plus utilize \$820K prior deferred revenue for \$5,353K total.*
 - *Proposal for 2026 contract likely submitted late August. Initial preparation has started.*
 - *Still working to finalize other contracts with Erie County for Harm Reduction and Discovery*

- *Harm Reduction - \$250K over five years starting 1/1/25 that can be executed in less than five years. LABB signed final contract 4/7 - awaiting Erie County execution.*
 - *Two awards for DCJS - one Aid to Defense for Discovery Reform and one Aid to Defense Supplemental. One of these has an Erie Co resolution, the other does not. The total awards are \$2.1MM each of which we believe 1/3 will be for LABB and 2/3 will be for ACP.*
- *NYS Indigent Legal Services - Hurrell-Harring Funding – Erie County*
 - *HH2 Three-year contract from 04/01/24 - 03/31/25 billings are now current.*
 - *Original HH contract extension Buffalo City Court construction.*
 - *Construction finalized April 2025*
 - *Final billing will be sent W/E 6/20*
 - *Niagara County – finalizing \$250K contract for 2025.*
- *Erie County Expansion*
 - *ILS added \$3.027M additional funding to HH2 contract ending 4/1/27.*
 - *Completed preliminary cost assessment and reviewed with Finance Committee on April 9. Refreshed analysis based on ramp beginning in second half 2025.*
 - *Initial Funding Sources still look sufficient.*
- *NYS United Court Systems*
 - *Three main contracts ended 3/31/24. Attorneys for Children (AFC) Child Welfare, AFC Juvenile Defense and Judiciary Civil Legal Services (JCLS)*
 - *Funding levels for 2025-26 still not received from the Unified Court System. LABB internal budget from February BoD assumed slight funding increase over 2024-25. As discussed in prior meeting, this likely results in a potential shortfall with Civil and Attorneys for Children funding lower than assumptions of cost on board.*
 - *Recently learned that AFC is run-rating portion of funding that was added mid-2024 new contract should be higher than originally assumed in LABB budget. This should reduce the shortfall.*
 - *Potential for JCLS to receive higher funding which could mitigate Civil funding shortfall.*

2025 Financial Activity Summary (\$000's):

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>June Estimate</u>
Total Revenue Budget	\$ 21,472	\$22,106
Total Expenses Budget	<u>21,414</u>	<u>22,040</u>
Change Net Assets Budget	\$ 58	\$ 66

- *2025 Latest estimate reflects four main changes from 2025 LABB budget*
 - *Expected AFC additional funding compared to budget assumptions*

- *ILS HH Extension. Erie County Courthouse construction final costs that that consumed more available funding and higher than budget assumptions.*
- *Beginning Erie County Expansion ramp in second half of 2025.*
- *Niagara County contract*
- *Cash*
 - *\$110K cash on hand as of 6/16/25*
 - *Have not used Line of Credit since April and do not see any significant need for at least the next few months.*
- *Continue to work alternatives to close remaining AFC funding GAPS*
 - *Pursue new/alternative funding sources – several applications in process*
 - *Engaged with AFC about issue. AFC noted there is potential for additional funding to free up later as we proceed through the contract year.*
 - *Explore allocation of current part-time FTEs to alternative sources.*
 - *Attrition / leaves materialize. Do not backfill attrition*
 - *Reductions in OTPS/Equipment Assumptions*
 - *Indirect allocation reduction as direct cost close to budget*
 - *Transfer full FTEs to other programs*

Other Items:

- *Finance/Accounting Staffing*
 - *Assistant Controller started 4/28*
 - *Interviewing for Controller replacement.*
- *Highmark Health Insurance – initial meeting with Aebly in May to identify means to reduce LABB costs*
 - *Recent claims data indicates potential for another increase of greater than 20% in the new plan year starting 12/1/2025.*
 - *Potential mitigating actions include:*
 - *Aebly obtaining quotes form alternate carriers for similar plan offering. Initial quotes should be available in early July.*
 - *Review alternate plan offerings*
 - *Increase opt out incentive or incentivize employees to elect (cheaper) High Deductible plans.*

A motion was made by Thomas Diina to authorize Legal Aid to request funds from the City of Buffalo Community Development Block Grant – Public Services Application for Year 51 in the amount of \$90,000. Sherene Bennett seconded and it was unanimously approved.

Reports of Committees

Search Committee

Tim Murphy gave a brief update on the search for a CEO. The search firm will begin the search in September, and we have had some names of possible applicants coming in. These names are being forwarded to the search firm.

Governance Committee

Lisa Patterson reported that Legal Aid would like to begin the process of creating a mission statement as well as establishing core values. Anyone from the Board that is interested in assisting in this process can contact her.

Development Committee

Michael Pace reported a 600% increase in donations in the past year, bringing in a little over \$35,000. Our donor retention rate is 52%, which is above average for non-profits.

The first newsletter was sent out and the open rate was about 50%, again, above average for a non-profit with the average being between 30% - 35%.

Give 716 is coming up, hosted through the Buffalo Bills Foundation and the Buffalo Sabres Foundation. There are \$500 grants available, and winners are randomly selected. This year, funds will be going to the expansion of Project Thrive. This project currently supports youth clients, and we would like to expand so we can further support adult clients. Please like and share social media posts during the Give 716 campaign to boost our exposure.

Old Business – none

New Business – none

At this time, Lisa Patterson adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



David C. Schopp
Assistant Secretary