

SDODC

Special District Operations and Development Committee
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Tony Fiorito, Chair

SPECIAL DISTRICT OPERATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2026

INSPYRE Innovation Hub
235 Harrison Street, Syracuse NY 13202

3:35pm

Attendance

Members: Chair Tony Fiorito; Charlie Breuer, Jo Anne Gagliano, Susan Katzoff, Karyn Korteling, Ed Riley, Nicole Samolis, Cjala Surratt, Meg Tidd, Melissa Zell

Staff: Merike Treier, Tom Campanie, Julia Fay, Becca Flint, Rachael Schaefer, Kristine Sherlock, Sarah Tietje-Mietz

Guests: Cory LaDuke, CBRE Upstate NY

I. SPECIAL DISTRICT PROPOSED BUDGET 2026-2027

Chairman Fiorito called the meeting to order at 3:35pm, and welcomed guests and members present.

A. Review and Approve

Merike Treier reported that the Budget Committee has met to review, prepare, and recommend the Downtown Special Assessment budget to the Board, which upon the Board approval, will be recommended to the Mayor as the 2026-2027 Downtown Special Assessment Budget. She thanked Board Members Tony Fiorito, Ed Riley and Melissa Zell for their contribution as part of the budget committee.

Treier presented the proposed budget, noting:

- Continued diversification of revenue streams has reduced dependence on the special assessment, as portion of the overall operating budget has gone down from **74% ten years ago to 55% today**.
- Environmental maintenance, security services, marketing, transportation operations, and economic development remain core investment areas.

- Staffing remains a focus due to hiring competition and increased workload.
- Special assessment increases of **2%, 2.5%, and 3%** were evaluated. After discussion, the board supported a **3% increase**, recognizing inflation and anticipated programmatic needs.
- The budget reflects a manageable year-end deficit, and this is due in part to planned one-time expenditures such as the Vision Plan.

Chair Fiorito asked for a motion to approve the 2026-2027 budget at a 3% assessment increase.

Melissa Zell moved, and Susan Katzoff seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

II. OTHER BUSINESS AND ADJOURN

With no other business to come before the Board, the SDODC meeting was adjourned at 4:21pm.

**NEXT MEETING:
January, 2027 - tba**