



Seattle Center Advisory Commission Meeting

February 5, 2026 | 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

Armory Loft 3 / WebEx

Adopted

ATTENDEES

Commissioners: Michael George, John Olensky, Sally Bagshaw, Eric Berlinberg, Adriane Musuneggi, Matt Roewe, Mark Dederer, Lara Mae Chollette, Sarah Rich, Holly Golden, Lauren Campbell, Will Ludlam

Absent Commissioners: Stacey Hutchison, Gloria Connors, Matthew Mead, Eric Pettigrew

Seattle Center Staff: David Kunselman, Rose Ann Lopez, Chelsea Riddick-Most, Kaori Kiyono, Janet Chapman

Guest: Rob Johnson, Nikki Visel

Welcome/Review & Approve December Minutes – Mark Dederer, *Chair*

- Vote to approve December meeting minutes: approved

Public Comment – Mark Dederer, *Chair*

- Nancy Pasternak from Bellevue Rotary Club proposed installing a peace pole on the Seattle Center campus in conjunction with the 2026 FIFA World Cup, to help promote peace.

Director's Report – Diamatris Winston, *Acting Director*

- Seattle Center is briefing the Mayor's Office on a proposed bond. The initial meeting was receptive, with questions indicating engagement and understanding. The goal is to secure the Mayor's Office's support and place the bond on the November ballot.
- Campus and Waterfront Park tours are being provided to help educate the Mayor's executive team on Seattle Center operations and needs.
- Two upcoming legislative requests: (1) funding for the Seattle/King County Health Clinic and (2) \$2 million for decarbonizing Fisher Pavilion.
- McCaw Hall update: Shelly Bradshaw has been hired as the new General Manager and brings extensive operations experience.
- Recruitment: The Emergency Services Manager position is open. Commissioners were asked to share the posting within their networks.
- Mayor's executive order on immigration enforcement: Seattle Center will implement required signage on campus to prevent staging by Immigration Customs Enforcement.
- Seattle Center Director recruitment: The City's HR Department is initiating the search for a new Director, with a decision expected by mid-March.
- Commission input: Commissioners agreed to discuss and share the qualities and qualifications they would like to see in the next Director.

Recap of 2025 Seattle Center Finance – Ariana Grlj, *Budget Manager*

- 2025 was a financially challenging year for Seattle Center.
 - Total campus revenue: \$43 million



- Total campus expenses: \$44 million
- Expenditures were approximately \$2 million higher than 2024, while revenues remained similar to the prior year.
- The gap between the expenditure budget and revenue budget was \$241,000 in 2025. It is anticipated that cash balance or fund balance will be used to address this gap.

Revenue Highlights & Challenges

- Parking and Armory revenues were lower than projected due to reduced tourism and broader economic impacts.
- Payment plan structures for major events such as Bumbershoot and Bite of Seattle resulted in delayed or reduced revenue collection.
- For 2026, revenue forecasts remain cautious in those streams. Ongoing monitoring of revenue performance is planned throughout 2026.
- Unexpected expenditures in 2025 included pest control related to Memorial Stadium construction, fire watch, and overtime costs due to staffing shortages.
- Hiring challenges persist due to salary constraints and market competitiveness.
- For Waterfront Park Operations, carryforward funds will extend into 2026. This structure will continue until the next MTE (Mid-Term Evaluation) cycle.
- For McCaw Hall, we had a strong revenue performance, and expenditures remained within budget.

Strategic Actions

- Commitment to more proactive financial planning moving forward. Strategy will include increased revenue generation and reduced expenditures.
- Establish internal savings targets for 2026.
- Advocacy efforts for additional revenue sources, such as commercial parking tax .
- Continued improvement of financial management systems and data analysis to strengthen long-term financial stability.

Conversation with Nikki Visel, Chief of Staff, Path with Art – Will Ludlam, Vice Chair

- Path with Art focuses on fostering the restoration of individuals and groups in society from the effects of trauma through arts engagement and community building.
- Established 18 years ago, Path with Art has grown significantly, with 1,956 participants in 2025, 57% BIPOC and 35% LGBTQIA, with 75% experiencing social isolation. They offer programs for veterans, survivors of gender-based violence, and those reintegrating from incarceration.
- The organization serves low and no-income adults recovering from complex trauma, primarily through social service partners, and also has cohorts for veterans, reintegration from incarceration, gender-based violence survivors, and Spanish speakers.
- The organization has launched a five-module trauma-informed arts training program and is involved in research with Johns Hopkins. They advocate for arts prescribing to address mental health issues, aiming to integrate this practice in Washington.



Challenges and Future Plans

- Path with Art faces challenges, including limited government funding and the need to scale their practice to meet growing demand.
- The organization is exploring partnerships with local organizations to expand their reach and impact, particularly in serving youth and those waiting for behavioral health services.
- The organization is planning events like Art After Hours, which offer free art activities for the community, and is open to new ideas and partnerships to enhance their impact.
- Commissioner Ludlam proposed exploring collaboration opportunities between Art with Path and the Seattle/King County Clinic (SKCC). Director Riddick-Most will connect Art with Path with the SKCC Managing Director.

Good of the Order – All

- Commission Recommendation to Acting Director Winston: Commissioners recommended not approving the proposed Peace Pole installation on the Seattle Center campus for the following reasons:
 - The campus already has a Peace Pole located in the Peace Garden.
 - Given the temporary nature of the 2026 FIFA World Cup events, the fan celebration location would not provide the long-term stability.
 - FIFA is a global event representing many nations and cultures; limiting the Peace Pole to eight languages would not adequately reflect the diversity of participating teams.
- Chair Derdere shared that he would like to bring and present a folder of artifacts from the opening week of the 1962 World's Fair as a show-and-tell at a future meeting.

1:38 p.m. – Meeting adjourned