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MINUTES: Board of Management, Meeting 7 (2025-2026)

Monday, September 14, 2026 @ 6:30 – 8:30 PM, Hybrid via Zoom & Room #304

Board Members

Chair: Tom Spence	Bobby Hrehoruk	Jaris Swidrovich
Vice-Chair: Zoe Robinson	Victor Huynh	Dennis Yu
Secretary: Erika Voaklander	Mohamed Omar	
Treasurer: Vanshika Dhawan	Juan Camilo Rendon Ocampo	
Ex-Officio: Councillor Chris Moise (regrets)		

The 519

Executive Director	Maura Lawless
Head, Organizational Services	Maria Martinez
Head, Programs	Becky McFarlane
Head, Community Resilience and Impact	Jaymie Sampa
Head, Philanthropy	Dane Bland
Manager, Strategic and Executive Planning (minutes)	Laura Gibbon

Guests: n/a

Item	Minutes
BD-7.1	**Welcome and Introductions** – Tom Spence (Chair) Tom Spence opened the meeting at 6:30 PM.
BD-7.2	**Land Acknowledgement** – Vanshika Dhawan (Board member) Vanshika Dhawan delivered the land acknowledgement.
BD-7.3	**Approve Agenda** – Tom Spence (Chair) Tom Spence requested the Board to review the agenda for the Board Meeting of September 14, 2026. **MOTION 7.3:** To approve the agenda for the Board Meeting of September 14, 2026. **Moved by:** Juan Camilo Rendon Ocampo **That** the Board of Management approve the agenda for the Board Meeting of September 14, 2026. **Recorded vote:** Unanimous Vanshika Dhawan Bobby Hrehoruk Victor Huynh Mohamed Omar Juan Camilo Rendon Ocampo Zoe Robinson Tom Spence

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	Jaris Swidrovich Erika Voaklander Dennis Yu **Decision** carried
BD-7.4	**Declaration of Conflict of Interest(s)** – Tom Spence (Chair) Tom Spence confirmed no conflicts of interest were declared.
BD-7.5	**Approval Meeting Minutes** – Tom Spence (Chair) **7.5.1 June 8, 2026 Meeting Minutes** Tom Spence requested the Board to review the minutes for the Board Meeting of June 8, 2026. **MOTION 7.5.1:** To approve the minutes for the Board Meeting of June 8, 2026. **Moved by:** Erika Voaklander **That** the Board of Management approve the minutes for the Board Meeting of June 8, 2026. **Recorded vote**: Unanimous Vanshika Dhawan Bobby Hrehoruk Victor Huynh Mohamed Omar Juan Camilo Rendon Ocampo Zoe Robinson Tom Spence Jaris Swidrovich Erika Voaklander Dennis Yu **Decision** carried **7.5.2 June 8, 2026 In-Camera Meeting Minutes** Tom Spence confirmed that no one wished to go in-camera to review or provide edits to the in-camera minutes for the Board Meeting of June 8, 2026. **MOTION 7.5.2:** To approve the in-camera minutes for the Board Meeting of June 8, 2026. **Moved by:** Bobby Hrehoruk

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	That the Board of Management approve the in-camera minutes for the Board Meeting of June 8, 2026. **Recorded vote**: Unanimous Vanshika Dhawan Bobby Hrehoruk Victor Huynh Mohamed Omar Juan Camilo Rendon Ocampo Zoe Robinson Tom Spence Jaris Swidrovich Erika Voaklander Dennis Yu **Decision** carried
BD-7.6	**Chair Report/Executive Committee** – Tom Spence (Chair) **7.6.1 Chair Updates** • Tom started by acknowledging the work staff have been doing over the summer, in addition to the day-to-day stewarding of the community centre, including hosting events such as the Defend Refugee Rights, Sunday Drop-In Pride BBQ, AIDS vigil, Green Space Festival, leading two contingents in the Pride Parade, Sports Day, various activations on the Church Street Pedestrianization, Volunteer Appreciation Event, and Intergenerational BBQ. • Tom thanked Board members for completing this year's Board Effectiveness Survey. Results will be discussed at the next Governance Committee meeting. • Tom flagged the following engagement opportunities, and invited Board members to participate where possible: sharing personal connection to The 519 for the Storytelling Projects, signing the open letter to the Prime Minister defending refugee rights, participating in new volunteer orientation, the Day of Action for Migrant Rights, the Annual General Meeting, Orange Shirt Day events and activations, the launch of Prismatic Futurity at Nuit Blanche, and a very special 50th Anniversary event on December 13. **7.6.2 Board Member Resignation** **MOTION 7.6.2:** To accept the resignation of Natalie Miller from the Board of Management effective June 28, 2026. **Moved by:** Vanshika Dhawan **That** the Board of Management accept the formal resignation of Natalie Miller, effective June 28, 2026.

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	Recorded vote: Unanimous Vanshika Dhawan Bobby Hrehoruk Victor Huynh Mohamed Omar Juan Camilo Rendon Ocampo Zoe Robinson Tom Spence Jaris Swidrovich Erika Voaklander Dennis Yu **Decision** carried **7.6.3 Appointment of Nominations Subcommittee Chair** **MOTION 7.6.3:** To appoint Dennis Yu as the Chair of the Nominations Subcommittee. **Moved by:** Mohamed Omar **That** the Board of Management appoint Dennis Yu as the Chair of the Nominations Subcommittee. **Recorded vote**: Unanimous Vanshika Dhawan Bobby Hrehoruk Victor Huynh Mohamed Omar Juan Camilo Rendon Ocampo Zoe Robinson Tom Spence Jaris Swidrovich Erika Voaklander Dennis Yu **Decision** carried **7.6.4 Nominations Subcommittee Report** • See in-camera portion of the meeting.
BD-7.7	**Executive Director Report** – Maura Lawless (Executive Director) **7.7.1 ED Update (Legal Services)** • City Council approved The 519 to start to provide limited legal services. Maura thanked Vanshika and Erika and staff for all their help throughout that process.

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	• Working through documentation for limitations, retainer requirements, indemnification requirements, scope, authorities. We expect to work in consultation with City to review those forms to ensure we meet obligations outlined in the council approval. Expect that to take a while, but hope to start delivering in November. Thanked the board for their support of this motion and this work. • Grateful for support for the Councillor's office.
BD-7.8	**SCD Committee Update** – Juan Camilo Rendon Ocampo (Chair, SCD) & Becky McFarlane (Head, Programs) **7.8.1 50th Anniversary Update** **7.8.2 Economic Resilience Project Update** **7.8.3 Advocacy Update: SOGIESC Newcomer Rights / Defend Refugees** • Becky addressed three highlights from the report: ○ With the passing of Bill C-12, changes to the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP), and the escalated gutting of the settlement sector broadly, the environment for queer and trans refugees has changed dramatically over the last several months. ○ These changes do not impact all refugees equally, and we know that SOGIESC refugees are among the hardest hit. Within the sector, things have shifted from general concern to very organized advocacy. There is movement building happening on the local and national levels around LGBTQ refugee rights. ○ We want to maintain advocacy efforts and direct service provision. Defend Refugees is an advocacy campaign that will continue to work across all levels to build networks and movement, sounding the alarm and pushing for better policy. The 519's Settlement and Access to Justice teams continue to respond to the dire conditions people find themselves in. • The Board expressed interest in the advocacy coalition which convenes 30+ refugees-serving organizations. One Board member, Victor Huynh, attends regularly. Other interested Board members are welcome to participate, attend meetings, help disseminate information, or help build relationships. Staff are starting to extend beyond settlement sector and into existing Toronto-based coalitions like The Neighbourhood Group (TNG). **7.8.4 Drug Toxicity Coordination Response Plan / BHP Update** • Becky addressed a few highlights from the report: ○ The conditions facing Barbara Hall Park (BHP) are serious, urgent, and require sustained attention. The response must also remain grounded in a clear understanding of whose lives are most directly at stake. ○ The organization is absorbing the consequences of a systems-wide problem caused by compounding issues of prolonged housing scarcity, the drug poisoning crisis, the closing of Supervised Consumption Sties, and the stretched-too-thin health and social service systems. Staff are doing incredible work every day to try to respond as best they can, but the level of crisis intervention and case management required to actually help people is

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	unrealistic under the current circumstances. Without systemic, government-level intervention, the issues will remain. ○ Safety and harm reduction are not competing objectives and staff will continue to push back against that false dichotomy. We want the park to be a safe and accessible space for everyone while being clear that displacement and policing cannot be substitutes for housing and shelter. ○ The operational impact on The 519 has been substantial, but we are responding both in real time and structurally with the addition of full-time and part-time management positions that will be focused on community access and crisis response. Currently, there is 24/7 corporate security in the park, in addition to The 519's contracted security, however, it is unclear how long City resources will be in place. ○ There is a developing coordinated strategy at the City level with other divisions, parks, and partners. The 519 staff were initially invited to attend meetings in June but have subsequently been left out of task force communications. Staff have reached out to the Councillor's office to attempt to re-engage and are awaiting a response. • The Board discussed the reputational risks associated with being seen as responsible for Barbara Hall Park despite not having authority over the park, and needing a strong strategic communications plan to proactively communicate the complex and overlapping issues, the impacts on the organization and staff, the work being done in response, how others can get involved, etc. It is difficult to be clear with community when the City is not communicating clearly with us. • The Board thanked staff for their huge efforts in continuing to support people under incredibly difficult circumstances every day. Further, the Board agreed that if staff hadn't yet heard back from the City and Councillor's Office about re-engaging in the task force by the next SCD meeting, that the committee should table a motion in support of staff.
BD-7.9	**Finance Committee Update** – Vanshika Dhawan (Treasurer) & Maria Martinez (Head, Organizational Services) *Dennis Yu stepped away from the meeting at 7:20pm.* **7.9.3 Procurement Policy Amendment** • The Finance Committee is recommending an amendment to the Procurement Policy to reflect the new Head positions within the organizational structure. **MOTION 7.9.3:** To approve the adjusted spending and contract authority levels for the new Heads' positions and make all policy operational changes to come into effect with the approved amended policy. **Moved by:** Vanshika Dhawan

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That the Board of Management approve the adjusted spending and contract authority levels for the new Heads' positions and make all policy operational changes to come into effect with the approved amended policy.

Recorded vote: Unanimous
Vanshika Dhawan
Bobby Hrehoruk
Victor Huynh
Mohamed Omar
Juan Camilo Rendon Ocampo
Zoe Robinson
Tom Spence
Jaris Swidrovich
Erika Voaklander

Decision carried

7.9.2 2026 Q2 Variance and Year End Forecast

- Q2 results include strong Green Space Festival financial results, continued cost containment strategies, and new funding agreements secured during the year.
- Staff expect to end the year on target to meet the approved 2027 budget, contingent on attaining philanthropy and funding goals.

MOTION 7.9.2: To receive and approve the 2026 Q2 Variance Report and Year End Forecast for information.

Moved by: Vanshika Dhawan

That the Board of Management receive and approve the 2026 Q2 Variance Report and Year End Forecast for information.

Recorded vote: Unanimous
Vanshika Dhawan
Bobby Hrehoruk
Victor Huynh
Mohamed Omar
Juan Camilo Rendon Ocampo
Zoe Robinson
Tom Spence
Jaris Swidrovich
Erika Voaklander

Decision carried

7.9.1 2027 Budget Development Principles and Timeline

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	• Maria presented the 2027 budget principles, which are consistent and slightly developed from previous years. **MOTION 7.9.1:** To a) receive and approve the 2027 Budget Framework, Principles, and Timelines as amended, and b) direct staff to submit a 2027 Core Budget request of $2,789,175, that includes the reasonable economic factors of $100,761, or 3.75%, over the 2026 Core Budget. **Moved by:** Vanshika Dhawan **That** the Board of Management a) receive and approve the 2027 Budget Framework, Principles, and Timelines as amended, and b) direct staff to submit a 2027 Core Budget request of $2,789,175, that includes the reasonable economic factors of $100,761, or 3.75%, over the 2026 Core Budget. **Recorded vote**: Unanimous Vanshika Dhawan Bobby Hrehoruk Victor Huynh Mohamed Omar Juan Camilo Rendon Ocampo Zoe Robinson Tom Spence Jaris Swidrovich Erika Voaklander **Decision** carried **7.9.4 Philanthropy: Mid-Year Progress Report** **7.9.5 2026-2027 Philanthropy Strategic Update Report** *Dennis Yu returned to the meeting at 7:35pm.*
IN-CAMERA ITEMS	
BD-7.9	**MOTION 7.9a:** To go in camera. **Moved by:** Vanshika Dhawan **That** the Board of Management go in camera. **Recorded vote**: Unanimous Vanshika Dhawan Bobby Hrehoruk Victor Huynh Mohamed Omar

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	Juan Camilo Rendon Ocampo Zoe Robinson Tom Spence Jaris Swidrovich Erika Voaklander Dennis Yu **Decision** carried **7.5.2 In-Camera Minutes** **7.6.4 Nominations Subcommittee Report** **7.9.1 2027 Budget Development Principles and Timeline (Core)** **7.9.4 Philanthropy Mid-Year Progress Report** **7.9.6 2026-2027 Philanthropy Strategic Update Report** **MOTION 5.9b:** To come out of in camera. **Moved by:** Juan Camilo Rendon Ocampo **That** the Board of Management come out of in camera. **Recorded vote**: Unanimous Vanshika Dhawan Bobby Hrehoruk Victor Huynh Mohamed Omar Juan Camilo Rendon Ocampo Zoe Robinson Tom Spence Jaris Swidrovich Erika Voaklander Dennis Yu **Decision** carried
BD-7.10	**Adjournment** – Tom Spence (Chair) • The meeting was adjourned at 8:24pm.

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Approved by The 519 Board of Management on November 2, 2026.

Signed by:
Vanshika Dhawan
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11/6/2026

Vanshika Dhawan
Board Chair