

## CCSE Business October 5th, 2023 Meeting Minutes

### **Attendees:**

- 1) Diana Abrams
- 2) Francine Almash
- 3) Sanayi Beckles Canton
- 4) Carolyn Castro
- 5) Heather Dailey
- 6) Mark Gonsalves
- 7) Lupe Hernandez
- 8) Tamuira Reid
- 9) Maggie Sanchez
- 10) Sharon Terrell (remotely)
- 11) Mohamad Alam - absent

The meeting was called to order by **Francine Almash** at **6:30pm**.

### **- Introduction of Interpreters & Check in**

#### **Roll Call:**

Diana Abrams **Present**  
Mohammend alam - **Absent**  
Francine almost - **Present**  
Sanayi Beckles Canton - **Late arrival**  
Carolyn Castro - **Present**  
Heather Dailey - **Present**  
Mark Gonsalves - **Present**  
Lupe Hernandez- **Present**  
Tamaura Reid- **Present**  
Shannon Terrell- **Joined Virtually**

### **- Appointment of timekeeper: Mark Gonsalves**

Francine Almash- **First item on Agenda:**

**Asked for a motion to approve the June 15th & June 23rd Meeting Minutes.**

**Motioned to approve:** Mark Gonsalves

**Second:** Maggie Sanchez

**Francine called for a voice vote.**

In favor: All

Opposed: none

Abstentions: none

**\*June 15th & June 23rd Minutes were approved.**

### **- *We ran into audio connection issues for those present in our virtual meeting.***

**Francine asked if there were any corrections that needed to be made to the July 6th Meeting Minutes**

**July 6th** Minutes were discussed and corrections were made:

One council member was cited as being late, but the council member did not show up.

**Carolyn Castro** requested that the status for that member be changed from “**present really late**” to “**Absent**”

No other changes after that.

**Francine asked for a motion for approval of July 6th minutes with the requested change.**

**Motioned to approve:** Carolyn Castro

**Second:** Tamaura Reid

**Francine called for a voice vote.**

In favor: All

Opposed: none

Abstentions: none

**\*July 6th Minutes were approved with corrections.**

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**Francine asked if there were any corrections that needed to be made to the July 20th Meeting Minutes**

July 20th, August 3rd, August 17th minutes

Francine asked for a motion to approve

**July 20th** Minutes were discussed and corrections were made:

One council member was sited as being present, but the council member was 2 hours late.

Carolyn Castro requested that the status for that member be changed from “present” to “2 hours late”

No other changes after that.

**Francine asked for a motion for approval of July 20th minutes with the recommended change.**

**Motioned to approve:** Carolyn Castro

**Second:** Lupe Hernandez

**Francine called for a voice vote.**

In favor: All

Opposed: none

Abstentions: none

**\*July 20th Minutes were approved with corrections.**

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**Francine asked if there were any corrections that needed to be made to the August 3rd Meeting Minutes**

**August 3rd** Minutes were discussed and corrections were made:

Heather Dailey was present at the August 3rd meeting.

**Francine asked for a motion for approval of July 20th minutes with the attendance change.**

**Motioned to approve:** Heather Dailey

**Second:** Lupe Hernandez  
Francine called for a voice vote.  
In favor: All  
Opposed: none  
Abstentions: none

**\*August 3rd Minutes were approved with corrections.**

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**Francine asked if there were any corrections that needed to be made to the August 3rd Meeting Minutes**

**August 17th** No corrections to the Meeting Minutes for this date

**Francine asked for a motion for approval of August 17th minutes as posted.**

**Motioned to approve:** Carolyn Castro

**Second:** Heather Dailey

**Francine called for a voice vote.**

In favor: All  
Opposed: none  
Abstentions: none

**\*August 17th Minutes were approved.**

- **Francine moved to introduce John Hammer & Johana Rodrigues**

### **Updates From Special Education Office**

#### **John Hammer:**

Introduced the council and the public to **Johanna Rodriguez**, Central parent advocate in the Special Education Office. She previously served on the Promise Project as an advocate. Johanna has been in communication with Include NYC to strengthen the process to bring in IEP parent members. She's been conducting outreach seeking potential CCSE student representatives.

#### **Announcements:**

NYSED- is working closely with the Special Education Office on Tuition Redesign Stakeholder Engagement Sessions. On tuition rates for 4410 & 853 schools

- NYSED is conducting a comprehensive study of alternative tuition rate setting methodologies for approved providers, for both special education preschool and school age programs across the state.
- Tuition rate setting methodology is used to reimburse school age day and residential special class programs, extended school year special class programs, preschool special class programs, and special class in an integrated setting class programs.
- The study will consider alternative approaches to reimbursement to ensure students with disabilities receive education and related services in accordance with their IEPs.

There are a series of Regional Meetings, in NYC there will be a virtual preschool session on:

**November 9th from 9:30am-11:30am.**

For school age it will be on

**November 9th from 12:30PM- 2:30pm.**

**In person sessions will be held at:**

M600 The High School of Fashion Industries (Auditorium)

225 W24th St. New York, NY 10011

In person session: **November 15, 2023, 9:30- 11:30 AM**

**Preschool Session**

In person session: **November 15, 2023, 12:30- 2:30 PM**

**School Age Session**

**For more information, families can email [npsdocreview@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:npsdocreview@schools.nyc.gov)**

NYSED is also conducting an SPPAPR indicator 15 stakeholder engagement survey.

- State is seeking to engage stakeholders in activities to improve outcomes for students with disabilities across the state. State is requesting input of diverse groups of parents, as an extremely important part of this process.
  - Seeking feedback on recently revised data, related to state performance plan indicator 15, which is the percent of impartial hearing requests that went to resolution sessions that were resolved through resolution settlement agreements. Recent activities dedicated to improving indicator 15 including more accurate data reporting, have resulted in NYSED exceeding the current SPP indicator 15 targets and the state has developed a survey to gather meaningful stakeholder input on setting updated indicator 15 targets.
  - Stakeholder engagement sessions open for feedback from students, parents, families, educators, school district representatives, county representatives & approved program providers.
  - Special Education Office has already sent this info out to 4410 & 853 schools.
- **John Hammer addressed questions from CCSE council members and will be coming back to discuss what he presented at a Calendar meeting so the public can also give feedback or ask questions.**

Council members raised these concerns::

- Teacher retention, particularly bilingual teacher retention; bilingual programs.
  - John will be bringing more information on initiatives for more bilingual teacher retention overall.
- Consistent communication between DOE and 4410 & 853 programs, and sometimes the lack thereof.
  - John will follow up on the date that the communication went out. SEO feels pretty confident that 4410 & 853 school leaders are aware, since there's also been outreach from the State Education Department and the SEO team.

### **Co-Presidents Report**

#### **Francine Almash**

- Visited two D75 programs with Paulette Healy (member of CCD75)
  - Spoke to 4 different principals from 4 different schools and they are reporting school bus issues.

- Those schools were unaware regarding CCSE bussing advocacy.
- More School engagement from CCSE was suggested.
  - Engage schools, engage parent coordinators, engage principals
- Prioritize engaging IEP reps as a council.
- Prioritize talking to school staff.

#### UFT Contracts clarification - Limited IEP time provision:

Francine spoke with some teachers on the concern that there's a specific 40 minute block of time allocation that teachers and service providers can use for IEP meetings.

- It was cleared up that it's not really what the provision says. What the provision is about is more about allocation of time. It's about how the time is allowed to be used. Suggested that council watch it carefully for any unintended consequences. Provision is not intentionally limiting IEP time. Moving forward council would need to think about the problem this provision is intending to solve. Which is that there is not enough time in the day for staff and teachers to both perform their education duties and also attend IEP meetings.

#### **Member Reports**

##### **Carolyn Castro**

- Has sent out correspondences to the local CECs for contact information for IEP Rep, their D75 Rep and their ELL Rep.
- Looking to create a committee to support local districts. Asked to help spread the word. Reported that Large parts of Queens have not responded. As well some parts of Brooklyn and parts of the Bronx.
- Reported that children are not being offered their services, as listed on their IEPs. Children with AT on their IEP are not utilizing those services. Children are being pulled out of their core subjects, when they are only supposed to be pulled out of non core subjects.

##### **Mark Gonsalves**

- On **10/2/23**, Class Size Matters had their third and final engagement working group in-person, two were virtual a week prior. Various CCSE members were in attendance & spoke in support of the different offerings they had in terms of special education. They did have a focus section on special education. They were primarily focused on ensuring that ICT classrooms were prioritized and not being hurt, because of the class size mandate. Due to the tremendous need of teachers and the concerns that the ICT classrooms would be going to be one classroom teacher, instead of one general education teacher and one special education teacher.

##### **Heather Dailey**

- In regards to bussing, the same concerns from parents as Francine had mentioned. For example there's students that have not been able to attend school at all, because of lack of bus para, or bus routes that aren't set top. Been escalating lots of issues. The biggest trend is that because there's a shortage of drivers, they (OPT) have made the routes incredibly long. With many students and serving multiple schools on each route. Therefore, students spend long hours on the bus, some have been on the bus 2/3 hours, both ways. Picking up 15-16 kids and dropping them to 3/4 schools on the same route. If escalated to the right people, they'll resolve that

student's long route issue but then it's put on another student's route by taking a student from one route and putting another student in another route. Which would also make it long for that student.

- Regarding the ATU (union) contract, most of the companies in the union agreed to the tentative contract agreement. NYCSBUS is still has not signed on to any agreement. It seems like a school bus strike will not be happening at this point. The hope is that with these tentative agreements that NYC will see more school bus drivers come in and that may help OPT to create more routes.
- Families have also reported that routes are also very inefficient and have sent screenshots of how routes look, which appear to zig-zag back and forth over boroughs. Seeing that as a trend as well.
- Reported that before it was resolved fairly quickly but now weeks on end the same routes have these issues without it being resolved with any kind of permanency. Complaints for families continue to have the same roadblocks as before, which is very frustrating for families.
- Attended the 10/4/23 CEC25 Calendar meeting. They had a presentation from the district office on IEPs and it was a basic overview of IEPs. It was good and a good start for new parents coming into the school district. No Spanish interpretation was available, but they will try and translate the recording. They also had their UFT representative there.
- CEC25 will be hosting a couple of events, one for Autism Awareness Month, Assesmbly member Anderson is going to be in the UFT's Queens office and they're going to do a presentation on Autism. CCSE will send out the flyers on the listserv.
- Attended a Disability Affairs AT Expo from the NY Department of Social services and Department of Disability Affairs. Made connections since CCSE will be working on expos of our own, as well as conferences, webinars and training. Mark Serbian was present and was able to make some networking.

#### **Lupe Hernandez**

- Reminded families that bus companies within ATU (union), that have come to the principal agreement, will also be conducting their pick. since they did not get a chance to do that in August.
  - Gave heads up to families that the seniority pic will be taking place soon. She dropped some dates in the chat. Families may want to start prepping for new school bus drivers.
  - Reminded families that the agreements are with the bus drivers and that the Chancellor is the one that is approving or rejecting the pay proposal for the school bus attendants., and that is what's being held up. So when the DOE claims that they are far removed from these negotiations, families need to think twice. As this is a mandated service for our students with disabilities to be able to enable their civil rights to be able to get to and from school.
  - Urged that the council write a letter or a resolution on this issue.
  - Announced that High school admissions opened up as well as Middle school admissions, this week. When stopped by the Welcome Center and tried to obtain a physical copy of the admissions guide, was told it wasn't available and that all you could do was to go to the Myschools dashboard, which is not user friendly and does not filter programming for ICT, or center students with disabilities and maybe project based learning and curriculums sites. Many schools don't seem to have an admissions guide.
- **Francine asked for a volunteer to draft a letter or resolution on the issues with bussing. Heather and Lupe** volunteered to draft that. Can enlist other members to help as well.

#### **Tamaira Reid:**

- Voiced concerns that there's been a shift in giving parental consent on IEPs, verbally rather than signing a document, either a paper copy or a digital copy. So there's a verbal consent that's

ultimately given. This needs to be spoken about and the council needs to bring this up. Since it brings up many problems legally and otherwise, with this move of it being verbal. It's also happening with progress monitoring and reporting. As many parents are finding out when they don't receive those progress reports with the report cards. So, families need to make sure that everything is signed. This is on the council's radar.

- **Francine encouraged parents in the public to reach out.**
- **Heather Dailey also made a comment about having documents accessible. SOPM is only available in English, and us as a council should really push to get that translated into other languages.**

### **Maggie Sanchez**

- Pointed out the lack of preparation before the storm, and that affected a lot of the families. Families reported that some students were stuck in their route home, or that the families have to scrambling with their work schedules to pick up their kids early from school, as there wasn't a warning the day prior. That's something that the DOE, the Chancellor and the Mayor need to answer for, because that put the students at risk.
- Also reported that the bus app is not working for many of the families that should have access to it. If the DOE can give the council the status on that and if those issues can be resolved.
- Attended the CCHS meeting which was very informative. There were a lot of good CCHS candidates there as well and was left optimistic.
- Attended the Class Size matters working group virtually. The meeting sometimes was a lot to take in. There was a lot of lobbying against class size reduction.

### **Additional Comments**

#### **Francine Almash**

Concerns with safety inside and outside of schools, storm preparation protocol, and who is responsible for students when there is a crisis, like the storm. To make sure they get home safely.

#### **Carolyn Castro**

Pointed out the lack of accountability and lack of partnerships, between NYC administration & DOE with NYC agencies (ie. inter-borough Ferry line, and MTA line disruptions). For students to be stuck for hours on end not able to get home is inexcusable. On social media there's been contradictory information that's been provided. Where the DOE is saying one thing and then there are emails being shared that are saying the opposite. We do have examples of emails that state that there was "no shelter in place", there are emails that are contradicting everything that the Mayor and the Chancellor have said, and there's no accountability for those actions.

#### **Lupe Hernandez**

Highlighted that NYC does have a readiness plan in place. These general response protocols that exist before an emergency takes place, are not being followed. It doesn't help that communication from the top is not trickled down or communicated to the staff that were having to make decisions on their own and that nothing was consistent across the board. It put a lot of our students at risk and it was preventable.

#### **Tamaira Reid**

Echoed that it was troubling, and how it was ableism at its worst. For a lot of students in Manhattan, like in CEC2, that were released, without even being asked if they had a plan on how they're getting home.

These are children that are getting on trains and going to other boroughs because not everybody lives in the district where they attend school.

The issue is also access to cell phones for these students during school hours. Parents were trying to get through to these schools, trying to figure out how to let their kids know how to get home, since trains were down in a lot of areas. Families had to find another parent or friend to pick them up, and needed to get consent from the school office, but they weren't picking up. Leaving students to show up in a shut down train station. No child should be released like that, just on their own accord. There was no check in with students from a lot of these schools.

### **Francine Almash**

Suggested that this can be something can be put under a School Safety or Emergency Readiness Committee.

### **Sanayi Beckles-Canton (Co- President Report)**

- Reported that in District 5 there was a big literacy push. There was a free community event at PS154 on 09/30/23 where thousands of books were given away.
- The Superintendent as well as the Deputy Superintendent, also talked about the different partners that they were working with in terms of social emotional wellness of children. As much as we talk about social emotional wellness in schools, and how much DOE wants to see that. You don't really get to see that and they're partners that are working within the buildings. As a parent of a child in District 5, was able to go around and speak to some of those partners and get information, and how they're helping and supporting the schools within the district.
- Mentioned that was also in conversation with the Superintendent regarding getting a Nest program in Harlem, and determined to bring a Nest program to Harlem. It's a disservice to a lot of our children that they can only for to District 2 or 3. To be serviced if our child qualifies for the Nest program. While there are new Nest programs apparently happening across the city, they do not seem to be in most communities.
- When it comes to Committees, how do we bring these fabulous programs that you often see in the more wealthier districts to districts in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens where more families who may be struggling or maybe of the working class stature. To get those services. A lot of the time our parents don't know how to apply to Nest or Horizon. If we have a Horizon program like in District 5, it is underutilized, because families don't even know what is offered and where it is at. So, that is a concern. It's great to have these things like the SEED program or programs that support children with disabilities. But families sometimes cannot access them or there's not a simple process and not a tedious selective process, though it may seem, a process that families have to go through. We are never going to bring equity to this disparity that we see. As we think about the committee's and the work that we do. Really start talking about the disparities within special education and how some kids get access and others do not, which is a real concern.
- Reported on work around homelessness in DC and how it's affecting families in that area and how working within those systems and working within school systems to support families in transitional housing. It was an eye opening experience in thinking about families in transitional housing with kids with disabilities. Have a big concern about that, since that conversation may rarely come up. Because often times we're talking about children with special needs or children with developmental variations, and we're not really thinking about the trauma that homelessness adds to that layer of struggle.

### **Bylaws Update/Discussion**



**Francine Almash Brought up a resolution to amend our Bylaws.**

Council had a resolution to amend our bylaws to change our meeting time permanently to 6:30pm, and to combine our Business Meeting and our Calendar Meeting, meeting once a month, moving forward.

Council was advised that the resolution could be presented at this Business Meeting and be voted on.

*Resolution was read out to the public and reviewed by council members.*

*The resolution was opened up for discussion.*

*No concerns were voiced by council members.*

*Public comments were opened up solely on the resolution.*

*No concerns were voiced by members of the public.*

**Francine asked for a motion for approval of the resolution 002 Business and Calendar Meeting.**

**Motioned to approve:** Lupe Hernandez

**Second:** Mark Gonsalves

**Francine called for a roll call vote.**

Diana Abrams - **Yes**

Francine Almash - **Yes**

Sanayi Beckles Canton - **Yes**

Carolyn Castro - **Yes**

Heather Dailey - **Yes**

Mark Gonsalves - **Yes**

Lupe Hernandez - **Yes**

Tamaira Reid - **Yes**

Maggie Sanchez - **Yes**

Shannon Terrell - **Yes**

**\*Motion passes; Resolution is agreed to.**

**Unfinished Business**

2023/2024 Meeting Schedule

**Francine asked for a motion to table discussion.**

**Motioned to move the agenda item to calendar meeting:** Heather Dailey

**Second:** Carolyn Castro

**Francine called for a voice vote.**

In favor: **All**

Opposed: **none**

Abstentions: **none**

**\*Table discussion of the council's meeting schedule is approved until Calendar meeting 10/19/23.**

**New Business**

**CCHS Vacancy**

**Francine Almash** reminded the council that the CCSE appointee to the CCHS still needs to be appointed. Council needs to agree to hold the interviews and call the candidates to come to our 10/19/23 Calendar meeting.

Francine announced that the council has a new vacancy. The application will be opened after the meeting.

### **Town Hall with Chancellor**

Francine mentioned that the council was asked to submit dates.

- **Francine made the suggestion of having a Town Hall committee**
- **A committee for the Town Hall was further discussed by the council and the need for that committee was also discussed.**

Some ideas that council members brought up were:

- Having the discussion regarding the Town Hall during a Business Meeting, holding a special meeting, maybe an ad hoc committee or continuing to vote on having a Town Hall committee.
- Some council members mentioned they may not be in attendance for the Town Hall with the Chancellor.

- **A further discussion took place in regards to committees, the nature and purpose of the committees and the rationale as to why a committee for the Town Hall may be needed.**

**Francine asked to have the Town hall committee discussion at our Calendar Meeting.**

**Seconded: Carolyn Castro**

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### **Committee Formation**

Two Standing committees  
**Annual Report Committee**  
**IEP Conference Committee**

1. IEP Conference; co-chairs: Lupe, Mark and Tamuira

1. Votes:

- i. In favor: 9
- ii. Against: 0
- iii. Abstain: 0

2. Bylaws; co chairs: Carolyn Castro

1. Votes:

- i. In favor: 8
- ii. Against: 0
- iii. Abstain: 1

3. Annual report; chair: Francine Almash

1. Votes:

- i. In favor: 8
- ii. Against: 0

iii. Abstain: 0

4. Inclusion and Belonging; chair: Diana Abrams

1. Votes:

- i. In favor: 8
- ii. Against: 0
- iii. Abstain: 1

5. Busing and transportation; co-chairs: Heather Dailey and Lupe Hernandez

1. Votes:

- i. In favor: 8
- ii. Against: 0
- iii. Abstain: 0

6. Communication;co- chair: Heather Dailey and Maggie Sanchez

1. Votes:

- i. In favor: 8
- ii. Against: 0
- iii. Abstain: 1

7. CECs local support group/D75 CEC members; chair: Carolyn Castro

1. Votes:

- i. In favor: 8
- ii. Against: 0
- iii. Abstain: 0

**Heather Dailey** placed a motion to form the **Annual Report Committee**

**Second:** Francine Almash

**Francine called for a voice vote.**

In favor: All

Opposed: none

Abstentions: none

**Motion passes, Annual Report Committee is formed**

**Co-Chairs Annual Report Committee:**

Francine Almash

Heather Dailey (as temporary)

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**Francine** asked if someone can put a motion to form the **IEP Conference Committee**

**Motioned to form the IEP Conference Committee:** Carolyn Castro

**Second:** Tamuira Reid

**Francine called for a voice vote.**

In favor: All

Opposed: none

Abstentions: none

**Motion passes, IEP Conference Committee is formed**

**Francine asked if anyone would like to co-chair it.**

**Co-Chairs IEP Conference Committee:**

Mark Gonsalves

Lupe Hernandez

Tamaira Reid

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**Francine asked if someone would like to put a motion to form any other committees**

**Placed a motion to vote in the Inclusion and Belonging Committee:** Carolyn Castro

**Second:** Mark Gonsalves

**Francine called for a voice vote.**

In favor: 8

Opposed: none

Abstentions: Sanayi Beckles-Canton

**Motion passes, Inclusion and Belonging Committee is formed**

**Francine asked if anyone would like to co-chair it.**

**Co-Chairs Inclusion and Belonging Committee:**

Diana Abrams

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**Francine asked if someone would like to put a motion to form any other committees**

**Placed a motion to vote in the Busing & Transportation Committee:** Heather Dailey

**Second:** Lupe Hernandez

**Francine called for a voice vote.**

In favor: All

Opposed: none

Abstentions: none

**Motion passes, Busing & Transportation Committee is formed**

**Francine asked if anyone would like to co-chair it.**

**Co-Chairs Busing & Transportation Committee:**

Heather Dailey

Lupe Hernandez

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**Francine asked if someone would like to put a motion to form any other committees**

**Placed a motion to vote in the Community Education Council Local Support Committee (for Local CEC IEP Reps, D75 Reps, ELL Reps & 853 schools):** Heather Dailey

**Second:** Lupe Hernandez

**Francine called for a voice vote.**

In favor: All

Opposed: none

Abstentions: none

**Motion passes, the Community Education Council Local Support Committee (for Local CEC IEP Reps, D75 Reps, ELL Reps & 853 schools) is formed**

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**Francine asked if anyone would like to co-chair it.**

**Co-Chairs IEP Conference Committee:**

Carolyn Castro

- **Francine mentioned that a geographic breakdown was created. She asked that each CCSE member be assigned a geographic region of the city. We will have a committee that invites all of the representatives to meet periodically, and be the point of contact for those representatives within their assigned region.**

**Francine asked if someone would like to put a motion to create a Communications Committee**

**Placed a motion to vote in the Communications Committee: Heather Dailey**

**Francine called for a voice vote.**

In favor: 8

Opposed: none

Abstentions: Sanayi Beckles Canton

**Motion passes, Communications Committee is formed**

**Francine asked if anyone would like to co-chair it.**

**Co-Chairs IEP Conference Committee:**

Heather Dailey

Maggie Sanchez

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**Carolyn Castro asked if someone would like to put a motion to create a Bylaws Committee**

**Placed a motion to vote in the Bylaws Committee: Lupe Hernandez**

**Second: Mark Gonsalves**

**Francine called for a voice vote.**

In favor: 8

Opposed: none

Abstentions: **Sanayi Beckles Canton**

**Motion passes, Bylaws Committee is formed**

**Francine asked if anyone would like to co-chair it.**

**Co-Chairs of the Bylaws Committee:**

Carolyn Castro

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**Francine Almash asked for a motion to table discussion.**

**Motioned to move the agenda item to calendar meeting:** Mark Gonsalves

**Second:** Carolyn Castro

Francine called for a voice vote.

In favor: **8**

Opposed: **none**

Abstentions: **Sanayi Beckles-Canton**

**\*Table discussion of the council's meeting schedule is approved until Calendar meeting 10/19/23.**

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**Francine Almash asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.**

**Motioned to move the agenda item to calendar meeting:** Mark Gonsalves

**Second:** Carolyn Castro

**Francine called for a voice vote.**

In favor: **9**

Opposed: **none**

Abstentions: **none**

**\*Table discussion of the council's meeting schedule is approved until Calendar meeting 10/19/23.**

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm**