



**NOACA HR, Personnel, and Organizational Development Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes**

September 30, 2025

NOACA Offices

1299 Superior Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio

No Quorum

Present: Please see the attached attendance record.

Mayor Matt Castelli, Chair of HR, Personnel, and Organizational Development Subcommittee, convened the meeting at 3:10 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

No action was taken on the meeting minutes of August 12, 2025.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

No public comments were made at this meeting.

Executive Director's Report

No report was presented at this meeting.

Action Items

No action items were presented at this meeting.

Presentation/Discussion Items

Associate Director of Human Resources Introduction

Director Grace Gallucci reported that NOACA's new Associate Director of Human Resources, Ms. Lisa Durkin, has been with the organization for three and a half weeks and has already made a strong start. She noted that Ms. Durkin is fitting well into both the role and the organization, bringing with her a wealth of experience and knowledge that she is actively applying. Director Gallucci expressed her admiration for Ms. Durkin's ability to quickly begin working with staff, building relationships, and holding productive meetings. She welcomed Ms. Durkin to NOACA, adding that this appointment has been a long time coming.

Ms. Durkin began by thanking Director Gallucci and the HR Subcommittee for the opportunity to attend the meeting. She shared highlights of her career, which began in government finance at Cuyahoga County. Her financial expertise led to her first HR role, transitioning employee health benefits to a self-insured model, launching a health care consortium, and implementing systems like SAP and My HR. Promoted to Deputy Director of HR in 2010, she unified multiple agencies' policies, benefits, and compensation, established the county's first Personnel Review

Commission, and linked performance planning to countywide goals. She later worked at the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Hiram College, and the Cleveland Orchestra, building HR practices, guiding reductions in force, improving leadership, and boosting employee engagement. She also gained consulting experience and became a certified Workday ERP administrator, but missed the mission-driven culture of being embedded in an organization—one reason she joined NOACA. Ms. Durkin emphasized her personal connection to Northeast Ohio and shared her vision: to align HR, culture, and organizational development strategies to support employees and leadership while advancing NOACA’s mission, bringing together “a million little pieces” of culture into a cohesive whole.

Mayor Castelli addressed the Subcommittee and welcomed Ms. Durkin. He explained that while the interview process had provided a much deeper look into her background, her overview today highlighted the breadth of experience she brings to NOACA. He noted that among all the candidates considered, Ms. Durkin’s resume and professional accomplishments stood out above the rest. He expressed the Subcommittee’s appreciation for her interest in NOACA and for joining the organization. Mayor Castelli added that the purpose of today’s meeting was to allow Ms. Durkin to introduce herself to the Subcommittee. He acknowledged that she is already working closely with Director Gallucci and the team to identify next steps from an HR perspective, and he invited Subcommittee members to ask Ms. Durkin or Director Gallucci questions.

Ms. Durkin shared that she is particularly interested in hearing the perspectives of Board members. She asked if there are areas they believe she should focus on in her role that would most benefit NOACA. She added that she would greatly appreciate any words of wisdom they might offer.

Mayor Castelli invited feedback from Subcommittee members, now or later.

Commissioner Richard Regovich noted the uniqueness of the subcommittee and the size of NOACA’s 48-member board. He emphasized the importance of having a full-time HR director to bridge gaps and relieve Director Gallucci of carrying the responsibility alone. He highlighted the challenges of navigating federal funding and meeting the diverse needs of Northeast Ohio, pointing out how costs have risen dramatically while funding has declined. He praised Ms. Durkin’s broad experience, expressed optimism about her role at NOACA, and asked about her work with Hiram College, specifically who served as president during her tenure.

Ms. Durkin replied that Ms. Lori Varlotta was president during her two years at Hiram College. She added that she had just missed serving under former President Tom Chema.

Commissioner Regovich noted that Ms. Jen Schuller, now at Lake Erie College, had previously been at Hiram College.

Ms. Durkin said Lake Erie College is fortunate to have Ms. Schuller, describing her as a “whiz.” She added that Hiram’s development efforts have struggled without her.

Commissioner Regovich added that Ms. Schuller is doing well` in Lake County.

Ms. India Birdsong Terry thanked Ms. Durkin for her detailed input, noting that her points align with NOACA’s goals and the committee’s discussions. She emphasized the importance of actions matching goals and commended the role of being a change agent, despite its challenges. She asked for Ms. Durkin’s thoughts on how NOACA compares in size and effectiveness to other

organizations she has worked with, noting the agency's 48 board members and nearly equal staff size.

Director Gallucci confirmed it is a one-to-one ratio.

Ms. Durkin said that whether managing HR for 12,000 employees or 47, the work is essentially the same. She noted her experience at Cuyahoga County, a healthcare system, Hiram College, and the Orchestra, emphasizing that she has handled both large and small organizations and often built functions from scratch.

Mr. Gall thanked Ms. Durkin for sharing her diverse background and noted its value to NOACA. He asked if she had reviewed NOACA's budgets from the past few years.

Ms. Durkin said she has not reviewed NOACA's past budgets but has reviewed the current one.

Mr. Gall acknowledged the challenges of setting priorities, noting Director Gallucci's role in guiding them. He emphasized the importance of building trust through change, adding that more change is ahead for the organization. He said governance actions are underway and encouraged Ms. Durkin, noting that despite NOACA's smaller size, she will stay busy and should enjoy working in a diverse culture. He asked Director Gallucci to confirm there are no major concerns regarding healthcare.

Director Gallucci stated that NOACA has a strong health plan through Lorain County.

Ms. Durkin noted she had spoken with Ms. Tonya Becraft from Lorain County that morning and praised their team.

Mr. Gall reported that Lorain County's open enrollment is expected to begin soon.

Ms. Durkin outlined her 90-day and one-year goals, including reviewing policies, procedures, and compensation for fairness; linking performance evaluations to the mission; meeting with all employees; and developing consistent management practices. Within one year, she aims to align policies, compensation, and performance processes with established leadership practices while preserving organizational adaptability.

Ms. Terry suggested the HR subcommittee continue meeting, perhaps quarterly instead of monthly, to support Ms. Durkin's 90-day and longer-term plans. She emphasized the importance of ensuring the subcommittee's efforts go beyond "checking the box" by reinforcing goals, tracking progress, and providing actionable feedback to the CEO and board. Once the plan is fully implemented and tested, the subcommittee could transition to an ad hoc role.

Director Gallucci agreed that quarterly meetings are a worthwhile approach to monitor the HR function and agency, with the option to move to ad hoc once the processes are "battle tested."

Mayor Castelli concurred and noted the next meeting will likely align with NOACA's existing quarterly schedule.

Director Gallucci noted there is an open slot in the schedule where the Equity Subcommittee used to meet.

Mayor Castelli agreed and suggested using that slot. He noted that the HR Subcommittee should remain project-driven and avoid overlapping or conflicting with the Executive Committee's responsibilities.

Commissioner Regovich said the HR Subcommittee should support Ms. Durkin and Director Gallucci for at least a year, listening and providing guidance as needed. After that, the Subcommittee could transition to an ad hoc role, stepping in only for new issues before recommendations go to the Executive Committee.

Director Gallucci emphasized that the Subcommittee's support is important for both herself and Ms. Durkin.

Mayor Castelli clarified that the Subcommittee is not an investigative body and noted that NOACA has HR and legal resources for that. He agreed with previous comments, supported quarterly meetings, and stressed the importance of being present long enough to provide meaningful guidance rather than just wishing them luck. He said the discussion helped align everyone's focus going forward.

Ms. Terry agreed that the discussion is helpful and emphasized that the Subcommittee's role is to support NOACA staff, not act as an HR audit team. She suggested drafting a simple outline to present to the Executive Committee on how the Subcommittee can provide ongoing support, serve as a sounding board, and help guide any pivots or adjustments before escalating them to other bodies. This would allow the Subcommittee to see initiatives through and close out the first phase effectively.

Mayor Castelli supported Ms. Terry's suggestion and proposed working together to make a recommendation to the Executive Committee.

Ms. Barlik reminded the group that a charter was adopted in February but not yet submitted to the Executive Committee for board approval. She suggested revisiting the charter to align on goals and meeting schedule before moving it forward.

Mayor Castelli suggested collaborating with Director Gallucci (and others who wish to participate) to draft a recommendation to present at the next meeting.

Commissioner Regovich said the next step should be reviewing the Subcommittee's charter to confirm the path forward and using Ms. Durkin's 90-day and one-year plan as guidance, emphasizing that the subcommittee's role is to support rather than lead the initiatives.

Ms. Barlik noted that December 5 at 10 a.m. would have been the next meeting of the Equity Subcommittee.

Mayor Castelli invited members to share their input on the next meeting date and any feedback regarding the timing.

Ms. Terry agreed with the date, noting it allows time to review the charter and for Ms. Durkin to progress on her 60–80-day goals.

No members expressed any issues with the proposed meeting time.

Mayor Castelli said the Subcommittee will review the charter, incorporate Ms. Durkin's strategy, make recommendations, and forward them to the Executive Committee, aiming to finalize by the December 5 meeting.

Ms. Terry asked whether future meetings will be virtual or in-person.

Ms. Barlik explained that, in her interpretation, the Governance Committee concluded that virtual meetings are not currently feasible due to existing requirements.

Director Gallucci expressed appreciation for the Subcommittee's preparation, engagement, and contributions, noting that it is making a difference.

Reports/Updates

No reports/updates were presented at this meeting.

Old Business

No old business was discussed at this meeting.

New Business

No new business was discussed at this meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:59 p.m.

Note: Additional information on this meeting can be found on [NOACA's website](#) or on [NOACA's YouTube channel](#).



NOACA HR, Personnel and Organizational Development Subcommittee 2025 Attendance Record

MEMBER	2/11/25	2/25/25	3/11/25	4/8/25	5/13/25	8/12/25	9/30/25	12/5/25
CASTELLI, Matt	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
DREYFUSS-WELLS, Kyle	X	X	X		X	X		
GALL, John	X	X	X	X		X	X	
HARRISON, Aaron					X			
REGOVICH, Richard	X	X	X		X		X	
TAYLOR, Katie	X	X	X	X	X			
TERRY, India Birdsong		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Ex-officio								
RONAYNE, Chris (Debbie Berry, Alternate)	X	A	X		A	A		

X = Member Present

A = Alternate Present