



Ace Monster Toys (dba Ace Makerspace) Board Meeting

Date: Thursday, January 15, 2026

Time: 6pm

Location: Remote (on Zoom)

Type of Meeting: Regular (scheduled per the Bylaws)

Board of Directors Present:

Sylvia Gonzalez (she/her)

Samantha "Pixie" Piszkiwicz (she/her)

David R. Perry (he/him), aka drp

Vacant Board Seat: One (1) Vacant Director Seat, Recruitment is ongoing

Board Member Not Present: Katie Harrell (she/her)

Officers Present:

Sylvia Gonzalez (she/her), Chair of the Board, acting as CEO *while President role is vacant*

David R. Perry (he/him), Treasurer

Jun Zou (she/her), Assistant Treasurer

Officer Not Present: Katie Harrell (she/her), Secretary

Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) Members Present: Adrienne Lemberger (she/her), Margaret Yoon (she/her), Mark Piszczor (he/him and present only for initial part of meeting)

Agenda:

- Mission Moment
- Financial Reporting and Accounting Processes Status
- Organizational Pipeline
- Instructor Availability
- Operations Updates
- Executive Session

Meeting Minutes:

- The meeting was called to order by Sylvia as Chair at 6:01pm with 3 directors (Pixie, David, and Sylvia) and 2 FAC members initially in attendance (Adrienne and Mark).
- Margaret joined the meeting a few minutes later. Jun joined the meeting later.

- Quorum was met with 3 directors present for the entirety of the meeting.
- Announcements regarding board actions taken since the last regular meeting.
 - Final Report for CAC grant was submitted in time for the deadline.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- No meeting minutes approval to report since the last scheduled regular board meeting was an informal meeting due to lack of quorum.
- The Mission Moment occurred.

Strategic Plan

- Review and approval of the 2025-2026 Strategic Plan (materials distributed in advance).
 - Motion: Sylvia moved to approve the 2025-2026 Strategic Plan as presented in appendix
 - Second: David
 - Votes: All ayes
 - Outcome: Motion passed, Approved Strategic Plan part of Appendix

The following policy motions were distributed in advance to the Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) and full voting members of Ace. Approved policies are collected in the appendix to these minutes.

Deferred Revenue Cash Reserve Policy

- Review current deferred revenue cash reserve status and proposed policy for 2025-2026 (materials distributed in advance).
 - Motion: adopt the Deferred Revenue Cash Reserve Policy:

Hold cash equal to 100% of recorded unearned revenue and gift card liabilities on the balance sheet.

Permitted Uses: Release only as revenue is earned or gift cards redeemed; prohibit use for other purposes.

Authorization: Treasurer forwards quarterly summary from monthly reporting; board approval for any deviation exceeding \$1000 or persisting beyond quarter-end.

Recording: Segregate as Deferred Revenue Cash Reserve in financial statements; report quarterly.

Motion Made by: Sylvia
Second: Pixie
Votes: All Ayes
Outcome: Motion passes

Capitalization Threshold Policy

Motion: Sylvia moved to adopt: The capitalization threshold is \$1000.
Second: David
Votes: All Ayes
Outcome: Motion passes

Cash Minimum Balance Policy

- Review cash minimum balance status and proposed policy for 2025-2026 (materials distributed in advance).

Motion: adopt the Cash Minimum Balance Policy:

Hold unrestricted cash equal to at least 1.5 times the largest single monthly expense (currently \$6,065) to prevent payment failures from revenue timing delays.

Permitted Uses: May dip temporarily for essential payments; replenish from surpluses within 60 days.

Monitoring: Treasurer checks monthly against prior 12-month largest expense; report shortfalls to board.

Reporting: Include status in quarterly financial reports.

Motion made by Sylvia
Second by David
Voting: All ayes
Outcome: motion passes

Payroll Cash Flow Coordination Reserve Policy

Review status (currently \$0) and proposed policy for 2025-2026 (materials in advance).

Motion: Adopt the Payroll Cash Flow Coordination Reserve Policy:

Target: Hold restricted cash equal to one month of payroll (including overhead) to guarantee final paychecks in any closure or shortfall.

Permitted Uses: Final payroll only (including taxes/benefits); no other operations.

Oversight: External accountants verify quarterly; board approves any access.

Reporting: Track separately in financials; include status in quarterly reports.

Motion: Sylvia
Second: David
Votes: All Ayes
Outcome: Motion Passes

Operations Reserve

- Review current operations reserve status and proposed policy for 2025-2026 (materials distributed in advance).

Motion: adopt the Operations Reserve Policy:

Operations Reserve

Maintain an operations reserve, excluding payroll, equal to a minimum of 3 months of budgeted monthly operating expenses, targeting 6 months, funded from unrestricted surpluses.

Permitted Uses: Limited to short-term cash flow shortfalls, unexpected non-recurring expenses, or emergencies; not for chronic deficits. Require replenishment plan within 12 months.

Authorization: Board approval for any use exceeding \$3,000.

Recording: Track as Board-Designated Operating Reserve in segregated accounts; report quarterly in financials.

Motion Made by: Sylvia
Second: David
Voting: All ayes
Outcome: Motion passes

Payroll Reserve

Maintain a payroll reserve, including overhead, equal to a minimum of 3 months of payroll expenses, targeting 6 months, funded from unrestricted surpluses.

Permitted Uses: Limited to short-term cash flow shortfalls, unexpected non-recurring expenses, or emergencies; not for chronic deficits. Require replenishment plan within 12 months.

Authorization: Board approval for any use exceeding 1 month of payroll expenses.

Recording: Track as Board-Designated Payroll Reserve in segregated accounts; report quarterly in financials.

Motion Made by: David
Second: Pixie
Voting: All Ayes
Outcome: Motion Passes

The Board and the FAC members held discussion regarding the method for selecting the Equipment Maintenance Reserve target of \$10,000 and the Equipment Maintenance Replacement Reserve target of \$10,000.

- A Committee member recommended ensuring that the Board did not select these targets based on the remaining unallocated amount left in unallocated cash in Ace Makerspace's cash accounts.
- The Board and FAC members reviewed the Operational Risks spreadsheet developed by the FAC in May 2025, and viewed

that the total of operational risks was \$45,000.

- The Board and FAC members generally agreed that for now the targets were a starting point and that Ace Makerspace should continue to evolve its policies by revisiting these targets and updating these policies in future months.

Equipment Maintenance Reserve

Hold funds equal to minimum of \$10,000, targeting \$20,000 for routine maintenance that is above the capitalization threshold.

Uses: Scheduled repairs, inspections, preventive servicing only. Require replenishment plan within 12 months.

Oversight: External accountants review annually; board approval for uses >\$3000.

Reporting: Include balance in quarterly financials.

Motion Made by: Sylvia
Seconded: David
Voting: All Ayes
Outcome: Motion passes.

By general consensus (no vote), the Board recommended to the next elected board revisiting the Equipment Maintenance Reserve targets of \$10,000 minimum and \$20,000 target.

Equipment Replacement Reserve

Hold funds equal to minimum of \$10,000, targeting \$20,000 for equipment replacement that is above the capitalization threshold.

Uses: Equipment replacement due to failure or equipment reaching useful end of life only. Require replenishment plan within 12 months.

Oversight: External accountants review annually; board approval for uses >\$3000.

Reporting: Include balance in quarterly financials.

Motion Made by: Sylvia
Seconded: Pixie
Voting: all ayes
Outcome: Motion passes

By general consensus without a vote, the recommendation to the next elected board is to revisit these targets of \$10,000 minimum and \$20,000 targeted for Equipment Replacement Reserve.

The Board and FAC noted that no funds are currently allocated for

development and acknowledged this reserve policy applies to future budgets with specified nonzero development amounts.

Development Reserve

Target: Hold unrestricted funds equal to 25% of the annual development budget (or the specified amount once budgeted), funded from surpluses as feasible.

Permitted Uses: Cover fundraising shortfalls, campaign startup costs, or revenue downturns; replenish within 12 months of use.

Oversight: External accountants review annually during financial prep; board approves any draws exceeding \$1,000.

Reporting: Track balance separately; include target, status, and progress in quarterly financial reports.

Motion Made by: Sylvia
Second by David
Voting: All ayes
Outcome: Motion Passes

Financial Oversight Discussion

- Sylvia, as Chair, reviewed the recent meeting schedule in which the Board invited the FAC to regular and special board meetings in order to reduce the number of meetings.
- Sylvia clarified to the FAC members that even a single FAC member can request a motion be added to the board meeting agenda, and that as FAC members, their responsibility is to advise the Board regarding financial motions.
- All FAC members are encouraged to reach out to the Board at any time to request a meeting be scheduled or to request a particular agenda for the next board meeting.
- All FAC members are encouraged to exercise their financial oversight and encourage good financial stewardship.
- Sylvia, as Chair, suggested that these meeting minutes include a recommendation to the next board to review the target numbers in these reserve policies.

Financial Reporting and Accounting Processes Status

- As Assistant Treasurer, Jun provided a brief summary of the review of the December 2025 draft financial reports received from Jitasa.
- Sylvia provided status regarding Books Closure, that only a few remaining items regarding accrual accounting on a monthly basis remain to be closed out.

Organizational Pipeline

- Sylvia discussed board and officer recruitment.
- FAC members advised focusing on the benefits to the potential volunteer leaders, such as leadership development that could be beneficial for career development. Emphasize the benefit of volunteering for the individual rather than focusing on what Ace needs from volunteers.
- Adrienne led a discussion around current engagement levels of the present board members and the sustainability of their continued board service.

Staffing Discussion

- The Chair presented a proposal for an internal coordination position limited to essential tasks required to maintain operations and keep the makerspace running.
- The proposal included these options:
 - A part-time Financial and Operations Coordinator (combined role) at 20 hours per week;
 - or
 - Two part-time individual roles totaling 20 hours per week
 - A part-time Financial Coordinator at 10 hours per week; and
 - A part-time Operations Coordinator at 10 hours per week.
- Assistant Treasurer Jun and Sylvia as Chair/CEO presented the following proposed budget numbers.
 - Entry-level position at 10 hours per week would result in a projected monthly budget expense including 30% overhead of \$1500 per month
 - Entry-level position at 20 hours per would result in a projected monthly budget expense including 30% overhead of \$3000 per month.
- The Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) and Board discussed.
- From a scaling standpoint, Assistant Treasurer Jun recommended engaging only a part-time Financial Coordinator initially, then reevaluating budget impact before approving any additional payroll expenses.
- The Chair noted that the role is intended as a stable, clearly defined operational position (rather than a growth position), with duties and compensation aligned to organizational needs and budget.
 - Future requests from employees to expand the role or compensation solely for retention would be evaluated against organizational needs and budget.
 - If misaligned, the organization would support the employee's transition out rather than altering the position.
- The Chair referenced the board resolution in October 2024 in which officer positions are volunteer unpaid roles. This approach further minimizes potential conflicts of interest related to job descriptions, compensation, and role expansion.
- Margaret proposed that the organizational need be expanded to consider volunteer coordination of operational tasks.
- Adrienne proposed reviewing the recent financial reports to determine the maximum budget amount available for paid positions.
- The FAC and the Board discussed defining needed roles and budget aligned with Ace's nonprofit mission, favoring multiple part-time positions over single full-time role to avoid operational risk from single-person reliance.
- The discussion concluded with general agreement that increased payroll for operational support advances sustainability goals and reduces volunteer burden on the board.
- No motion was made, as the FAC will provide further consideration consistent with governance best practices.
- The FAC noted the organization's history of board turnover resulting in lack of financial oversight .
- The FAC requested a one-page summary of the current financial picture in support of the proposed increased budget for payroll.

Instructor Availability and Capacity *Metal Program Updates*

- Team of members met regarding the metal program and asked for board consideration for one-on-one certification to be possible while the classes are still being developed.
 - The Chair referenced the team's concern that one-on-one certification would impact the existing wood program.
 - The Chair pointed out that the programs are different because the wood program has a robust certification schedule of classes, whereas the metal program does not.
 - Further discussion of this consideration needs to be held and is moved to the next board meeting agenda.

Textiles Program Updates

- The board received an update that textiles project classes were reduced since autumn due to limited instructor availability and that the current instructor is available through the end of February; future textiles offerings will depend on successful recruitment of textiles instructors.

Operations Update

- Ted, 3d printing steward, requested board consideration of the 3d printing policy.
- Ted requested that the rules requiring 3d printer users to physically be in person every 30 minutes during their 3d print be revisited from a risk based assessment.

Motion: Change Ace Makerspace policy to no longer require users to be in person every 30 minutes during their 3d print after an initial supervision: Require users to stay long enough (suggested for the first 20–30 minutes) to confirm adhesion and basic behavior before leaving the printer.

Second: David

Votes: All Ayes

Outcome: Motion passes and by general consensus, the board agrees that the written policy needs a full update and consideration needs to be made for how long to leave a print in place and consideration that a previously finished print could be removed from the printer by the next user, which can be made at discretion of 3d printing steward.

East Bay Open Studios (EBOS)

- Summary that preparation for EBOS in December 2026 that occurred during the grant period was included as part of the final report for CAC grant.

Adjournment

- The Board did not enter Executive Session.
- The Board met as scheduled in accordance with the Bylaws; a quorum was present throughout, and the Board voted on multiple motions.
- The meeting was adjourned at 8:21pm.

Appendix: Approved Strategic Plan 2025-2026

2025–2026 Strategic Plan

Mission

Bringing people together to create, learn and solve life's challenges with an amazing array of tools, technology, and education. All in inclusive spaces, serving everybody in Oakland and beyond.

Organizational Context

Ace Monster Toys dba Ace Makerspace is a small organization with limited staffing. Our focus is maintaining a safe, reliable space for making. This plan reflects realistic priorities and capacity. Members play an active role in maintaining the space and supporting one another, contributing to a shared responsibility culture.

Operating Model

Members have 24/7 access to the space. The organization does not maintain staffed open hours due to its small size and reliance on a self-managed membership model. Use of power tools and specialized equipment requires completion of safety training. Paid on-site staff are engaged only as instructors for scheduled classes, while members manage their own tool use and space access, adhering to established safety and operational guidelines.

The organization maintains liability insurance and requires members to agree to shared-use, safety and conduct policies.

Strategic Priorities

1. Maintain Safe, Reliable 24/7 Access

- Actions:
 - Maintain secure access
 - Post safety guidelines
 - Maintain safe operation of tools
- Success Metrics:
 - Continuous member access
 - No serious safety incidents
 - Functional core tools

2. Support Responsible Tool Use

- Actions:
 - Safety training required for power tools
 - Clearly mark which tools require training
 - Encourage a culture of mutual respect and peer accountability
- Success Metrics:
 - Completion of required trainings
 - No tool-related incidents

3. Ensure Financial Stability

- Actions:
 - Focus fundraising for core costs

- Maintain simple financial tracking
- Regular review of the financial health of the organization with the Finance Advisory Committee, identifying any financial risks or opportunities for expansion.
- Success Metrics:
 - Maintain consistent cash flow and meet operational expenses without delays.
 - Predictable monthly expenses: Ensure that all operational costs are planned for and that any unexpected costs are mitigated through reserves or additional fundraising.
 - No unexpected site closures

4. Preserve Access & Inclusion

- Actions:
 - Offer class scholarships and reduced cost memberships to increase accessibility
 - Uphold inclusive norms in programming and community interactions
 - Maintain community partnerships
 - Explore outreach strategies to better reflect local community diversity
- Success Metrics:
 - Number of financial assistance memberships awarded and workshops subsidized
 - Increased rates of retention and active participation of individuals receiving financial assistance or scholarships.
 - Member feedback demonstrates respectful and inclusive environment
 - Number and quality of community partnerships
 - Ongoing efforts to increase membership diversity
 - Active member participation in workshops, classes, and general makerspace use

Evaluation & Board Oversight

Progress is reviewed through member feedback, usage data, and financial reports. The board reviews strategic priorities, safety practices, and finances at least annually to ensure alignment with mission and capacity.

Community Impact

Even at a small scale, the makerspace provides consistent educational, creative, and community value to East Bay residents.

Closing Statement

This strategic plan is intentionally modest. By focusing on safety, shared responsibility, and realistic operations, Ace Makerspace remains a sustainable, accessible, and community-driven resource for the East Bay community.

Appendix: Approved Capitalization Threshold Policy

Capitalization Threshold Policy

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Appendix: Approved Reserve Policy

Ace Monster Toys Reserve Policy

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Appendix: Approval of Minutes

Approval of January 15, 2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes via Slack Vote

Voting Period: January 18, 2026

Motion: To approve the minutes of the January 15, 2026 Regular Board Meeting.

Votes:

Sylvia Gonzalez:  Approve

Samantha "Pixie" Piskiewicz:  Approve

David R. Perry:  Approve

Katie Harrell: not present at meeting / does not vote on minutes approval

Outcome: Motion passed. The minutes are approved. All quorum-present directors (3 of 3) voted to approve.