Interfaith Food Ministry
Minutes of the Annual Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, January 27, 2026
9:00 am - Meeting via Zoom

Board Officers & Staff	Board Members
Phil Alonso, Executive Director	Terry Robinson-Calvary Bible
Venus Paxton, Program Manager	Deborah Wilder, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
Victoria Lindsay, Mktg/Comm Mgr	Carol Fegte, Emmanuel Episcopal
Laura Perry, Bookkeeper	Gaye Rogers, Grace Lutheran
Bob Thurman, President - **ABSENT**	Barbara Agrimonti, United Methodist, GV - **ABSENT**
Jeff Hebert, Vice President	Jan Alessi-Marrer, United Methodist, NC
Sandy Hakala, Treasurer	Don Andersen, Seventh Day Adventist
Robert Emmett, Asst. Treasurer - **ABSENT**	Cheri Eckholt, Sierra Pines Methodist - **ABSENT**
Amy Mathews, Secretary	Julie Clutter, Sierra Presbyterian - **ABSENT**
	Trinity Episcopal – **VACANT**
Supporting Churches (No Board Rep)	Linda Grube, St. Patrick's
Christian Science Church	Anne Lyon, Unitarian Universalist - **ABSENT**
Sierra Center for Spiritual Living	Jeff Hebert, St. Canice
	Judi Wade, Twin Cities
	John Muff, Peace Lutheran

Guest attendee: Father Seth Kellerman, Emmanuel Episcopal Church

Meeting Open: 9:04 AM (via Zoom)**.** Phil announced the meeting was being recorded.

Opening remarks by Phil: This past year has been a wild one, and we are learning that there is no such thing as a "normal" year any more. We do what needs to be done and come out stronger on the other side. Our reputation in this community is stronger than ever before, and is a testament to our amazing staff, volunteers, and Board Members. Thanks to everyone for being a part of this great organization.

Prayer was offered by Father Seth Kellerman.

It was determined by a count of attendees that there were a sufficient number of Board members present to establish a quorum.

PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The Minutes from the last Board Meeting in December of 2025 were sent out via email for review prior to this meeting. There being no corrections or questions, **Jeff Hebert made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes as is. Carol Fegte seconded the motion. All approved, none opposed or abstained, the motion passed.**

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Sandy Hakala and Julie Clutter have announced that they are going to retire from the Board of Directors. As Sandy no longer lives locally, it may serve the Board better to have a Treasurer who is in the area. Thanks to them both for their years of service.

APPROVAL OF BOARD OFFICERS

Nominees are as follows:

- President – Bob Thurman
- Vice President – Jeff Hebert
- Treasurer – Sandy Hakala
- Assistant Treasurer – Robert Emmett
- Secretary – Amy Mathews

Terry Robinson made a motion to approve the Board Officers as presented. Don Anderson seconded the motion. All approved, none opposed or abstained, the motion passed.

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

1) Client Stats
   - Average weekly number of family visits in 2025 was approximately 12% lower than it was in 2024, however there were some weeks in the 4th Quarter of 2025 during the SNAP Crisis where weekly family visits were higher than in 2024.
   - The number of completed Client Reservations fluctuated throughout the year, with spikes during the SNAP Crisis as well as during Holiday Distributions.
   - Monthly average of client visits by quarter shows a pattern change. Historically, the highest numbers were in Q4 of 2021 through 2023, then it shifted to Q1 in 2024 and 2025.
   - Individual Client Visits compared with the number of bags given out during distribution shows fairly consistent visit numbers from 2018 to 2021, then increasing numbers over the subsequent 3 years, with a slight decrease in 2025. Bags of food increased steadily over this same timeframe with the exception of 2025 when we saw our first decline (184,969 bags in 2025 compared with 227,114 in 2024). The main reason is the much smaller food budget, with some lingering supply chain issues. Looking back at Client Visits, we can see that the current 2025 number is about DOUBLE the number who came through in 2021.
   - The number of New Client Families followed a similar trend with the number almost doubling from 2021 to 2024, with a bit of a drop in 2025. Reactivated Families (those who went 9 months longer without getting food but then came back) showed the biggest increase overall, starting at 122 in 2021 and ending up at 628 in 2025 (5 Times as many!).
   - **Conclusions** drawn from a review of our client data mainly indicated that we did not need to switch to a Reservation-Only Model of Distribution, so we will be continuing with our hybrid model of serving our reservations until 11:00 am then allowing the First Come First Served clients through. Also, our newest employee, Alexandra, has proved to be a major help to a great many people, including Victoria, Venus, Phil, Gaye, and Amy, all while keeping her hours lower since we are keeping with our hybrid model of Distribution (instead of Reservation-only).
2) Operations
   - Feeding the Foothills (formerly Placer Food Bank) changed their vendor and their inventory system in 2024, and they continue to have supply chain issues. Additionally, they are struggling with funding due to the CA State Budget Deficit, fewer grant opportunities, and Federal Funding freezes. There are fewer canned goods available to us from them, which impacts our buying power as their prices are far lower (typically 3 to 4 times lower) than we can find anywhere else. This is one major reason we are making more bulk food purchases.

- In 2025, we were working with a scaled-back Food Budget (reduced to $452K compared to the previous year's Food Budget of $649K). Venus and the Food Committee did a great job!

3) Fund Development

- Successes in 2025 include our May Match Campaign (formerly March Match), Shred Day, Sponsor-a-Family for the Holidays (Huge success), and we were awarded Best Non-Profit of 2024 by The Union.

- There were some Grants awarded, including the following: Community Resiliency Centers (CRC), Community Initiative Fund (CIF), Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS), Mautino Park Planning, and the 2 VISTA positions from AmeriCorps.

- The biggest success has to be how we responded during the challenges that faced our community, most notably the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Crisis, where the Federal Government indicated there would be no funding for programs during the shutdown. Locally, our program is called CalFresh, and it provides assistance to over 13,000 people in Nevada County, with a total of around $2.3M in funds. Many of our county agencies responded by offering assistance, but IFM was a primary source of information as well as a recipient of donations (monetary, food, and volunteer hours). Victoria made the jump to full-time work during this period in order to accommodate the abundance of interviews (television, radio, print), food drives, fundraisers, and social media posts.

- Challenges in 2025 included Federal Funding freezes (no EFSP grant this year), fewer grants available, SNAP Crisis, and distractions for donors (local issues, national issues). All in all, however, our successes outweighed our challenges, by a lot!

- Social Media Metrics:
  Visibility = 280,000 views across all of our types of content (posts, reels, stories, ads)
  3-second Reel Views = 2,500 (increase of 467%)
  Engagement = 10,700 content interactions, such as Likes, Comments, Shares, Saves, and Replies (72% increase). Biggest increase in Engagement was from non-Followers (160% increase), indicating that we significantly expanded our reach beyond our existing audience.

- Importance of these statistics: Social Media extends IFM's reach to new donors, volunteers, and partners <u>at no cost!</u> When our content is shared, it amplifies our visibility and credibility. Engagement supports our fundraising, advocacy, and event participation.

- During the SNAP Crisis, Social Media was a vital tool for communicating with our community, establishing us as a trusted source of information. Consistent engagement builds awareness, and can be converted into long-term donor and volunteer relationships.

- Community Presence in 2025: IFM was present in the community at various events more than 50 times. Our media appearances exceeded 30 times (a record for IFM)!

- **Donor Metrics**

  $993,865 raised in 2025, increase of 50% over 2024 (this is from Individual and Business donations, does not include grants or fee for service revenue)

  Average donation $319, increase of 26% over 2024

  3,111 total number of donations, increase of 20% over 2024

  Overall, these numbers are very strong, especially when compared with the previous year.

4) Review of Financials

2025 Compared to 2024

EXPENSES	2025 Actual	2024 Actual	Difference
Food	$459K	$649K	- $190K
Staff	$215K	$205K	$10K
Operations	$332K	$273K	$59K
Total Expenses:	**$1,006,000**	**$1,127,000**	**- $121K**
Total Revenue:	**$1,304,000**	**$934,000**	
Net Op Revenue:	**$298,000**	**- $193,000**	**$491,000**

- Food expenses were lower due to smaller Budget.
- Staff Expenses were higher because of salary increases as well as the new position created in Q2 for our Reservation Project Coordinator.
- Operations came in almost $60K higher than the previous year.
- All in all, our Expenses were around $121K lower in 2025.
- Revenue in 2025 was approximately $370K higher than in 2024. Wow! When combined with lower Expenses, the result is a Revenue Surplus of almost $300,000 in 2025 versus a Deficit of $193K in 2024. That is a difference of $491,000!

2025 Actuals Compared to 2025 Budget

REVENUE	2025 Actual	2024 Budget	Difference
Total Revenue	$1,304,000	$1,000,000	$304,000
EXPENSES			
Food	$459K	$420K	$39K
Staff	$215K	$230K	- $15K
Operations	$332K	$406K	- $74K
Total Expenses	**$1,006,000**	**$1,056,000**	**- $50K**
Net (Rev – Exp)	**$298K**	**- $56K**	**$354K**

- Food went over a little bit, but this includes IFM Food, Partner Food, and Holiday Food. IFM Food was under budget, while Partner and Holiday Food both were over budget. NOTE: Part way through 2025, the Board approved an additional $20K for Holiday Food for turkeys to distribute at Thanksgiving (this was not included in the original 2025 Budget line item of $420K).
- Staff and Operations Expenses were under Budget.
- The year ended with Revenue exceeding Expenses by almost $300K which, considering there was a projected Deficit of $56K, takes us to a total difference of $354K between Budgeted and Actual Net Operating Revenue.

CASH BALANCE (includes cash accounts, reserves, Baird)

Start of 2023 = $1.675M	Year over Year Difference
2024 = $1.467M	- $208K
2025 = $1.230M	- $237K
2026 = $1.480M	**+ $250K**
Total Difference:	- $195K

This information reviews the Cash Balance at the start of each of the past 4 years, and ultimately serves to illustrate the importance of having reserves to help us through the lean years. The Bottom Line is that 2025 was a huge turnaround for our Cash Balance. Deficit spending in 2023 and 2024 brought it from $1.675M down to $1.23M. In 2025, we exceeded our Revenue goals and managed our Expenses well, resulting in us starting 2026 with a Cash Balance of $1.48M. **Revenue Generation and Expense Management continue to be top priorities this year.**

Review of previous Financial Figures:

- Large grants and Estate Gifts from 2020 to 2022 significantly boosted our Revenue (peaking at over $2M in 2021), and we saw an increase in Expenses, but still those numbers were lower than our Revenue.
- Between 2022 and 2024, Revenue began trending downward, with a low of $934K in 2024, while Expenses reached a peak in 2023 ($1.4M) before starting to decrease in 2024.
- Looking at 2025, once again we saw our Revenue ($1.3M) exceed our Expenses ($995K), so we successfully turned the trend around.
- All of this was considered in preparing our 2026 Budget.
- Expense Tracking shows Food trending down since 2022 in response to lower Revenue numbers. Overall Staff Costs have shown very little increase.
- When comparing the total Food Expenses and dividing by the total number of Individual Client Visits, the cost per visit in 2018 was $4.05. That number increased over the ensuing years to a high of $8.70 in 2022 before decreasing to a low of $3.77 in 2025. We did our best to maintain the quality and quantity of food for our clients, however we had to eliminate some of the choices of food that we offered in order to reduce costs.

2026 PLAN AND BUDGET

Reminder about IFM's Vision and Mission -

Vision: A community where **no one** should feel the hurt of hunger.

Mission: Interfaith Food Ministry feeds the hungry and works to reduce food insecurity in Nevada County. We help to sustain health, human dignity, and the opportunity for individuals to realize their full potential.

FOCUS AREAS:

- Boost Revenue
- Reduce stress on Staff and Volunteers
- Serve Clients the best we can
- Expense Management

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- The 2 AmeriCorps VISTA members in 2025 were a huge help. We anticipate having 2 more position in 2026, and are awaiting final confirmation. Anticipated start date in March or April.
- Need to exercise caution about IFM taking on new projects.
- Food procurement challenges could make it difficult to maintain our level of service.
- Hoping to have a higher food budget in 2026 than in 2025.

- Reminder that there were 3 Options presented for the 2025 Budget, including a Balanced Budget ($0 Deficit), a $100K Deficit, and a $200 Deficit. After a discussion, the Board approved a Deficit of up to $50K.
- In April, the Board approved a new staff position for a Reservation Project Coordinator as well as salary increases for staff all totaling $12,000.
- In July, an extra $20K was approved by the Board to purchase turkeys for our Thanksgiving Holiday Distribution.

2026 Budget Proposal

	2025 Budget	2025 Actuals	2026 Proposal
Total Revenue	$1,000,000	$1,303,000	$1,175,000
Expenses:			
Food	$418,000	$452,000	$552,000
CRC Grant Freezer Project	$100,000	$0	$100,000
Staff	$230,000	$215,000	$258,000
Operations	$306,500	$328,000	$265,000
Total Expenses	**$1,055,000**	**$995,000**	**$1,175,000**
Net (REV – EXP)	**- $55,000**	**$308,000**	**$0**

Detailed Budget Line Items

REVENUE	2025 Budget	2025 Actuals	2026 Proposal
Business Contributions	$50K	$106K	$5K
Estate Gifts / Wills	$0	$80K	$0
Individual Contributions	$200K	$197K	$200K
Fundraisers	$425K	$787K	$600K
Zero Waste Initiative	$15K	$7.5K	$35K
Grants	$80K	$52K	$75K
CRC Grant	$200K	$42K	$200K
Fee for Service	$30K	$31K	$60
Total REVENUE	**$1,000,000**	**$1,303,000**	**$1,175,000**

Revenue Line-Item Particulars

- Business Contributions were mainly brought in via Safeway Gift Cards, but that item was moved “below the line” due to new instructions (more info later).
- Estate Gifts are never planned in the budget, they come randomly and are a nice surprise when they happen.
- Individual Contribution Actuals came close to our Budget projection in 2025, so we will set the same goal for 2026.
- Fundraisers provided a huge boost to our Revenue in 2025, far exceeding our expectations. This was done mainly on the strength of the May Match Campaign and Sponsor a Family for the Holidays. Our goal for 2026 is ambitious, but still reflects a lower amount than our 2025 Actuals.

- Zero Waste is projected to bring in substantially more Revenue in 2026 based on the addition of one new collection site at Peace Lutheran Church as well as plans to open another one (or maybe two) sites this year.
- Grants are budgeted a little lower this year than in 2025, but is higher than our Actuals for the year. Confidence is high because of the assistance provided by our consultant, Dana, and also the plans to assemble a Grant Research Team.
- The CRC Grant is a straightforward reimbursement of specific expenses. For 2026, we anticipate $100K for the Freezer Project, and another $100K to help cover Food, Staff, and some other Operational expenses.
- Fee for Service is projected to be higher in 2026, and includes our CalFresh Contract in the amount of $25K, along with some Revenue from Partner Agencies who have been able to secure grant funding of their own to pay for more of the food they get from us.
- Overall, the Revenue projection for 2026 is $1.175M, which is higher than our 2025 Budget but lower than our 2025 Actuals, putting it somewhere in the middle.

Safeway Gift Cards:

- Moving the gift cards we receive from Safeway to "below the bottom line" due to a change in their policies and guidelines on how we use them and the timeframe that they give us.
- In essence, we are meant to act as a pass-through between Safeway and our clients, which shifts the gift cards into the category of In-Kind donations (non-monetary contributions), which are tracked below the bottom line.
- The impact on the 2026 Budget will be approximately $100K less in the category of Business Contributions on the Revenue side, and a corresponding $100K less under Client Outreach on the Expenses side of the equation.
- A review of Business Contributions for 2024 and 2025 showed that, without the Safeway Gift Cards, we were receiving approximately $5,000 each year. For this reason, our Budget reflects a revised amount of $5K for the Business Contributions line item.

Fundraisers: We raised a total of $787K with our events in 2025!

	2025 Actuals	2026 Budget Proposal
Sponsor a Family ('24 carryover)	$42K	$30K
May Match Campaign	$202K	$200K
Shred Day	$3.7K	$4K
Good Food for All	$14K	$14K
Spaghetti Dinner	$3.5K	$4K
Hunger Action Month	$7.5K	$8K
Sponsor a Family 2025	$515K	$350K
TOTAL	**$787K**	**$610K**

To be a bit more conservative, we rounded down the 2026 Budget to an even $600K for the Fundraiser line item.

CRC Grant (we spend the money up front and are reimbursed by the Grant)

- Program Costs: For the 2026 Budget, we will split the $100K between Food ($43K), Operations ($27K) and Staff ($30K).

- Freezer: Using $100K of grant funds for the new Freezer, targeting Summer for installation. Much appreciation to Deborah and her company for providing Monitoring of Labor Compliance services (saving us a great deal of money).

Fee for Service increased to $60K, includes the following:

- CalFresh contract ($25K)
- Hospitality House ($5K)
- County Resource Centers ($10K)
- United Way – School Pantry ($15K)
- United Way – Food Access Saturday ($5K)

This is a little ambitious, but it is possible to achieve.

EXPENSES	2025 Budget	2025 Actuals	2026 Proposal
IFM Food	$376.5K	$365K	$487K
Partner Food	$12K	$35K	$30K
Holiday Food	$30K	$52K	$35K
Subtotal Food Exp	**$418.5K**	**$452K**	**$552K**
Staff Expenses	$230K	$215K	$258K
Operations	$306.5K	$328K	$265K
CRC Grant Freezer	$100K	$0	$100K
Subtotal Ops/Freezer	**$406.5K**	**$543K**	**$365K**
TOTAL Expenses	**$1,055,000**	**$995K**	**$1,175,000**

Expense Line-Item Particulars

Food Expenses

- IFM Food: Venus and the Food Committee did a great job managing food expenses during 2025 and kept Actual spending under budget (even with a much smaller budget than previous years).
- In order to present a Balanced Budget, all of the other Revenue and Expense line-items were filled in first with the remaining funds being applied to the Food Expenses category. Likely to be more bulk purchases in 2026 to remain within budget.
- Partner Food: The 2025 Actuals were much higher than we budgeted due to increased partner activity as well as improved tracking mechanisms internally. Some partners are acquiring grant funding in order to purchase food through IFM.
- Holiday Food: Looking at $35K overall, with $5K going for Easter and the remaining $30K being applied to Thanksgiving. The plan is to have the Community Meals (or possibly pre-made Heat and Eat Meals) for the Easter Holiday, then we would purchase a large quantity of turkeys for Thanksgiving Holiday Distribution, and finally we'd use any leftover turkeys to offer clients for the Christmas Holiday or the option of a $25 Safeway Gift Card instead. We will rely on Community Food Drives and other donated (or low-cost) options for the side dishes. We want to have a meat option (or Safeway Gift Card, at Christmas) along with sides to offer our clients at both of the Holiday Distribution Events.
- Also, we may combine our efforts with the Food Bank of Nevada County on a joint food drive, especially given the wonderful spirit of collaboration under their new Executive Director, Brett Bentley.

Staff Costs to be discussed later once staff members have left the meeting.

Operations

- Biggest change to this section is the removal of the Safeway Gift Cards from the Client Outreach line-item (also remove from the Revenue side).
- Facilities line-item has been increased due to the Freezer Project and to cover the purchase of stainless- steel tables to replace the old (unsanitary) wooden tables. There may be grant money available to help cover this expense.
- Due to the deferred plumbing project which was not needed in 2025, the Repair & Maintenance line-item has increased to address these issues in 2026.
- We now have a higher Waste Management bill due to the additional Food Waste bins, so Utilities is higher, as well.
- The Freezer Project is budgeted at $100K, with the money spent being reimbursed by the CRC Grant.

The 2026 Budget as presented is balanced, meaning there is a $0 Deficit.

STAFF COMPENSATION DISCUSSION

Venus and Victoria were asked to leave the Meeting for the ensuing Discussion.

--- REDACTED ---

As the Compensation Discussion was over, Venus and Victoria were invited to rejoin the Meeting.

2026 BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

We are starting 2026 with a strong Cash Balance which is projected to carry us through to our May Match Campaign. Here are some potential Triggers that may prompt us to make Budget adjustments or require a withdrawal from the Baird account:

- Safeway Gift Cards we receive could be fewer than anticipated
- Revenue may be trending lower than projected
- Expenses might be running higher than planned
- If cash flow is low and we want to take advantage of a bulk purchase opportunity that offers us substantial savings

Scenarios such as these could be brought to the Board's attention at a Meeting during the year as a means of taking action to resolve the issue right away.

- For clarification, any proposed withdrawal from the Baird account would be funds already in the Approved Budget, NOT Deficit Spending (if that were the case, it would be presented as such).

Jeff Hebert made a motion to approve the Proposed 2026 Budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Linda Grube. All approved, none opposed or abstained, the motion passed.

FACILITIES UPDATES IN 2026

- Freezer project may likely go over the proposed $100K planned, so we may have to pull some money from our Facilities and Repairs / Maintenance Budget to cover that.
- We are planning to purchase stainless-steel tables to replace our existing wooden ones, cost is estimated to be $10K (included in the Budget). The hope is that the expense will be covered by grant funding.
- Plumbing Project (originally slated for 2025) is included in the Budget with a projected cost of $11K, and we will apply for a Teichert Grant to cover some or all of the expense.
- Food Safety: Facility / Door improvements are needed to meet Food Safety Compliance Rules. Currently there is a rodent issue which has grown with our increase in food waste, with critters evident inside and outside the building. We have been working on solutions with Economy Pest Control with limited success. Possibly bringing in a couple of outdoor cats to control or eliminate the problem. They would not be allowed inside the building, just serve as a deterrent to the rodent population (not just us, happening all over the county). We would install a home for them (a "Catio") where they would live.
- Fund Development Plan for 2026 will include the following:
    - Focus on Donor Management and Acknowledgements, especially new donors
    - Partner with others for Events rather than putting them on by ourselves
    - Hold Small- or Medium-sized events, such as the Spaghetti Dinner and/or Volunteer and Donor Appreciation Events
    - Still need help from volunteers, Board Members (even congregants recruited by Board Members)

Proposed Meeting Schedule for 2026

January 27 – Annual Board Meeting
February 24 – IF NEEDED
March 24 - IF NEEDED
April 21 - IF NEEDED
May 26 – Q1 Review
June 23 - IF NEEDED
July 28 - IF NEEDED
August 25 – Midyear Review, Plans for the rest of the year
September 22 - IF NEEDED
October 27 - IF NEEDED
November 17 - IF NEEDED
December 15 – Q3 Review, Preview of 2027
January 26, 2027 – Annual Board Meeting

IFM Staff extends their heartfelt thanks to the Board for their support and guidance of our organization.

Victoria still needs help writing Thank You notes to donors. Statistics show that donors who hear from a Board Member are likely to make another donation. Anyone interested please contact her.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 11:36 AM.