



## **Regular Meeting January 27, 2025**

**Call to Order:** The Board met in person in Council chambers at Richfield Village Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Anita Gantner, Board Chair.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

### **Roll Call**

**Present:** Anita Gantner, Mike Lyons, Holly Price, Mark Robeson, Mike Selig, Dave Wehner

**Excused:** Steve McPeake

**Also in Attendance:** Park Director John Piepsny, Administrative Coordinator Polly Wheeler, Village rep Sue Ann Philipppbar, Township rep Don Laubacher, 40+ other attendees, and seven attendees by Zoom

## **Regular Meeting**

### **Minutes**

Minutes of November 6 special meeting, December 16 regular meeting, and January 13 special meeting were approved, with minor changes to November 6 requested by Ms. Gantner.

### **Standing Committee Reports**

**Governance Committee:** There has been no meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for 6pm on Tuesday, February 18, in the park office.

**Fundraising/Grant Writing Committee:** The committee just had a meeting. Grants and funding that have been received were reviewed. Grants for the future were discussed, particularly a potential trails grant. The development of an ADA compliant trail is primary.

### **Administration Report:**

- 1) Mr. Piepsny gave the board a review of the finance reports submitted by the fiscal officer. He explained the various funds in the report, simplifying the report so it is easier to understand. Mr. Piepsny said that in 2022 and 2023, the park lost money. He reported that in 2024, the park lost \$10,000 in the general operating fund, but the Lodge fund gained. Overall, there was \$459,000 in the bank at the beginning of 2024 and \$558,000 at the end of 2024. This is an increase of nearly \$99,000 overall.  
Mr. Wehner said that the final ending balance also ties to the cash basis bank statement that the park receives.
- 2) Mr. Piepsny reminded the board that a strategic planning meeting was held in November. Following that meeting, he has created a spreadsheet with different areas of the park and their various goals and projects listed by year. Mr. Piepsny said that he wants to get as many projects

done in 2025 as possible. His goal is to bring in money for the park and to start to build savings. [The document is attached.]

Ms. Gantner asked the board to review the spreadsheet and asked for a summary of current status of projects. Mr. Piepsny agreed to provide this.

3) Mr. Piepsny brought to the attention of the board the policy for bids and quotes. The current limit is \$5,000 for the park director to purchase items without specific board approval. For purchases over \$5,000 two estimates are required. He described the difficulty of receiving the minimum number, especially for used items and asked the board to consider removing that stipulation. Ms. Gantner said the Governance Committee should take this up at their February meeting.

4) Oviatt House Inc. quarterly and annual report

Tricia Steiner gave the OHI fourth quarter and annual reports for 2024. She previously submitted the written reports. Among the topics covered were as follows:

- Restroom plans
- Docent office plans
- Wagon barn planning
- Rewiring the house

OHI has closed out their Network to Freedom Grant covering expenses for two interns to produce a hard copy of a reference library. Members held a values workshop to develop statements for the organization. They attended a museum workshop and a museum council meeting.

Income for fourth quarter was \$2,875.75, and expenses for fourth quarter were \$2,597.02.

### **Treasurer's Report**

On December 31 the balance in the bank was \$571,000, with \$13,000 outstanding checks and adjustments. This left \$558,000 cash available, broken down to \$184,000 in the bond fund and \$374,000 in all other funds.

Cash inflows in December were \$21,000, from the following sources: \$10,000 from a donation by Sam Petros, \$10,000 in Lodge rental fees, and \$1,000 in miscellaneous, program fees, and cell tower revenue. 114% of the budgeted operating fund has been received, 135% of the budgeted Lodge revenue, and 109% of the budgeted bond fund receipts.

Cash outflows for the month of December were as follows: \$13,000 in payroll related expenses, \$1,000 for technical support, \$3,000 in repairs/maintenance, \$2,000 for utilities, \$2,000 in cleaning fees, \$2,000 for supplies, \$6,000 for miscellaneous, and \$5,000 in commission, for a total of \$35,000. Of the budgeted expenses, the operating fund stands at 99%, Lodge at 96%, and bond at 99%.

The 2022-2023 audit has been completed, released, and placed on the State of Ohio's website.

### **Old Business**

1) Non-renewal of the Friends MOU

Ms. Gantner mentioned that the MOU with the Friends of RHP was not renewed. She said that the board is waiting for information that has been requested from the Friends so that the board can have an informed discussion.

## 2) Water testing at The Lodge

Mr. Piepsny directed the board's attention to the revised quote from JG Environmental and reiterated that he recommends approving the contract with JG Environmental.

**MOTION:** Mr. Wehner moved to enter into an agreement with JG Environmental for water testing at The Lodge; Mr. Lyons seconded.

No further discussion.

**MOTION PASSED:** Vote was taken by voice vote; unanimously yea.

## 3) Increased pay for staff

Ms. Gantner introduced Resolution 02-2025 amending compensation rates from \$19/hour to \$20/hour for Administrative Coordinator, Park Maintenance Technician, and Volunteer Coordinator, beginning January 1, 2025.

**MOTION:** Mr. Lyons moved to adopt Resolution 02-2025; Mr. Selig seconded.

No further discussion.

**MOTION PASSED:** Vote was taken by roll call: Ms. Gantner (yea); Mr. Lyons (yea); Ms. Price (yea); Mr. Robeson (yea); Mr. Selig (yea); Mr. Wehner (yea).

## 4) Gannett Fleming agreement

Ms. Gantner questioned the wording regarding the responsibilities of the engineering firm, which Mr. Piepsny explained. Mr. Lyons asked for verification that the grant has been awarded and that it is a reimbursement grant. Mr. Selig and Mr. Piepsny said that both of these are the case.

Ms. Price questioned the differences between the last quote and the current one and the reason for reviewing again. Mr. Piepsny and Mr. Selig explained that the quote has been updated and it was important to bring it to the attention of the board. The main difference is that the historical component could be removed. Gannett Fleming will move forward while waiting for approval of removing the historical component.

**MOTION:** Mr. Lyons moved to approved the contract with Gannett Fleming; Mr. Wehner seconded.

No further discussion.

**MOTION PASSED:** Vote was taken by voice vote: Vote was taken by voice vote; unanimously yea.

**New Business**

None

**Announcements:**

Mr. Piepsny reported that the Snowbird Festival on January 26 was very successful, with over 600 attendees. He also stated that the 2025 Program Guide is posted on the RHP website, adding that ads were sold in this year's guide equating to approximately \$3,000 in revenue.

Mr. Selig announced that there will be public forums in February and March for discussion of an ADA compliant trail.

**Comments from the Floor:**

**Lynn Richardson** (Berea & Friends of RHP) said that she submitted to Mr. Piepsny a request to do work on the mill. She said that the reply stated that the mill might be mothballed. It also implied that mill funds are to be diverted to other projects, but she said that those funds are restricted by law. Ms. Richardson said that the mill contract that expired in 2018 was superseded by another agreement. She stated that the Friends received inquiries about the mill and Friends finances, but she did not receive those until this morning.

**Corey Ringle** (Hawthorne Dr) said that, speaking as a Richfield resident, it is good to use other resources to offset taxpayer expenses, such as those offered by the Friends. Ms. Ringle also stated that she wrote a personal check for a Friends ad in the program guide, but the ad was rejected. She had to follow up weeks later to find out why the check was not cashed.

**Art Gonzales**, a past board member and resident, stated that he does not understand the proposal to mothball a structure on which so much money was spent. He was the chair of the Capital Projects committee during the rehab of the dam, refilling the lake, and much work on the mill. He is shocked that the mill would be mothballed when it is nearly complete and should be an area for historical and technical education. Mr. Gonzales thanked the board for their service and asked the board to renew the Friends MOU and take advantage of free labor.

**Calista Bajorek** (Broadview Heights) reviewed the mill docent program on Sundays during the summer, which is a very educational opportunity. She listed the numbers of people who visit the mill during this program and asked the board to consider keeping the mill docent program.

**Carolyn Sullivan** (Revere Rd) stated that she is glad to see the water testing will continue and would love to have water at the Summer Barn. She asked why the Friends could not continue to refurbish the mill and why the board would consider mothballing.

**Patrick Hayes** (Buckeye Trail Association) reviewed the 1,450 mile Buckeye Trail in Ohio and never asked for money to maintain it. He asked additional questions about the state capital funding that includes Buckeye Trail rerouting and about the proposed ADA compliant trail.

**Lisa Kohlert** (Boston Mills Rd) said that she heard that Friends volunteers might not be allowed to work in the park any more and asked why the board would throw out a group that is helping so much. She stated that the Friends have people who believe in them and donors, and they should not be thrown away.

**Karen Smik** (Faith Lane) told the board that they have not done much to promote the Champion Program, and they are turning away a volunteer group and being irresponsible with taxpayer money.

**Rick Hudak** (Brecksville Rd) said that volunteers have put so much into this park, and he gets a lot of questions from residents about the park and whether he supported the levy. He stated that the board is wasting people who care and that Friends funds were donated for specific purposes. Mr. Hudak reminded the board that, although the RJRD is a separate entity, the people who own the park are his constituents as a councilman.

**Nagwa Ahlborg** (Streetsboro Rd) asked for clarification on the information requested from the Friends and said that the board is not accepting the gift of the Friends' efforts. Ms. Gantner replied that the end of the relationship is not a done deal and that it will be discussed at the next board meeting, provided that the information from the Friends is received. Ms. Ahlborg said that she hopes the board will consider a special meeting before the Feb. 24 regular meeting.

**Adjournment:**

**MOTION by:** Mr. Wehner moved, seconded by Mr. Selig, to adjourn the meeting.

**MOTION PASSED:** Vote taken by voice, which was unanimously yea.

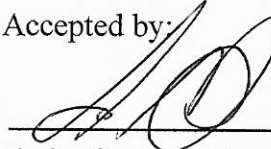
Meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Submitted by:



Polly Wheeler, Administrative Coordinator

Accepted by:



Anita Gantner, Board Chair