



Regular Meeting with Work Session December 18, 2023

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, Steve McPeake, Holly Price, Mark Robeson (6:40pm), Mike Selig
Excused: Dave Wehner

Also in Attendance: Village Councilperson Sue Ann Philippbar, Administrative Coordinator Polly Wheeler, and approximately 10 other attendees. 2 attendees by Zoom.

Work Session

- A) Oviatt House museum plan presentation by Tricia Steiner
- 1) Began working on museum plan in early 2023; joined American Association for State and Local History in March, and also enrolled in Standards of Excellence Program for History Organizations, which is a self-paced training tool covering 6 areas of focus.
 - 2) Reading multiple instructional manuals for guidance, organized many workshop sessions for OHI board, and developed vision statement to go along with existing mission statement
 - 3) Developed museum scope to narrow focus to house itself, its occupants, and its role in Underground Railroad
 - 4) Developed a timeline for museum development. Museum expected to open in 2026, coinciding with 250th anniversary of U.S.
 - 5) Organized first museum development committee, using information from a workshop Ms. Steiner attended in Lancaster OH with a number of museum professionals
 - 6) Meeting with experts in the field from Richfield and other local organizations
 - 7) Developed collections management policy and procedures over the summer
 - 8) Received small grant from Network to Freedom and Association for the Study of African American Life and History; planning to provide stipend to interns from University of Akron to help with research and creation of reference library

Ms. Gantner asked Ms. Steiner to share the OHI vision statement with audience, which Ms. Steiner then read. Mr. McPeake congratulated the OHI group on the work they've accomplished.

Judy Bowman added (via Zoom) to the comments. She reminded the board that, according to the lease and restoration agreements, the board's approval is required.

Ms. Gantner said that the board could pass a motion or put together a resolution to that effect. Mr. Lyons stated that the board has already thoroughly authorized OHI to do this work. Ms. Steiner clarified

that OHI would like to be sure that the museum phase could progress concurrently with the restoration, rather than after the restoration is complete.

Ms. Bowman said that the agreement specifically states that OHI needs board approval for the museum. Ms. Gantner and Mr. Lyons agreed that a resolution should be drawn up for this purpose and approved at a future meeting.

Ms. Price requested information on other museums that are operating in buildings that they do not own, including if there are other implications of that for the museum sponsor or the building owner. Hopefully the museum would operate beyond the length of the 15-year lease on the Oviatt House that is already authorized. Is there precedent for this type of arrangement?

Lynn Richardson commented that the Richfield Historical Society operates in the Old Town Hall which is owned by the Village of Richfield. Ms. Gantner and Ms. Bowman agreed that they would meet before the next regular board meeting to discuss the specifics.

Mr. Lyons suggested that the Governance Committee should review the existing Oviatt House lease regarding the museum.

B) Park Sponsorship RFPs suggestion presented by John Piepsny, park director

- 1) Many park districts ask for proposals for sponsorships of the park, or portions of the park
- 2) Board can reject any that they do not feel are a good fit for the park.
- 3) Board can determine sponsorship rates and scope, e.g. \$10,000 for the full park for a year, and benefits offered to sponsor in exchange.

Ms. Gantner asked if there are RFP templates available that the board could see. Mr. Piepsny said he does have a draft of one that can be emailed to the board for review and discussion. Mr. McPeake suggested there should be further discussion to determine how this would be worked out. Mr. Piepsny responded that this should take place to determine the details but there would probably not be renaming of facilities, just a listing of the sponsorship for each facility.

Ms. Price asked for examples of some parks for in which this has been done, which Mr. Piepsny provided. Mr. Lyons asked if they followed a RFP procedure, which they did. Ms. Gantner reminded the board that Richfield does have a lot of business in town, which might be interested in sponsorships, even just as a way to give back to the community.

Ms. Price said that she does not think a full-park sponsorship is a good idea because the residents are the sponsors of the entire park. Ms. Gantner replied that other parks have done this successfully, so it doesn't seem out of line. Mr. McPeake reiterated that it would be a good idea discuss in a committee and bring the framework back to the board.

C) Budget 2024

- 1) Mr. Piepsny told the board that the park needs to build revenues so they exceed expenditures. This will improve when the new levy takes effect in 2025.
- 2) The excess general fund receipts at the end of the year go into the capital fund, which has been depleted by major projects.

Mr. Selig questioned the budget breakdown, asking where the deficits exist. Mr. Piepsny reviewed the general fund revenues and expenses. Mr. Lyons asked which fund the park is drawing down to

cover the deficit. A discussion followed about the source of funds and the effect of the deficit on the various funds and overall bank account balance.

Ms. Price asked about the needed bridge repair, referring to the bridge to the southwest of the Mill. Mr. Piepsny responded that this is not included in the budget numbers because the cost is not known at this point. However, the bridge must stay closed until it is repaired. Ms. Price stated that since the board needs to plan for the repair, she would rather see a holding spot in the budget.

Mr. Piepsny said that the type of bridge to be built determines the cost, e.g. a pedestrian-only bridge would cost less than one that could accommodate vehicles and horses. Mr. Selig mentioned that he thought the bridge would be left alone for the next year or two. Ms. Gantner said that there could be grants, sponsors, or other funds available for the bridge.

Mr. Robeson requested an explanation of Lodge revenues and expenses. Mr. Piepsny explained that this is a prediction based on the 2023 numbers and future reservations already made. Ms. Gantner replied that the Lodge business plan from several years ago showed an expected 40 reservations in 2023, but the actual for 2023 was 85, so The Lodge is doing better than anticipated. Mr. Lyons asked about Lodge revenue vs. bookings for each year.

Ms. Price asked about change in salary allocation, noting that 20% of all salaries are coming out of Lodge fund in 2024. Mr. Piepsny explained that this is because all employees spend some time on Lodge business. After discussion with fiscal officer Tim Clymer, this seemed more fair.

Comments from the floor

None

Regular Meeting

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Dec. 4 regular meeting were approved as written.

Standing Committee Reports

Governance: There was nothing new to report. Mr. Lyons stated that the bylaws are ready and accompany Resolution #17-2023; the Governance Committee recommends approval.

The Oviatt House MOU will be added to the agenda for the committee meeting on Jan. 8, 2024 at 6:30pm, as will the park RFP proposal.

Grants & Fundraising: Mr. Selig reported that the allocation materials for the State Capital Allocation Bill were submitted. There has not been a committee meeting since the last meeting two weeks ago on Dec. 4.

Administration Report:

Mr. Piepsny thanked Mr. Selig and Ms. Price for their work on the grant applications that were recently submitted. He reported that Mr. Doug Wisneski fixed the connections on the salt spreader for the pickup truck, which will be used for snow plowing this winter. He also thanked all the volunteers for their work throughout the year and mentioned the Snowbird Festival on January 21.

Treasurer Report:

Mr. Wehner was not present, so there was no treasurer's report.

Old Business:

Ms. Gantner introduced Resolution 17-2023 and reviewed the recent changes.

MOTION by: Mr. Lyons and seconded by Mr. McPeake to approve Resolution 17-2023 approving an amended version of the RJRD bylaws.

DISCUSSION: None further.

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

Volunteer Waiver and Agreement

Ms. Gantner reminded the board that there was a question at the last meeting about the difference between volunteers and consultants. Mr. Selig had supplied the suggested definitions which were included in the board packet. Mr. McPeake had made a modification to the language in both definitions for clarification, which he read to the board. Ms. Gantner said that the wording will be worked into the document.

Resolution 20-2023: Ms. Gantner stated that discussion of this resolution is postponed.

MOTION by: Mr. Selig and seconded by Ms. Price to renew the annual contract with RecDesk for reservation software.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Piepsny said that \$5800 is the annual contract price. Ms. Price asked for a rundown on its effectiveness in the past year, which Mr. Piepsny provided.

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

New Business:

Ms. Gantner reviewed the reason for the change in appropriations, which was restricted to Summit County fees.

MOTION by: Ms. Price and seconded by Mr. McPeake to approve Resolution 18-2023 amending the appropriations for 2023.

DISCUSSION: None.

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

Ms. Gantner introduced Resolution 19-2023.

MOTION by: Mr. McPeake and seconded by Mr. Lyons to approve Resolution 19-2023 making the appropriations for the 2024 budget.

DISCUSSION: None further.

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

Announcements:

The organizational board meeting will be held on January 5, 2024 at 5pm. The 2024 regular meeting calendar will be announced at that time. The next regular board meeting will be January 22.

Anita Gantner and Holly Price have been reappointed to the board for full terms ending Dec. 31, 2026.

The board is working on two grants. The first is the State Capital Allocation Request. The second is an Akron Visitors Bureau that would help the website reach as many people as possible, once the site is revised and updated.

There is a Wish List Giving Tree on the RHP website for donations of needed items for the park.

The Snowbird Festival will take place on January 21, 2024 from 1-4pm. It is a joint event between the Village, the Township, and RJRD.

Comments from the Floor:

Corey Ringle (Hawthorne Dr) said that a person from Black Horse Construction who is also involved in Ohio Horseman's Council expressed interest in assisting with the closed bridge.

Ms. Ringle also mentioned a tree hanging over Kirby Garage and the pathway that is creating a hazard. She said that Friends obtained a quote and asked if they could go forward with helping with the removal of this tree, if their board approves, since they do have the funds to do this. Mr. Piepsny asked her to discuss with him, as he also has a quote from Hartman Tree Service but was waiting until after the first of the year. Ms. Gantner suggested that Ms. Ringle take the request to her board and bring the result back to Mr. Piepsny, adding that she couldn't see why the board wouldn't accept this offer. Mr. Lyons moved that the board express their willingness to accept the Friends' offer.

MOTION by: Mr. Lyons and seconded by Mr. McPeake to accept the offer from Friends of RHP for removal of the tree over Kirby Garage.

DISCUSSION: None further.

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

Judy Bowman (Brush Rd) reminded Mr. Piepsny that there is still a tree behind Oviatt House that needs to come down, as it is a threat to the new roof.

Sue Serdinak (Streetsboro Rd) asked for what the State Capital funds would be used. Mr. Selig responded that it would be used to move the portion of the Buckeye Trail that runs along the main drive, help with the Upper Lake bridge project, and plans and improvements to the landscaping at the main entrance and also to the driveway.

Sue Ann Philippbar (Humphrey Rd) said she visited Bath Nature Preserve's new trail, which has large white rock gravel that is beautiful but makes walking very difficult. She suggested that the board might want to consider that when choosing gravel for trails. She also thanked the board for their time and efforts over the last year.

Mr. Piepsny asked Ms. Philippbar if the board could sit in the Council chairs during future meetings to improve the Zoom process. She replied that there is no reason they could not use those chairs.

MOTION by: Mr. Lyons and seconded by Mr. Selig go into executive session for the sole purpose of considering the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official.

DISCUSSION: None.

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

The board removed to the small Council meeting room at 7:50pm for executive session.

The board returned from executive session at 8:46pm.

MOTION by: Mr. Lyons and seconded by Mr. McPeake to extend the existing event planning services agreement with Shari Green for one month.

DISCUSSION: None further.

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

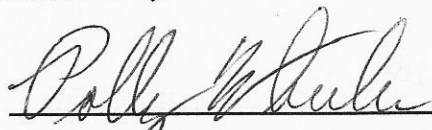
Adjournment:

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


MOTION PASSED: Vote taken by voice, which was unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Submitted by:


Polly Wheeler, Administrative Coordinator

Accepted by:


Anita Gantner, Board Chairperson