# OHIO HISTORY CONNECTION
## Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
## Thursday, March 5, 2026 – 1:00PM
## Ohio Statehouse – State Room

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| **Trustees Present:** | Charles Moses (President), Ann Bair (Vice President), Alex Hastie (Secretary), Melody Young (Treasurer), Jon Elsasser, Rich Hillis, Guadalupe Valasquez, Anthony Joseph, Jen Miller, Renu Ramankutty Kathleen Russell, Betty Montgomery, Janenne Allen, Edmund Sargas |
| **Trustees Absent:** | Bob Roach, Steve Coon, Chris Samuels |
| **Trustees on Team:** | Kathleen Russell, Chris Gillcrist |
| **Staff on Team:** | Wes Newhouse (General Counsel) |
| **Ex Officios Present:** | Sarah Wickham, Designee for Director, Ohio Department of Development, Laurel Dawson, Designee for Governor |
| **Staff & Others Present:** | Megan Wood, Jeff Ward, Steve George, Jen Aultman, Ann Ruege, Diana Welling, Theresa Hopewood, Jerry Dannemiller, Brenda Estes, Kevin Boehner, Amy Kuhlman General Counsel), Jodi Salvo, State Representative |

## I. Call to Order

President Charles Moses called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

Mr. Moses asked trustees, staff, and guests to go around the room and introduced themselves.

Mr. Moses shared that the Women's Monument project recently held a fundraiser event. Donors have been very supportive. He provided an update on the Statehouse South Plaza art installation, slated for September 2026. The artist, based in North Carolina, is producing column sculptures described as a unique addition to Statehouse grounds. Trustees were invited to visit the artist's studio.

Mrs. Wood asked the trustees to review the draft list of proposed meeting dates for FY27 that she distributed. Trustees were asked to review their calendars and note any potential conflicts. Theresa emailed the proposed FY27 draft list to everyone who attended the meeting via teams.

**Executive Director's Report**

Mrs. Wood referenced the major projects dashboard on page 3 in the packet. We use a red-yellow-green status system to indicate progress. Several projects remain in active stages.

Ohio Village is currently on schedule for opening during the Ohio State Fair, although weather challenges continue. Construction teams have been working through the snow to maintain progress. Some work will continue after the fair as we prepare for the next phase at the Ohio History Center, which remains pending capital funding. Halloween and holiday programming for Ohio Village will proceed after the State Fair.

The Ohio Showcase Building at the Expo Center is also scheduled to open for the State Fair. Exhibit content is undergoing final review and installation is expected to be nearly completed by our next board meeting.

Planning continues for the groundbreaking of the Poindexter Village African American Museum on May 6 at 11:00 a.m. The project's architect, Moody Nolan and construction manager, Smoot Construction are in place. Community engagement efforts continue as the project progresses toward the planned 2028 completion.

Mrs. Wood shared the first presentation of the FY26 operational goals. Because of the recent organizational restructuring, these goals were developed later than usual. Each goal aligns with the strategic plan adopted in August 2023. Many objectives are still "in between" as project-based work continues.

Key focus areas include:

1. Increase Organizational Support & Income (in between)
    - Focus on stewardship and leadership development.
        1. Tracking progress toward achieving a positive three-year budget target of $750,000.
        2. Budget monitoring expectations for staff.
2. Improve Operational Efficiency (on track)
    - Aligning processes and systems.
        1. Updates to standard operating procedures are underway.
3. Increase awareness of the organization (in between)
    - (Goal)Targeting elected officials.

- Develop 2-year advocacy efforts related to capital budget priorities remain in progress.

4. Reach more broader audiences (in between)
    - Continuing to work to broaden engagement across multiple audience segments.
5. Provide high quality experiences centered on visitors and users (in between)
    - Developing consistent customer experience practices across all sites.
    - Incorporating feedback from organizational reordering discussions.

Some of these goals may be carried into FY27 as work continues.

## II. Consent Agenda

Mr. Moses entertained a motion and a vote to approve the consent agenda minutes from December 11, 2025, board meeting, and February 18, 2025, executive committee meeting. A motion to approve both minutes was unanimously approved.

## III. Marketing

Mr. Dannemiller mentioned the continued improvements in media coverage and use of primary platforms. Updates shared on recent promotional efforts. Renderings for ongoing campaign projects were shared.
Momentum remains strong.

## IV. Committee Reports

### Governance Committee

Mr. Joseph referenced the matrix listing of Board of Trustees on page 34 of the packet. The priority is more geographic diversity. Mr. Joseph said there will be 3-4 seats open in the coming year or two.

Mr. Joseph shared that a board engagement survey will be coming out shortly for the trustees to complete. This will be a 15–20-minute survey. Results will be shared during the June meeting or August board retreat.

### Historic Sites and Real Estate Committee

Ms. Russell mentioned that Jen Aultman last day at OHC is March 6. Ms. Russell and the committee extended gratitude for her years of service and her continued success in her new job as Executive Director of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma Ohio Enterprises.

Ms. Aultman shared that the committee met on February 10 and discussed upcoming leases that would be coming to the board. The Caretaker's House at the Octagon and a structure in Zoar Village.

Ms. Aultman shared the committee approved and wants to move to the board a revision of the site establishment and transfer policy. The updated policy referenced on page 36 of the board packet clarifies criteria for determining whether a site belongs within the state site system. The committee will start with the significance assessments, National Register, National Historic Landmarks, World Heritage sites. Significance assessments will be conducted by staff and reviewed by the committee before board consideration. The committee is requesting the board's approval of the revised Site Establishment and Transfer policy.

Mr. Hastie entered a motion to approve the revised policy. Mrs. Bair seconded the motion. The motion to approve the revised policy was unanimously approved.

**Fundraising Committee**
Ms. Ruege thanked the trustees for attending recent events. Ms. Ruege reminded the trustees about upcoming events, including the annual Conestoga gathering on April 19 in Columbus.

**Finance Committee FY26 – Final Budget**
Mrs. Wood referenced page 45 of the packet showing the financial snapshot as of the end of December. Operating expenses: $15.7 million, closely aligned with the projected $14.69 million. Organization is on track toward achieving a $750,000 operating surplus by year-end. Fundraising for project-based needs remains strong, including major commitments to Poindexter Village and the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks. Earned revenue is slightly trailing projections; leadership evaluating adjustments.

## V. New Business

With no new business, the meeting adjourned at 1:48 p.m.

3/16/25

Alex Hastie, Secretary

Date

Charles R. Moses, President

Date

Prepared by Theresa Hopewood