OHIO HISTORY CONNECTION
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 18, 2026 – 1:00PM
Cardinal Classroom – OHC

Trustees Present: Charles Moses (President), Melody Young (Treasurer), Jan Allen, Steve Coon, Rich Hillis, Guadalupe Valasquez, Anthony Joseph, Jen Miller, Renu Ramankutty Kathleen Russell, Edmund Sargas

Trustees Absent: Bob Roach, Ann Bair (Vice President), Chris Samples, Nate Poyfair, Betty Montgomery

Trustees on Team: Chris Gillcrist, Jon Elsasser, Alex Hastie (Secretary)

Ex Officios Present: Sarah Wickham, Designee for Director, Ohio Department of Development, Andrew Brenner, Designee for Senate President, Megan Wycuff, Director, Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board

Staff & Others Present: Megan Wood, Steve George, Ann Ruege, Theresa Hopewood, Jerry Dannemiller, Brenda Estes, Kevin Boehner, Steve Conkel, Stacia Kuceyski, Amy Kuhlman, General Counsel), Wes Newhouse (General Counsel), Anna DeWine Bolton, Mary Stier, Dan Ujczo

I. Call to Order

President Charles Moses called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Mr. Moses recognized departing board members, Jen Miller, Melody Young, Renu Ramankutty, and Jon Elsasser.

Mr. Moses asked trustees, staff, and guests to go around the room and introduced themselves. Incoming members were invited to share more information about their background.

Mr. Moses mentioned the trustees ending their terms. Mrs. Wood presented tokens of appreciation to departing members in recognition of their service and contributions. Gratitude was expressed for the dedication, insight, and time each member provided.

Mr. Moses highlighted two key topics: Poindexter Village Event - Poindexter event was exceptionally well executed. It brought together key stakeholders, from elected officials to corporate and philanthropic leaders, and demonstrated the significant impact this project will have on the east side of Columbus and the state. The positive media coverage and the efforts of the entire team were outstanding. This is a transformative initiative, and everyone involved should take pride in its progress.

Capital Budget – The recently approved capital budget represents a major milestone for the Ohio History Connection. With major projects such as the Collections Care Center and Ohio Village nearing completion, the allocation of $58 million for facility improvements is a remarkable achievement. This investment underscores strong support from state leadership and reflects confidence in the organization's mission and staff. This funding will significantly enhance our facilities and visitor experience, and appreciation was extended to all who contributed to this success.

Executive Director's Report

Mrs. Wood shared that planning is underway for our annual board retreat, scheduled for August 20-21, 2026, at the Ohioan Hotel and Event Center. The reception and dinner will be held on August 20. The reception will be around 4-5:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 6 p.m. The meeting retreat will take place on August 21. The agenda/details will be provided. One of the items that the board will work through at the retreat is resetting where everyone is on their committee among other topics.

Mrs. Wood referenced the major projects dashboard included in the board materials that provided a snapshot of progress toward our strategic goals. Overall, the organization is making steady progress, with strong performance in operational efficiency and advocacy efforts. Some initiatives, such as audience expansion and visitor experience improvements, are progressing more gradually and will continue into the next fiscal year.

Regarding major projects, several initiatives are advancing well:

- Ohio Village construction is nearing completion, with preview opportunities during the State Fair.
- The Ohio Expo Center exhibit is in final development stages.
- The Ohio River Museum and Fort Laurens projects are progressing on schedule.

- Poindexter Village remains a priority, with ongoing fundraising and planning considerations.
- Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks projects continue to move forward with planning and partnerships.

The recently approved capital budget will support numerous initiatives, including building upgrades and exhibit enhancements, representing one of the largest investments in the organization's history.

Mrs. Wood introduced Ms. Kuceyeski, who shared an overview of the NAGPRA program.

NAGPRA Program Overview

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) is a federal law governing the treatment and repatriation of Native American remains and cultural items. Given the organization's historical focus, compliance with this law is both a legal and ethical priority.

Recent regulatory updates have significantly increased expectations for institutions, requiring more comprehensive consultation with tribal nations and stricter timelines for repatriation. The Ohio History Connection holds a substantial portion of NAGPRA-eligible materials nationally, making this work particularly significant.

- Approximately:
    - 20% of ancestors inventoried or repatriated
    - 5% of associated funerary objects processed

The process includes:

1. Inventory and documentation
2. Tribal consultation
3. Federal notice publication
4. Claims review and determination
5. Repatriation and potential continued stewardship

This is a complex, ongoing effort requiring organization-wide coordination, enhanced systems, and sustained leadership attention. Progress is being made, with ongoing improvements in processes, staffing, and consultation practices.

Mr. Hill inquired about what the budget was.

Ms. Kuceyeski responded that there are three staff members fully funded by GRF that are doing the work. Additional staff who support NAGPRA includes their division director, Elizabeth Woods, who directly manages them, Patti Lavell, Director of American Indian Relations also has a role in NAGPRA. There's money in there for the travel aspect of it as well.

Ms. Wickham inquired if anything has been concluded or identified.

Ms. Kuceyeski responded that we do have things that we have put into a notice, have been claimed by tribes that we've repatriated that have been reburied in our intertribal burial ground. We have seen the process through start to finish on a variety of items. The invent notice of inventory is the thing that most of the press will focus on because the notice of inventory says how much of our collection, we have made available for tribes to make a claim on.

II. Consent Agenda

Mr. Moses entertained a motion and a vote to approve the consent agenda minutes from March 5, 2026, board meeting and February 18, 2026, executive committee meeting. A motion to approve both minutes was unanimously approved.

Mrs. Wood shared that we have an AI policy up for board approval. The policy establishes guidelines for responsible AI use, including:

- Data privacy and security requirements
- Clear boundaries for acceptable use
- Transparency in AI-assisted work
- Ongoing review and updates

As an organization, OHC wanted to get ahead of how staff are using AI and how OHC wants to be showing up as an organization. Ms. Ramage, head of our operations and works with our IT team, has put together a small team of internal staff to put together the policy presented in the board packet. It outlines different parts of the policy, governance and oversight role, roles and responsibility. The team looked at examples of other organizations and their AI policies and worked with our legal counsel on this policy. This is something that updated regularly.

A motion to approve the entire consent agenda, including the AI policy, was unanimously approved.

Mr. Brenner inquired why OHC was using Microsoft versus some other available system .

Mrs. Wood responded from a security and safety perspective, using the whole team suite, it has the tools that we need for collaboration. It has the safety features that are required.

III. Development

Mr. Dannemiller shared that fellow ex-officio board member, Ms. Wickham, notified OHC that they had inventory of paid advertising to dedicate to a few places around the state of Ohio, including OHC. Mr. Dannemiller thanked Ms. Wickham and her colleague at Tourism Ohio for their generosity and strategic thinking. They dedicated it to additional awareness from outside the state of Ohio specific to the Hopewell Ceremonial earthworks.

Mr. Dannemiller shared the development report presentation.

- Poindexter Village Campaign:
  - Goal: $25.9M
  - Funds raised: ~$21.5M (approx. 72%)
- Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks Campaign:
  - Goal: $40M
  - Ongoing fundraising efforts
- Annual Fund:
  - Goal exceeded at $400,000+

The Board discussed positioning fundraising as a unified organizational effort totaling approximately $66 million, with nearly 60% achieved.

The Griesse gift agreement for $100,000 to be named in honor of Doctor Brad Lepper to support ongoing archaeology and research around the Hopewell ceremonial earthworks and to provide some funds on an ongoing basis to support that work.

Mr. Hillis moved to accept this gift agreement, all approved. A motion was approved to accept a $100,000 gift supporting archaeological research.

Mr. Dannemiller reminded everyone of upcoming events:

- Annual Meeting at 4pm
- Juneteenth Jubilee Day Festival – June 19, OHC
- Serpent Mound Tower Dedication/Summer Solstice – June 20
- Rededication of the Tomb of the Unknown Patriot – June 27, Fort Laurens
- Ohio Village First Look – July 19-August 9, Ohio Village

- America 250-Ohio Homecoming Picnic – July 31, Ohio Village; lots of picnics around the state
- Ohio Showcase building will be opening concurrently to the fair

IV. Committee Reports

Governance Committee
Mr. Joseph expressed appreciation to departing members, Mr. Elsasser and Ms. Ramankutty, for the last two years of working alongside them on the governance committee. Mr. Joseph shared that the committee met in June and reviewed board composition, succession planning, committee structure and engagement. The outcome and discussions with Ms. Wood and Mr. Moses were the new slate of officers.

- Approved leadership slate:
  - President: Charley Moses
  - Vice President: Ann Bair
  - Secretary: Alex Hastie
  - Treasurer: Anthony Joseph

Government Affairs Committee
Mr. Hills recognized Mr. Boehner's successful advocacy efforts securing the capital budget.

Fundraising Committee
Continued progress on major campaigns, including Poindexter Village and Hopewell Earthworks, with strong fundraising momentum

Sites and Real Estate Committee
Ms. Russell shared that the committee met on May 19. Ms. Russell reminded everyone that Jen Aultman took another job and that Erin Bartlett is the department manager of managed sites. The Sites and Real Estate committee and the board approved the site establishment and transfer policy. Supplementing that is the guidelines that will provide the procedures for review of sites and that will guide the site assessment team. That team consists of members from the historic museums, Ohio State Preservation Office, Diana Welling, Ohio State Historic Preservation Advisory Board, and archaeologist and architectural historian Elizabeth Woods from collections, Anita Ervin from accounting, American Indian Relations and facilities in major projects. During the May committee meeting, three sites were presented to test how the policy works and its effectiveness. These three sites for Glacial Groove, which are being transferred to the ODNR, the Davis Memorial, same thing, and the Cook Dorn House, which is a little bit more complicated. Reports that documented and invalid and evaluated the deaccession from the OHC

site system were provided and upon request additional information was provided regarding funding, expenses and attendance to help us get a bigger picture of how these sites affected our entire system.

Ms. Wood mentioned the proposed lease extension for the Octagon Earthworks caretaker's house. OHC is working with current property owners for a proposed 10-year extension with structured end-of-term purchase agreement.

Finance Committee

Ms. Young shared that the Finance Committee is asking for the FY27 budget to be approved.

Mr. Conkel shared an overview of the FY27 budget

The proposed FY27 budget projects total revenue of approximately $49.1 million, representing a significant increase compared to both the FY2026 budget and projected FY26 year-end results. This increase is primarily attributable to capital projects, and the associated expenditure required to complete them. The budget includes a $700,000 contingency reserve, resulting in a planned surplus of approximately $2.0 million. This is generally consistent with the FY26 budget and slightly above the projected FY26 surplus of $1.9 million.

Key revenue drivers include increased state capital appropriations and related construction activity. Compared to the FY26 budget, state capital appropriations are projected to increase by approximately $5.5 million, and by $9.6 million compared to projected FY26 results. These increases are primarily tied to facilities improvements, major capital projects, campus enhancements, and exhibition and interpretation initiatives.

Personnel expenses, including salaries and benefits, are budgeted at approximately $17.5 million and remain the organization's largest operating expense. The increase reflects cost-of-living adjustments, targeted position investments, and the planned filling of vacant roles, resulting in an estimated 2% increase in full-time equivalent staffing.

Key risks and opportunities for FY27 include the execution of a substantial capital project portfolio, the potential temporary closure of the History Center during renovations, cash flow timing related to quarterly GRF funding, the reopening of Ohio Village, and the possibility of additional grant and philanthropic revenue, including support related to Poindexter and Greater Columbus Arts Council funding.

Staff also presented a request to repurpose the existing Huntington Bank line of credit. A dedicated Ohio Village construction line of credit was allowed to expire and replaced with an additional $750,000 operational line of credit, providing greater flexibility to manage short-term cash flow

Following discussion, a motion to approve both the FY27 budget and the line of credit resolution was unanimously approved.

V. New Business

VI. Executive Session

Mr. Moses requested a motion to recess into Executive Session at 2:33 p.m.

The board emerged from Executive Session and meeting adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

Alex Hastie

____________________ 7/6/26

Alex Hastie, Secretary Date

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Charles R. Moses, President Date

Prepared by Theresa Hopewood