



Rochester Hills

Minutes - Draft

Rochester Hills Museum Foundation

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*Bryan Barnett, Julie Granthen, Steven Fite, Carol Morlan, Vern Pixley,
Katharine Altherr-Rogers, Heather Sellick, Joe Snyder, Suzanne Wiggins;
Staff Advisor Pat McKay*

Foundation Mission: *The mission of the Rochester Hills Museum Foundation is to further
the educational programs and purposes set forth by the
Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm.*

Museum Mission: *To enhance understanding of the past through interpreting, preserving
and collecting the history of the greater Rochester area for present and future generations.*

Friday, November 21, 2025

7:30 AM

CALL TO ORDER

*Suzanne Wiggins called the Rochester Hills Museum Foundation Board
Meeting to order at 7:32 a.m., Michigan Time.*

ROLL CALL

Present 6 - Heather Sellick, Suzanne Wiggins, Carol Morlan, Vern Pixley, Joe Snyder
and Julie Granthen

Absent 3 - Katharine Altherr-Rogers, Bryan Barnett and Steven Fite

Others present:

Patrick McKay, Museum Manager

Cathy Fitzpatrick, Program Coordinator

Samantha Lawrence, Archivist

Erin Sudrovech, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2025-0489 Approval of Minutes - Rochester Hills Museum Foundation - August 15, 2025

Attachments: [Minutes Draft 8-15-25.pdf](#)
[Minutes Master 8-15-25.pdf](#)

**A motion was made by Pixley, seconded by Snyder, that these minutes be
Approved as Presented. The motion carried by the following vote:**

Aye 6 - Sellick, Wiggins, Morlan, Pixley, Snyder and Granthen

Absent 3 - Altherr-Rogers, Barnett and Fite

MUSEUM OPERATIONS UPDATE

Archive Update

Samantha Lawrence updated members on the archives. She indicated that the Museum received a grant from the Questers to repair 10 items, primarily from the Van Hoosen Farmhouse. The Historic Sites collection (approx. 20 boxes) has been fully digitized, facilitating more efficient research into local building and house histories. The latest Found In Collection archival publication raised approximately \$2,300 in donations for the collection fund. The Museum currently employs one paid intern who is completing her Master's degree and is expected to graduate in the spring or summer of 2026. She also explained that the first major portion of the Broomfield collection has been cataloged and digitized, featuring correspondence and photos involving world leaders such as Jimmy Carter and Queen Elizabeth. Discussion ensued.

Museum Program/America250 update

Cathy Fitzpatrick updated members on Museum programs. She explained that the Museum utilizes SurveyMonkey to gather feedback; recent comments highlight high satisfaction with staff and facilities. Other feedback also led to finding high school students to open the schoolhouse this Christmas, addressing the need for more use, along with the Museum considering upgrading to chairs with arms to improve accessibility for elderly guests.

Museum Update

Pat McKay updated members on the new full-time ground's maintenance position approved by City Council. This role will oversee custodial services, seasonal staff, and work with local garden clubs to maintain the 16-acre site. The position is currently being reviewed by Human Resources; internal posting is expected with a start date in early January 2026.

Mckay gave a briefing on Museum finances. The Museum receives revenue streams from private events and Crank's Catering which remain significant revenue sources, and are heavily influenced by alcohol sales. He also discussed the current endowment fund, which stands at approximately \$921,000 as of October 2025. The goal is to reach \$1 million by year-end and eventually \$9 million for long-term self-sufficiency. The Museum also received an unannounced estate donation of \$188,000 to be used specifically for operations. He also mentioned that the Big Barn fund has received its first donation of \$500. Discussion ensued.

NEW BUSINESS

2025-0491 Big Barn Concept Review and Discussion

Attachments: [Big Barn Drawing & Renderings.pdf](#)
[AS-2 Site Plan.pdf](#)

Pat McKay discussed the conceptual drawings and planning for the Big Barn. He briefly discussed the history of the barn and indicated the goal is to recreate the building exactly as it was. Some challenges that have arisen from this project include parking and zoning issues. Rochester city officials have been very supportive in advancing this project. The conceptual plans include a three-story, heavy timber building featuring a lobby, exhibit space, conference meeting room, a video room, and modern restrooms with exterior access for site users. Museum offices and archival storage will move to the Big Barn, allowing current office spaces in the Dairy Barn to be converted into flexible programming space and traveling exhibit space. The projected cost is approximately \$5.5 million, if delayed until 2030, the cost is estimated to rise to \$7 million. It was suggested to seek additional funds to create an endowment for the Big Barn, covering future operating, electrical, and heating costs, ensuring long-term maintenance. One way to do this is by giving donors an opportunity to name interior spaces, leaving a legacy for their family and the Museum. Erin Sudrovech proposed a more structured, collaborative approach to sponsorships across city departments to avoid overlapping. It was agreed that now is the time to start creating a gift chart and coordinating fundraising asks across the city departments to avoid donor fatigue and maximize contributions. Discussion ensued.

Joe Snyder congratulated Pat McKay for being named Grand Marshall for the Rochester Christmas Parade.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Friday, February 20, 2026 at 7:30 am

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Suzanne Wiggins adjourned the meeting at 8:56 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Melissa Zaborski.

Minutes were approved as presented/amended at the _____, 2026 Regular Museum Foundation Board Meeting.

Suzanne Wiggins, Chairperson