



Rochester Hills

Minutes - Draft

Rochester Hills Museum Foundation

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*Bryan Barnett, Julie Granthen, Steven Fite, Diana Mannino, 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, May 15, 2026

7:30 AM Department of Public Services garage – 511 E. Auburn,
between Rochester Road and John R Road.

CALL TO ORDER

*Chairperson Wiggins called the Rochester Hills Museum Foundation meeting to
order at 7:30 a.m.*

ROLL CALL

Present 7 - Heather Sellick, Suzanne Wiggins, Steven Fite, Vern Pixley, Julie
Granthen, Diana Mannino and Joe Snyder

Absent 2 - Katharine Altherr-Rogers and Bryan Barnett

Others Present:

Patrick McKay, Museum Manager

Cathy Fitzpatrick, Program Coordinator

Samantha Lawrence, Archivist

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2026-0239](#) Approval of Minutes - Rochester Hills Museum Foundation - February 20, 2026

Attachments: [2-20-26 RHMF Minutes Draft.pdf](#)
[2-20-26 RHMF Minutes Master.pdf](#)

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

Aye 7 - Sellick, Wiggins, Fite, Pixley, Granthen, Mannino and Snyder

Absent 2 - Altherr-Rogers and Barnett

MUSEUM OPERATIONS UPDATE

Archive Update - Tour of Collection area at DPS Garage

Pat McKay provided an overview of the Museum's current off site storage layout and operations at the Department of Public Services (DPS) garage. Samantha Lawrence provided a tour the storage space and reviewed the Museum's archival and collections storage, environmental challenges, security, and long-term use.

Museum Program Update

Cathy Fitzpatrick shared highlights from recent and upcoming educational programs and community partnerships. This included working with Rochester Adams High School to help organize primary source categories for quick classroom access. She explained that the Pre-K Wiggling Worm program is expanding to include kindergarteners, while the second-grade walking tours have been modified to eliminate reading barriers. The children are also receiving community passports to encourage visiting across Rochester Hills, Rochester, Meadowbrook Hall and the Rochester Hills Public Library. The Museum also collaborated with Macomb Community College which featured our Museum objects alongside their production of Patriot Inc. She also mentioned that the Museum is installing an outdoor interpretive sign downtown featuring newspaper clippings on the building at 114 W. Third Street.

Museum Operations Update

Pat McKay updated members on Museum operations. He indicated a severe lightning strike three weeks ago that split a major black walnut tree, requiring its removal as well as two nearby maple trees. The strike completely destroyed the security systems across six buildings, fried the Calf Barn projector, and damaged multiple electrical circuits. Two sugar maples will be planted to replace the tree this fall. To combat bank erosion caused by foot traffic, the Museum will stop mowing directly up to the water's edge, leaving brush to secure the bank. Staff will establish a single controlled access point and line the bank with heavy logs and donated Christmas trees to capture sediment. A contractor will be brought in to place the logs safely.

Dean Schantz retired after 11 years of part-time service.

Dave Coy has been hired as the new full-time maintenance staff member, currently completing his third week.

The Museum will host the auction and fundraiser at the Museum this October. This marks the third major statewide history organization hosted by the Museum in four years. We have also hosted two national conferences - the National Vintage Base Ball Association (VBBA) and the Society for the Preservation of Old Mills (SPOOM).

McKay also informed members that the endowment fund officially surpassed \$1 million in January, getting us closer to the long-term goal of \$9 million. The Museum is maintaining a strong operational balance, bolstered heavily by the annual membership program. An anonymous \$180,000 memorial donation is currently sitting in operations. Pat is awaiting explicit email confirmation from the donor to transition these funds permanently into the "Big Barn" capital project fund. He also indicated that the Big Barn is officially on the city's approved Capital Improvement Plan authorizing it as a long-term priority. The project is currently in a "quiet phase" of fundraising with a nominal balance of \$500. The current proposal outlines a potential 50/50 funding split with the City, though formal City council negotiations have not concluded. The total fundraising target is \$7 million (\$6 million for construction) and additional funds to address additional staffing needs and increasing the endowment fund cushion

NEW BUSINESS

[2026-0238](#)*Review and discussion - 2026 - 2030 Museum Division Plan***Attachments:** [2026 - 2030 Museum Division Plan.pdf](#)

The board reviewed the latest version of the five-year master plan (2026-2030), which will serve as an appendix to the city Parks Department's five-year master plan. Pat explained the four core priorities for the Museum operation: buildings and grounds, educational programs, archives management and private rental availability. He also mentioned long-term project proposals such as rebuilding the historic 1850s Baptist church on an empty Museum-owned lot in Stony Creek Village. Discussion ensued.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Friday, August 21, 2026

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Wiggins adjourned the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Melissa Zaborski.

*Minutes were approved as presented/amended at the _____ 2026
Rochester Hills Museum Foundation meeting.*

Susanne Wiggins, Chairperson