

**MISSION** To restore, protect, and enhance the Rouge River watershed through stewardship, education, and collaboration.

1. **STAFF PRESENTATION** – Ashley Flintoff, Executive Director – [Introduction](#)
2. **CALL TO ORDER**  
President, Jessica Eiland-Anders, called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM.
3. **ROLL CALL**
  - a. **Directors Present:**  
Jessica Eiland Anders (JEA), Paul Draus (PD), Erma Leaphart (EL), Samraa Luqman (SL), Madelin Maher (MM), Mike McNulty (MMN), Carol Snodgrass (CS), Susan Thompson (ST), Myra Tetteh (MT), Gerry VanAcker (GVA), (10 total)
  - b. **Directors Not Present:**  
Alice Bailey (AB), , Nick Leonard (NL), Dave Norwood (DN), Brandy Siedlaczek (BS), Jeremiah Steen (JS) (5 total)
  - c. **Staff Members Present:**  
Sam Davis (SD), Allison Eder (AE), Lara Edwards (LE), Ashley Flintoff (AF), Karen Hanna (KH)
  - d. **Guests Present:**  
Chester Marvin (CM)
4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
  - a. Agenda was moved (MT/CS) and approved with the change of moving the staff presentation before the call to order.
5. **APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES**
  - a. The May 8, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes and the June 12, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes were moved (SL/CS) and approved.
6. **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS - Voting**
  - a. **Finance Committee** CS Reported
    - i. KH provided a summary of the reports and how the data is reported.
    - ii. The BvA report for July 31 shows the variances for grants that have not yet come in.
    - iii. AF and KH are working on the 2025 budget now. They may have to do some last quarter amendments for 2024.
    - iv. For example, there was a plan to spend 1.4 million in 2024 for trails, but FOTR is still waiting for the contract for the ARPA funding.
    - v. FOTR is currently in the season of spending. We tend to run cash short in summer months and recoup in the fall and winter.
    - vi. A question was asked about how a denied grant impacts the budget. While they are listed in the budget, the work doesn't begin until the grant has been achieved, which is why adjustments will be made to reflect the reality.

vii. April, May, June, and July Financials Reports were moved (EL/SL) and approved.

**b. Finance Committee Presentation:** KH Reported

- i. KH put together a presentation in response to the Detroit River Conservancy Controversy.
- ii. After reviewing the details of the allegations and potential financial control failures, KH then reviewed the policies and procedures that FOTR already has in place to safeguard the organization's finances.
- iii. The auditor made some additional recommendations. KH then highlighted how these suggestions are already being implemented.
- iv. AF mentioned that we have changed the process on bank statements to Paper bank statements are received in the mail and opened by AE. Then they are reviewed by AF, who will select transactions she would like more information on. AE will then pull information about the transaction for AF.
- v. GV thanked KH for all her hard work
- vi. CS, JEA, and LE have been given the ability to view and monitor online bank statements, adding another layer of internal controls.

**7. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS/STAFF REPORTS**

**a. Executive Director** AF Reported

- i. Heart of the Rouge was a huge success. It had high attendance and a good financial outcome. We are looking to understand labor expenditure and earned outcome to make sure we are thinking sustainably long term about events.
- ii. FOTR did not get the NOAA grant for the Rain Catcher's Collective. Although we received good feedback, it was not rewarded. Huron, Clinton, FOTR, and FDR are looking at other funding opportunities, including the EPA Community Change grant.
- iii. No update on Bonnie Brook at this time.
- iv. AF has attended many meetings to build her own relationships with stake holders and potential partners.
- v. ARC will not be renewing a 10,000 grant used for Stonefly Search due to budget constraints on their end.
- vi. The Culvert Survey team created a dashboard to show the data they collected on their surveys.
- vii. AF highlighted upcoming events including the Fall Friends Fest, Haunted Paddle, Fall Bug Hunt, and Fall Native Plant Market.

**b. Executive Committee** JEA Reported

- i. Welcome to AF and thank you for the work she has done already.
- ii. Thank you to the board for their time and effort in the search and hiring process.
- iii. JEA and AF have been meeting on a weekly basis.

**c. Grants Administration** AF Reported

- i. Erin has jumped in wholeheartedly to this grants administration role. We are excited to have the support for Karen and program managers through Erin.
  - d. **Membership Committee** GV Reported
    - i. No Updates
  - e. **Fund Development Committee** LE Reported
    - i. LE gave warm thank you to the HOTR host committee, the board members who brought in sponsorships, and PD for his art donation.
    - ii. This was the most successful fundraising event FOTR has had to date, raising just over \$55,000.
    - iii. Fall Friends fest is October 19 and the annual stonefly society event will be held afterwards.
    - iv. FOTR is engaging with Ford Motor Company. They are starting a community relations team and we are hoping to start a partnership with them.
    - v. Thanks to MM, FOTR has also reconnected with DTE.
    - vi. JEA thanked LE for all of her work to make HOTR a success.
  - f. **Board Development Committee**
    - i. There are five directors up for re-election at the end of 2024: DN, PD, SL, EL, and BS. All 5 are eligible for one more 3 year term.
    - ii. DN, PD, SL, EL, and BS have all committed to running again.
    - iii. NL has decided to step down from the board. Therefore there will be an open seat. The current strategy is to wait to fill that role at the end of next year so they can serve a full 3 year term, unless a strong candidate is found before that time.
    - iv. A survey will be sent out to board members to assess current structure, roles, committee structures, and skill sets/talents.
  - g. **Advocacy Committee**
    - i. FOTR did sign on to a letter this week for Healing Our Waters Great Lakes Coalition. The letter will be sent to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee of the House of Representatives in regards to the impact of the Sackett v. EPA hearing.
  - h. **PR/Marketing/Media Report**
    - i. Report out only

## 8. NEW BUSINESS

- a. No new business

## 9. REMINDERS

- a. Upcoming Board Meetings:
  - i. November 13, 2024, 5 - 6:30 PM
  - ii. December 11, 2024, 5 - 6:30 PM
- b. Upcoming Organizational Events:
  - i. October 5, 2024 - Fall Birding Paddle with Detroit Bird Alliance

- ii. October 5, 2024 - Fall Native Plant Market at Keep Growing Detroit
- iii. October 12, 2024 - Fall Bug Hunt
- iv. October 19, 2024 - Haunted Paddle and Inaugural Friends Fall Fest

**10. ADJOURNMENT:** SL/EL motion to adjourn moved and approved. Meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.