

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

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Myra Tetteh called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**a. Directors Present:**

Paul Draus (PD), Erma Leaphart (EL), Mike McNulty (MM), Dave Norwood (DN), Brandy Siedlaczek (BS), Carol Snodgrass (CS), Myra Tetteh (MT), Susan Thompson (ST) (8 Total)

**b. Directors Not Present:**

Jessica Eiland Anders (JEA), Samra'a Luqman (SL), Gerry VanAcker (GVA) (3 total)

**c. Staff Members Present:**

Allison Eder (AE), Ashley Flintoff (AF), May Gulley (MG), Karen Hanna (KH), Nicole Wilson (NW)

**d. Guests Present:**

Jen Felmlee, Lindsey Rossow-Rood

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- a. AF proposed moving the board election results and executive committee election to before the presentation from CFSEM.
- b. KH proposed adding the preliminary December reports to the finance committee's updates.
- c. Agenda was moved (DN/MM) and approved with the two changes.

**4. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES**

- a. The December 10 , 2025 Board Meeting Minutes were moved (DN/PD) and approved.

**5. ITEMS FOR VOTING**

**a. Board Election Results** MM Presented

- i. There are two directors up for re-election: JEA and GVA. Both are eligible for one more 3 year term.
- ii. We received 245 total votes between received paper ballots and electronic ballots. GVA received 119 votes and JEA received 126.
- iii. Official results: Congratulations to Jessica Eiland Anders and Gerry VanAcker for being voted on for another term.
- iv. We did receive two write-in votes. Both candidates will be contacted to determine their interest. There are currently four open seats on the board.

**b. Executive Committee Election** MM and AF Presented

- i. Slate for Executive Committee:
  1. President: Myra Tetteh
  2. Vice President: Brandy Siedlaczek
  3. Secretary: Sue Thompson
  4. Treasurer: Carol Snodgrass
  5. Member at Large: Mike McNulty
- ii. The slate as presented was moved (MM/DN) and approved

- iii. Thank you to Brandy and Sue for stepping up to join EC. Thank you to JEA and GVA for serving and all who continue on to serve on the EC.

## 6. FOTR ENDOWMENT PRESENTATION

- a. J. Femlee/L. Rossow-Rood from the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan (CFSEM) presented about the FOTR Endowment Fund
- b. AF thanked Jen and Lindsey for their time and services for FOTR.

## 7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- a. **Strategic Plan** AF Reported - 5:53
  - i. All staff retreat in early February will be focused on implementation of the strategic plan, decision making frameworks, and general team building.
  - ii. AF is developing a dashboard for future board reports that will show the goals of the strategic plan and the progress towards those goals.
  - iii. There will be a board retreat planned for later in the year.
- b. **Finance Committee** CS and KH reported
  - i. November 2025 Financials Reports were reviewed and discussed. KH gave a brief overview of the reports.
  - ii. KH sent out a preliminary 2025 year end budget to actual projection for discussion. KH gave a brief overview of this report. A final version will be available after the auditor and finance committee has a chance to review and finalize this report.
  - iii. If you are interested in joining the Finance Committee, please reach out to Karen and Carol. It is not required to be a board member to join a committee.
- c. **Executive Director Report** AF Reported
  - i. Livonia Public School District approved our offer to purchase their 10.45 acre property on Hix Road in Westland at their December meeting. This purchase is funded through a grant from Ducks Unlimited and is a partnership with the Michigan Land Conservancy, Holliday Nature Preserve Association, and the Western Wayne Conservation District. The hope is that eventually, this property will be transferred to Wayne County Parks to be added to the Holliday Nature Preserve and will be under a permanent conservation easement in perpetuity.
  - ii. Our Year End fundraising campaign was successful in raising \$52,000! Thank you to all who contributed to this campaign.
  - iii. Recent Funding: \$60,000 from DTE Foundation (\$50,000 for Rain Gardens to the Rescue and \$10,000 for Heart of the Rouge sponsorship).
  - iv. FOTR is currently at 56,000 in sponsorships for Heart of the Rouge.
  - v. Lobbying/Advocacy
    - 1. The Advocacy Committee is meeting this week to set priorities for 2026.
    - 2. FOTR is watching three bills introduced to the MI Senate Energy and Environment Committee (SB 761, SB 762, SB 763) regarding regulating data centers and water consumption. We are working with Plunkett Cooney to determine appropriate and impactful next steps. MT asked about inviting sponsors from the bills to upcoming FOTR events.
    - 3. Sally and Ashley attended a Townhall about the Arbor Hills Landfill proposed expansion in Salem Township. AF spoke on behalf of FOTR.

- vi. AF provided an update on the search for FOTR's next Development Director.
- vii. Recognition
  - 1. Watershed Ecologist Sally Petrella was quoted in the December 2025 issue of *The Ville (Northville's News and Lifestyle Magazine)* talking about the daylighting of the Walled Lake branch of the Rouge which feeds into Johnson Creek and the Middle Branch.
  - 2. Monitoring Manager, Lauren Eaton, presented at the American Geophysical Union's 2025 Annual Meeting in New Orleans in mid-December. Her poster, "*Friends of the Rouge Chloride Monitoring in the Rouge River, Michigan: Helping to Guide Management Action*" detailed the chloride monitoring work the team performed in 2024 and 2025 that will help guide EGLE actions on impairment of streams in the watershed.
- viii. AF highlighted upcoming organizational events.

**8. BOARD COMMITTEE/STAFF REPORTS - Report out only**

- a. See Board Materials for updates on the: Fund Development Program, Grants and Funding Report, Monitoring Program and Committee, PR/Marketing/Media Board Committee Reports, Restoration Program, Water Trail Leadership Program and Committee

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. None to Report

**10. REMINDERS**

**a. Upcoming Board Meetings:**

- i. March 11, 2026 - 5:00-6:30pm **[Virtual]**
- ii. May 13, 2026 - 5:30-7:00pm **[In Person] - hopefully at places we have done projects - Fort Street Bridge Park**
- iii. June 10, 2026 - 5:00-6:30pm **[Virtual]**
- iv. September 9, 2026 - 5:00-6:30pm **[Virtual]**
- v. November 11, 2026 - 5:30-7:00pm **[In Person]**
- vi. December 9, 2026 - 5:00-6:30pm **[Virtual]**

**b. Upcoming Organizational Events:**

- i. January 18, 2026 - A River of Knowledge Speaker Series: "Creating a Fish Expressway"
- ii. January 24, 2026 - Stonefly Search
- iii. February 21, 2026 - Frog & Toad Survey Orientation, Livonia Civic Center Library
- iv. February 21, 2026 - Rain Garden 101 Workshop, Henry Ford Centennial Library Auditorium

**11. ADJOURNMENT** Motion to adjourn moved ( ST/DN) and approved. Meeting adjourned at 6:25 pm.