

NORA ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Date: December 18, 2025

Time: 5:30 P.M.

Location: ESC Building (GHAPS)

1. Call to order: Chairperson – William Montgomery, Ferrysburg

2. Roll Call.

Mary Jane Belter - GH Twp - pr

Howard Behm – GH Twp - absent

Sarah Kallio – Grand Haven - ab

Lyndsey Huisman - Grand Haven - pr

William Montgomery - Ferrysburg - pr

Craig Bessinger - Ferrysburg - pr

Marc Eickholt - GHAPS - pr

Sarah Elliott - GHAPS - pr

Rick Mikkelson – Robinson Twp - absent

Rebecca Hopp - At Large - absent

NORA: Bailey Gonzalas-Bertapelle

Jackie Rowland, NORA Programming

Also present: Tahlor Carlen, City of Grand Haven, HR

3. Approval of Meeting Agenda – motion to approve the agenda:

Motion by Belter, seconded by Huisman. Vote: 6-0

4. Approval of Consent Agenda – motion to approve the consent agenda:

Motion by Huisman, seconded by Eickholt . Vote: 6-0

Put November minutes on the Feb 2026 agenda.

A. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes of October 23, 2025, as printed.

B. Financial Reports:

1. November 2025 Financials – Revenue & Expense Sheet

5. New Business

A. Winter Programming

Bailey reported on upcoming programs. Basketball basics at 4 elementary schools coached by Ben Pouquette, a former NBA player.

Basketball is the big winter program.

Offering golf, NORA has a partnership with First T.

Jackie: basketball, girls leagues, boys winter league, outdoor rec winter explorer (hiking, winter survival skills), this Saturday a STEM program is scheduled (2.5 – 3 hour program with dinner)

Archery program this winter, will be doing indoor archery.

Wed activities at White Pines work with the early release program. Pickleball at White Pines on Wednesdays

B. NORA Director Contract

The board received a copy of the contract for review prior to the board meeting.

Comments/questions:

Tahlor Carlen (City of GH, HR) used other contracts that the city has as a template for developing the contract.

Eickholt: have we done steps? Did not

City has a step program so we will be using that. It will be easier for the city's HR and will give a clearer path for Bailey.

Tahlor will add the city pay scale, but NORA will have to approve the COLA for each year. The pay scale will have steps and plus the additional cola.

Tahlor will present what the city is doing and what the range would be.

Montgomery: as a board we can renegotiate what is listed for the steps.

Elliott: how does this fit in with Jackie? Montgomery: before Chris left they were going to meet to look at the team and identify a grade to put the staff at using job responsibility, etc.

Tahlor worked on a job description, the average income and put Bailey into that. She is hoping to look at Jackie's role, responsibilities with Bailey and develop the plan for that position.

Carlen: When calculating the salary, supervision, how many staff; how large a budget the individual is working with was taken into consideration and compared to other rec programs. The areas' median household income was also in consideration.

A performance review will be done in 6 months.

Eickholt: do a year to the anniversary date (Nov 2026) review for salary discussions.

Chris was hired at \$50 k, left at around \$76k.

Bessinger: we can reassess the wage in 6 months.

Elliott: criteria for the steps? Tahlor looked at other rec programs, dollar amounts, and how the other programs are funded.

Bailey has been with NORA full time for 3.5 years. Bailey was asked for his opinion: fine with this, Chris was with NORA for 5 years and had the qualifications for the position.

Motion to approve the compensation at step 1.

Eickholt moved, to accept the contract as presented, Elliott seconded. Vote: 6-0.

Tahlor will work with Bailey, perhaps identify another wage study and look at Jackie's position and other positions that we will have.

Elliott: do we back up the salary for Jackie also? She feels that the work that Jackie has done has been under rated and we need to look at that. Montgomery: ask Bailey to handle that.

Elliott stressed the need to not wait for 6 months to review that position.

Bessinger: question of back filling Bailey's former position. Bailey feels we will be fine for now, work through things and see if there is a need.

Bailey: Meeting with the Outdoor Discovery Center after the first of the year to see if we need to do more hiring.

Huisman: with only 2 people now, more has been added to Jackie's responsibilities; we need to look at that and reevaluate that position and compensation.

C. Update Board Email/Phone Number List - board members made corrections to the board list.

D. December Donations

There have been several donations received: \$1000 and a \$5000 donation from Barbara Rowe (through a connection with Liza Dora). Barb wants NORA to decide on the use, but she stressed the money be used to youth impact.

There was a discussion of endowed and non-endowed funds. Montgomery and Bailey are going to meet again with the GHACF. Montgomery will let board members know when the meeting is set up so board members can attend if they want.

E. Community Leadership Breakfast

The thought is to plan this in conjunction with the school calendar so that school leaders can attend.

The thinking is with the schools involved; it would help push the NORA vision.

Belter commented that with some of the negative feelings in the community towards the GHAPS, NORA should present itself as independent of GHAPS.

Montgomery: other contacts include the Chamber, meetings of community pastors.

Eickholt: schools, other community organizations, etc. Eickholt volunteered to assist and be the point person for the Rotary.

NORA staff need to develop a budget for any possible event.

Huisman suggested the "100 Women Who Care" and the men's group. We would need to look at the membership to find individuals that would be willing to suggest and present for NORA.

6. Old Business

A. Fall Programming Wrap-Up

Ended 5/6th grade season – girls' basketball –

Fall baseball was big, we've had growth in teams and numbers.

Staff has looked at gaps where there is a need between other programs.

A lot of people in the leagues have helped with the 'rounding up' when paying fees to help kids' activities.

Archery went all the way through November. A lot of kids were enrolled in this and in other outdoor rec programs.

B. Jackie/Bailey DDA Meeting

Met with the DDA, going to include funding for the kids' nights as a donation. The event will be more clearly defined as a NORA event. There will be more visibility for NORA. A schedule has been developed and plans are in progress. The DDA is fundraising and putting more into this. The DDA put out info to the downtown businesses, asking them to sponsor. Any gaps in sponsorship will then be offered to other businesses outside the DDA area.

C. Fish Fry Fundraiser Update

\$335 for the 3 hours; Jackie had volunteers that assisted from other organizations.

7. Public Comments

8. Advisory Board Comments

Elliott: thank you to Bailey and Jackie for all of their work, she appreciates everything they do. The program provides so many opportunities for kids, which means so much.

Eickholt: will reach out to Rotary for a possible program by NORA for one of their meetings. He appreciates the efforts to fill in the gaps in recreation opportunities for kids.

Jackie: helped form a high school pickle ball club and those kids are now helping with NORA pickleball.

She is connecting GHHS outdoor ed kids with the NORA outdoor rec to provide assistance.

Huisman: This gives younger kids a more positive role model.

9. Next Scheduled Meeting – February 26, 2026, 5:30 p.m.

10. Adjournment

Motion by Huisman, second by Elliott. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Mary Jane Belter

NORA board secretary