

NORA board meeting August 28, 2025

Call to order: Chairperson - William Montgomery, Ferrysburg
The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Board Chair William Montgomery.

Roll Call.

Mary Jane Belter, GH Twp - pr
Howard Behm - GH Twp - pr
Karen Lowe - Grand Haven - pr
Lyndsey Huisman - Grand Haven - pr
William Montgomery – Ferrysburg - pr
Craig Bessinger – Ferrysburg - pr
Marc Eickholt – GHAPS - ab
Sarah Elliott – GHAPS - pr
Rebecca Hopp - At Large - pr

Present:

Tahlor Carlen, HR City of Grand Haven
Jackie Rowland, NORA Rec Planner
Bailey Bertapelle, NORA staff

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda: Motion by Hopp, second by Huisman . Vote:7-0

Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda: Motion by Belter, second by Lowe. Vote:7-0

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes of June 19, 2025 as printed.

Financial Reports:

July 2025 Financials . Revenue & Expense Sheet

No discussion

5:40 p.m. Sarah Elliott arrived.

New Business

Summer Programming updates/Fall Preview – Jackie Rowland and Bailey Bertapelle reported on summer programs and upcoming fall programs.

Summer went very well.

There will be a bit of a delay with the fall, won't see the registrations until about the second week of school.

Fall programs include:

4th grade girls bb

Archery

Softball

Adult pickleball

The new website has been launched; staff are able to add more pictures and sponsors.

Looking at the requests for scholarships. Staff wants to establish some way to track if scholarship recipients/ the parents have

volunteered or helped in some way. The plan is to make that a part of the request for financial assistance. Those asking will be issued a coupon, good for a year for a scholarship. Coupons can't be shared. The coupon applies only to their account.

Sponsor page: this will have links to the sponsors websites.

Class registration – rounding up payments: Have the option to round up towards NORA scholarships: minimum of \$3, maximum of \$10.

NORA/Grand Haven City Administrative Agreement review & Vote
Motion to approve the admin agreement.

Motion by Belter, second by Hopp. Vote: 8-0

The budgeted expense will come down a bit once the audit is completed. We are being charged at the higher rate from last year (which has been renegotiated/lowered).

NORA Articles of Incorporation Board review & Vote

Motion to by Elliott, support by Behm, to approve the articles with the correction. Vote: 8-0

Discussion: Montgomery - still has Robinson mentioned – page 12 – article 26 – remove Robinson

NORA Director discussion

Chris expressed appreciation with the work of the board; thanked all. He praised Jackie and Bailey for all of their work with the NORA programs.

Chris is taking over a brand-new rec department in S. Haven; they do have a millage; he will be building the program.

Appreciation by individual board members was expressed to Chris.

Montgomery

Introduced Tahlor Carlen, HR director for the City of Grand Haven.

The board needs to put in an interim director for NORA.

VanHekken and Montgomery spoke with Bailey. Jackie and Bailey both agree on Bailey's assuming a temporary director position.

Motion Hopp, second by Huisman, to put Bailey Bertapella in the interim director position at \$62,400 per year, paid on a monthly basis, until the position is filled with a full time director effective immediately.

Vote: 8-0

Discussion details prior to the final vote on the motion to approve Bertapella and the salary:

This will be a salary increase for the interim position for Bertapella. He is currently at \$49,500.

Lowe commented about the action at the city when Ashley Latisch moved from assistant city manager to interim. Salary was determined on a monthly basis.

Bertapella is willing to do this, the idea has been in discussion the last couple of weeks. Prior to VanHekken leaving there was planning for an intern for this fall, utilizing an individual who has previously worked with NORA. He has experience in sports and leagues and will help out with supplementing Bailey's responsibilities. That position will be about 20 hours a week at an hourly rate.

Montgomery will handle the press release; Rowland will handle the Facebook post.

Bertapella will send a note to the govt units as an FYI.

Tahlor Caren (HR) : for the interim salary, is the board looking to place at VanHekken's previous rate? Montgomery: experience-wise, he doesn't think Bertapella would be at that level.

Tahlor Caren (HR) will check with Emiley Greene , City of GH financial services, as to how to handle the position and salary. It will be done as a salary that would count towards retirement (rather than a bonus.)

Specific salary discussion:

VanHekken was making \$74,755.

Board question: do a percentage lower since Bertapella doesn't have all of the criteria on the job description?

Bessinger: VanHekken's salary vs. Bertapella's current salary, the difference is about \$25,000, \$2K a month. Perhaps increase Bertapella so there is a \$1,000 per month difference.

There was a suggestion of doing the hourly rate: Bertapella is \$23.94, VanHekken was \$35.

Montgomery: do \$30 per hour for Bertapella, which puts him at \$62,400 annually at that rate.

When a successful candidate is found, the salary will be negotiated.

The agreement for the interim director is based on a month to month until the director's position is filled.

Tahlor Caren (GH HR) will talk with Emily Greene tomorrow and handle all of the details.

Interview process:

Tahlor Caren discussed board input on the job description and interview process. Lowe deferred to fellow board members.

Process as outlined by Tahlor Caren:

Identifying what the board is looking for, align skills we feel are most important.

Finalize the job description, which will also influence the salary compared to the labor market.

She will be putting together interview questions.

Interviews will be with the exec team or team, keeping the number at 4 to avoid the issues with OMA.

Montgomery shared his recent experience with interviewing and how the Silversides committee handled their recent search.

The full board will be involved with the review of all of the applicants, narrowing the number down.

Hopp gave her position on the board reviewing the applications.

Montgomery: concern that this will involve more board meetings since the review of the applications will involve an open board meeting. Board members will need to plan on this.

The posting will be put out and will be shared with the NORA board so that they can use their own individual networks to share.

Hopp stressed using a matrix for the application and interview process.

Tahlor Caren (GH HR): a matrix will keep it on a level playing field. She will use board input to create one.

Travel reimbursement for applications: this will be addressed when needed, if necessary.

Tahlor Caren (GH HR) will come up with a recommendation for salary. Hopp asked that Montgomery send out an email addressing the need for future board meetings for the selection of a director.

Old Business

NORA Summer Fundraiser event . Recap/review/discussion

Montgomery: discussion of changes, what went right, what went wrong.

Issue with better define what we expect from staff, board members.

Belter thanked Karen Lowe for all of the work she put into developing the bid sheets and the description of the auction items.

Lowe: most of the boards she has been on, the boards have taken on greater responsibility. Don't put it all on the staff, do the heavy lifting much earlier. Play on the board member strengths, skills. Board members can also solicit friends who have the skills to help out.

The Board takes the burden off of staff and accepts more of a working board member role.

6:49 p.m.: Behm left for another meeting.

Montgomery: Board member ticket goal, he referenced planning done for the Silversides fund raiser. Begin planning in April. Be more strategic.

Lowe: start meeting in February. She offered to assist.

February agenda: establish a fundraiser committee with Board members and community members.

Signage on the doors: for people who happened to stop at the Unicorn thinking they were open....invite to pay and join the fundraiser and auction.

Lowe: we didn't do the raffle –the 50/50. How did that affect income?

Last year we made \$250 because without a license you can only do max of \$500. VanHekken did personally cover the \$250.

Get more underwriters for the dinner.

Define what comes with a sponsorship, have that in the donor letter, sponsorship perks.

Huisman: highlight on the NORA page the sponsors which would give them more business.

Strategy for someone the Nite of the dinner talking about the impact of

NORA: NORA chair, Sarah Elliott, perhaps a parent, recognize the sponsors that attend. A powerful message is having Sarah Elliott share the impact on the students/families that she works with.

Other suggestions:

Donor cards, note cards on the tables for donations.

Have kids and parents attend and talk about their experiences.

Every board member adding their NORA board position on their LinkedIn page.

Conversation about the DDA and NORA and what the DDA can do for NORA:

Rowland: meeting with the DDA in October; Karen Lowe is interested in sitting in on that meeting.

October agenda for NORA:

Director search, discussion with the DDA, a letter to the donors reviewing the success of the fundraiser and thanking them.

United Way update

Bertapella: doesn't think anything has come in yet.

Huisman: high School staff is supporting the GHHS foundation rather than the United Way since nothing came back to GH.

Elliott said she had written/received a mini grant to the GHHS foundation.

Rowland did get a mini grant with a middle school PE teacher. The grant was for equipment for archery.

Public Comments: No public

Advisory Board Comments:

Expressed appreciation for the staff and the plan in place for NORA operations and the transition to a new director.

Next Scheduled Meeting . October 23, 2025

Adjournment

Motion by Hopp, second by Huisman to adjourn. Approved.

Meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Mary Jane Belter
NORA board secretary