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**REGULAR MEETING of the PAINT CREEK TRAILWAYS COMMISSION
Rochester Municipal Offices
400 Sixth Street, Rochester, MI 48306**

CALL TO ORDER: The Tuesday, April 19, 2022 Regular Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Steele at 7:02 p.m.

Voting Members Present: Brian Blust, Robin Buxar, Linda Gamage, Steve Sage, Donni Steele, David Walker

Voting Alternates Present: Patrick Ross, Chris Shepard

Non-Voting Alternates Present: David Becker, Carol Morlan (*enter 7:05 p.m.*), Martha Olijnyk

Village of Lake Orion Non-Voting Member Present: Jason Peltier

Voting Members Absent: Ken Elwert, Aaron Whatley

Alternates Absent: Julia Dalrymple, Dave Mabry, Ann Peterson

Village of Lake Orion Non-Voting Alternate Absent: Jerry Narsh

Others Present: Melissa Ford, Trail Manager, Chris Gray, Assistant Trail Manager, Suzanne Tapia, Administrative Assistant Candidate, Sandi DiSipio, Recording Secretary

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: All rose and recited the Pledge.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MOTION by Blust, seconded by Buxar, ***Moved***, to approve the April 19, 2022 agenda as presented.

Ayes: All Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

CONSENT AGENDA:

a. Minutes – March 15, 2022 Regular Meeting, approve and file

b. Treasurers Report – March 2022, receive and file

MOTION by Buxar, seconded by Sage, ***Moved***, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Ayes: All Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF INVOICES: Ms. Ford presented the list of invoices totaling \$14,614.67. In addition to the recorder's fee, this amount includes credit card charges for the Nicholson bench replacement; 1st Qtr wages, FICA and one time longevity payment for both the Manager and Assistant Manager, staff shared copier costs, and the pole for the solar powered audio sign. Estimated unrestricted fund balance is \$93,000.

MOTION by Gamage, seconded by Buxar, ***Moved***, that the invoices presented for payment are approved as presented in the amount of \$14,614.67 and orders be drawn for payment.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Blust, Buxar, Gamage, Ross, Sage, Shepard, Steele, Walker
Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL: Resolution #2022-002 – Honoring Chris Gray:

**PAINT CREEK TRAILWAYS COMMISSION
RESOLUTION HONORING CHRIS GRAY
RESOLUTION #2022-002**

WHEREAS, Chris Gray began her employment with the Paint Creek Trailways Commission (the “Commission”) in 2015; and

WHEREAS, Chris has been instrumental for the continued development of the Paint Creek Trail, the outreach of the Trailways Commission, and the advancement of the Paint Creek Trail; and

WHEREAS, during her career with the Commission Chris was professional, dedicated, knowledgeable and loyal to the Commission’s mission to provide trail users with a natural, scenic, and educational recreation experience while preserving the natural integrity of the Trail for the enjoyment of present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, Chris’s efforts over her years of service have contributed significantly to the Trail as well as to the Commission’s ability to provide exceptional service to the area residents and visitors that enjoy the Trail and her level of commitment to the Paint Creek Trail set a positive example for others to follow; and

WHEREAS, Chris’s commitment to high work quality and her dedication to the Trail and the Commission has proven to be a great asset to the Commission and to Trail users; and

WHEREAS, her commitment to the Trail and the Commission leaves an invaluable legacy for Trail users to enjoy far into the future.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Paint Creek Trailways Commission, by adoption of this resolution honors Chris Gray for her outstanding quality of work, her commitment to provide a superior Trail for all Trail users, and extends its sincere appreciation for her countless contributions, and the lasting, positive impact she made during her years of dedicated service to the Paint Creek Trailways Commission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Paint Creek Trailways Commission extends to Chris Gray its best wishes for continued success in all her future endeavors.

Chairperson Steele commented Ms. Gray will really be missed, and appreciates the time and effort she has put into the Trail that showed in everything she did, always had a positive attitude, and always something very pleasant and very complimentary to say about everybody, which is always appreciated. Ms. Gray thanked the Commission for all the support they give to the staff, it makes their job easier. She feels lucky to live in a place where green space and parks are a priority and has enjoyed her time with the Trail staff.

DISCUSSION/APPROVAL: Oakland County Sheriff’s Office 2022-2024 Law Enforcement Services Agreement with Paint Creek Trailways:

A cover memo and the actual contract are included in the packet. Ms. Ford explained she received the contract last week and there was a substantial increase in the rate for the mounted patrol. The explanation was that we were locked into a three year contract and there have been at least three pay increases during this time to get the mounted deputies up to the same rate as the other deputies were making. She noted that bicycle and mounted patrol are now at the same cost. We may want to increase bicycle patrol over mounted patrol now that they are at the same wage. Ms. Ford stated we didn’t budget for this increase – we budgeted a 5% increase for the 2022 rates. A decision needs to be made either to decrease the number of patrol hours or amend the budget to increase how much we budgeted for this item for the year to keep the patrol hours at 500. One thing to note however, is that we

received their invoice for October patrol services in January of this year, so we've already spent \$2,100 of the budget this year. Ms. Gamage noted the bike and mounted patrol are now the same rate, and asked if this is the police bike patrol. Ms. Ford said yes, it's not the staff bike patrol individual who is paid much less than the deputies. Ms. Gamage asked if staff knows out of the 500 hours budgeted for mounted patrol, how many hours are actually spent on the trail versus how many hours are spent for transporting and care of the horses. Ms. Ford said she believes we pay for time on the trail, not transporting, but will double check. Mr. Becker is in favor of keeping the mounted patrol on the trail as they are an ambassador for the trail. Even though the bike patrol may be more efficient for enforcement activity, he would prefer keeping the horse patrol. Mr. Becker suggested our attorney review the contract before we sign it as it's quite lengthy, and he prefers not having the Commission sign it without the attorney's review. Ms. Olijnyk pointed out a typo in one of the wage amounts; Ms. Ford is aware of this. Ms. Olijnyk also suggested under 14h we ask for a report of deputy activities while out on the trail. Ms. Ford indicated when Lt. Miles was at a meeting, he said a summary will be provided, but the patrol program is no longer under his department, so she will talk to the new contact supervisor to request these reports as promised. Ms. Olijnyk again suggested putting this requirement into the actual contract language under 14h. Mr. Walker said he went back through the Treasurer's Reports for 2021 and found five checks for mounted patrol totaling \$6253, plus the late bill of \$2100 – we are only in the \$8200 range, but we budgeted closer to \$10,200. Ms. Ford explained the weather dictates how many hours they actually provide during the year. Sometimes they don't use the 500 allotted hours. Mr. Walker asked over the past few years, did we get close to 500 hours in one season; are we budgeting too much for this line item? Ms. Ford said we've been close to the 500 hours before the last two years. The last couple years were not typical because of the bridge project and then COVID hit. Mr. Walker agreed we need the mounted patrol as it's welcomed on the trail and feels we should find ways to find the revenue. He feels the licensing agreements more than offset the additional \$3,000, or we could pass it off to the municipalities next year. Ms. Ford said she will definitely increase the members' share next year based on the new patrol rates. Ms. Steele said we have a choice to continue with the 500 patrol hours and adjust the budget using the fund balance for this year, or do we want to limit the amount of hours in the contract and be within budget. We should also find out if we can add the language about summary reports to the contract and have the attorney review the contract. Chairperson Steele took a straw vote as to who wants increase the budget for mounted patrol versus reducing the amount of patrol hours to stay within budget – the vote was tied at 4 each for the options. To stay within budget, the hours would have to be cut by 134. Mr. Blust asked if we go with the reduced number of hours, can we modify the hours later if we get the revenue as it's a three year contract. Ms. Ford stated she talked to Lt. Miles and explained we did not budget for this increase and would ask the Commission what they wanted to do, and he was fine with either option. Ms. Buxar agrees with having the mounted patrol as Oakland Township residents appreciate them and she likes that the new reporting structure for the deputies is the Township's old lieutenant from their substation; she knows him well so the Township has a connection. Ms. Gamage mentioned we've asked for the reports several times, and asked if we could request a summary for last year. Ms. Ford said we received one report, but it wasn't very detailed. Lt. Miles did promise more detailed information going forward, but patrol is now under a different department. Ms. Gamage would also like to see what hours the patrol spends on the trail; is it weekends, weekdays, when the trail is crowded, etc. Mr. Becker remembers we once asked a patrol representative at one of our meetings, and the response was they patrol at random times so users won't know when they will be out. Mr. Sage if we want to split this in half, we could increase the budget from \$9,730 to \$11,520 and we would lose 67 hours. Mr. Walker commented if this does become a pass through on next year's budget, and we can afford the \$3000 we're short on this year's budget – we were short on 2021's budget, so that money is in the fund balance. Chairperson Steele suggested a two

part motion, one for attorney review and one for the hours.

MOTION by Buxar, seconded by Gamage, *Moved*, to have the attorney review the Oakland County Sheriff's Mounted Patrol Contract as presented, and add additional language to paragraph 14h requesting a quarterly summary of activity reports.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Blust, Buxar, Gamage, Ross, Sage, Shepard, Steele, Walker

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED.

The discussion then turned to the budget issue. Chairperson Steele indicated the straw vote was a tie as to whether to adjust the budget or hours. Mr. Blust asked if we go with the full 500 hours and they haven't traditionally spent all the hours, who gets to decide how much we under allocate – is it our call or their call. If we allocate at 500 hours, can we reach back out and pull it back to 400 hours. Ms. Ford said the contract indicates up to 500 hours, it doesn't say they have to meet 500 hours – we've basically said don't exceed 500 hours. Mr. Blust asked if we have a discretion to say it's up to 500, but next year we say 400 hours. Ms. Ford did tell them we might be reducing the hours because of the budget issue, and will ask if we can reduce the hours next year. Ms. Buxar said the Sheriff's Office is pretty workable with them. Mr. Becker suggested asking the attorney to add a clause saying we would sign on for 400 hours, but have the right to reopen to go to 500. He feels once we sign a contract for 500 hours, they wouldn't be happy about reducing the hours, but if we have a clause where we go into it with 400 hours and we see if we have the money where we need more hours, we can reopen it because of the clause if the Sheriff's Office would accept that. Mr. Walker said if we're talking hours, we need to distinguish between regular and overtime hours as it's very different. Mr. Blust indicated the contract calls out for regular rates, the attorney should check this out. Ms. Steele asked when the contract has to be signed. Ms. Ford responded they are probably expecting it this week as we start patrol in May. Ms. Steele asked if we can get our questions answered – are the hours adjustable, only regular time, add the clause about the report and have the attorney review it. If everyone is OK with that, Ms. Steele can sign it before the next meeting, but we need to adjust the budget.

MOTION by Buxar, seconded by Blust, *Moved*, to adjust the budget for the mounted patrol not to exceed 500 hours at a cost of \$13, 310.

Discussion: Ms. Steele said another thought is to reduce the number of hours and that was the reason we said put 400 hours into the contract and we could still do a hybrid of adjusting the hours, but remain within budget. Ms. Gamage is not sure the money was moved back into the general fund as we do some shifting throughout the year. Ms. Ford agreed, money was moved to the fund balance but she's not sure of the amount. We did make some budget adjustments last year because the rent was higher and some other things. Ms. Buxar added if the Sheriff's Office really wanted to take it to us, they would have had forces out for the 500 hours but they didn't do that, and they are down on manpower. Ms. Buxar asked where we are at, do we want to go to the attorney first, but the Chairperson would not have an opportunity to sign before the next meeting. Ms. Steele said if we agree to do up to 400 hours, then we wouldn't be adjusting the budget and she would be able to sign. Ms. Buxar asked if we want to get the questions answered and come back. Ms. Buxar then withdrew her motion. Mr. Becker said this is a three year contract, and if we say 400 hours for this year, are we held to 400 hours for the next two years, or do we ask for an increase from the municipalities - do we have to make a decision tonight. Mr. Walker said if they agree to the suggested clause about increasing the hours to 500 next year, that would take care of the issue. Ms. Olijnyk feels we need to see what the contract says because we're suggesting adding language, and we need to see it before it's signed – we can probably wait until next month. Chairperson Steele indicated this issue will be brought back for discussion next month after the questions are answered and we receive the attorney's input. Ms. Ford

summarized the information needed – the attorney reviews the contract, add the language, and she will talk to the Sheriff's Office about the changing the hours to 400 this year and 500 for the next two years at regular rates, and if we can hybrid between bicycle and mounted patrol at any time. Ms. Ford will also ask about the language suggested under item 14h.

UPDATE: Tour de Trail: Mr. Peltier updated the Commission on this event. Tickets are available on Eventbrite, and he's posted and shared information on the Oat Soda and Friends Facebook pages; if anyone can grab this and share it, that would be great. He's had posters made to distribute; a copy was included in the packet. There is a sponsorship grid; he's looking for additional sponsors, and explained the different levels. Meetings are held regularly at Oat Soda if anyone would like to attend. They are usually in the mornings and coffee is provided. He will start asking businesses this week to participate in the passport program. Food trucks have been scheduled for the event. A meeting has been set up between Mr. Carrio and the Rochester DDA. Tickets are \$10 and t-shirts are available for purchase. Ms. Buxar indicated this information will be included in Oakland Township's newsletter for all residents. Mr. Peltier has reached out to the Orion Chamber to get them involved, and the Polly Ann Trail will be involved as well. There is a limit of 400 tickets for the event, but anyone can attend the Expo. There will be donation jars, 50/50 tickets and a portion of food and beverages will be revenue. Volunteers are needed, and a sign-up sheet will be posted. Discussion then turned to PCTC promotional items. The stickers cost .72 each and the bike bells \$1.83 each. There are 29 bike bells available. Chairperson Steele asked if the Commission wants to provide a giveaway. Ms. Ford explained the question was whether we wanted to sell them as single items or as a combo, and what the price would be as a fundraiser. It was suggested a bell and sticker could be sold for \$5.00, the stickers for \$3.00; many stickers are left, but only 29 bells. To order new bells, the cost would be \$1.52 each, at a minimum order of 500; nothing is budgeted this year. Ms. Ford suggested selling what we have and revisit the issue before the Labor Day Bridge Walk. The Commission thanked Mr. Peltier for all his ideas and work on this event. Mr. Peltier commented this is a lot of work, but it's laying the groundwork for future events, especially if we're talking about a fall event bike ride out of Rochester.

DISCUSSION: Memorial Donation Program Policy: A memo was included in the packet, as well as the policy on Bench Donations, and information from the Polly Ann Trail about Protocol for Structure Placement on their trail. Ms. Ford said other ideas for the trail could be the Little Libraries and the brick pavers. One of the reasons we're looking at this is because we have so many people on the list waiting to get a bench and we want to give them an opportunity to maybe choose an alternate item. If they want to stay on the bench list, that's fine too. If we decide to do this, it needs to be put in the policy and amend the language to accommodate this. A question was asked about how many benches, picnic tables and garbage cans the trail can support. Ms. Ford indicated they would have to go out and start identifying locations for places for these items to go. Personally, she is not a fan of being a trash can sponsor, but likes the idea of picnic tables. We've done a bike rack and little library at the Pollinator Garden. There is a Little Library in every community except for Orion Township; we don't need to add more than that one on the trail. Ms. Ford can see a bike rack at every trailhead parking lot, and the picnic tables would be more site specific – we would have to see if there is space and talk to the communities to see if they were open to it. Bike racks would cost less than a bench, and Ms. Ford has not priced out picnic tables yet, but assumes it would be more. It was suggested that two donors could go in for the picnic table. Mr. Walker is also not in favor of trash cans. Ms. Ford said we currently have trash cans and just spent a lot of money to purchase varmint defiant ones, so we don't need them. Chairperson Steele asked what we want to do – identify what we currently have or change our policy to include additional items. Ms. Gamage stated we need to keep the trail natural and adding more benches or tables really clutters the natural aesthetic of the trail. There is also more

cost and maintenance to it. Even though there are 21 people on the waiting list for benches, Ms. Gamage doesn't think that adding more things on the trail is the solution, and wonders if we may have an opportunity with the new bridge that's going in to have a name on each tie on the bridge – something that's not going to add more things to the trail. She's not convinced we have come up with the right solution with additional things. Ms. Steele would like to see a few picnic tables on the trail. Ms. Ford said we would have to pick a model, get a price and find a location where it's not cluttered. Ms. Buxar suggested memorial stones. Ms. Steele noted Ms. Ford identified one additional Little Library and asked where. Ms. Ford said in Orion Township, and one bench will be located at Paint Creek Junction, but there may be an opportunity for a picnic table there also. Potentially a table could be located at Clarkston/Kern. Ms. Steele asked if we could make a recommendation of where these items could be located, and later amend the policy accordingly. In the policy under item #2, Mr. Sage asked if we are still using American Recycling for the plaques. Ms. Ford indicated yes. Mr. Sage said they only offer a 2.5" x 6" or 2.5" x 8" plaque, so both sizes should be offered. Ms. Ford will make this change. Chairperson Steele asked if the Commission was OK with this change – everyone said yes.

DISCUSSION/APPROVAL: Administrative Assistant Candidate: Ms. Ford introduced Ms. Suzanne Tapia, who's going to be taking Ms. Gray's role. She interviewed four candidates, and the Personnel Committee interviewed the final two. Ms. Tapia has a long history of Administrative Assistant and Customer Service experience, having worked at Cranbrook Schools for a long period of time and is a trail user. She is excited to have her on board and will overlap with Ms. Gray for a bit to show her the ropes. Each Commissioner then introduced themselves, indicating what community they represent. Ms. Tapia said she's very excited and happy to be working with everyone. Chairperson Steele added the Commission made their decision in a systematic, fast fashion as they wanted the overlap with Ms. Gray. There were 15 applicants it was narrowed down to two after Ms. Ford's four interviews. The Personnel Committee's decision was unanimous, and Ms. Ford offered Ms. Tapia the position based on their discussion after the interviews. Ms. Steele asked for a motion to approve Ms. Tapia as the Administrative Assistant.

MOTION by Buxar, seconded by Walker, *Moved*, to approve Suzanne Tapia for the Administrative Assistant position at 12 hours a week.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Blust, Buxar, Gamage, Ross, Sage, Shepard, Steele, Walker

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED.

MANAGER'S REPORT: In addition to the written report, Ms. Ford indicated Ms. Gamage attended the Friends meeting on April 14th to get information for the new committee that was formed. Ms. Gamage said they were going to meet before today's meeting, but did not and will schedule a time that will work. She reported that some of Mr. Carrio's concerns may be handled within the Friends Group, so some of his questions were answered. They will be working toward meeting again and will have more information at the next meeting. Ms. Ford said she's beginning to receive complaints about the condition of the trail – her response is that we have to wait until it's above freezing to grade. She would like to get a commitment from the communities as to a date when the grading can be completed – last year was May 15th. It was agreed grading would be done by May 15th. Congratulations to the City of Rochester for receiving the \$25,000 grant from Oakland County for the Bridge 31.7 bridge design engineering. We are still waiting to hear from the Community Foundation on their grant to be awarded the end of April. Trail staff will be submitting two applications for projects through Rep. Slotkin's office – engineering of Bridge 31.7 in Rochester (in case we aren't awarded the other grant) and development of the Southeast Rochester property. Ms. Ford is still working on the final paperwork for the Bridge 33.7 MNRTF grant; once approved, the Commission will receive the final reimbursement of \$30,000. Ms.

Olijnyk's employer agreed to include the PCTC as one of its featured charities for its advertising promotion with the Tigers – thank you Ms. Olijnyk. Audit material has been sent to the auditor. **COMMISSIONER REPORTS:** Everyone thanked Ms. Gray for her services, offered best wishes, indicated she will be missed, and welcomed Ms. Tapia as her replacement. Ms. Gamage indicated a trail cleanup will be held on Saturday. Ms. Steele indicated Orion's cleanup will be held on Saturday, and invited Ms. Gamage and her crew out to Camp Agawam for hotdogs that afternoon.

ADJOURNMENT OF REGULAR MEETING:

MOTION by Gamage, seconded by Buxar, *Moved*, to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 8:35 p.m.
Ayes: All Nays: None **MOTION CARRIED.**

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: May 17, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. – Rochester Municipal Offices

Respectfully submitted,

MELISSA FORD, Trail Manager

DAVID BECKER, Secretary