

VERMILION PORT AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES

January 8, 2026 – 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call: Peter Corogin, Jonathan Hauck, Heidi Riddle, David Miklos. Absent: Larry Drouhard

Present: Arron Bias, Port Operations Manager; Drew Werley, Council Representative; Melanie Wood, Clerk of Council.

Meeting video is available on the city website at www.cityofvermilionohio.gov under Meetings and Ordinances.

Melanie Wood, Clerk of Council called the meeting of January 8, 2026, to order at 6:30 p.m. at the Vermilion Municipal Court Complex.

NOMINATION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIR:

Melanie Wood entertained a motion to nominate a Chairperson for 2026.

D. Miklos MOVED; H. Riddle seconded to nominate Peter Corogin as Chairperson for 2026. Roll Call Vote 3 YEAS; 1 ABSTAIN (Corogin). **MOTION CARRIED**.

Melanie Wood entertained a motion to nominate the Vice Chair for 2026.

P. Corogin MOVED; H. Riddle seconded to nominate David Miklos as Vice Chair for 2026. Roll Call Vote 3 YEAS; 1 ABSTAIN (Miklos). **MOTION CARRIED**.

Melanie Wood turned the meeting over to Chair Corogin.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

D. Miklos MOVED; H. Riddle seconded to approve the minutes of December 11, 2025. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED**.

CORRESPONDENCE/OPEN DISCUSSION:

Mark Musial, member of the Vermilion Parks and Recreation Board, said he was there on behalf of the Vermilion Rotary Club and the Parks and Recreation Board to speak about Rotary Park. Rotary Park is the park which sits under the water tower on the river. About 20 years ago, the club spent about \$75,000 redoing the park and needless to say, it has gotten a little stale, and they are at the point that they are working to redo it again. Their plan is to do it as a project that will be completed and dedicated in the spring of 2028 which coincides with the Rotary Club's 100th anniversary here in Vermilion.

What started off as a nice rehab, trees mature, shrubs mature, things grow up, cement cracks and the river does its damage and they have seen their fair amount of erosion along the riverfront. From where the old train trestle is, south of that there is a discharge pipe that now hangs 9-10 feet in the air which shows how much erosion they have had there. The Rotary Club took a look at the park and noticed it has become a park that has done nothing, it is not a park people tend to use very much and unfortunately it is probably short of Main Street, one of the best places to sit and watch train traffic and what goes on in the river. They have had a lot of growth with grape

vines and other garbage growing between the cement façade and the river and blocking the view most of the time. Rotary Park wants to clean it up and make it something that people want to go to again and be a destination, not just an afterthought.

M. Musial provided the board with a rendering of what they are looking to accomplish which has also been presented to the Parks & Recreation Board and Rotary Club. He explained they are looking to do primarily three things. Along the roadway, they are looking to reconfigure the front of it and the sidewalk if they can in order to add diagonal parking and pick up two more parking spaces across the front with a handicapped spot. They are not looking to take out any trees; they want to keep the trees and flowerbeds as they are and will be cleaning those up a little bit. They will keep the front corner flowerbed for Vermilion in Bloom to plant flowers. The rest of the grass area will be dug up and replaced with a low slow growth grass so it still remains natural grass but something that doesn't have to be cut weekly which will be less maintenance for the park. The cement walkway coming out towards the river will remain there. The face along the river right now is the shale cliff and they are looking to use a ready rock façade to finish, and it is something that can withstand the water and ice pounding up against it. They want to have that come down to a lower level at the river edge which can be used as a place for people to go down and sit, maybe fish, or to come up in a kayak or paddle board. It is not intended for docking because it is too shallow for boats to get in there. They plan to have a couple benches down there also. At the top, they will put three swinging benches with a cover over them that will mirror a train station depot. This is one of the areas that the electric railroad ran through and there is a sign acknowledging all that. They are not just looking to tie into the waterfront, but the history of the railroad as well. To the north of that there will be a small gazebo with benches and their intention is to remove all the current benches and tables that are there currently. There will be some sort of sign or display for all the people who donated money 20 years ago to still recognize their contributions to the park in the past along with anyone who does so today. There is an area that will look like a train trestle embedded in the walkway along the front and people can buy the trestles and have their names engraved on them as well. There will be a stairway going down to the river, they looked at putting in a handicap accessible ramp to get down there but there is just not enough space length ways along the face of the cliff there to be able to do that.

Because this affects the Port Authority and the riverfront, he wanted to show them what they are looking to do and hopefully get their blessing towards that end. Their goal right now is to get all their approvals between the City, Port Authority, ODNR and the Army Corps this year. They have a good deal of financing for this already in place. Rotary Club has received a substantial donation of some land that they have up for sale that is going to cover the bulk of the cost of this project. They are doing it without any cost to the Port Authority or to the City or the residents. There are a couple of grants they will be working with the City to help them obtain. The projected cost on the project is between \$750,000 and \$1 million. Their property is under contract and if it sells the way they expect it to, they have about 80% of the funds necessary in hand to go towards it.

For the lighting, they plan on using solar, so they are trying to keep things off the grid. The lighting for flagpoles or anything like that will be downlighting so they can minimize any light pollution that otherwise might exist. P. Corogin asked if the solar panels will be on top of both structures. M. Musial answered yes, it will supply the electricity to operate lights underneath the pavilion and underneath the shelter. D. Miklos asked if he was planning on some sort of capture mechanism. M. Musial answered there will be some sort of battery system there which will store energy overnight because if there is no sun, there is no light otherwise.

H. Riddle said they show sheet pile on the drawing. M. Musial answered down at the very base of the structure for sitting or fishing will have a sheet piling going in for the face of that.

Everything up the side of the cliff will be cement or limestone or sandstone block. D. Miklos asked how high off the river surface does he plan on putting the patio on top of the sheet piling. D. Miklos answered it will probably be at the level of the 300-year rain. There are times if they have what they did four years ago, it might be underwater but most of the time it should be well above. P. Corogin said he had a chance to talk with Mark about this project a couple of days ago and he mentioned in that part of the river, you can get quite a flow so whatever is done there has to be pretty substantial for waterflow, debris flow, and of course ice flow. They will need drawings that will need to be submitted to all the proper people to study and understand them. M. Musial responded yes, absolutely. They are working with Environmental Design Group which is who developed the site plan for them, and they have done a number of other waterfront projects around the State as well as here in Vermilion so they will be helping to coordinate a lot of that. Lynn Miggins is active with their club, and her firm is going to be active in this project as well with some of the engineering. J. Hauck said with his business down there he has personally seen the flow and the furthest south dock constantly gets mangled to the point that they don't even put it in any longer. With that being said, has he talked to any of the local historians on the river who have vast amounts of knowledge to take it to someone professional. M. Musial answered some, but not enough yet. J. Hauck said he would encourage that.

D. Miklos asked if it would be a Rotary maintained project after it is completed as well. M. Musial answered yes, the Rotary was maintaining the park and the folks involved got lazy and were not maintaining it as much. He got back involved four or five years ago and has been much more active with it. Part of the funds they get from the sale of the donation are going to be set up as an endowment fund for the park to ensure funds are there to maintain it in the future as well. It is not a one and done. D. Miklos said a lot of that stuff has a definitive lifespan and it might not be in their lifetime, but it definitely has a lifespan. M. Musial agreed.

P. Corogin said one thing they need to come to grips with is that the Port Authority historically has had jurisdiction over river frontage, so they need to make sure to sign off or approve to make sure they do their responsibility. The members expressed agreement. P. Corogin said he likes the stone instead of just the concrete wall or the railroad ties, it is a nice feature. M. Musial said when you go further up river on the south side of the railroad tracks on the opposite side, they have the same kind of 5-ton stones lined up along there but it is grown over and right now they have such a hodge podge of things along there it will be nice having some cohesiveness with it and finishing things off so it is attractive and useful.

J. Hauck said that M. Musial had mentioned grants and asked for their own knowledge what type of grants they are applying for. M. Musial answered ODNR has a grant for waterfront erosion issues and invasive species ratification. They have a little bit of both of that there and he has already had conversations with the folks at ODNR about this. It is not a matching grant, it is full-scale and they are excited about this project too because it fits in exactly the type of thing they are looking at. J. Hauck asked what that grant funds. M. Musial answered this one would cover all the engineering, architectural, the stone façade, sheet piling, and everything along the riverfront and the clean up along the banks into the where the railroad is. A lot of City property there has been overgrown, and they are looking to eliminate some of that and reclaim some of it to expand the size of the park. J. Hauck asked if there is anything tied to the grant, once they give the money is there anything they are tied to as far as how it can be used. M. Musial answered it is to be used for the project for which it is presented.

P. Corogin asked if he would be in a position to share some further drawings as they move along with the project. M. Musial answered yes, absolutely. P. Corogin said it would be helpful for them to get a better perspective on it. M. Musial said he looks at them all as partners in this and you have to do it in a way that benefits everyone otherwise, you shouldn't be doing it in the first

place. This has been in the works and the planning for a year and a half, so they have been working on this for quite a while. P. Corogin asked as he gets information to share with the board and they will do research on their side to see if there are any issues.

Sandra Coe representing the Vermilion Chamber of Commerce said they have a new event they want to propose for Vermilion. There is not really much going on in Christmas in July on the river, so they want to use their asset and they came up with Santa Splashdown: Adopt an Elf River Race. It will be a family friendly festive river race for teams to decorate and motorize their rafts which could be kayaks or paddleboards or anything as long as it does not have an engine. There will be raffle tickets and teams racing and the team who wins will win money. They are asking to use the public launch ramp to launch them from there. She will get the permits through ODNR. It will not impede the river for anyone else, no different than when they have the crazy craft regatta. J. Hauck asked if it was an organized paddle. S. Coe answered yes, kayaks, paddleboards, canoes. J. Hauck asked if it would be similar to a poker run. S. Coe answered no, they will be racing from the public ramp to Water Works, or Parson's Marina, or they might have them turn around and go back to the ramp. Those are some of the details they are working on. She wanted to make sure they could use the launch ramp that day.

P. Corogin asked if the date was a Saturday. S. Coe answered yes, from 8am – 1pm. A. Bias asked if she would have a lot of parking down at the launch ramp. S. Coe said it depends on how many because their plan was 10 plus rafts and she doesn't know who will sign up to participate. A. Bias answered if people would come down to watch. S. Coe answered yes, probably at McGarvey's landing they will stand there but it will not impede that public area, anyone can still come down and sit on the picnic tables, they will have judges there as well. A. Bias answered if the judging will take place at the end of the race. S. Coe said they have not put those details together yet. A. Bias said for the poker run, they have people leaving the launch ramp and they go all the way down to the RV park and come back but it is still a good paddle. S. Coe asked if it was too far. A. Bias answered no, about 99% of the people finish it, he will have to see how it relates to going to Water Works and back. S. Coe said they will have safety boats.

D. Miklos said the only concern they would have is how much additional parking there will be and if it will impede with the regular business and a Saturday in July could be a busy boat traffic day. J. Hauck asked if it was a ticketed event. S. Coe answered yes, they will have to pay to register. When they do a race format, they are looking at 10 plus rafts to launch, and they will be judged like the crazy craft for creativity along with the place they finish. A. Bias asked if people who are not on the rafts pay to adopt one of the rafts. S. Coe answered they will have raffle tickets they can buy the day of the event. The volunteers and set up will begin at 8am, at 9am they will inspect the rafts and ticket sales will begin at 10am. They have also talked about people placing bets on whose raft they think will place first. A. Bias said his question is parking and how much space they will need at the launch ramp if there are tables for judges or tables that tickets are being sold from. S. Coe said they were looking to do that more at McGarvey's Landing. There will be volunteers where they check in and get into the water to do the registration. A. Bias asked if the elves would be launched at the launch ramp and then the spectators would buy their tickets at McGarvey's Landing. S. Coe answered yes. More details will be worked out for that. J. Hauck asked if they were to have the event, would it make more sense to drop the kayaks off and loop around and park elsewhere to leave the parking lot open. A. Bias said they have potential to fill the parking lot in June or July because it is the peak time. S. Coe said they can give the instructions to drop off and then go park, those details can be worked out. A. Bias said if the bulk of people are at McGarvey's it would be more doable because McGarvey's doesn't get as busy. D. Miklos asked if they have any yacht clubs or people who have rented McGarvey's for that weekend. A. Bias answered their weekends fluctuate but chances are they will probably have some kind of group in July, but it depends on when they schedule their regattas. D. Miklos asked if they have

multiple 40-foot boats that are tied up, will it be a problem for spectators. S. Coe said she doesn't think so because she thinks they can do like what they do for Crazy Craft and borrow a corner of Quaker Steak and Lube to do that. There are so many ways they can make it work. A. Bias said he would suggest she talks to Quaker Steak about parking as well. S. Coe said that is her next step, she wanted to make sure it is okay they use the Launch Ramp.

P. Corogin said this is a fundraiser for the Chamber and an activity for the community. S. Coe said they want to bring people into town because a lot of the merchants say they have nothing for Christmas in July. They used to do the Chocolate and Wine Walk, but no one wants to do that in hot weather. P. Corogin asked A. Bias if he thought this would work out without impacting them. A. Bias answered yes, he would want to know exactly how many boats they plan to launch at South Street when they figure that out and then keep him updated on the number of tables and what is going on. J. Hauck said there is a cap for the poker run and he can think of the capacity for that they can cap the tickets that way. A. Bias said this will be a little different because there aren't going to be 125 entries with 125 cars.

S. Coe said their timeline is 3-6 months before they want to secure river permits, launch marketing and sponsor recruitment and open registration. They will have an idea of how many rafts are registered after that. This is just an idea they don't know if it will work but they are hoping to bring more people into town and promote Vermilion and what we have to offer. She will continue to work with Arron as the information continues to be updated. P. Corogin said she had their blessing.

FINANCIAL REVIEW:

Arron Bias, Port Operations Manager, reported on the Statement of Cash from Revenue and Expense for period ending November 30, 2025. Nothing has changed because they are in the off season at this point.

The Port Authority Capital Fund 411 beginning balance as of November 30, was \$47,573.50. The following reported by A. Bias indicates the following: Net Revenue YTD - \$57,303.80; Net Expense YTD - \$69,431.34; Unexpended Balance - \$35,445.96; Ending Balance - \$35,392.84.

The Dredge Grant Fund beginning balance of January 1, 2026, was \$404.99 which stayed the same.

Arron Bias reported on the Statement of Cash from Revenue and Expense ending November 30, 2025, which hasn't changed much since the last meeting. They have an Ending Balance of \$282,827.19.

P. Corogin asked if he was working with Mike Moes as he is working hard on all the dredging plans. A. Bias answered he signed off on everything he needs and Mike knows that he can contact the Port Authority if he needs help with anything. P. Corogin said he has really taken this dredging almost single-handedly by himself to coordinate with all the marinas and of course the Port. A. Bias said last year they volunteered to help with soundings and if he needs help again this year they can. D. Miklos asked if they needed to do dredging where their docks are. P. Corogin said Mike has soundings and a plan for dredging along the whole river starting at Parson's and then going up to Moe's, the Boat Club, the Port Authority's facility at East Exchange, and then the Condos. D. Miklos asked how they are paying for it. P. Corogin answered that is the plan he is putting together. A. Bias said they have soundings from the Army Corps which show the depth of everything too. Last year, they didn't have any issues with depth at any of their marinas, so it seems they are still doing okay with dredging. J. Hauck asked about the launch ramp. A. Bias answered the launch ramp has been fine too, they just had dredging there two years ago at the

beginning of 2024 and it is still holing up there. P. Corogin asked if Mike has presented Arron with what he has recapped so far. A. Bias answered he will have to get with Mike to see where he is at, he has not received any additional emails in the last month after he signed off on everything. P. Corogin said they need to help support his effort because he is doing a lot by himself and he is covering all the marinas and lagoons and river areas, and it is substantial.

ACTIVITY REPORT:

Arron Bias reported on the Vermilion Port Authority Activity Report as follows:

Waterworks Marina: No Update.

McGarvey's Landing: No Update.

South Street Ramp:

Arron Bias reported they had the asphalt worked on at the Launch Ramp and while they were excavating the first section, it was discovered that there wasn't a sufficient base, so they had to take out two additional inches and since they had all the equipment there and they were ready to do it, they went ahead and had it done. It was an additional \$3,500 above what was approved so he will need approval for the additional \$3,500 for the additional two inches they took out. P. Corogin asked if everyone had been down to see how nice it looked. H. Riddle said it looks nice.

Arron Bias said during the transition of Financial Directors, their budget hasn't been finalized yet, so they have a last minute opportunity to make any changes to the budget. He proposed they approve the \$3,500 and then additionally approve \$3,500 into the budget so it is covered in their budget.

D. Miklos MOVED; H. Riddle seconded to approve the additional \$3,500 for the paving at South Street. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

D. Miklos MOVED; P. Corogin seconded to increase the budget by \$3,500 to cover the paving and excavating at South Street. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

Miscellaneous Financial:

Arron Bias said all 2025 deposits have been reported and additionally they received \$750 in donations on behalf of the death of Richard Bulan. He and the Port Authority gave his family their most sincere condolences and he thanked Richard Bulan and his family for their contributions to the Port Authority over the years. Appreciation letters were sent to the family. H. Riddle asked who sent letters to the family. A. Bias answered he did.

He went to a meeting for the Destination Development Grant for this year and got with Marc Weisenburger and they spoke with the grant coordinator who said they can submit a grant together under the City of Vermilion and what this does is it circumvents competition. Last year, they didn't know they were both applying for the grant, the Port Authority was approved, and the Parks Department was not approved because of that. If they do this, since the Parks Department is going for a bigger ticket item, it would be a matching grant so anything they get, they will have to put in themselves. If they apply for this grant, he needs to know how much money they will be willing to match. The few ideas he has are one to two new docks, new trash cans for all locations or picnic tables and umbrellas for McGarvey's Landing. Since they will be applying as the City of Vermilion, they are not restricted to a single location because the location

is the entire city so it gives more leniency to what they can do. J. Hauck asked if there was a cap to the match. A. Bias answered the maximum they grant for a single grant is around \$70,000.

P. Corogin asked whatever grant is obtained, they will be sharing with the Parks Department, will they be sharing it at 50% equally? A. Bias answered they are not sharing funding, whatever money is granted for the Parks Department, they will match for their project and whatever is granted for Port Authority will be matched by the Port Authority.

P. Corogin asked if they go for one new dock, with the estimated commitment being \$15,000 is that what they estimate one new dock will cost? A. Bias answered if they go for one new dock, they will spend around \$15,000 on a dock and they will get \$15,000 and then they have to match \$15,000 which would give them \$30,000 which would potentially get them two docks. P. Corogin asked what docks he was looking at. A. Bias answered in the past they talked about docks one and two and three and four at Water Works and turning those into 35-foot docks instead of keeping them at 30 feet. P. Corogin asked if it kept them inside the federal channel. A. Bias answered yes, and it gives them more opportunity because the boats just keep getting bigger and some of the boats that come in are hanging far off the docks.

P. Corogin asked A. Bias his recommendation on what they should go for based on need. A. Bias said if they want to commit \$15,000, they can try to get a couple of docks. If the board is not comfortable with that much money, they can apply for trash cans which cost less but it seems like they are always talking about when they are going to get new docks. J. Hauck said it sounds like a lot of work just for trash cans. P. Corogin said he likes the dock, they have been talking about this for a long time. H. Riddle said she likes the dock too, they have to start doing it. J. Hauck said they have talked about electricity a lot, is that something they should add? A. Bias said he doesn't think that would be covered by the grant mainly because it has to be a new item, not repairing existing items. If they do an electrical repair, they might consider it repairing an existing issue. J. Hauck said he thinks he should look into that because it would be a completely new system. P. Corogin said to get started, are they comfortable to give him the okay to apply for the dock. J. Hauck said yes, even if they decided not to. A. Bias said they can go for dock and electric if they want because it won't hit the cap of \$70,000. D. Miklos asked if the cap was for their portion, or if it is the total with the Port Authority and Parks Department. A. Bias answered that is the total amount of the grant that someone can apply for. D. Miklos asked how much the Parks Department is going for. A. Bias said they are still finalizing their numbers, but he believes it is around \$25,000. P. Corogin said he knows they want to do docks. J. Hauck said it makes sense to go for \$35,000 and maximize their opportunity. A. Bias said it would depend on how much money they are comfortable with spending out of their carryover. J. Hauck asked if it had to be spent in one calendar year. Can they get the grant and show the funds for one project in one year, and then do another project the following year? A. Bias responded that they do this grant every year. J. Hauck said right but do they have to spend the money and have the project completed in one calendar year. A. Bias answered yes, he thinks so. H. Riddle said if the grant is available every year, why would they do that. A. Bias said your existing grant also has to be completed before you can apply for the following year's grant so they would want to complete it before the next grant. P. Corogin said he is comfortable with the commitment of a dock, they have been talking about it and have gone to see them. H. Riddle says she is too. D. Miklos said especially if they are increasing them from 30 to 35 feet. He knows they talked about repair programs and refurbishing but they are not getting grant money for that, and they are not gaining five feet and don't have the potential to bring a bigger boat which generates some additional money. A. Bias asked if a couple of the members could come look at docks with him, so he has a board member's opinion.

D. Miklos MOVED; J. Hauck seconded to approve the Arron Bias to apply for the Destination Development Grant requesting \$15,000 to replace docks one and two and matching for docks three and four at Water Works. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

H. Riddle MOVED; D. Miklos seconded to approve the additional \$15,000 in matching funds for the grant to be included in the budget. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS. MOTION CARRIED.

Arron Bias said he will be sourcing some new hires for the 2026 season. D. Miklos asked if they were losing anyone. A. Bias answered Bob is no longer working there and they might be losing one other person, but he is not sure yet.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairperson Peter Corogin adjourned the meeting upon no further discussion.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, March 12, 2026 – 6:30 p.m.

@ Vermilion Municipal Court Complex, 687 Decatur Street, Vermilion, Oh.

Transcribed by: Melanie Wood, Clerk of Council 1/14/2026