

# Geauga County Planning Commission

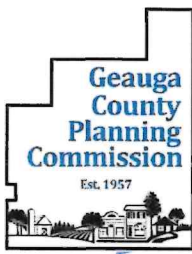
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<https://bocc.geauga.oh.gov/departments/planning-commission>

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***GEAUGA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA***  
***January 13, 2026 REGULAR MEETING***  
***12611 Ravenwood Drive***  
***Conference Room A334, 3rd Floor***  
***7:30 A.M.***

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Election of Officers for 2026: Chairman  
Vice Chairman  
Secretary/Treasurer
4. Approval of Minutes:
  - A. December 9, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes
  - B. December 23, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes
5. Approval of Agenda/Addendum:
6. Financial Report and Approval of Expenses:
7. Other Business:
  - A. 2025 Accomplishments and 2026 Goals (Department)
  - B. Geauga County 2025 Profile
  - C. Ratification of paid time off
8. Major Subdivisions to be reviewed: None
9. Township Zoning Amendments to be Reviewed: None
10. Director's Report:
11. Correspondence: None
12. Old Business:
  - A. Farmland Preservation Plan Update
13. New Business:
  - A. Mileage Reimbursement for 2026 (\$0.725 cents per mile)
  - B. ODA Grant
  - C. Intern
14. Adjournment

Per Article 4, Section 2 of the Bylaws of the Geauga County Planning Commission,  
this agenda is subject to modification.



# Geauga County Planning Commission

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## JANUARY 13, 2026 MEETING MINUTES

### **1. Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Nick Gorris called the January 13, 2026, regular meeting of the Geauga County Planning Commission to order at 7:30 a.m. at 12611 Ravenwood Drive, Suite A334, Chardon, Ohio. A quorum was present. Roll call was taken by Ms. Irizarry, and the following members were present:

### **2. Roll Call**

Members present: Nick Gorris, Phillip Miller, Dennis Bergansky, Enzo Perfetto, Lee Imhof, Matthew Mesok, Alternate Dave Fabig for Commissioner Dvorak, and Alternate Walter Claypool for Commissioner Ralph Spidalieri.

Members absent: Commissioner Carolyn Brakey, Bob Rogish, Jr., and Matt Johnson.

Staff present: Linda Crombie (Director), Pamela Irizarry (Administrative Assistant) and Allyson Kobus (Planner II/GIS Coordinator).

Mr. Gorris said he would like to welcome the three new board members to their first Planning Commission meeting. Each member and staff introduced themselves.

### **3. Election of Officers for 2026: (Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary/Treasurer)**

Mr. Gorris said it is time for Election of Officers, and he opened the floor for nominations for Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary/Treasurer. Mr. Bergansky nominated Mr. Gorris as Chairman.

Motion made by Mr. Bergansky to elect Nick Gorris as Chairman and Mr. Claypool seconded. There were no other nominations or discussion, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Gorris nominated Mr. Bergansky as Vice-Chairman.

Motion made by Chairman Gorris to elect Mr. Bergansky as Vice-Chairman and Mr. Claypool seconded. There were no other nominations or discussion, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Gorris nominated Mr. Perfetto as Secretary/Treasurer.

Motion made by Chairman Gorris to elect Mr. Perfetto as Secretary/Treasurer, and Mr. Bergansky seconded. There were no other nominations or discussion, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

### **4. Approval of Minutes:**

#### **A. December 9, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Motion made by Mr. Bergansky to approve the December 9, 2025 regular meeting minutes as presented, and Mr. Miller seconded the motion, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**B. December 23, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes**

Motion made by Mr. Perfetto to approve the December 23, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes as presented, and Mr. Bergansky seconded, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**5. Approval of Agenda/Addendum Items:**

Motion made by Mr. Perfetto to approve the agenda as presented and Mr. Fabig seconded, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**6. Financial Reports and Approval of Expenses: (December 2025 and 2026 Appropriations)**

Chairman Gorris asked Ms. Irizarry if there was anything significant on the Financial Report and Ms. Irizarry said Ms. Kobus' tuition reimbursement has been paid for her Fall 2025 classes, and she created two financial reports for this meeting. One outlines the financials for the month of December, and one shows the new appropriations for Fiscal year 2026. Chairman Gorris told Mr. Perfetto he will be signing off on these reports.

Motion made by Mr. Claypool to approve the financial reports and the summary of expenses for December 2025 and 2026 Appropriations as submitted. Mr. Bergansky seconded, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**7. Other Business:**

**A. 2025 Accomplishments and 2026 Goals (Department):**

Ms. Crombie presented the 2025 accomplishments, and a draft of all the 2026 Goals. She explained the "green check" shows the project was started, worked on, or completed, and the "red x" shows the project was not started.

Ms. Crombie highlighted the bigger 2025 projects, such as the Farmland Preservation Plan Update, County Model Zoning Resolution update, Township Land Use Plan Assistance, Info Sheets Series, Directory of Public Officials update, Standard Operating Procedures Update, the Mining Operations report, which was posted to Planning Commission's website, Buildings by Type and the Census Data Book.

She said staff did not work on the County Subdivision Regulations update but in 2026 we may pursue reducing the number of application forms and making them electronic. She noted the staff were not available to participate in Amish Safety Day at the end of July.

Ms. Crombie said the 2026 Goals are partially based on the 2025-2029 5-Year Goal Timeline, which shows work the staff are required to do, such as Subdivision reviews, Township Zoning Amendments, Census Data; work staff should do, such as Info Sheets series, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), Township Land Use Plan Update; and work staff could do, such as custom projects, interactive mapping, and story maps.

Ms. Crombie said staff will continue with updating the Farmland Preservation Plan first, then work on finalizing the Agriculture/Zoning Info Sheet, finish writing the Thompson Township Land Use Plan, perform necessary updates to the County Model Zoning Resolution, County Subdivision Regulations, Building by Type and Census Data Book, which the intern in the summer will work on, and any other routine projects. Ms. Crombie noted that more outreach to the township would be pursued but as to the form and how often, that is up for future discussion.

Chairman Gorris asked once the Info Sheet is completed, can this be highlighted on the website since is it informative. He asked if staff could reach out to Company 119 to find out how to highlight good information. Ms. Kobus said the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has something like that on their website.

Chairman Gorris said along with requesting this information, staff also needs to update Planning Commission's website showing the new board members and changes in officers.

**B. Geauga County 2025 Profile:**

Ms. Crombie presented the board with the Ohio County Profile 2025 information from the Ohio Department of Development. She said this profile provides data related to population, housing, agriculture, income, education, land use, taxes, etc. Such data can be used to update the County General Plan and Comprehensive land use plan.

**C. Ratification of paid time off:**

Chairman Gorris said the BOCC granted a change to their holiday schedule. A decision was made by the BOCC to grant employees under their hiring authority December 24, 2025 and December 26, 2025 as paid time off. Since Planning Commission does not fall under the hiring authority of the BOCC, the Prosecutor's Office advised the Commission's three executive officers could decide to follow the BOCC but a motion is needed from the board to ratify December 24, 2025 and December 26, 2025 as paid time off for staff.

Chairman Gorris said he and the Planning Director, Linda Crombie, will look at the policy and procedure manual to change this to be more in line with the BOCC.

Motion made by Mr. Bergansky to ratify December 24, 2025 and December 26, 2025 as paid time off for staff. Mr. Miller seconded, and upon a call for the vote the motion passed unanimously.

**8. Major Subdivisions to be reviewed: None**

**9. Township Zoning Amendments to be Reviewed: None**

**10. Director's Report:**

Ms. Crombie said three new building lot proposals were submitted in December. Regarding land use plan updates, she wants staff to complete the Thompson Township Land Use this month or next to focus on the Farmland Preservation Plan Update.

Ms. Crombie said Ms. Kobus started the zoning requirements matrix, which is an at-a-glance guide of various township zoning requirements. Ms. Irizarry expanded it over the past year, adding more detail. Ms. Crombie presented the zoning matrix to the board, highlighting the various zoning information, such

as which townships allow flag lots, surface mining, accessory dwelling units, riparian setbacks, shipping containers, pond setbacks, and more. Mr. Claypool asked if this matrix was part of the packet of information emailed out to the board. Ms. Crombie said no, it is still in the draft form, but she will send it to the board. Chairman Gorris said Burton Township has a matrix they use, he will share it with Ms. Irizarry.

Ms. Crombie said Geauga Soil and Water Conservation District (GSWCD) is required to monitor the agricultural easements approved under the LAEPP (Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program). Carmella Shale, the Director of GSWCD, provided her with the report to make sure there is no subdividing of land.

Ms. Crombie said another farm preserved under the LAEPP program is the Hope Farm, which was approved in December, totaling 129 acres located in Thompson Township. This new easement brings the total preserved farmland under this program to 451 acres in the County.

Ms. Crombie said a conservation easement was approved by the Henry's and the Western Reserve Land Conservancy in Munson Township. It totals 31.094 acres, all of which are two (2) smaller parcels and the back portion of a larger parcel. Chairman Gorris said there is a ravine there, it is not flat.

Ms. Crombie said Laketrans and Geauga Transit received a grant from Ohio Workforce Mobility Program to expand transportation throughout Lake and Geauga Counties. Also, the BOCC received an Excellence Award for Collaborative Excellence by the Ohio Public Transit Association regarding the partnership between Geauga Transit and Laketrans to improve services in the county.

Ms. Crombie provided the board with an update that the 7.0 mile long Norfolk Southern rail line located between the City of Solon and Treat Road in the City of Aurora will be sponsored by the City of Solon and West Creek Conservancy as a rail to trail project. Mr. Perfetto asked if the easement was granted and was there any liability. Ms. Crombie said her understanding is that it is a direct purchase.

Ms. Crombie briefly described two significant non-residential permits issued in December: Newbury Township, Cross Creek Parkway for an office and warehouse addition and the City of Chardon, North Street, for tennis courts for the Chardon Board of Education. Ms. Crombie informed the board of the New Housing Starts and Commercial Construction Permits for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter in 2025.

Legislative Updates: Ms. Crombie highlighted the House and Senate Bills that affect planning and zoning. HB 598: introduced November 18, 2025: This bill proposes to authorize local governments to create residential stability zones where homeowners may qualify for a partial property tax exemption.

HB 608: introduced November 18, 2025: This bill proposes to modify the law governing property taxes and other local taxes.

HB 609: introduced November 25, 2025: This bill proposes to require a public body to allow for public commentary and testimony before taking formal action on any item.

HB 630: introduced December 17, 2025: This bill proposes to amend sections of the Revised Code regarding police escorts for farm equipment and vehicles that haul agricultural equipment and produce. A police escort would not be required by the director of transportation if the permit holder operates the machinery or equipment on a state route other than an interstate; and the permit holder moves the machinery or equipment less than 10 miles.

**11. Correspondence: None**

**12. Old Business:**

**A. Farmland Preservation Plan Update:**

Ms. Crombie said the Farmland Preservation Task Force held its fourth meeting on Thursday, December 18, 2025. They discussed Task Force recommendations from the 2008 Farmland Preservation Plan, House and Senate Bills related to agriculture and zoning, the ODA (Ohio Department of Agriculture) Farmland Preservation Grant, accessory dwelling units, current task force and staff recommendations discussed so far, which included creating an Everything Ag Website where everything agriculture related can be found on one website, continued agricultural education in children, additional agricultural preservation tools, Agritourism, a local Agricultural Expo, some type of a local food guide, and a Farm to Feast Cookbook with recipes only from local farmers. Ms. Crombie said the staff's idea would be to charge a fee for the cookbook, which would go toward a scholarship fund for students interested in pursuing agriculture.

Ms. Crombie then presented the board with the approved meeting minutes from the October 28, 2025 Farmland Preservation Plan Task Force for their information. She said given the ODA farmland preservation grant is now a possibility, which she will discuss later in detail, the next Farmland Preservation Task Force meeting will be held after the ODA grant is submitted.

Mr. Claypool asked if Western Reserve Land Conservancy is having discussions with people about giving up their rights to farmland, which is giving up your right to control your own property. He said conservation easements are in perpetuity, which takes away the rights of the future, and this limits a farmer's ability to adapt to changing agricultural practices. Ms. Crombie said a conservation easement info sheet was previously drafted and the staff could focus on finalizing it instead of others.

Mr. Claypool suggested putting together a presentation of legal rights to farmers and why a farmer should sell only to farmers. Chairman Gorris said these topics come up in meetings, we hear from older farmers how their kids have no interest in farming. Maybe there needs to be an educational program that leases a farm to a younger family to see if they would potentially have an interest in farming and taking it over one day. Mr. Gorris said that unfortunately, some of the younger generation want to do other things than farming.

**13. New Business:**

**A. Mileage Reimbursement for 2026 (\$.072 cents per mile):**

Ms. Crombie said the mileage reimbursement rate requires approval each year.

Motion made by Mr. Claypool to approve the IRS mileage reimbursement of \$0.72 cents per mile for 2026, and seconded by Mr. Bergansky, and upon a call for the vote the motion passed unanimously.

**B. ODA Grant:**

Ms. Crombie said the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) released information regarding its Land Use Planning Grant 2025, which provides financial and technical assistance to county governments to develop, update, or implement a Comprehensive Land Use Plan or Farmland Preservation Plan.

Ms. Crombie said \$25,000 is available to update their farmland preservation plan and she must submit it by February 27, 2026. She said to be eligible, counties must demonstrate collaboration with all townships, villages, and municipalities within the county that contain active farmland, the county Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and/or Regional Planning Commission, and others such as land trusts, agricultural nonprofits, or educational institutions. She will draft a letter requesting a letter of support and send it to all the county townships, municipalities, and villages.

Applicants will be notified of funding status by March 31, 2026, and the updated plan must be completed by May 31, 2027. Ms. Crombie said there is a 10% local match, and it can be in-kind, which is staff time involvement, equipment use, meeting space, or other documented services directly related to the project. The in-kind must include records of staff hours and rates. Chairman Gorris said grants look for time tracking consistency. Ms. Crombie said at least one public meeting in an un-zoned or non-planning township must be held.

Ms. Crombie said this will take time and the Farmland Preservation Plan Update Task Force meetings will not meet again till April sometime. Chairman Gorris said he did not feel a motion was needed by the board right now until February after the Director works on the application materials.

**C. Intern:**

Ms. Crombie said the 2026 budget included the GIS/Planning Intern position at \$16.00 per hour with a maximum of 560 hours. She presented the GIS/Planning Intern job description to the board for review. She said this is the same job posting/description from last year. Ms. Crombie said last year the intern worked on the buildings by type data GIS Layer and map for Geauga County. She presented the map created by the 2025 intern and explained for edification purposes to the new members, the buildings by type categories, such as institutional, industrial, accessory structure, commercial, and color code for each. Mr. Claypool asked if this map that shows the buildings by type was considered spot zoning. He felt it was not consistent looking at it. Ms. Crombie said there are always going to be non-conforming uses. Chairman Gorris asked if the Chester Township zoning layer could be added. He asked Ms. Kobus if she could take a snapshot and send it to the board members. Mr. Bergansky asked what is institutional? Ms. Crombie said schools, churches, government offices.

Motion made by Mr. Claypool to approve advertising for a GIS/Planning Intern, and seconded by Mr. Bergansky, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Perfetto asked what the status of the NOACA (Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency) letter was sent to the BOCC since the special meeting. Chairman Gorris said staff will reach out to the County Administrator.

**14. Adjournment:**

Motion by Mr. Bergansky to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Miller and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 a.m.

  
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Nick Gorris, Chairman

  
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Enzo Perfetto, Secretary/Treasurer

SUMMARY RESOLUTION FOR EXPENSES  
GEAUGA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

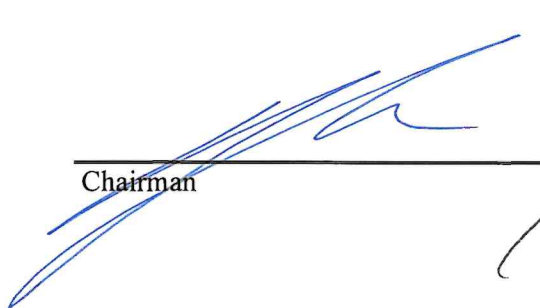
Mr. Claypool MOVED THE ADOPTION OF THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION,  
WHICH MOTION WAS SECONDED BY Mr. Beagasky.

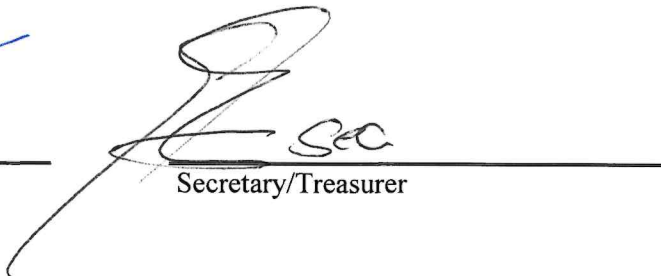
WHEREAS, THE EXPENSES LISTED HEREIN HAVE BEEN INCURRED BY THE GEAUGA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION IN ORDER FOR THE COMMISSION TO PERFORM ITS DUTIES; AND

WHEREAS, THESE EXPENSES HAVE BEEN REVIEWED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION AT ITS JANAURY 13, 2026 MEETING.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE GEAUGA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION HEREBY AUTHORIZES PAYMENT OF THE FOLLOWING BILLS OR CLAIMS:

<u>P.O.</u>	<u>ACCOUNT</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>VENDOR</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
1159	COPIER USAGE	12/2	DEX IMAGING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copier Usage               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 10/22/25 to 11/21/25</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	\$32.64
1166	TRAVEL	12/2	GEAUGA TOWNSHIP ASSOCIATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly Dinner               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Newbury Township</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	\$70.00
1162	SUPPLIES	12/23	STAPLES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office Supplies</li> </ul>	\$567.55
1165	OTHER	12/23	ALLYSON KOBUS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduate School Tuition Reimbursement               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Fall 2025</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	\$1,187.18
<b>TOTAL</b>				<u>\$1,857.37</u>

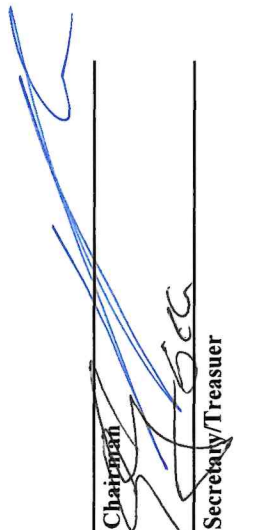
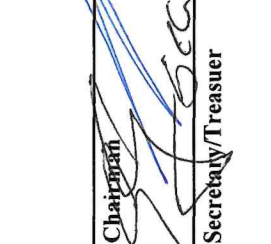
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary/Treasurer

<b><u>Planning Commission Revenues</u></b>	<b><u>Year to Date Balance:</u></b>
January	\$317.40
February	\$1,392.50
March	\$150.00
April	\$1,100.00
May	\$684.83
June	\$4,267.42
July	\$450.00
August	\$1,700.00
September	\$3,300.00
October	\$600.00
November	\$1,750.00
December	\$950.00
	<b>Yearly Total: \$16,662.15</b>



**GEAUGA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**FINANCIAL REPORT SUMMARY: Month of December 2025**  
**BUDGET - PREPARED**      **6-Jan-26**

<u>Account</u>	<u>Annual Appropriation</u>	<u>Monthly Expenditure</u>	<u>Year to Date Expenditure</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Salaries	178,274.00	-\$13,242.96	\$178,271.22	\$2.78
Supplies	\$1,000.00	-\$567.55	\$962.66	\$37.34
Hospitalization	\$33,212.27	-\$4,892.26	\$33,197.24	\$15.03
Medicare	\$2,950.00	-\$186.23	\$2,535.60	\$414.40
OPERS	\$24,870.00	-\$1,854.02	\$24,862.41	\$7.59
Worker's Comp.	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Expenses	\$3,062.73	-\$1,187.18	\$1,974.79	\$1,087.94
Equipment	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	\$2,500.00	\$0.00
Contracted Services	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Covid -19 Expenses	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Copier Usage Services	\$700.00	-32.64	\$404.63	\$295.37
Travel	\$3,420.00	-70.00	\$3,090.97	\$329.03
Advertising	\$150.00	0.00	\$69.00	\$81.00
Training	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$369.00	\$131.00
Member, Dues, Lic. Sub	\$3,200.00	\$0.00	\$3,098.00	\$102.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$253,839.00</b>	<b>-\$22,032.84</b>	<b>\$251,335.52</b>	<b>\$2,503.48</b>

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chairman  
  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Secretary/Treasurer

**GEAUGA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**FINANCIAL REPORT SUMMARY: 2026 Appropriations**  
**BUDGET - PREPARED**      **6-Jan-26**

<u>Account</u>	<u>Annual Appropriation</u>	<u>Monthly Expenditure</u>	<u>Year to Date Expenditure</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Salaries	\$181,875.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$181,875.00
Supplies	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00
Hospitalization	\$30,879.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$30,879.00
Medicare	\$2,650.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,650.00
OPERS	\$25,480.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$25,480.00
Worker's Comp.	\$90.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$90.00
Other Expenses	\$2,700.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,700.00
Equipment	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Contracted Services	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Covid -19 Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Copier Usage Services	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$600.00
Travel	\$3,860.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,860.00
Advertising	\$325.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$325.00
Training	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$400.00
Member, Dues, Lic. Sub	\$4,100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$254,459.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$254,459.00</b>

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chairman  
  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Secretary/Treasurer