

## CHCA Minutes – February 2026

1. **Attendance** – Leslie Caruso, Matt McKeegan, Alan Miroslaw, Mary Ann Ogle, Will Pearce, Lis Rundle, Ron Sears, Brittany Smith, Mercedes Chomos, Alec Chomos, Francis Scardina, Heather Barkimer, Max Wright
2. **Review/Approve prior month's minutes** – *Mary Ann motion, Will second, passed.*
3. **Treasurer's Report-Fund Balances, Revenues, Expenses, Invoices**
  - **Fund Balance**
    - Matt sent the January P&L reports and bank reconciliation forms for the CHCA accounts (Checking and Money Market Savings), along with the proposed 2026 budget. Current account balances are Checking ~\$2,469 and Money Market Savings ~\$18,296.
    - Matt noted the balances remain healthy, totaling ~ \$21,716 across the accounts, and that monthly P&L activity is minimal at this time. Ad sales are coming in, and most advertisers have confirmed they will continue.
    - Matt also shared that he revised and recirculated the budget following the prior discussion, noting that he increased the Holiday Party budget. He inquired about the decision to set the scholarship amount at \$5,000 versus \$6,000. He noted that the organization will likely show a \$1,000 loss this year if the scholarship award is \$6,000. The group discussed the need to increase membership dues and Courier advertising. Matt mentioned that one district had zero participation. Heather asked whether trustees could be made aware of contributions from their districts. Will noted that the website has a worksheet with trustee emails and said he will email the list to Matt. Matt said he could begin sharing the district participation percentages with the trustees in May, monthly. Leslie suggested bringing the proposed budget to the next meeting for review and approval.
    - The group revisited the scholarship amount, noting it was determined in the last meeting that the final decision should be deferred until the financials were clearer. Will recommended that the scholarship be posted at \$6,000.
4. **Update for 2026 Courier #1**
  - Will confirmed that he verified the addresses for GraphX. Leslie shared that the magnets had been completed and thanked Will and Cynthia. The group noted that the minimum order quantity is 1,000 magnets and clarified that GraphX withdraws payment from the bank, and the invoice is available on the pull date. Matt added that he issues the invoice to Cynthia after ad-related and Halloween-related costs are finalized.
5. **Buddy Box Packing Event Update. May 3, 2026**
  - Alan shared the Buddy Box Packing event is scheduled for May 3rd, and Emily typically needs about 20 volunteers, but the specific time is still being finalized. Leslie added that the event usually lasts a couple of hours and is a fun activity.
6. **Scholarship Applications/Deadlines.**
  - **Due Date April 4<sup>th</sup>**
  - **Determination Date April 14th**
  - **Scholarship Ceremony Thursday May 21st**
    - Leslie shared that she heard from Kelly Swearingen, who coordinates the scholarship ceremony for Thomas Worthington. Leslie provided the timeline: the submission deadline is April 4, the determination date is April 14 (at the CHCA meeting), and the scholarship ceremony will be held on Thursday, May 21, around 8 a.m. The group noted that the final award amount (\$5,000 vs. \$6,000) is still under consideration and depends on the

organization's financial status. Leslie also mentioned that two 2026 applicants, Alec Chomos and Francis Scardina, were present at the meeting.

## 7. July 4<sup>th</sup> Update

- Ron shared that he would confirm whether Randy Sanders can present his collection of historical artifacts (arrowheads, tools) during the July 4<sup>th</sup> event. He estimates a presentation approximately every 15 minutes.
- Ron mentioned that he is considering new game ideas, including a 3D pinball concept and a “bugs in the rug” electronic-input concept, and is interested in brainstorming these during the next meeting. He noted that last year's axe-throwing activity was created on a whim but ended up being very popular.
- Ron shared that he would like to recruit booths in advance, in ways that give volunteers more team-oriented ownership and engagement opportunities.

## 8. Public Comments

- The group discussed the upcoming Easter Egg Event. Alan confirmed that Annie Schuster will serve as chair, but she is seeking both a co-chair and a successor for next year. He shared that supply purchasing is underway and that the processes for setting up the course and stuffing the eggs are well-established
- Max provided an update on social media and Volunteer Outreach. He noted that the Instagram and Facebook accounts are now linked, and the team is working on giving Alan admin access and enabling Facebook posts to automatically share to Instagram. He noted that he does recognize that some residents are not active on social media and believes a physical bulletin board at the park would be helpful.
- Leslie announced that she is thrilled to have Heather Barkimer, our Welcome Wagon Chair, in attendance. Heather shared that she has had great success working with community sponsors to secure donated goodies—such as a plant, a day pass to the rec center, and a shopping bag for the farmer's market. She receives the previous month's home-sale list from Cymack and keeps an eye out for new neighbors herself. She estimates that there are about 2–4 new households each month. Heather shared that recipients are delighted by the welcome bags. Leslie and the group thanked Heather and her helpers (her children) for being such wonderful ambassadors to Colonial Hills.
- Alec, a senior at Thomas Worthington, introduced himself. He is involved in STEM, marching band, and baseball. He has a sister in 8th grade and shared that he plans to help with the social media accounts once those efforts kick off. Alec has volunteered at the July 4th event multiple times and has helped fill luminary bags.
- Francis, also a senior at Thomas Worthington, introduced himself. He is in the marching band and has volunteered at the Holiday Party, the Easter event, and with Courier and Welcome Bags. He shared that he has always enjoyed living in the neighborhood and sees it as a welcoming community.
- Ron asked the students to share one thing Colonial Hills could do in the future to make it better for kids.
  - Max shared that a bit more urbanization and updates to outdated areas, especially those that could support year-round activities, might invigorate the community. Proposed ideas included a skateboard park, a movable container-based art gallery, outdoor art installations, a Zen Garden, an antique-aircraft play/exploration feature, and a potential ice rink. He also noted several infrastructure concerns, such as sidewalks in need of repair and recurring water-main breaks.
  - Alec shared that while it is easy to navigate within the immediate neighborhood, it is difficult to reach adjacent areas without a car due to barriers at 161 and High Street. He expressed interest in improving walkability to surrounding destinations and proposed creating a bike path connecting Colonial Hills with surrounding areas, such as Old Worthington, Dairy Queen, Kilbourne, and the library.
  - The group discussed creating more year-round opportunities, such as a designated sledding hill and winter classes at the Shelter House. Ron noted that there is “not much to

- do” during colder months and reiterated the potential value of offering structured winter activities.
- Alan suggested that perhaps some of these ideas could be incorporated into the upcoming Shelter House remodel. The group discussed transforming the Shelter House into more of a “mini rec center”—staffed by Parks & Recreation and integrated with the neighborhood. Ideas included offering art and drawing classes, installing a visible community event board, supporting volunteer recruitment, hosting school field trips, and partnering with organizations (e.g., the zoo) for educational presentations.
  - Francis shared that he would enjoy having a community center that helps educate neighbors about what is going on locally. He also noted that such a facility could create employment opportunities and tie into school activities like Clean Up the Ravine or field trips for elementary school.
  - Ron and Will thanked the students for their ideas. Ron emphasized the importance of including youth as key stakeholders when providing feedback to Parks & Recreation. He proposed piloting interviews with young residents, compiling the findings, and submitting them to the city and the schools.
  - Ron raised a public comment regarding the “Worthington Together” interim report and the consultant’s approach. He recommended listening to the recent City Council meeting to better understand the process and related considerations.
  - Heather asked about more effective ways to promote CHCA events and suggested installing a permanent sign at the park featuring upcoming activities. The group noted that a sign would need to be vetted through Parks & Recreation. Leslie suggested contacting Jennifer at Parks & Recreation, and Heather proposed including a direct sign-up link via a QR code on the sign.
  - Ron revisited the topic of recruiting student volunteers and asked whether students would like to have ownership of a booth at the July 4<sup>th</sup> event. The students shared that teens often miss signups without reminders and that small incentives (such as food or popsicles), a team-based volunteering atmosphere, and having at least one partner at a booth would make volunteering more appealing.
  - Matt recalled enjoying a past program called “Java, Juice, and Jelly,” which neighbors hosted on Saturday mornings at the Shelter House. The group discussed the potential to revive the program as a teen volunteer opportunity with clearly defined commitments (e.g., four-week rotations). They imagined offering “something cool” every Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. year-round. The group agreed that this would help create a stronger sense of community.

**9. Adjourn-** *Mary Ann motion, Will second.*