

PORTAGE LAKE ASSOCIATION**Regular Board Meeting**

December 3, 2025

6:00PM

Onekama Township Hall

OUR MISSION: The Portage Lake Association is a group of volunteers who are dedicated to making the Portage Lake Area a great place in which to live, play and stay.

Officers	Board of Directors	Committee Heads
Cyndy Wangbichler, President VACANT, Vice President Evie McNeil, Treasurer Mary Jo McElroy, Secretary Al Taylor, Past President	Jean Capper Susan Halloran Kathy Loynes Mark Miller Roz Jaffe Carey Stark Diane Wemlinger	Brian Devilling, Mary Jo McElroy, Mary Fairgrieve, Theresa Gimpel, Nancy Dabrowski, Paul Mueller, Nikki Schneider, Carrie & Greg Cassagnola, Katy Castillo

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEMS / RESPONSIBILITY
Call to order and welcome	Cyndy Wangbichler called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM. Seven PLA board members attended, either in person or via Zoom. Attendees were Cyndy Wangbichler, Roz Jaffe, Evie McNeil, Mary Jo McElroy, Susan Halloran, Kathy Loynes, and Jean Capper. In addition, three of the prospective board members whose term will begin on January 1, 2026 were invited to attend; they were Cindy Brown Pons, Jane Foster, and Sally Koon. Welcome!	
Additions to the Agenda	Near and Farr Friends report from Mary Fairgrieve	
Consent Agenda	The Consent Agenda consisted of November 2025 minutes and November 2025 financials. Susan Halloran made a motion to approve; Mary Jo McElroy seconded, and the motion passed without discussion or dissent.	Mary Jo to get November minutes posted at Onekama.info .
Correspondence	The PLA received a request for a donation to Manistee County Community Foundation. No action was taken. Roz received an email from Wendell Brooks recognizing the wonderful job that Jean Capper does with the newsletter. Mary Jo attended the West Shore Community College donor recognition breakfast which acknowledged the three \$1500 scholarships from the PLA in memory of Frank English.	
COMMITTEE / EVENT REPORTS		

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Celebration of Lights	<p>Kathy thanked Susan Halloran and Diane Wemlinger for their help with the event. Music was provided by the bell choir at First Congregational Church and the choral group from Church of the Brethren. Net revenue was \$2,402 (less than 2024). Proposed changes for 2026 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have music run a little longer (more songs) • Get the envelopes out earlier • Use a microphone • Move the event to Saturday evening <p>Evie expressed appreciation to Cyndy Wangbichler who honored the PLA members at the event.</p>	Kathy to send an article to Jean Capper for the January newsletter
Christmas Artisan Market	<p>Nikki Schneider sent an update as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few vendors cancelled the night before • Lack of a cookie competition and no Grinch were negatives • Afternoon was slow • Vendor survey (N=19) showed strengths of well-organized event, good marketing, and intent to participate in 2026 • Suggestions for 2026 are to engage more vendors, have a photo op (maybe Santa or the Grinch) 	
STRATEGIC PLAN REPORTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Build and Strengthen Community Collaboration</i> – Joe Suchocki sent an update on his work to engage others; Joe would consider remaining involved if deemed appropriate; Roz suggested having two or three persons coordinate the work • <i>Expand Financial Resources and Build Reserves</i> – Roz and Al – exceeded revenue from business sponsorships (almost \$14,000); sold jigsaw puzzles which netted about \$2300; still need to work on membership campaign, possibility of selling ads in the newsletter, metrics, and possibility of becoming a 501c3 • <i>Build an Engaged Board and Volunteer Force</i> -- Cyndy – still have a few vacancies on the board and committee leaders; also need a leader for the following strategic initiative related to communications 	<p>Cyndy to discuss with Joe Suchocki and recruit a co-leader</p> <p>Roz to send out membership renewal email in late January or early February</p> <p>Cyndy to continue to recruit for vacant board officers and some committee heads</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strengthen and Diversify Communications</i> – Roz discussed need for branding due to confusion about what the PLA is • <i>Establish Effective Operational Tools and Systems</i> – Mary Jo reported that she has drafted the first “operational procedure” on the Summer Party; she is also working on Artisan Market, Banners and Lights, and Fall Festival. Other categories to add to the list are Silent Auction, Business Sponsorship, and Membership. 	<p>Cyndy to recruit for leader; Cyndy to draft RFP for a consultant to assist with branding</p> <p>Roz to provide UserID and password for Google account so that finalized documents can be housed on the share Drive</p>
OLD BUSINESS		
Near and Farr Friends	<p>Near and Farr Friends will collaborate with First Congregational Church on a series of programs on Aging Well in Onekama. They will run from January through May, then again in September and October. Speaker and free lunch are included. Alison Young, pastor of the church, obtained a grant for this series.</p> <p>Evie mentioned that the most recent Near and Farr Friends presented by Paul Hoke was successful in raising some donations toward causes he supports with Ukrainians.</p>	
January Newsletter	Articles are due to Jean Capper by December 15	
NEW BUSINESS		
Election Report	Mary Jo reported that there were 32 ballots returned; some only completed the first page so she suggested that the word OVER be added to the first page of the ballot next year. All nominees were confirmed by affirmative votes and will begin their terms on January 1. One respondent suggested that we need to fill vacancies with men.	
Christmas Decorations and Lighting	Evie voiced the need for a project to identify the issues and solutions for some of the problems with the holiday lighting. Known problems are with the electrical breakers and some of the lit “ornaments.” This would need to be a committee, hopefully with collaboration with government entities and other interested parties.	Mary Jo to send documentation from Consumers Energy to Tim Mostowy

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Calendar of Events to Village	Cyndy is making a list of PLA events in 2026 which will need a reservation for either the Village Park or Farr Center e.g., concerts, Onekama Days, Celebration of Lights, etc.	Cyndy will submit to Village of Onekama; Evie will generate a check to cover the costs
OTHER BUSINESS		
Farewell to Jean Capper	Jean Capper was given a fond farewell since her term on the board is expiring. She will continue with the quarterly PLA newsletter and Facebook administrator.	
Next meeting	The next meeting will be on January 7, 2026.	
Adjournment	Roz made a motion to adjourn, Kathy seconded, and the motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.	

Submitted by Mary Jo McElroy