



The mission of the Westmoreland Heritage Trail is to manage and maintain the trail from Saltsburg to Trafford, in partnership with like-minded groups, Westmoreland County Parks, and the associated municipalities the trail passes through. The trail will be promoted for walking and biking activities and to provide for recreation, education, volunteerism, tourism, and historic and environmental conservation. (www.westmorelandheritagetrail.com)

Minutes of the WHT Board Meeting

May 14, 2026, 7:00-8:00 PM

The Lamplighter Restaurant, Delmont PA

Meeting Attendees:

- Board (11): Mike Banda, Michael Bertonaschi, Karen Rose Cercone, Jerry Detar, Tom Marcin, Darren Miller, Pat Norton, Stan Rudge, Vicki Rudge, Malcolm Sias, Ann Wade
- Absent Board (10): Rob Cronauer, Wendy Davis, Chad Emahizer, Liz Ferri, Rick Fisher, Steve Ising, Monica Meehan, Chris Panichella, Brooke Russick, Annamarie Stackiewicz
- Guests and Members (14): Jerry Babcock, Gail Carns, Sarah Colligan, Barb Coulter, Jim Coulter, Tim Dunn, Mike Grimaldi, Jim Kluber, Tim Leriots, Hal Lester, Melissa Martin, John Ruccio, Mike Urban, Dale West.

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. President's Comments – The President thanked everyone who worked so hard to bring the trail up to its current excellent condition. Stan Rudge also reported that he attended a recent meeting of the Westmoreland County Commissioners and expressed thanks for their continuing support of the trail.

3. Public Input / Introductions

- a. Melissa Martin introduced herself as a film professor from Carnegie Mellon University. She is working on a hybrid professional / student film project with local actors called 'Summerlings' which was co-written by a St. Vincent professor, Don Ammon. Part of the film will be set along Turtle Creek in the Level Green area, where Mr. Ammon grew up. Three vehicles with film equipment and about 20 people will need to have access to the trail for 2-3 weekdays from June 15-19 to film from dawn to dusk. The film crew will be filming along the creek banks, not the trail.

Jerry Detar made a motion, seconded by Ann Wade, to recommend the film project to Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation. The motion passed.

- b. Jim Kluber introduced himself as a representative of Slickville Community Days and noted that they will again be asking RTC for approval of a 5K race in Zone 1 (between Sportsmen's Road and Route 819) on Sunday, August 8 as part of their festival. The course for this year's race will be slightly different from last year. There might also be interest in organizing a 'coal miner's' night race with head-lamps later in the fall, which would need special permission from the RTC.

5. Approval of Minutes

Jerry Detar made a motion, seconded by Michael Bertonaschi to approve the April 9, 2026 minutes. The motion passed.

6. Approval of Treasurer's Reports

Karen Rose Cercone presented the April 2026 Treasurer's Report for Chad Emahizer. Our checking balance was \$58,302.50 at the end of April, our Money Market balance was \$15,223.17, our Fidelity Investments totaled \$75,455.15 and our CD balance is around \$64,227.69. We are still expecting a check for \$65,000 from the RTC to reimburse us for the Route 66 property purchase.

WHT's current assets now total \$278,228.51 with fixed assets of \$50,353.43. The trail received income of \$2,465.00 in April from fundraising, membership dues, grants and Poker Run registration. Total expenses for April, including splitting Comedy Night income with Five Star Trail, Sponsorships, Porta-Potties and Trail Maintenance came to \$8,882.07.

A motion was made by Ann Wade, seconded by Pat Norton, to approve the April treasurer's reports. The motion passed.

7. Items for Action and/or Information

- a. Karen Rose Cercone reported that 7 thank-you letters were sent out to donors in April. Printed copies of the Spring Newsletter were mailed to our Corporate Sponsors along with the President's special Thank You Letter.
- b. The WHT Joyriders will hold a kickoff event on July 16, 10 AM, at Carson Braun Trailhead. Jerry Detar offered to coordinate the committee to train volunteers.

8. Old Business

- a. Trail resurfacing update – Malcolm Sias reported that the trail resurfacing project was successful. The contractor, Adam Eidemiller Inc, was able to complete all the scheduled work plus some additional work in other sections. They were also able to complete some bank stabilization by removing some fallen trees and adding rip-rap,

and the entire project still came in below the original bid. Note – nothing was done to the section from Mine Safety to Franklin Township MSA, because that section will be shut down from November 1 to March 31 for sewer line replacement. FT-MSA's contractor will restore the trail in that section to its original condition and can also install some additional culverts for us in that zone. Maintenance volunteers will mark the places where additional culverts are needed.

9. New Business

- a. A work crew will be needed to transport the Ventrac, cut grass and whack weeds on the Route 66 property on Tuesday, May 19 from 9 AM to 1 PM.
- b. Volunteers are requested to help with our information table at Trafford Flavor Fest on June 28, 12-5 PM at B-Y Park in Trafford – contact Vicki Rudge if interested.
- c. A request was made that WHT send a letter to Rep Brandon Markosek asking for assistance in getting Allegheny County Public Works to install more aggressive speed bumps at the bottom of Saunders Station Road (a county road) near the trail crossing. Stan Rudge noted that he plans to visit all three of the representatives whose districts include our trail. He will bring the request to Rep. Markosek.

10. Standing Committee Reports

- a. Real Estate/Acquisitions & Engineering/Construction – Ann Wade reported for Jeff Richards that Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation has hired Gordon Shaler as their new director. Jeff also asked for a work crew to help clear some of the future trail property near Route 66. The bulk of the work may be done by a contractor.

GAI Consultants has now completed the initial design for the Route 66 Property, which will be used for fundraising and grant submissions. Blueprints of the design were passed around at the meeting.

- b. Public Relations – Facebook followers increased by 353 to a new high of 4473 thanks to the frequent updates about the trail resurfacing. Instagram followers rose to 232, and X followers are again 162. Website statistics also increased with views at 3297 (up 27% from March) and visitors at 1442 (up 36% from March).

Poker Run plans are coming together, with registrations coming in. Poker Run volunteers should show up at 8:00 AM on June 6 with the activities due to complete by 1:30 PM. Pro Bikes has donated a Cannondale hybrid bicycle with accessories. This will be our summer raffle prize. Michael Bertonaschi offered to store it.

- c. Membership – the number of active members remained at 590 in April.

d. Maintenance - Michael Bertonaschi has some signs left over from the resurfacing project, so if the trail needs to be closed for any reason, they are available in the FT-MSA shed along with markers and caution tape. Penn Township mowed the trail sides this past week and did a great job. Additional volunteer vests are needed, especially in smaller sizes (Small, Medium, and Large). Stan Rudge will order some.

e. Fund-raising – Malcolm Sias gave an update about the RTC Parking fundraiser at the Westmoreland Arts and Heritage Festival. Folks interested in helping us raise money can sign up for 3-hour shifts to increase our percentage of the profit.

Contact Brandon Simpson at bsimpson@westmorelandcountypa.gov for a spot.

f. Trail Ambassadors – Steve Ising sent in a report by email that 19 Trail Ambassadors recorded a total of 262 hours in April.

g. Regional Trail Corporation / Trans-Allegheny Trails – Stan Rudge reported that the trail project along the GAP is moving along, with some additional funding needing.

h. Municipal Representatives – Tom Marcin reported for Monroeville that no news has come in about the grant for the parking lot. Monroeville has also requested that Allegheny County lengthen and augment the rumble strips around the Saunders Station road crossing, since the current plastic has been degraded by snow plows.

Michael Bertonaschi reported for Trafford that on next Thursday, May 21 at 6 PM, the Trafford Planning Council will hear the proposed plans for the UPMC Baseball Park in Trafford Council Chambers. Trail members are encouraged to attend to express their support for the Turtle Creek Connector trail under the bridge.

Darren Miller reported for Murrysville that the mural has been completed under the Route 22 bridge and that no major graffiti issues have occurred. A fishing derby will be held on Saturday May 16 in front of the Murrysville Municipal Building for kids 15 or younger. Please encourage interested families to attend.

11. Next meeting – June 11, 2026, 7:00 PM in person at the Pedora Park in White Valley.

12. Adjournment

Pat Norton made a motion, seconded by Ann Wade, to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 PM. The motion passed.