

2013 | Annual Report



**Portage County
Regional Planning Commission**



Mission Statement

Our mission is to improve the quality of life in Portage County by helping communities turn vision into action in order to equitably achieve sustainable communities in harmony with the natural environment.



PCRPC Staff

Todd Peetz, AICP
Director

Claudia James
GIS Specialist/Planner

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Office Manager

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CDBG Specialist

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Administrative Assistant

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Intern

Message from the Director

The Portage County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) had another eventful year in 2013. We were able to receive additional grant funding for a variety of projects which helped our funding improve from past years. Funding will continue to be challenging, but we are working to find more consistent funding sources that we can rely on year to year. The RPC continues to make strides in community collaboration and guiding member communities to meet their needs. We continue to provide zoning and mapping needs for our members, process countywide subdivision reviews, administer CDBG grants on the behalf of the Portage County Commissioners, and write multiple grants for our member communities. Other activities included fair housing calls, attending member zoning commission meetings per their request, and assisting with mapping data as requested. We also sit on several boards representing Portage County in the regional setting.

Some exciting projects that occurred in 2013:

The RPC continued the **Quarterly Zoning Inspector (QZI) meetings**. The QZI meetings are at no additional cost to our member communities. We had 3 meetings in 2013, two of which included Assistant County Prosecutor Chris Meduri. The QZI is also open to representatives from our members' Zoning Commissions and Boards of Zoning Appeals.

RPC continued to work on the **Asset Mapping** project for the entire county, per a Local Government Innovation Fund (LGIF) grant. We identified all the commercial, industrial and other non-residential parcels and then converted the data into an easy-to-use Excel format. This conversion greatly improved the availability of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data. We hope to complete this project countywide in 2014.

The **Moving Ohio Forward** grant has allowed communities to remove abandoned and blighted residential buildings. It is estimated that over 130 abandoned residential buildings throughout the county will be demolished through this grant. Studies have shown that removing abandoned and blighted buildings can increase neighboring property values by as much as \$10 for every \$1 spent, depending upon the circumstances. This project is adding value to those participating communities.

RPC is updating the **Subdivision Regulations** which will be completed in 2014. The Subdivision Regulations have not had a major amendment in more than a decade and those agencies that implement the subdivision regulations, including the Greater Akron Homebuilder's Association and others, have provided valuable insight into the process.

Looking ahead to 2014, we seek to build on the accomplishments of last year. We are actively seeking grant funds on behalf of our communities and for projects that will benefit our communities. We continue to seek membership gains in the RPC. We believe that our services exceed the cost to our members and we want to strive to increase those benefits. On behalf of our hard working staff, I would like to thank all of our community members for their support and for their desire to make their communities and Portage County a greater place for us all to enjoy.

Sincerely,
Todd Peetz, AICP, Director
Portage County Regional Planning Commission

Zoning

RPC reviewed and provided recommendations to townships on zoning resolution text amendments and zoning district amendments. The following are the zoning amendments in which RPC assisted:

Text Amendments

- Agricultural Uses; Definition of Accessory Structure/Use; Accessory Building; Demolition Permit—Suffield Township.
- Section 902, Enforcement—Palmyra Township
- Fences, Walls and Hedges—Hiram Township
- Rebuilding Non-Conforming Structures and Uses—Rootstown Township
- Chapter 4 (General Provisions); Add Chapter 13 (Exterior Maintenance)—Franklin Township
- Home Occupation—Nelson Township
- Chapter 5.K (Accessory Buildings and Structures)—Randolph Township
- Section 301.7 (Amendments) and Amend the Minimum Side Yard Setback to 15 Feet in Sections 605.4, 606.4, and 607.4—Nelson Township.



Zoning District Amendments

- Map Amendment to Correct Several Areas that were Rezoned in 2011 to L-1 (Light Industrial) to be Reverted back to O-C (Open Space Conservation) and to Rezone One Parcel from O-C to L-I—Brimfield Township
- Rezoning from R-O (Residential Office) to C-3 (Highway Interchange) Located West of State Route 44 and South Side of Lynn Road—Rootstown Township.

Quarterly Zoning Inspector (QZI) Meeting

The RPC continued the Quarterly Zoning Inspector (QZI) meetings in 2013. The QZI meetings are at no additional cost to our member communities. The QZI is also open to representatives from our members' Zoning Commissions and Boards of Zoning Appeals. We had three meetings in 2013, two of which included Assistant County Prosecutor Chris Meduri. Topics for the meetings this year included signage, property maintenance and Moving Ohio Forward and the related lien process. The meetings are meant to be informal and to give zoning commission members an opportunity to learn how other zoning commissions have handled similar issues.

Portage County Subdivision Regulations

RPC staff worked with the Subdivision Update Committee to revise the 1984 *Portage County Subdivision Regulations* and address hot-button issues. Recent changes in the *Ohio Revised Code* will be incorporated into the Subdivision Regulations and the standards for construction and maintenance of improvements to roads and sanitary sewers, for example, are being revised to better serve the county's needs when new developments are proposed. Cul-de-sac and block lengths, open space, and the criteria for evaluating variances from Subdivision Regulation requirements are also being discussed. When the committee has completed its review in 2014, suggestions for changes will be made available for public comment and then will be presented to the Regional Planning Commission. The Regional Planning Commission will forward final recommendations and changes to the Board of County Commissioners and a public comment period will take place before formal adoption.



Land Divisions and Subdivisions in Portage County 2013

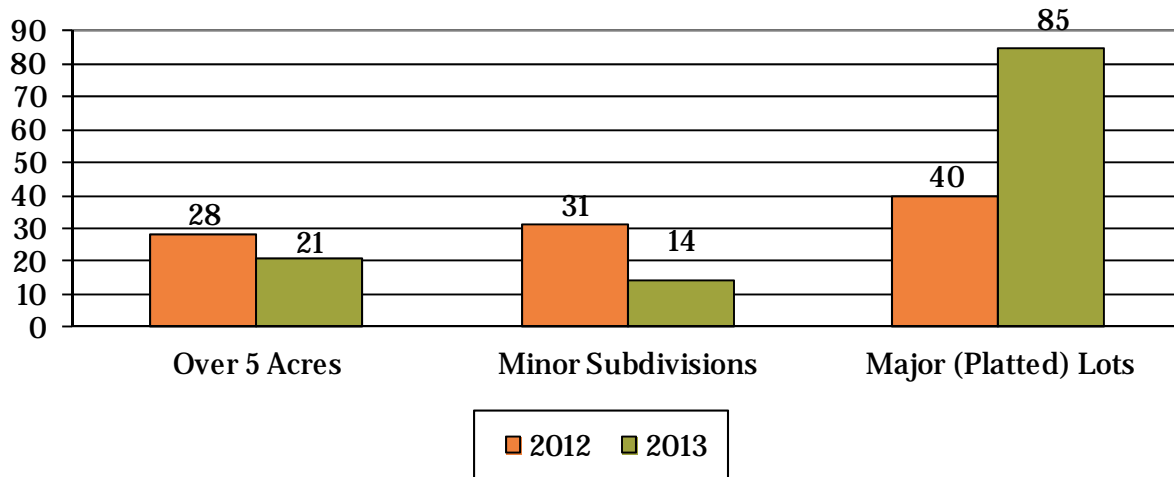
There were 43 subdivision applications and divisions of land to create 120 lots. There was 0 variances from the Subdivision Regulations.

Township	Over 5 Acres	No. of Lots Created by Minor Subdivisions	No. of Lots Created by Major Subdivisions	Total
Atwater	1	0	0	1
Brimfield	1	0	80	81
Charlestown	0	0	0	0
Deerfield	1	0	0	1
Edinburg	3	0	0	3
Franklin	0	0	0	0
Freedom	4	2	0	6
Hiram	2	0	0	2
Mantua	2	3	0	5
Nelson	5	2	0	7
Palmyra	0	0	0	0
Paris	0	0	0	0
Randolph	3	2	0	5
Ravenna	2	0	0	2
Rootstown	1	0	5	6
Shalersville	1	0	0	1
Suffield	2	3	0	5
Windham	0	2	0	2
Total	28	14	85	127

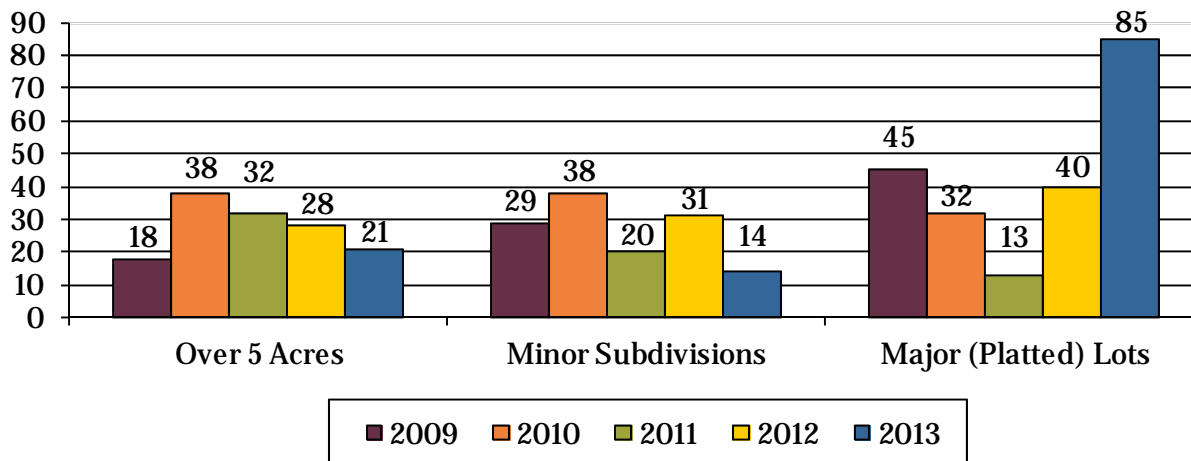
*Transfers to an adjoining property owner=30. (Not included in table).

Land Divisions and Subdivisions Lots Approved

Land Divisions and Subdivisions
Lots Approved
2012-2013



Land Divisions and Subdivisions
Lots Approved
2009-2013



Community Development

PCRPC Administered \$633,164 in Community Development Block Grant Formula Allocation funds, New Horizons funds and Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds for the Portage County Board of Commissioners with the following results:

- Renovated a house located in the City of Ravenna to be used as a shelter that benefits homeless female veterans and their dependent children.
- Rehabilitated a house located in Deerfield Township owned by the Deerfield Historical Society. The house will serve the community as a museum, a repository of genealogical materials open to small groups for tours, and as a model of encouragement for the surrounding historic properties.
- Rehabilitated a group home in Edinburg Township owned by Coleman Professional Services housing four persons. Renovations included: removal and replacement of the sump pump; excavation of corresponding exterior drain to allow for positive slope away from the house; removal and replacement of all windows including the glass block for the basement; removal and replacement of two AC units; removal and replacement of shingles and failed roof decking and replacement of the gutters and downspouts.
- Obtained an architect, prepared the specifications and put out to bid the rehabilitation of the former “One Stop Building” located in the City of Ravenna for the Center of Hope.
- Rehabilitated the Streetsboro Child Development Center. Energy efficient windows were installed; worn and deteriorated flooring was replaced; and the parking lot was resurfaced and expanded .
- Reconstructed 2,490 linear feet of Orchard Street and Line Street in the Village of Mantua to improve access to businesses and residents.
- Assisted 5 LMI households countywide excluding the City of Streetsboro with home repairs (i.e. roofs, furnaces, waterlines, tie into sewer and/or replacement of septic systems).
- Assisted 8 LMI households in the City of Streetsboro with home repairs (i.e. roofs, furnaces, waterlines, and connection to city sewer and water).



*Deerfield Historical Society
Before Renovation*



*Deerfield Historical Society
After Renovation*

- Prepared application for the 2013 Formula Allocation Grant to provide services for low and moderate income Portage County households and/or eliminate a slum and blight.
- Provided fair housing assistance for 37 households within Portage County excluding the Cities of Streetsboro, Kent, Ravenna and Aurora. Provided educational materials regarding fair housing to 10 agencies/organizations.
- Provided fair housing assistance in the City of Ravenna to 10 households. Provided educational materials regarding fair housing to 8 agencies/organizations.
- Provided fair housing assistance in the City of Aurora to 6 households. Provided educational materials regarding fair housing to 7 agencies/organizations.
- Provided fair housing assistance in the City of Streetsboro to 7 households. Provided educational materials regarding fair housing to 9 agencies/organizations.
- One unit was constructed and has been sold in the City of Kent under the Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

Committees

Portage Revitalization and Economic Planning (PREP)

We continue the **Planning, Revitalization, Economic Planning (PREP)** meetings, which include economic development directors, city planners, zoning inspectors, chambers of commerce, and commercial and industrial realtors. The idea is to have an informal collaboration between the cities, villages, and townships. The days of competing against one another for business opportunities are gone. The big picture: through collaboration, we will attract more business opportunities, as well as retain current business. Ravenna City's PREP representative suggested that PREP members seek out and encourage business owners to first consider communities in Portage County, and then follow up by passing on business owners' information to those communities. PREP meetings are held on the 1st Wednesday of each month at noon and are open to anyone who is interested in attending. PREP is also the group who will be fine-tuning the LGIF Asset Mapping project.

Visioning in Portage (VIP)

The RPC is a core participant in Visioning In Portage (VIP), which is a grassroots effort to prepare a countywide vision plan. This project was kicked off in 2011 and has approximately 200 participants that includes all the major regional, county, and city agencies. Collaboration and understanding each other's goals for our communities is a key to success that will establish a direction from which all of us can work. VIP has attended the Randolph Fair, the Ravenna Balloon A-Fair and Art in the Park in Kent. VIP is also coordinating with Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium (NEOSCC), which is devoted to creating a 12-county regional vision plan. The emphasis is on the 6 largest populated counties in Northeast Ohio and Portage County is not one, but the NEOSCC has accepted the idea of using VIP as Portage County's representative in the NEOSCC process. VIP is important to make sure our voices are heard in this larger process. VIP has worked to develop a "Portage County Celebration Week" to kick-off in August of 2014. It will include five days of community activities from around Portage County to recognize and celebrate the great accomplishments in our county.

Grants

Local Government Innovation Fund–Asset Mapping

Working with the County Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Coordinator and the County Information Technology department, staff has devised methodology for delivering Asset Mapping tables and maps via a website. Searches will be created for both vacant land and developed land to help users focus search efforts to their specific interests. Additional mapped information will be added to the website to provide a better understanding of Portage County's characteristics and features in relation to its economic, organizational and cultural assets.

Moving Ohio Forward

This grant is state-funded through the Attorney General's Office. The funds available were generated via a settlement with the largest banks and their role in the financial crises affecting the state. Portage County received \$812,800.00 for the purpose of demolishing abandoned residential homes. The grant was implemented through the Portage County Land Reutilization Corporation, also known as the Portage County Land Bank. The goal is to utilize all the funding and to demolish approximately 130+/- residential units.



New Horizons 2012 Grant

The Ohio Development Services Agency New Horizons Grant funded a project to analyze the zoning codes of the cities of Ravenna and Streetsboro with regards to fair housing. Changes in the *Ohio Revised Code* that have an impact on fair housing at a local level were noted. Suggestions for revising codes to further fair housing will be made to each municipality.

Special Projects

Farmland Preservation

After the Western Reserve Land Conservancy was designated by the Ohio Department of Agriculture as a Local Sponsor to administer the 2013 Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program in northeast Ohio, RPC staff worked with them to make sure Portage County farms would be included in their continuing farmland preservation efforts.

Portage Development Board Strategic Plan

RPC staff compiled current and historic economic data for the Portage Development Board's Strategic Plan. Data was depicted in graphic format for easier understanding. Base data will help the board establish goals, objectives and strategies to guide economic development activities for the next 5 years.



Ravenna Farmer's Market

RPC provided assistance as necessary, which included a countywide brochure of active farmer's markets and agriculture product producers by type of product available for sale at the market. Staff attended organizational meetings when available, as well as participated in manning the main booth as necessary.

Community Member Projects

Hiram Township Comprehensive Plan Update

RPC updated the Hiram Township Comprehensive Plan to be more focused on the township. This would include a new community survey and updates to the demographic, community and environmental maps, as well as a review and update to the goals, objectives, and policies.

Mantua Township

RPC provided a minor update to the Mantua Township zoning code to address issues related to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). This effort was to address the flow between the code and the BZA's process to assist the BZA with the review of applications that they may receive.

Randolph Township

RPC finalized the review and update of Randolph Township's zoning code.

City of Ravenna

RPC updated the *Shoppers Guide to Fresh Fruits & Vegetables in Portage County* that was to be distributed at the Ravenna Farmers' Market. Staff also created a large city map for use at the Balloon A-Fair to be used in conjunction with the survey of residents.

Ravenna Township/City of Ravenna JEDD

RPC supplied maps and data to Ravenna Township to support efforts to create a Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) with the City of Ravenna.

Rootstown Township Zoning Review

RPC assisted the Rootstown Zoning Commission with a review of the zoning code, which was last updated in 2004. The changes included putting the definitions in only one section and identifying outdated language. RPC also looked for inconsistencies in the code and provided recommendations to address those inconsistencies.

Shalersville Township Zoning Code and Map Update

RPC evaluated the Shalersville Zoning Code in relation to the recently approved land use plan. RPC addressed zoning map changes, new zoning code categories, planned residential development, transfer of development rights, and various other changes that were recommended in the land use plan.

Streetsboro Review & Update: 2009 Comprehensive Plan

RPC updated maps and data in the *2009 Comprehensive Plan* for the 5-year plan update. Staff attended meetings and worked with the Master Plan Review Commission to revise plan text and adjust original goals, objectives, and strategies. Staff used Adobe's *InDesign* desktop publishing software to update the original 2009 Plan.

Zoning

RPC provided maps and information for zoning amendments for member communities throughout the year.

Portage County Regional Planning Commission

2013 Financial Report

Beginning Cash Balance **33,142.26**

Revenue

RPC Membership Dues	225,415.65
Subdivisions	13,105.00
Intergovernmental Reviews	100.00
Copies/Miscellaneous/Over Hours	1,432.85
Publications	—
Rental Income	8,851.79

Contracts

Aurora City Fair Housing	1,517.18
Portage Metropolitan Housing Authority	417.54
Ravenna City Fair Housing	2,104.63
Ravenna City Farmers Market	1,639.66
Streetsboro City Fair Housing	1,458.93
PARTA Transit Development Plan	6,853.35
Hiram Township Comp Plan Update	2,000.64
Streetsboro City Master Plan Update	18,705.68
Ravenna City NSP	2,852.23
Portage Development Board Strategic Plan	4,564.96
Moving Ohio Forward	4,560.05
Sugar Bush Knolls	544.72

Total Contracts

47,219.57

Grants

2011 CDBG Fair Housing	861.67
2011 CDBG Formula Grant	25,310.69
2008 Neighborhood Stabilization Program	3,610.70
LGIF Asset Mapping Grant	17,329.94
New Horizons	7,590.57
2012 CDBG Formula Grant Admin	26,256.64
2012 CDBG Formula Grant Fair Housing	3,640.89
2013 CDBG Formula Grant Admin	8,920.13

Total Grants

93,521.23

County Contribution

—

Refund/Reimbursement

1,370.78

TOTAL REVENUE/BUDGET

424,159.13

Expenditures

Salaries	213,550.74
PERS	28,777.00
Medicare	3,004.64
Workers Comp	3,611.36
Health Insurance	37,491.60
Insurances (Bldg. & Bonds)	354.00
Maintenance/Custodial Contract	3,120.00
Utilities	9,784.63
Telephone	2,035.15
Contract Services	1,266.90
Professional & Technical Services	5,931.84
Audit Services	—
Legal Services	10,000.00
Repairs (Equipment, Rental, Bldg.)	6,245.00
Advertising	13.40
Postage	1,310.79
Supplies	2,642.67
Photocopying/Printing	1,566.54
Dues/Periodicals	767.50
Travel/Training	3,972.38
Equipment	352.00
Copier	3,703.44
Loan (Multi-Purpose Building)	31,788.76
Building Improvements	—
Reimbursement/Refund	—

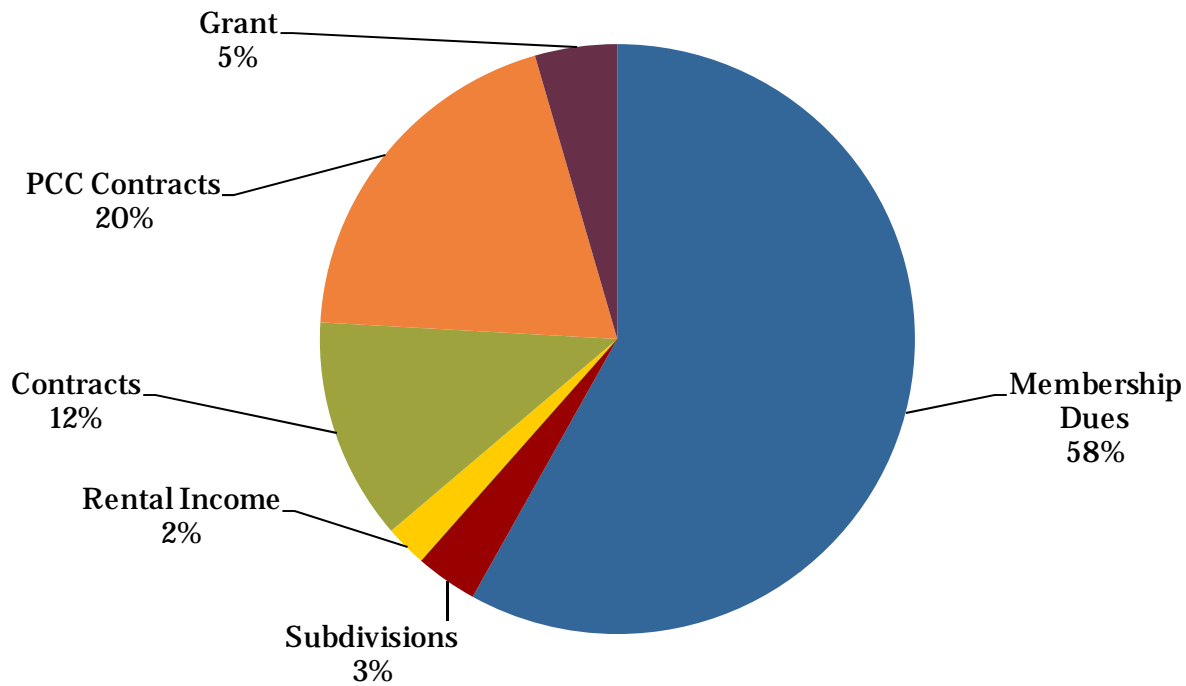
TOTAL EXPENDITURES

371,290.34

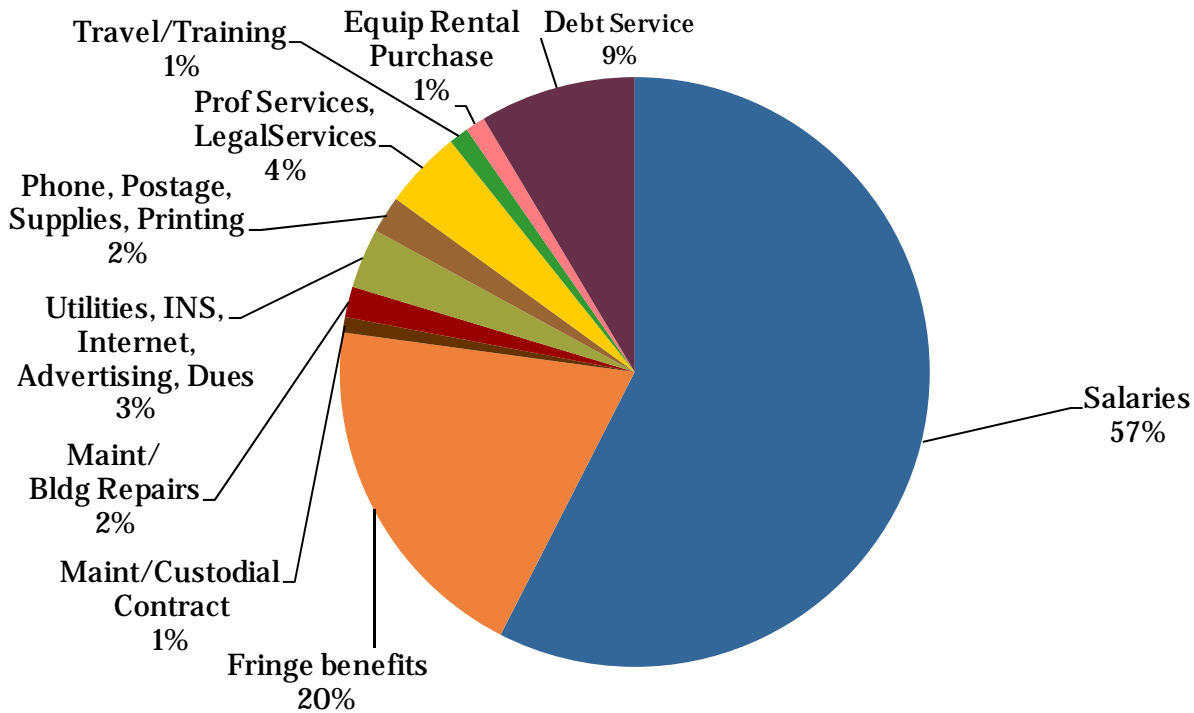
Ending Cash Balance

52,868.79

2013 Revenue Sources



2013 Expenditures



Members

Atwater Township

Danny Derreberry
*Lynn Whittlesey

Brimfield Township

Richard Messner
*Lisa Cotten

Franklin Township

Sam Abell
*Jenny August

Freedom Township

Jim Hammar
*Roy Martin

Garrettsville Village

Rick Patrick
*Becky Harrington

Hiram Township

Steve Pancost
*Jack Groselle

Hiram Village

Alan Donley
*Rob Dempsey

Mantua Township

Jason Carlton
*Sandy Englehart

Mantua Village

Paul Janson
*Ben Prescott

Nelson Township

Joseph Leonard

Palmyra Township

Sandy Nutter
*Bill Rohn

Paris Township

Tom Smith
*Ralph Graham

Randolph Township

Susan White
*Dan Kolasky

Ravenna Township

James DiPaola
*Pat Artz

City of Ravenna

Kerry Macomber
*Kelly Englehart

Rootstown Township

Brett Housley
*Joseph Paulus

Shalersville Township

Nancy Vines
*Frank Ruehr

City of Streetsboro

Mayor Glenn Broska

Suffield Township

Mark Frisone
*James Demboski

Sugar Bush Knolls

Jim Beal
*Nancy Stillwagon

Windham Township

Brian Miller
*Joe Pinti

PARTA

Bryan Smith
*Doug Wagener

Portage County

Tommie Jo Marsilio
*Deborah Durkee
Kathleen Chandler
*Melissa Long
Maureen Frederick
*Terry Montz

Portage County

Engineer
Mickey Marozzi
*Dan Jendrisak

Portage Park District

Allan Orashan
*Chris Craycroft

Portage County Water Resources Department

Jeff Lonzrick
*Tia Rutledge

Soil and Water Conservation Office

James Bierlair
*Eric Long

Ex-Officio Members

Hiram College
Kent State University
PC Health Department
Habitat for Humanity
Home Builders Association

*Indicates alternate member.

Officers/Executive Committee

Tom Smith, Chairman (3/10/10-Present)
Richard Messner, Vice Chairman (3/10/10-Present)
Todd Peetz, Secretary
Maureen Frederick (02/09/11-Present)
Jim DiPaola (3/10/10-Present)
Sandy Nutter (3/10/10-Present)
Allan Orashan (4/14/10-Present)
Danny Derreberry (1/9/13-Present)

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Portage County Regional Planning Commission