GRANDVIEW MEMORIAL PARK FILE PRESERVATION PROJECT

FINAL REPORT

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2019 OHRAB Grant

April 1, 2019-December 31, 2019

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

Ravenna Township is a small township located near the center of Portage County, Ohio. The Township surrounds the city of Ravenna and shares some services such as the Ravenna City Schools, but the Township is a clearly separated department from the city as a governing body.

Ravenna Township maintains a central administration building which houses the Service, Fire, Zoning and General Administration departments, as well as the meeting space for the Ravenna Township Trustees.

In January 2018, The Ravenna Township Trustees took over Grandview Memorial Park, a cemetery started in 1966, within its boundaries per the State of Ohio. This cemetery had previously been a private company operating for more than 50 years. The Township received this cemetery as part of a legal decision by the State of Ohio after the incarceration of its previous owners because of business fraud. Details of these events can be found on the background source links attached with this report.

A part time clerk was hired in February 2018 to organize and gather the state of the business records. This clerk operates as part of the Ravenna Township Service Department, under the supervision of Ray Taylor, Supervisor of the Service Department and Cemetery Sexton. An office within the Service Department was made in 2018 by the Township and is the location of these records. The duties of the clerk are to maintain the paper records of the cemetery, to help the Sexton locate plots and to make sure they are available for burials and to issue plot deeds for sales and transfers within the cemetery. While the cemetery does offer burials 6 days per week, the clerk is typically only available on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but is available for walk in appointments. There is no charge for research within these files.

Throughout 2018, the clerk tried to get a general overlook of the cemetery and made the assessment determined that the cemetery holds nearly 4,000 burials and the unique paper records are in varying levels of condition from newspaper clippings to sticky notes, to carbon copies and fax paper nearly too faded to read. Further document preservation is needed at this time to preserve these one of a kind records.

The physical documents related to the cemetery fill roughly 33 standard cardboard file boxes, and are held on 2 sturdy metal shelves within the Service Department. It is recommended that the files be transferred to an acid free archival system of files and boxes immediately as the files are deteriorating and the labels are beginning to fall off the file folders.

Digitally, a file server has been dedicated to the use of the cemetery for maintenance of the cemetery. This service currently uses 378 GB of data for the cemetery with a capacity of 813 GB. A suggestion of a backup standalone hard drive for digital preservation is also warranted at this time.

The total requested with this grant application at this time is $3,400 with an in-kind match of staff hours totaling $7,020, bringing the expected project cost to $10,420.

FINAL OHRAB 2019 GRANT REPORT FINDINGS

This grant period showed great progress in transforming these previously private held documents into publically accessible documents. To date, all files have been rehoused in the folders and boxes provided by the grant. And all pertinent documents have been scanned to be backed up digitally.

Here are some additional project highlights:

- Due to vendor discounts, we were able to purchase 90 archival quality legal sized boxes. 74 of which are currently holding documents, which leaves plenty of room for expansion. We also purchased 2 large map boxes for cemetery section maps and protective book boxes for our irreplaceable burial ledger.
- Our township took notice of the effort to rehouse these files and renovated our storage space to expand our shelving securely. Carpet will be installed in February, and we can't wait to send an updated photo of our completed repository.
- We were able to purchase a computer hard drive which contains the digital images of over 3400 plot owner files and contain the details of nearly 4,000 burials. Our township service team quickly saw the benefits of this drive to access the information from their trucks, and created a working desktop in a service truck to access this information via laptop with no need for Wi-Fi or internet related privacy concerns. The drive is backed up monthly with new burials.   Our Service Director/Sexton truly enjoys the ease of use to access these documents while at the cemetery to answer questions in real time about ownership details and plot locations.
- We did see challenges in using our CMS. Our computers were updated in the fall of 2019. As such we needed to reinstall the cemetery deed software provided by the State of Ohio called Uniform Accounting Network, or UAN. Through some challenges, we have had to rework the deed process for the cemetery. This has delayed our full participation in updating records on FindAGrave.com. In December, we were finally able to restart issuing deeds to our plot owners. We are working now, section by section, to fully document all of the burials and purchased plots with the digitized materials in both UAN and FindAGrave.com, and include details from online obituaries and other sources.
- In October, we were pleased to receive an additional grant from the State of Ohio to purchase additional cemetery signage. We look forward to installing these items for a nicely refreshed look this spring. As more people see the strides we have made to refurbish this property and corresponding records, we hope to increase their use and access points for the public.

ADDITIONAL MEDIA DURRING GRANT PERIOD

- Grandview Memorial Park showing improvement, Record Courier
  https://www.record-courier.com/article/20190804/news/308049916
- Grandview cemetery gets grant from state, Record Courier
  https://www.record-courier.com/news/20191031/grandview-cemetery-gets-grant-from-state

END OF GRANT FINANCIAL STATEMENT

PURCHASED SUPPLIES SUMMARY

Vendor	Original Estimate	Total in Grant Period
Gaylord Archival	$3300	$3386.01
Staples.com	$100	$94.95
Totals	$3400	$3480.96

MATCHING FUNDS SUMMARY

Salary for Cemetery Clerk @ $12 per hour

	Original Estimate	Total in Grant Period
Hours logged	585 hours @ $12 per hour	571.5 hours @ $12 per hour
Cemetery Clerk @ $12 per hour	$7020.00	$6858.00

*These matching funds reported do not include listings for additional funds used for renovations to the space and additional shelves purchased for the repository.

PROJECT TOTALS

	Original Estimate	Total in Grant Period
Purchased Supplies	$3400	$3480.96
Cemetery Clerk @ $12 per hour	$7020.00	$6858.00
Totals	$10420.00	$10338.96

Copies of invoices and other supporting documents are included with this report.