

METROPARKS OF BUTLER COUNTY  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, January 25, 2024

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The MetroParks of Butler County Board of Park Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, January 25, 2024, at Forest Run MetroPark – Timberman Ridge Offices, 1976 Timberman Road, Hamilton, Ohio 45013

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 a.m. by Ms. Trokhan

**I. Roll Call and Agenda**

Members present: Cynamon Trokhan, Larry Gersbach

Staff present: Zeb Acuff, Rhiana Barrero, Tony Carpenter, Scott Gaviglia, Jaime Kimbrough, Jackie O'Connell, Amy Pellman, Suzanne Roth, Shelly Schultz

**III. Approval of Minutes**

Approval of the November 30, 2023, Work Session & Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Ms. Trokhan seconded.

Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach

**VI. Finance**

**a. Schedule of Payables – November 2023**

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Ms. Trokhan seconded.

Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach

*Resolution No. 01.24*

**b. Schedule of Payables – December 2023**

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Ms. Trokhan seconded.

Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach

*Resolution No. 02.24*

**c. Quarterly Stander Report**

**d. December YTD Revenue & Expense Report**

**VII. Administrative Reports**

**Finance:** Ms. Shelly Schultz briefly reviewed the 2023 Donations report. There was a question on the Honeycutt donation from August. The donation will be used to purchase accounting software, to catch up on capital equipment and repair, and the creation of a Community Grants program.

**Visitor & Event Services:** Ms. Rhiana Barrero gave a brief update on the recent water damage at the Lodge. Pipes in the fire suppression system failed and flooded the building. A contractor was brought in to clean up the water and a fire suppression vendor will make repairs. This will not impact existing reservations. Insurance has been notified.

We will be using Hometown ticketing for parking at the Athletic Complex to streamline the process. Sales will be credit card only; there will be discount for tickets purchased in advance.

This year we are expanding the social media team to include all departments. We will also be creating a task force to review the website. Briefly reviewed the draft events and tournament schedule; we will be hosting our first international tournament, the MASC tournament and an adaptive run for the Dayton Dragons.

**Police:** Chief Scott Gaviglia briefly reviewed the report and the recent hiring of a new part-time officer. Lt. Scott Reeves will soon be attending a weapons training that will allow him to train other division staff. Planning meetings have begun for the VOA Country Music concert. We learned a lot from last year's event and Chief feels this year's event will be even better. Officer Greg Schwarber has announced that he will be retiring this spring. It was noted we've received no negative feedback with the name change from Rangers to Officers.

**Programming & Education:** Ms. Suzanne Roth noted 10 new schools were reached in 2023. Ms. Roth stated they are working on increasing community connections, specifically with 17 Strong with summer programming. The Run the Parks 5k series went well and finished strong. Attendance was highest in spring and fall, so will cut out summer and winter for 2024. The Winter Hike series is going well, and we are getting great feedback. We are currently working with the City of Middletown on shifting the Community Garden focus to be more on programming and less garden management and prep. We will be participating in a Bioblitz competition with other park districts in the state using iNaturalist this spring. Eclipse programming discussions and planning have begun. A large program will be held at Timberman Ridge, but viewing will be available at other sites.

**Planning:** Mr. Zeb Acuff said all four zones have projects in 2024. The consultant for the Indian Creek Bridge project has submitted three designs for review. Mr. Acuff said the Planning division will work with the Development division on fundraising for the project. The Stander fund may cover up to 40% of the cost but they have identified a few potential grants.

Working with BCEO and WCT on the Tylersville Road entrance. Discussions are currently centered on right-of-way and traffic impact.

Mr. Acuff will be attending an upcoming training on community engagement to help with Metroparks' outreach efforts.

During the Antenen pre-bid walk-through one person showed up but left once she learned she couldn't get inside the house. No questions were received by the deadline. Approximately 12 companies downloaded the bid packet. If no bids are received the second RFP will be posted for salvage.

Mr. Acuff stated construction drawings have been prepared for the Meadow Ridge/Sebald connector road. The grant funding is for the Meadow Ridge section. An RFP for the construction will be posted soon. We have submitted an application for State capital grant funds for the Sebald side of the project.

**Operations:** Mr. Tony Carpenter discussed new roofs will be installed at the Murstein cabin and at the Programming and Education Office. The play surface at Forest Run Wildlife Preserve will be replaced and site work on the outdoor archery range will start this spring. The Ohio Horseman's Council has elected new officers and have funds that they would like to donate toward horse trail improvements.

Operations is working with Planning on new park entry signs. An example of the new signs is included in the Planning section of this report. There is a staged implementation process for signs and kiosks. Will work with Visitor Services to update the website when the changes occur, as park naming is impacted.

**Human Resources:** Ms. Jaime Kimbrough commented that there will be lots of new/internal training for staff in 2024. She briefly reviewed the Great Place to Work survey results and the positive feedback received, as well as the large increases made since the last survey. Human Resources is working to incorporate the newly created list of values into all aspects of the organization.

There has been good feedback on the compensation memos that have gone out to staff. The memos showed the full compensation benefit versus just wage increases. This allowed the organization to be more transparent and show the full value of benefits received.

Currently Daniel Clepper, Manager of Volunteer Resources, is working with the new volunteer software and making adjustments so that it is more user-friendly. We are hosting regular community service days, and offering more meaningful projects for volunteers. Daniel will attend trail maintenance school in February along with Operations staff so that we can expand the Trail Ambassador volunteer program into light trail maintenance.

**Administration:** Ms. Jackie O'Connell gave a short update on the possible light show contract negotiations. They have counter-offered that they would like a 7-year guarantee with 13 years of 1-year renewals that would be mutually agreed upon. There was a question if there would be any limitations to other organizations using the facilities. Ms. O'Connell said due to the timing and layout, it was unlikely to have use conflicts.

The Board would like a 7-year guarantee with the option for a 3-year renewal. After year 10, the contract would be reviewed and renegotiated.

There was a short discussion on the current bill that could eliminate replacement levies. Ms. O'Connell will draft a letter of opposition for the Board to endorse to send to Rep. Hall.

Ms. O'Connell stated that we have received full payment from the VOA Country Music Festival.

## **IX. New Business**

### **a. Election of 2024 Officers**

For 2024, Ms. Cynamon Trokhan will be President, Mr. Larry Gersbach will be Vice-President.

Ms. Trokhan moved to approve; Mr. Gersbach seconded.

Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach

### **b. Field Scheduling Software Contract**

Ms. Barrero briefly explained that this is a fully customizable scheduling software for athletic fields. This will increase access and visibility so that organizers will be able to see what's available for reservation, eliminate the manual-nature of the current system and streamline the process to allow for efficiency and accountability. Ms. Barrero stated that the software should pay for itself overtime. Currently, it will be used just for sports, but could be expanded for other rentals in the future.

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Ms. Trokhan seconded.

Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach

### **c. Hueston Farm Lease Award**

Mr. Carpenter briefly reviewed the bids received bids. Ten percent is paid in February, with the balance paid in November. Mr. Truster previously farmed at the Angst property. There was a question on future plans for the property. Mr. Acuff commented that he didn't anticipate anything in the next 10 years.

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Ms. Trokhan seconded.

Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach

### **d. New Credit Card Provider**

Ms. Schultz reviewed the contract from Huntington Bank. The plan is to stop using store-specific cards and move to utilizing the P-Card from Huntington. Huntington Bank's card and online access is more user-friendly than our current system, and individual users can see their balance and upload and code their own receipts. The current provider can't do this. As part of the contract, we are required to have an account at Huntington but no minimum balance is necessary. The card has a cash reward system.

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Ms. Trokhan seconded.

Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach

**e. Park Mural Selection**

Ms. Barrero reviewed the proposal and asked the Board to assist in the site selection for two murals as proposed in the memo. The intention is to increase awareness and community engagement. She intends to work with Inside Out Studios for the design and installation. The plan is to poll the community for the final location(s). We will also do a poll to choose the designs. The Board agreed that their top two choices are the Kestrel Shelter and the breezeway at VOA. They felt that the underpass has less exposure and more opportunity for vandalism.

**f. Credit Card Limit Increase**

Ms. Schultz explained that the credit limit on the First Financial card is currently \$32,000. During this process, we will add Jackie and Shelly as account signers. This is a line of credit increase up to \$45,000 that will solve the problem of hitting our limit, especially when Munis is down at the end of December.

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Ms. Trokhan seconded.  
Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach

**g. Finance Software/Fiscal Agent**

Ms. Schultz stated that securing software with SSI is the first step to allows us to move forward with the process of becoming our own fiscal agent. Ms. Schultz has spoken with other users of the software and they were all very positive. She noted that it is expensive up front with the install and transition, but the annual fees are affordable. Payroll will remain with Butler County at this time, but the SSI software could be expanded to bring payroll in-house in the future. There was a short discussion on internal controls and the review of financial policies for checks and balances. We will be able to update the chart of accounts. The software will also be able to track project costs, grant-funded projects and P&L statements - eliminating the duplicative and manual processes.

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Ms. Trokhan seconded.  
Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach

**XI. Executive Session**

Mr. Gersbach moved for a roll call vote to enter Executive Session, seconded by Ms. Trokhan for the purpose of discussions involving:

- I. Land Acquisition or Sale
- II. Confidential Matters

Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach

The Board entered into Executive Session at 10:20 a.m.  
The Board returned to Regular Session at 10:31 a.m.

**XII. – Adjournment**

Mr. Gersbach moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:31 a.m., Ms Trokhan seconded.  
Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach

Adoption: The above minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting as adopted by the Board of Park Commissioners, MetroParks of Butler County.

Approved:

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Officer of the Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jacqueline O’Connell,  
Executive Director/Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date