

METROPARKS OF BUTLER COUNTY
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, September 16, 2021

The MetroParks of Butler County Board of Park Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, September 16, 2021, in the Lakeview Room-Ronald Reagan Lodge at Voice of America MetroPark, 7850 VOA Park Drive, West Chester Township, OH 45069-2938.

I. - Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at **8:30 a.m.**, by **Ms. Trokhan**.

II. - Roll Call and Agenda

Members present for purposes for roll call were: **Ms. Cynamon Trokhan and Mr. Greg Amend. Mr. Daryl Nelson was absent at this meeting.**

The Board worked from the following agenda:

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order –8:30 a.m.**
- II. Roll Call**
- III. Public Comment Regarding Agenda Items ***
- IV. Approval of Minutes – August 19, 2021 Regular Meeting**
- V. Consent Agenda ****
 - a. Financial Reports – Ratify, Acknowledge, Modify and/or Approve as noted
 - (1) Donations Report
 - (2) Summary of Transfer and Budget Modification
 - b. Schedule of Payables – Ratify and/or Approve
 - c. Employment Activity Reports
 - d. Special Event Contracts and Athletic Field Use Licenses
 - e. Notice of the Temporary Closure of the Wheelhouse Outdoor Area, etc. at VOA MetroPark – Rescinded
 - f. Notice of Temporary Closure Order for the Angst Preserve – Extension of Closure Order
 - g. Notice of Extension of a Temporary Closure Order of the Gilmore Road Entrance and surrounding areas at Gilmore MetroPark
- VI. Old Business**
 - a. Monthly Public Safety Activity Summary Report
 - b. Monthly Community and Park Relations Summary Report
 - c. Monthly Operational Services, Park Connections and Visitor Services Summary Report
 - d. Monthly Workplace Talent Management Summary Report
 - e. Bi-Monthly Capital Projects Update
 - f. Ratify Extension of Ohio Plan Insurance Coverage Package and Current Increased Cost
 - g. Other-Miscellaneous from Board or Administration

VII. New Business

- a. Acceptance of the Amounts and Rates, etc. Determined by the Budget Commission for 2022
- b. Refinance/Extend Series 2017 Special Revenue Bonds with PNC Bank
- c. Five year Funding Commitment for and Membership in Great Miami Riverway Organization
- d. Defining Use of State Capital Grant Funding for Forest Run, Timberman Ridge Area
- e. Up-date on Angst Property Acquisition and Establishment of Community Foundation Funds
- f. Information Regarding USS Cincinnati Memorial Project
- g. Other-Miscellaneous from Board or Administration

VIII. Executive Session

- a. Land Acquisition/Purchase and/or Sale of Real Property
- b. Personnel Matters – Employment, Compensation and/or Promotion of a Public Employee
- c. Pending Litigation

IX. Miscellaneous Relative to Executive Session

X. Adjournment

III. - Public Comment Regarding Agenda Items - None

IV. - Approval of Minutes

August 19, 2021 Regular Meeting

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the August 19, 2021 Regular Meeting as slightly amended to correct a motion numbering error in the draft version which the Members of the Board had received in their pre-meeting packet and presented by staff to the Board. The corrected version was prepared slightly prior to the meeting and that corrected version was approved and executed at the meeting. See motion below.

Mr. Amend moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Trokhan seconded the motion.

Motion No. 76.21

Vote:

- Mr. Nelson - Absent
- Ms. Trokhan - Aye
- Mr. Amend - Aye

The presiding officer declared the motion carried unanimously.

V. - Consent Agenda

MOTION: Following discussion, **to enact the blanket approval, acceptance, acknowledgment of receipt, and/or ratification of all items listed** in the Consent section of the meeting agenda for the September 16, 2021, Board meeting which have not previously or more specifically been approved or accepted, acknowledged, and/or ratified otherwise by the Board; including, but not limited to, motions listed and any modifications to those motions made during this meeting; including any actions on budget modifications (account transfers within a Fund) and/or changes to employee status or compensation previously taken by the Executive Director and the Executive Director's previous actions related to payments and/or contracts all as recorded in the minutes adopted by the Board or on documents referred to in these minutes hereinafter, including Agenda Items **V.a. through V.g.** (a.k.a. the Consent Agenda); and finally, instructing the Executive Director to take such actions as are necessary to implement the intent of the Board in any and all of these matters. See documents in the Proceedings Book of the Board all of which had been provided to the Board in its pre-meeting packet for more details.

Discussion During the Meeting: None

Mr. Amend moved for approval of the items on the Consent Agenda. Ms. Trokhan seconded the motion.

Motion No. 77.21

Vote:

Mr. Nelson - Absent
Ms. Trokhan - Aye
Mr. Amend - Aye

The presiding officer declared the motion carried unanimously, thereby approving and/or ratifying and placing on file the following:

V.a. - (1) Donations Report- **Approved - no separate action.**

V.a. - (2) Summary of Transfer & Budget Modification - **Approved - no separate action.**

V.b. - Schedule of Payables (August 2021) - **Approved - no separate action.**

V.c. - Employment Activity Reports- **Approved - no separate action.**

V.d. - Special Event and Contracts and Athletic Field Use Licenses – **Approved -**

No separate action thereby to ratifying and placing on file the following:

- d. Special Event Contracts and Athletic Field Use Licenses
 - (1) Special Event Contracts and/or Associated Sales or Commercial or Other Permits Pending Board Action-NONE
 - (2) Approved Special Event Contracts-Information ONLY
 - (a) Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Butler County – Run for Kids/Annual Celebration, August 14, 2021 (New)
 - (b) Lakota Local School District – East Fall Classic, August 26, 2021 – August 28, 2021 (Repeat)
 - (c) Miami University – Student Veteran Assoc. Regional 5K Run/Walk, September 11, 2021 (New)
 - (3) Approved VOA Athletic Complex License Contracts-Information ONLY
 - (a) Cincinnati United Soccer Club – Neil Bradford Cup, August 21 – August 22, 2021 (Repeat)
 - (4) Approved Practice Field Contracts-Information ONLY
 - (a) Lakota Sports Organization – Games and Practices Line Hill, August 15, 2021 – December 31, 2021 (Repeat)
 - (b) Lakota Local School District – Games and Practices VOA, August 9, 2021 – December 31, 2021 (Repeat)

In written information about this agenda item above that had been prepared and provided to the Board in the current pre-meeting information packet, Executive Director, Mr. Granville wrote that Board approval, ratification and/or acknowledgment of receipt is required for most items included on the Consent Agenda section of the meeting agenda if only so that the official record reflects Board intent and/or staff compliance with internal and external rules or policies. However, he noted that any Consent Agenda item may be removed from group approval at the request of any Board Member and considered separately.

VI. - Old Business

VI.a. Monthly Public Safety Activity Summary Report

Discussion During the Meeting: Chief Ranger, David VanArsdale provided a monthly Division of Public Safety Report which was included in the pre-meeting packet and which was distributed to Board Members prior to the meeting. *Chief VanArsdale stated that there have been no significant challenges dealt with by the Division of Public Safety over the past month.*

There was discussion about the future of the Ryan property where MI Homes recently received zoning approval for a residential development and whether if built it could have a traffic impact on the Timberhill Area of Rentschler Forest. The consensus was that the development would increase traffic volume on the narrow Timberhill area driveway.

See Chief VanArsdale's monthly report in the Proceedings Book of the Board.

VI.b. Monthly Community and Park Relations Summary Report

Discussion During the Meeting: Supervisor of Community and Park Relations, Katie Ely provided a monthly Division Report which was included in the pre-meeting packet and which was distributed to Board Members prior to the meeting.

Discussion occurred regarding the Educational campaign that will run for the balance of 2021. It will consist of a Social Media/billboard campaign as well as printed and digital materials. The OuterSpatial app is scheduled to launch prior to the Great Outdoor weekend in September. Mr. Granville explained that similar software applications are “all the rage” for trail users across the United States.

Ms. Ely mentioned that there were 3 press releases sent out last month. There was a short discussion on the ARPA funding requests which have been made to the county commissioners. According to a recent newspaper article, total requests have reached close to \$100 million. The County expects to receive only \$74.4 million from the federal government. MetroParks has asked the county for \$9.5 million for trail and park projects. Mr. Granville stated that in his opinion, many of the proposed projects for which funding has been requested of the county either do not qualify or will not be sustainable. Mr. Granville said that he would check with the County Administrator to determine if there is a schedule for deciding which projects are funded.

There was short discussion regarding the recent cancellation of the 2021 Crazy Cardboard Regatta. Although staff shared the information publicly, there were 2 walkups on the day of the event that hadn't seen the cancellation notices. It was discussed that due to school being back in session attendance/registration numbers were low and that for those reasons, the event had been called off. MetroParks co-sponsored the Miami University 5k race that did take place on September 11th even though the Regatta had been cancelled. There were 86 registrants for the 5k event.

See Ms. Ely's report in the Proceedings Book of the Board.

VI.c. Monthly Operational Services, Park Connections and Visitor Services Summary Reports

Discussion During the Meeting: Deputy Director Chad Smith commented the highlights of the monthly Operational Services, Park Connections and Visitor Services Summary report which was included in the Board's pre-meeting packet prior to the meeting.

Mr. Smith noted that there has been higher usage of fields at Rentschler and Line Hill than earlier this year. He also commented that the Seed propagation program in the Land Stewardship area is going well. A Hoop greenhouse has been ordered and should arrive in 4-6 weeks. Seed propagation will be moved into it once it is constructed.

Visitor Services handled events have been going well. Most fall weekends are full at the Athletic Complex. Ms. Barrero is hard at work researching new reservation system software and event planning for upcoming proposed activities organized by outside parties. A Board member suggested that MetroParks staff should explore possible partnership relationships with the soon to open Spooky Nook indoor sports complex in Hamilton.

See Mr. Smith's monthly report in the Proceedings Book of the Board.

VI.d. Monthly Workplace Talent Management Summary Report

Discussion During the Meeting: Supervisor of Workplace Talent Management Jaime Kimbrough submitted a monthly Division Report which was included in the Board's pre-meeting packet prior to the meeting.

Ms. Kimbrough told the Board about the 7 new staff hires that were recently on-boarded, also that the Executive Director search as going well. A Board member asked about staff turnover. Ms. Kimbrough stated that currently it is not too bad. The biggest struggle she noted, is filling open part-time positions. MetroParks currently has 5 part-time vacancies and 1 full-time job open in Operations. Currently she added, that she was working on filling vacancies for an Asst. Project Manager and an Executive Director position. Next the Supervisor of Financial services position should be posted.

See Ms. Kimbrough's monthly report in the Proceedings Book of the Board.

VI.e. Bi-Monthly Capital Projects Update

Discussion During the Meeting: Park Planner/Project Manager Matt Latham submitted a bi-monthly Capital Project Update which was included in the Board's pre-meeting packet prior to the meeting reviewed for the Board

Mr. Latham stated that the GMRT construction/extension at the Timberhill Area of Rentschler Forest MetroPark is currently underway. At VOA the north athletic field irrigation work is completed, and the project area is to be seeded soon. He continued by saying that since the area is being seeded, it will be at least a year before play can occur on those fields. The Miami 2 Miami project related sewer work at Gilmore MetroPark is also underway. The plan is to send the design work for the area out to bid later this year. Mr. Latham also said that there was a delay in beginning the bridge repair work at Elk Creek MetroPark, Sebald Park Area due to the contractor's staff illnesses. The work is slated to start soon to be done by October. Mr. Latham also mentioned he is working on new plans for the Meadow Ridge clubhouse renovation.

The Accessible Kayak launch at VOA is now complete he stated. Construction has or will start soon on gravel lots at Green Heron, Preserve area of Forest Run MetroPark at the Bothwell property as well as at the new Angst Preserve MetroPark site. Progress on construction of the new footbridge at Governor Bebb MetroPark is on hold until we hear from National Park Service verifying the award of a federal grant to fund the project. Mr. Latham also said that installation of the Stander memorial is slowly happening he said.

We have received 2 quotes for the Barn Stabilization project at the Angst Nature Preserve MetroPark. So, Mr. Latham concluded that will most likely a winter project. There are plans for the 2nd phase of paving at the VOA Athletic Complex to happen this fall with the spur gravel drive to the VOA overlook lot also being completed by mid-November.

Continuing, Mr. Latham recounted that vision planning for Indian Creek MetroPark has begun. A press release as well as an online survey have been sent out.

See Mr. Latham's report in the Proceedings Book of the Board.

VI.f. Ratify Extension of Ohio Plan Insurance

Discussion During the Meeting:

In written information about this agenda item that had been prepared and provided to the Board in the current pre-meeting packet, Mr. Granville wrote that the Board needs to Ratify and Approve the previous actions of the Executive Director to renew insurance coverage with the Ohio Plan for the period of September 1, 2021 through August 31, 2022. Further to instruct the MetroParks Director to take such actions as are necessary to implement the intent of the Board in this matter including, but not limited to, authority to order payments when due.

Treating the 2nd year increase of a 2-year coverage deal that the MetroParks Board accepted from the Ohio Plan Insurance Plan like a contract change order he acted to renew the current coverage effective September 1, 2021. Due to loss history and our adding coverage for additional property acquired, the annual cost of coverage increased \$5,598.00 as compared with the previous coverage year. The total cost for the new coverage period will be \$62,075.00.

Since the Board acted previously to approve the current 2-year insurance contract best practices indicate that the Board should also act to ratify (thereby accepting the new rate and accept/approve coverage for the new policy year) for the official record.

Mr. Amend moved for approval. Ms. Trokhan seconded the motion.

Motion No. 78.21

Vote:

Mr. Nelson - Absent
Ms. Trokhan - Aye
Mr. Amend - Aye

VI.g. Other-Miscellaneous from Board or Administration

None.

VII. – New Business

VII.a. Acceptance of the Amounts and Rates, Etc. Determined by the Budget Commission for 2022

Motion: To approve the resolution as presented by MetroParks Administration thereby accepting the amounts and rates as determined by the Butler County Budget Commission and authorizing the necessary Tax Levies (Levy) and certifying them (it) to the County Auditor and further to instruct the MetroParks Director to take such actions as are necessary to implement the intent of the Board in this matter.

Discussion During the Meeting: none

Mr. Amend moved to approve the motion above. The motion was seconded by Ms. Trokhan.

Motion No. 79 .21

Vote:

Mr. Nelson - Absent
Ms. Trokhan - Aye
Mr. Amend – Aye

The presiding officer declared the motion carried unanimously

In written information about this agenda item that had been prepared and provided to the Board in the current pre-meeting packet, Mr. Granville wrote that this is a boiler plate type of resolution annually necessary to enable the collection of any property tax levy in the next year. In our case, not adopting/approving it (and having staff file it by October 1st of the preceding year, this year) can result in no collection of the MetroParks' levy in 2022. The Ohio Revised Code mandates this annual process regardless of the fact that the duration of a levy has already been approved by the voters.

VII.b. Refinance/Extend Series 2017 Special Revenue Bonds with PNC Bank

MOTION: NONE

Discussion During the Meeting: Mr. Granville mentioned that MetroParks currently has 2 debts in the form of bonds upon which it makes payments. All both enabled the park system to make large capital improvements or purchase park land. Because of the legalities involved, PNC Bank and the Board are not interested the bond for which payment is guaranteed by levy income. The Series 2017 Special Revenue Bond will come due with large balloon payment the end of next year. The current Series 2017 interest rate for that bond is 4.1%. Of the refinancing options presented to the Board, Mr. Granville recommended the proposed 7 year debt with a 3.61% interest rate. The other option from PNC Bank was a 6 year debt with a 3.54% interest rate. During discussion, a board member suggested getting other quotes from other lenders.

There was then some discussion regarding the need to hire qualified Bond Counsel. However, no Board action on any Bond related matter took place and the President moved the meeting on to the next topic on the agenda.

No motion taken.

In written information about this agenda item that had been prepared and provided to the Board in the current pre-meeting packet, Mr. Granville wrote that he recommended that the Board act to authorize the refinancing of the Series 2017 Special Revenue Bond for a 7-year period pursuant to the conditions stated on the PNC Term sheet which was attached. Action now would lock in (at closing) a lower interest rate than we'd likely receive at a later date and would eliminate a balloon payment at the end of the repayment period.

VII.c. Five Year Funding Commitment for and Membership in Great Miami Riverway Organization

MOTION: to subject to the passage of a MetroParks levy in November, 2021 to commit to organizational participation (membership) in the Great Miami Riverway group for the period of June 2022 through May 2027 and to approve the Agreement all as provided by MetroParks Administration to the Board, thereby committing to pay \$3,500 per year for a total five year cost not to exceed \$17,500. Further to instruct the MetroParks Director to take such actions as are necessary to implement the intent of the Board in this matter.

Discussion During the Meeting: Mr. Granville stated that the Great Miami Riverway staff and members have been very supportive of the efforts of the MetroParks to enhance access along the river corridor.

Mr. Amend moved to approve the motion above. Ms. Trokhan seconded the motion.

Motion No. 80.21

Vote:

Mr. Nelson - Absent

Ms. Trokhan - Aye

Mr. Amend – Aye

The presiding officer declared the motion carried unanimously.

In written information about this agenda item that had been prepared and provided to the Board in the current pre-meeting packet, Mr. Granville wrote that the value of the Great Miami Riverway Organization to collectively promote the river and the adjacent Great Miami River Trail (GMRT) has been demonstrated on many occasions and recently especially in advocating for Federal ARPA funding to enable the completion of the GMRT in Butler County. At no increase over their current membership costs, the renewal request is a bargain for its members including MetroParks of Butler County. Board action is required as a conditional membership commitment such is suggested in this case are unusual in nature. But are necessary as committing funds at this time beyond the duration of the present levy are problematic according to state accounting rules.

VII.d. Defining Use of State Capital Grant Funding for Forest Run, Timberman Ridge Area

MOTION: None

Discussion During the Meeting: Mr. Latham relayed information to the Board Members present about the \$400,000 State Capital grant for improvements at the Forest Run MetroPark, Timberman Ridge Area. There has been focus in the past on rehabbing the white bank barn as a 3 season shelter, wedding venue etc. Earlier in 2021 a Feasibility study showed major structural issues with the barn. The recommendation in the study were to dismantle the barn, build a new foundation and reassemble it with a combination of new and old materials. A Board member stated that this proposal for reuse was going to be very expensive.

Mr. Latham discussed two options. It would cost approximately \$100,000 to deconstruct the barn before it could be rebuilt into a more useful structure, he said. A board member suggested demolishing the barn completely.

Mr. Latham presented slides of other possible plans for the area as alternatives to spending on the barn. That included adding amenities like a stand-alone flush restroom, playground, firepit gathering space, etc. at a cost close to \$700,000. There was discussion of doing the preceding project in phases and potentially using some of the federal (ARPA) money if MetroParks receives any of it. It was also suggested to potentially utilize some of the money from the sale of the Stander property to augment the State grant. Consensus was that those dollars should be used further west in parks like Indian Creek, however.

A Board member stated that they don't feel that any money should be spent on rehabbing the barn. But he suggested reaching out to an Amish builder to assist with the deconstruction and/or salvage/sell pieces of the barn materials to help fund the other project. Flush restroom and a playground are priorities, that Board member stated.

Mr. Latham further stated that since money earmarked in the current MetroParks Budget for the Elk Creek Meadow Ridge clubhouse demolition project won't be utilized, those dollars could be moved to fund Forest Run MetroPark, Timberman Ridge area improvement project Mr. Latham stated. More study will be undertaken and once complete, the results will be returned to the Board for further action.

In written information about this agenda item that had been prepared and provided to the Board in the current pre-meeting packet, Mr. Granville wrote that staff requests Board input by consensus on the options available to make the most productive use of the State Capital grant dollars (\$400,000 minus an ODNR administrative fee) that have been allocated to improve the Timberman Ridge Area of Forest Run MetroPark. Park Planner Matt Latham will lead a discussion at the Board meeting to help establish or solidify a direction for use of the State Funds. The feasibility study under taken to explore re-use potential of the White Barn at Timberman Ridge has resulted in causing some doubt as to the wisdom of pursuing use of the state funds to re-purpose the White Barn structure. More at the Board meeting.

VII.e. Up-date on Angst Property Acquisition and Establishment of Community Foundation Funds

MOTION: None.

Discussion During the Meeting: Mr. Granville stated that the new park area is scheduled to open October 22. Invitations will be going out shortly.

In written information about this agenda item that had been prepared and provided to the Board in the current pre-meeting packet, Mr. Granville wrote that several years ago there was a Board directive given to staff to establish MetroParks accounts (Funds) at each of the five Community Foundations that operate in Butler County. With the closing of the Angst property purchase MetroParks and with the assistance of partner donors, was able to open new Funds at the Oxford Community Foundation and the Middletown Community Foundations. This leaves the Fairfield Community Foundation as the only Butler County based community foundation where the park system does not yet have private dollars dedicated to support certain park system functions or properties. MetroParks now has funds at: 1. The West Chester/Liberty (now called the Northern Cincinnati Foundation); 2. The Hamilton Community Foundation; 3. The Oxford Community Foundation; 4. The Middletown Community Foundation. Unless otherwise determined as necessary by the Board, the next Executive Director will need to be tasked by the Board to find appropriate ways to grow the current Funds and to find private dollars to establish a new Fund at the Fairfield based Foundation.

VII.f. Information regarding USS Cincinnati Memorial Project

MOTION: None.

Discussion During the Meeting: Mr. Granville discussed the project and stated that the museum has a Cold War exhibit purpose, so this would be a good fit for the site. He also stated that MetroParks hasn't pledged any funding and will be just assisting the museum and township with maneuvering through the federal approval process with the National Park Service as the Museum property has similar use restrictions as those impacting VOA MetroPark.

In written information about this agenda item that had been prepared and provided to the Board in the current pre-meeting packet, Mr. Granville wrote that to keep the Board up-to-date on a possible nearby visitor attraction which indirectly might influence parking and traffic flow at the VOA Athletic Complex and impact the mowing that MetroParks performs by contract at the VOA Museum.

VII.g. Other-Miscellaneous from Board or Administration

VIII. Executive Session

MOTION: To enter Executive Session for the purposes noted as follows

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

- a. Land Acquisition/Purchase and/or Sale of Real Property
- b. Personnel Matters – Employment, Compensation and/or Promotion of a Public Employee
- c. Pending Litigation

Motion No. 81.21

Vote:

Mr. Nelson – Absent
Ms. Trokhan - Aye
Mr. Amend - Aye

The President declared the motion carried unanimously and the Board then entered into Executive Session at 9:53 a.m.. The Board returned to Regular Session at 10:08 a.m.

IX. - Actions Relative to Executive Session

No Board action was taken in this section of the agenda other than adjournment which follows.

X. - Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Amend moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Trokhan seconded the motion.

Motion No. 82.21

Vote:

Mr. Nelson – Absent
Ms. Trokhan -
Mr. Amend -

The presiding officer declared the motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 10:09 a.m.

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

Executive Director/Secretary

Date

Title

Unless rescheduled or relocated, the next regular business meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners is scheduled for October 21, 2021, at 8:30 a.m.