

METROPARKS OF BUTLER COUNTY
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, August 20, 2026

The MetroParks of Butler County Board of Park Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, August 20, 2026, at Timberman Ridge MetroPark, 1976 Timberman Road, Hamilton, Ohio 45013.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Mr. Nelson

V. Special Presentation

- a. MetroParks Community Grant Presentations - Grant recipient organizations were introduced and given the opportunity to briefly describe their funded projects. After each presentation, photos were taken with the Board of Park Commissioners as part of the recognition process. Awards presented to: Morgan Township, Fairfield Township, Wayne Township, Ross Township and City of Oxford.

I. Roll Call and Agenda

Members present: Daryl Nelson, Larry Gersbach, Cynamon Trokhan

Staff present: Katie Brown, Joe Dumyahn, Jaime Kimbrough, Jackie O'Connell, Amy Pellman, Frank Robinson, Suzanne Roth, Shelly Schultz, Scott Wingate

III. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the July 16, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes

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

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

IV. Consent Agenda

a. Donations – July

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda

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

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

VI. Finance

a. Schedule of Payables – July – Resolution

Short discussion on the Bayer Becker invoice. There was also a question on recent GovDeals transactions.

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

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

Resolution 26.20

b. YTD Revenue & Expense Report

VII. Administrative Reports

Planning: Mr. Scott Wingate began by stating that this is the wettest January through July period in 132 years. He noted that, while there have been some downed trees and other damage, the overall impact has been minimal, and staff have been able to address most issues.

The most visible damage occurred at Davidson Woods, which is still under construction. The contractor will be returning soon to place additional gravel. Mr. Wingate stated that there have been no major incidents or significant erosion at the other parks. Staff have periodically closed some parks due to conditions; however, the Operations team has worked diligently to reopen the parks as soon as conditions allow.

Ms. Trokhan asked whether the downed trees could be “stood up.” Mr. Dumyahn explained that most of the trees were too large for that to be a viable option.

Human Resources: Ms. Jaime Kimbrough briefly reviewed the changes that ORC 9.03 will create for the next levy campaign. She explained that public employees cannot be compensated with public funds for time spent attempting to influence the outcome of a levy issue; which brings salaried employees volunteering on a levy committee into question. Mr. Gersbach noted that there is currently approximately \$16,000 in the PAC account.

Ms. O'Connell stated that staff and the Board will need to begin discussions early next year to determine when MetroParks should place a levy on the ballot and what millage to request. The available options include a renewal levy or a new levy. She explained that staff are currently collecting data on deferred maintenance and capital projects. MetroParks is also wrapping up its strategic plan, which will help identify what the community wants to see in its parks. Early indications are that the general consensus is to maintain what MetroParks currently offers.

The current levy will expire at the end of 2028. Following a brief discussion, the Board indicated that MetroParks should consider going on the ballot in fall 2027. Ms. O'Connell suggested waiting until the first quarter of next year to review the data collected and the finalized strategic plan before making a decision.

Ms. O'Connell noted that one of the primary concerns is how the public will respond to a new levy. As an organization, MetroParks has continued to maintain a strong presence in the community and partner with like-minded organizations.

Administration: Mr. Gersbach stated that he had recently been contacted by the Elks regarding concerns about the proximity of the proposed bike path to the 10th fairway at the Hamilton Elks Golf Club. Mr. Scott Wingate stated that Mr. Gersbach could share his contact information with the group.

Mr. Gersbach also shared that he has received a significant amount of positive feedback regarding the progress at Davidson Woods. Mr. Nelson suggested obtaining drone footage of the trails.

Regarding updates to the Great Miami River Trail (GMRT), Mr. Wingate stated that MetroParks is continuing to spend the ARPA funds. He reported that the Monroe bridge project is progressing well and is anticipated to be installed within the next month or so.

A brief discussion followed regarding the remaining funding gaps and unfinished sections of the trail. Mr. Wingate stated that the section from Monroe to Middletown is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2027. Ms. O'Connell added that the City of Fairfield is also working on its section of the trail.

IX. New Business

a. Clean Ohio Grant Application – Ross Township Greenspace Parcel – Resolution

The property MetroParks is considering purchasing is contiguous with Timberman Ridge. Mr. Bolton is working with Three Valley Conservation Trust on the proposed acquisition. MetroPark's plan is to purchase the 49-acre property using Clean Ohio funds, with an estimated value of \$500,000 to \$600,000. Mr. Bolton would then donate the funds back to the Legacy Foundation.

The benefit of structuring the purchase in this manner would be that no local tax dollars would be required for the acquisition.

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

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

Resolution 26.21

b. Conservation Easement with the Millcreek Alliance – Draft Resolution

Ms. O'Connell stated that the Mill Creek Alliance recently contacted MetroParks regarding property they own near the Ellis Lake property. The Alliance received an H2Ohio grant for restoration work in the area and asked whether MetroParks would be willing to hold the conservation easement to allow the restoration work to proceed. Once the restoration project is completed, the Alliance intends to transfer the property to MetroParks.

Ms. O'Connell explained that the restoration work would contribute to habitat preservation in an important birding area. A brief discussion followed regarding the property's proximity to existing MetroParks property, the 747 property, and the trailhead on Seward Road.

Ms. O’Connell also stated that there have been discussions with the County Commissioners office and West Chester Township regarding trail maintenance; however, an agreement has not been reached. Concerns were raised regarding the railroad tracks and the potential for visitors to cross the tracks between the two areas.
Mr. Nelson moved to approve; Mr. Gersbach seconded.
Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Mr. Nelson, Mr. Gersbach, Ms. Trokhan

X. Commissioner Reports

XI. Executive Session

Mr. Nelson moved for a roll call vote to enter Executive Session, seconded by Ms. Trokhan for the purpose of discussions involving Land Acquisition, Legal Issues and Personnel Matters.

Vote: Aye: Mr. Nelson, Mr. Gersbach, Ms. Trokhan

The Board entered into Executive Session at 9:40 a.m.
The Board returned to Regular Session at 10:09 a.m.

XII. Adjournment

Mr. Nelson moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:09 a.m., Mr. Gersbach seconded.
Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Mr. Nelson, Mr. Gersbach, Ms. Trokhan

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