

METROPARKS OF BUTLER COUNTY
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
October 15, 2020

The MetroParks of Butler County Board of Park Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, October 15, 2020, and, because of the Coronavirus Public Health Emergency and the social distancing orders in effect, the meeting was held as a *Zoom Virtual Meeting* pursuant to recent amendments to Chapter 121 of the Ohio Revised Code temporarily allowing remote participation at a public meeting of the Board.

I. - Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m. by President Gregory Amend.

II. - Roll Call and Agenda

Members present for purposes of roll call were Mr. Amend, Mr. Nelson, and Ms. Trokhan

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 - September 25, 2020, Regular Meeting**
- V. Consent Agenda ****
 - a. Financial Reports
 - (1) Cash Summary Report
 - (2) Cash Summary and Forecast
 - (3) Donations
 - (4) Summary of Transfers and Budget Modifications
 - (5) Revenue Summary and Commentary
 - (6) Expenditure Summary and Commentary
 - (7) VOA Cost Center Cash Receipts
 - b. Schedule of Payables
 - c. Employment Activity Report
 - d. Special Event Contracts and VOA Athletic Complex 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. Hamilton Cross Country Invitational-Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2020-Timberman Ridge

- (Repeat)
- b. Lakota Cross-Country Quad-Saturday, September 26, 2020-VOA (New)
- c. CHCA Cross Country Invitational-Tuesday, October 6, 2020-VOA (Repeat)
- (3) Approved VOA Athletic Complex License Contracts- Information ONLY
 - a. Lakota FC Midwest Fall Cup-Friday, September 18-Sunday, September 20, 2020-VOA-(Repeat)
- (4) Approved VOA Practice Field License Contracts-Information ONLY
 - a. Gotham Soccer-Daily Use Contract-September 28-December 31, 2020-VOA (Repeat)

VI. Old Business

- a. Monthly Public Safety Activity Summary Report
- b. Monthly Community and Enterprise Initiatives Summary Report
- c. Monthly Operational Services *with* Status Chart, Park Connections and Visitor Services Summary Reports
- d. Monthly Workplace Talent Management Summary Report
- e. Other – Miscellaneous from Board or Administration

VII. New Business

- a. 3rd Quarter 2020 Financial Report
- b. Revised Pricing for Ronald Reagan Lodge
- c. Employee Health Insurance for 2021, etc.
- d. Award of Contract / Approval of Sale – Purchase Agreement Regarding Real Property at 5750 Dunwoody Rd., Reily Township
- e. Resolution to Authorize a LWCF Grant Application, etc.
- f. Revised Maintenance and Use Agreement for VOA Maintenance Building & Grounds with West Chester Twp.
- h. Other – Miscellaneous from Board or Administration

VIII. Executive Session

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

IX. Miscellaneous Relative to Executive Session

X. Adjournment

III. - Public Comment Regarding Agenda Items

Roger Koch, a resident of Reily Township, was recognized by the Board President and addressed the Board. Mr. Koch commented that the letter addressed to MetroParks regarding the pending sale of the Stander Farm property was not directly from him rather than a cumulative effort by concerned neighbors of the Stander Farm property. Mr. Koch met with two other neighbors and said that the letter turned into a petition which was signed by 47 area residents and was collected over one weekend. Mr. Koch expressed concern that he and other Stander property neighbors were not included in any conversations about the potential sale of the property and after discussion had three priority issues to convey: #1 - They do not believe the

property should not be sold. #2 - They feel MetroParks owes it to the Stander family to apply a conservation or agricultural easement to the property if sold. #3 – The group would like MetroParks to vet potential new owners/buyers to see what their intentions for the land would be. Mr. Koch also stated that the neighboring community does not want to see the property subdivided for housing. He relayed that the existing out-buildings on the property are unique and that they (especially the old barn) should be preserved.

Ann Jantzen who formerly was a neighborhood resident was recognized next and presented questions from other area residents which were: #1 - Why is MetroParks selling the Stander Farm property? #2 - Did the Standers not want this property preserved as a farm? #3 - What will the funds from the sale be used for? #4 - Has MetroParks considered that the perception of the community as the neighboring community feels this (the pending sale) was intentionally kept quiet? #5 - Can the sale be put on hold until the surrounding community can provide input?

A Board Member stated that it has been long and incorrectly thought by many that the Stander property was a gift to the MetroParks, but he clarified that MetroParks committed to pay full market price for the property when it was purchased from the Stander family in 2006. This Board member also stated that there was not an effort to keep the current potential sale hidden from the public and that the legal guidelines for selling public property (which include legal advertisement) are strict and were followed. He continued saying that this and any other MetroParks real estate sale must be conducted by a public/sealed bid process which does not allow for negotiations with the bidders. Additionally, he stated that many of the funds from the sale of the Stander property will be applied to projects at nearby Gov. Bebb MetroPark in order to better serve the broader county-wide community. He explained that most improvement grants require anywhere from 25 – 50% of local matching funds so that money from the sale could potentially double the funds available to the MetroParks for improvements at other MetroParks properties.

Another Board member stated that there had been conversations with Probate Court Judge Rogers regarding the possibility of selling the property and/or discussions about other uses of the property. This Board member also stated that a main priority of the MetroParks is to balance conservation with public utilization. Additionally, regarding renting/leasing the Stander Farm (property) for farming, there then becomes an issue with real estate taxes which must be then paid on the property if it is farmed commercially. Later in the meeting, Executive Director Granville noted that when the MetroParks had announced it was accepting bids for a farming lease on the property in 2019 there were no bids submitted. He pointed out that this meant there would be increased costs to the MetroParks to plant cover crops and for weed control etc.

Jonathan Granville, Executive Director stated that the Board decided to sell the property in October of 2019 and that the actions of the Board in this regard have been posted on the MetroParks website for almost a year. He also commented that the motion to sell contained a provision stating that the proceeds from the sale were to be used to improve other west side MetroParks. He continued by stating that there was absolutely no secrecy regarding the sale of the Stander property as evidenced by the Public Notice published in the local paper and that all prior Board meeting minutes are on file and can be requested as is the case for any public record. He continued by saying that all proceeds from the Stander property will be strictly

reserved for westside MetroParks property improvements. He also added that putting an easement on the property, as suggested by some Stander property neighbors, could potentially decrease the value of the property by 50% indicating that if the intent of the Board was to generate dollars to be used at other parks this would have been counter-productive.

As there were no more public comments at this point the Board moved forward on its stated agenda.

IV. - Approval of Minutes September 25, 2020 Meeting

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the September 25, 2020 Meeting as presented by staff to the Board. Mr. Nelson moved, seconded by Ms. Trokhan *Motion No. 77.20*

Vote: Mr. Amend - Aye
Mr. Nelson - Aye
Ms. Trokhan - 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 25, 2020, 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.d.** (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 Proceedings Book)

Mr. Nelson moved, seconded by Ms. Trokhan.

Motion No. 78.20

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

The President Greg Amend declared the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion During the Meeting: There was no further discussion on this agenda item.

In written information about this agenda item 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 compliance with internal and external rules or policies. However, any Consent agenda item may be removed from group approval at the request of any Board Member and considered separately.

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

V.a. - (2) Summary of Transfers and Budget Modifications - Approved - no separate action.

V.b. - Schedule of Payables - Approved - no separate action.

V.c. - Employment Activity Report - Approved - no separate action.

V.d. Special Event Contracts and VOA Athletic Complex Licenses Approved by Administration and Provided for the Official Record: - Approved - no separate action on items in the V.d. section below.

To ratify and place on file:

- (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. Hamilton Cross Country Invitational-Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2020-Timberman Ridge Area of Forest Run MetroPark (Repeat)
 - b. Lakota Cross-Country Quad-Saturday, September 26, 2020-VOA (New)
 - c. CHCA Cross Country Invitational-Tuesday, October 6, 2020-VOA (Repeat)
- (3) Approved VOA Athletic Complex License Contracts- Information ONLY
 - a. Lakota FC Midwest Fall Cup-Friday, September 18-Sunday, September 20, 2020 – VOA (Repeat)
- (4) Approved VOA Practice Field License Contracts-Information ONLY
 - a. Gotham Soccer-Daily Use Contract-September 28-December 31, 2020-VOA (Repeat)

V.e. – Notice of Temporary Closure and Reopening of an Unimproved Section of GMRT at Rentschler Forest MetroPark

Approved as part of the blanket Motion: To acknowledge receipt of Notices of the Temporary Closure and the Reopening of part of an un-improved section of the Great Miami River Trail at Rentschler Forest MetroPark for the public record. Further to instruct the Executive Director to take such action as he seems is necessary in order to implement the intent of the Board in this matter.

In written information about this agenda item that had been prepared and provided to the Board in the current pre-meeting information packet, Mr. Granville wrote that MetroParks Rules and Regulations require that the Executive Director notify the Board whenever he/she has ordered a closure of park area and/or the reopening which he had closed. Board acknowledgment serves to provide an official record that notice was provided pursuant to the policy.

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 had been included in the Board's meeting packet prior to this meeting and offered no additional comments. (see documents in Proceedings Book)

VI.b. Monthly Community and Park Connections Summary Report

Discussion During the Meeting: Division of Community and Enterprise Initiatives Supervisor, Kelly Barkley, submitted the monthly Division Report which had been included in the Board's meeting packet for the meeting and offered no additional comments. (see documents in Proceedings Book)

VI.c. Monthly Operational Services *with* Status Chart, Park Connections and Visitor Services Summary Reports

Discussion During the Meeting: In addition to the monthly report summarizing the activities of the Divisions which had been included in the pre-meeting packet that the members of the Board had received, Deputy Director, Chad Smith stated MetroParks has been continuing to work closely with the Butler County Health Department regarding compliance with Covid-19 safety guidelines. (see documents in Proceedings Book)

VI.d. Monthly Workplace Talent Management Summary Report

Discussion During the Meeting: Supervisor of Workplace Talent Management Jaime Kimbrough had submitted the monthly Report for the Workplace Talent Management Division which had been included in the Board's pre-meeting packet for this meeting. Volunteer hours are up with smaller projects, she stated.

The Board members asked to be on the distribution list of Buzz newsletter to which Ms. Kimbrough replied that she would add each member to the email list. (see documents in Proceedings Book)

VI.e. Miscellaneous:

Jonathan Granville, Executive Director stated that Board member signatures are still needed for the September 2020 meeting documents and that he could have a park Ranger or other staff member deliver the documents if that would be more helpful to members of the Board than

digital delivery. The Board members replied that they would sign them electronically and send them back.

VII. – New Business

VII.a. 3rd Quarter 2020 Financial Report

In written information about this agenda item that had been prepared and provided to the Board in the current pre-meeting information packet, Mr. Granville wrote that Based on a standing request from the Board each quarter year a report was provided to the Board detailing Financial matters from the past 3 months. Yamini Patel, Supervisor of Financial Services will attend the meeting to answer any questions about the material she has provided.

Discussion During the Meeting: Ms. Patel presented the 3rd quarter 2020 Financial Report in detail and there was no further discussion.

VII.b. Revised Pricing for Ronald Reagan Lodge

MOTION: To approve the pricing and procedures relating to the fees to be charged, usage, and the operations of the Ronald Reagan Lodge meeting and banquet facilities to be implemented as recommended in documents dated 10/12/2020 and presented to the Board by Administrative staff, all to be effective January 1, 2021 thereby replacing and making void all previously adopted fees and policies which are in conflict except as described in the documents presented and approved therein. Further, to instruct the Executive Director to take such actions as he deems necessary to implement the intent of the Board in this matter. (see documents in Proceedings Book)

Ms. Trokhan moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson.

Motion No. 79.20

Vote: Mr. Amend - Aye

Mr. Nelson - Aye

Ms. Trokhan - Aye

The President Greg Amend declared the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion During the Meeting: Ms. Barkley, Division of Community and Enterprise Initiatives Supervisor stated that there were no recent increases in Lodge rental reservations. Based on her market research, Ms. Barkley stated that MetroParks could remain competitive with Lodge pricing by implementing a 10% increase to Butler County residents and a 12% increase for non-Butler County residents, both of which were reflected in the materials provided to the Board. She stated that she believes that her plan would attract more Lodge rentals by offering special pricing (equivalent to the resident rate) to non-profit organizations and that this was part of her recommendations. She also added that the Mon-Thurs option for businesses to bring in their own boxed lunches may also help increase rentals. Additionally, she expressed that the potential to exceed recent revenue with this new Lodge rental and pricing structure is much

greater than with the prior rental and pricing structures.

A Board member asked if there is the potential to lose future rentals because of the new structure to which Ms. Barkley replied “Most likely not, because caterers would not have to pay MetroParks a percentage of their fee which in turn in the past has been passed down to the customer as an increase in costs, and because a customer could design and control their own costs potentially lowering the overall price each would pay.” A Board member noted that some corporate customers want a higher level of service and are willing to pay for the higher cost of one-stop service. He noted that those customers would rather pay more to avoid having to spend staff time selecting and arranging for options at the Lodge themselves. His point being that those customers would then likely move to other venues.

In order to explore alternative operating methods, a Board member requested that staff contact the National Park Service to verify whether MetroParks could potentially lease the Lodge completely to private vendors for meeting and banquet center management. National Park approval is needed based on the conditions under which MetroParks had received the VOA land from the federal government. Mr. Granville replied that he would see to contacting the National Park Service for clarification.

Another Board member stated that she would like to revisit the Lodge’s progress with the new plan in place after 6 months to gauge whether the new concept was working as projected.

In written information about this agenda item that had been prepared and provided to the Board in the current pre-meeting information packet, Mr. Granville wrote that in order to complete the revision of operational procedures and to bring fees charge up to market rates he recommends that the Board approve the revisions recommended by Kelly Barkley, Supervisor of Community and Enterprise Initiatives.

VII.c. Employee Health Insurance for 2020, etc.

MOTION: To approve continuation of current employee health Insurance coverage in 2021 with CEBCO and to approve the MetroParks / employee cost-share of premium costs in 2021 as described in memo with charts titled as Option 2, dated 10/08/2020, which was provided to the Board by administrative staff. Further to instruct the Executive Director to take such actions as he deems necessary to implement the intent of the Board in this matter. (see documents in Proceedings Book)

Ms. Trokhan moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson.

Motion No. 80.20

Vote: Mr. Amend - Aye

Mr. Nelson - Aye

Ms. Trokhan - Aye

The President Greg Amend declared the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion During the Meeting: Jaime Kimbrough, Supervisor of Workplace Talent

Management stated that the 2-teir rate for health coverage in 2021 is higher than last year, but is still lower than the average across that state for similar organizations. The wellness program discount requires that the employee(s) participating in the program complete the wellness program the year prior to the new rates being determined. Typically, enrolled employees have until August of the previous year to complete the wellness program requirements.

A Board member stated that Option #2 would be the best decision for 2021, but also said that is should be clearly communicated to employees that each employee will be responsible for the full cost of future wellness program charges should they choose to *not* participate in the program on future occasions.

Mr. Granville stated that Butler County has also opted to use CEBCO coverage also and that it may be possible to utilize coordinated wellness screenings when the County schedules onsite screening(s) dates. Mr. Granville asked that Ms. Kimbrough consult with Butler County to inquire about this possibility in 2021.

In written information about this agenda item that had been prepared and provided to the Board in the current pre-meeting information packet, Mr. Granville wrote that he recommends that the Board continue coverage with CEBCO and that the extra costs charged (lack of discount) for a covered employee who elected not to participate in the wellness program be paid by that employee at a rate of 100% of the additional cost charged by CEBCO.

VII.d. Award of Contract / Approval of Sale – Purchase Agreement Regarding Real Property at 5750 Dunwoody Rd, Reily Township

MOTION: Having previously determined that the real estate at 5750 Dunwoody Road, Reily Township, Butler County, Ohio is not necessary for the purposes for which it was acquired and having advertised for sale and considered all bids received pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Sections in 1545.12 and waiving any non-material errors and/or omissions in the bid document received, to award the sales contract to the best and highest bidder as determined by this body to be Myron Bowling. (see documents in Proceedings Book)

Mr. Nelson moved, seconded by Ms. Trokhan.

Motion No. 82.20

**Note: This agenda item was taken out of planned regular order due to a break to discuss the matter in Executive Session after Agenda item VII.f.*

Vote: Mr. Amend - Aye
Mr. Nelson - Aye
Ms. Trokhan - Aye

The President Greg Amend declared the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion During the Meeting after Executive Session: A Board member stated that as the highest bidder, Myron Bowling should be awarded the sale of the Stander Farm property.

Additionally, the Board member noted that MetroParks will officially segregate funds from the sale of the property to be used specifically for improvements to MetroParks properties on the west side in compliance with a previous resolution of the Board.

In written information about this agenda item that had been prepared and provided to the Board in the current pre-meeting information packet, Mr. Granville wrote that after investigation, the Board's possible actions in the matter with counsel's advice, he recommended that the Board award the sale to Myron Bowling who submitted the highest bid for the property. If for any reason the Board finds the highest bid to be unacceptable, he recommended that all bids be rejected, and that the property not be sold at this time.

VII.e. Resolution to Authorize a LWCF Grant Application, etc.

MOTION: To approve a Resolution to authorize the filing of a Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund grant application for 50% funding of the cost to construct a footbridge and make foot-trail improvements at Governor Bebb MetroPark, etc. Further, to instruct the Executive Director to take such actions as he deems necessary to implement the intent of the Board in this matter. (see documents in Proceedings Book)

Ms. Trokhan moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson.

Motion No. 81.20

Vote: Mr. Amend - Aye
Mr. Nelson - Aye
Ms. Trokhan - Aye

The President Greg Amend declared the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion During the Meeting: In addition to the draft Preliminary Master Plan for Gov. Bebb MetroPark which had been included in the pre-meeting packet that the members of the Board had received, Park Planner/Project Manager, Matt Latham described to the Board the plan for the grant in more detail.

A Board member asked if the proposed bridge would be of highway-standard design and if that is causing the cost of the proposed project to be seemingly so high. Mr. Latham responded that the proposed bridge is not a highway-standard design and that cars would not be able to cross. Mr. Latham added that the heaviest vehicle to cross would be a Gator-style utility vehicle useful for trail maintenance and the proposed bridge would be about 10' above the dry fork streambed and most likely would be a steel single-span structure.

Mr. Granville commented that there may be the potential for a cable bridge but is not sure that it would save any costs and that that option would be explored.

In written information about this agenda item that had been prepared and provided to the Board in the current pre-meeting information packet, Mr. Granville wrote that anticipating the availability of 50% matching funds from the net revenue from the sale of the real estate on Dunwoody Road, MetroParks has the opportunity to double the impact of some of those funds and provide public passive recreational access to a special part of Gov. Bebb which has been

largely inaccessible to general park visitors since it was first acquired about 80 years ago. Capital Improvement funds in the MetroParks' budget is largely unavailable and traditionally come from special sources. The proposed bridge and trail projects would go far to benefit the thousands of trail users that have otherwise visited other parks for these amenities.

VII.f. Revised Maintenance and Use Agreement for VOA Maintenance Building & Grounds with West Chester Twp.

In written information about this agenda item that had been prepared and provided to the Board in the current pre-meeting information packet, Mr. Granville wrote that although an extended and slightly revised Agreement was not yet available for the October 15, 2020 Board meeting members of the Township and MetroParks Administrative teams had met and have reached a verbal agreement on a 5-year extended contract. The only significant changes from the current Agreement would be that MetroParks would reimburse the VOA Museum for their actual costs for utilities used at the Maintenance Building rather than a payment based on estimates and also that the MetroParks would manage all activities in the Memorial Tree Grove as if it were owned by MetroParks rather than just mow the grass there as is now the case. Improvements to the Tree Grove would be at MetroParks' option, limited to those items listed on the new VOA Vision Plan updated on 06/03/2020, and including new gates on the tree Grove entrance and exit drives. Many options were discussed over the last 18 months with the Township.

Discussion During the Meeting: Park Planner/Project Manager, Matt Latham presented the Vision Plan for VOA MetroPark which had been included in the pre-meeting packet that the members of the Board had received.

Mr. Granville stated that about every 5 years the contract is revisited, and that the Township is willing to give MetroParks the authority to fully govern park activities at the tree grove.

MISCELLANEOUS

No additional comments.

VIII. - Executive Session

MOTION: To enter into Executive Session at 10:27 a.m., Ms. Trokhan, called for a roll call vote, seconded by Mr. Nelson, for the purpose of discussions involving:

- a. Land Acquisition/Purchase and/or Sale of Property
- b. Personnel Matter – Employment Compensation
- c. Pending Litigation

The Board returned to regular session at 10:58 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 at 11:01 a.m.

Mr. Nelson moved, seconded by Ms. Trokhan.

Motion No. 83.20

Vote: Mr. Amend - Aye
Mr. Nelson - Aye
Ms. Trokhan - Aye

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 November 19, 2020, at 8:30 a.m. at the Forest Run Welcome Center located at 1976 Timberman Road, Hamilton, OH 45013
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