

METROPARKS OF BUTLER COUNTY  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
May 21, 2020

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The MetroParks of Butler County Board of Park Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, May 21, 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 8:30 a.m. by President Gregory T. Amend.

### II. - Roll Call and Agenda

Members present for purposes of roll call were Park Commissioners Gregory T. Amend, Cynamon T. Trokhan, and Daryl Nelson. Also in attendance was Mr. Mark Hecquet, Executive Director of the Butler County Visitors Bureau.

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** - April 16, 2020, Regular Meeting
- V. Consent Agenda \*\***
  - a. Financial Reports
    - (1) Donations Report
    - (2) Summary of Transfers and Budget Modifications
  - b. Schedule of Payables
  - c. Employment Activity Report
  - d. Special Event Contracts and VOA Athletic Complex Licenses - NONE
    - (1) Special Event Contracts and/or Associated Sales or Commercial or Other Permits Pending Board Action - NONE
    - (2) Approved Special Event Contracts – Information Only - NONE
    - (3) Approved VOA Athletic Complex License Contracts - Information Only - NONE
    - (4) Approved Practice Field Contracts-Information ONLY - NONE

**VI. Old Business**

- a. Bi-Monthly Capital Projects Update
- b. Monthly Public Safety Activity Summary Report
- c. Monthly Community and Enterprise Initiatives Summary Report
- d. Monthly Operational Services, Park Connections and Visitor Services Summary Reports
- e. Monthly Workplace Talent Management Summary Report
- f. Bridge Repair Contract (Bid No. 2020-001) - Pick Up From Table
- g. Other – Miscellaneous from Board or Administration

**VII. New Business**

- a. Administrative Leave Policy - Proposed Addition to Employee Handbook
- b. Speed Limits for Internal Park Roadways
- c. 2021 Tax Budget Adoption Process
- d. Engineering Contract for Great Miami River Trail Extension to Timberhill (PID 110995)
- e. Construction Contract for VOA North Athletic Fields (Bid No. 2020-002)
- f. Acceptance of Funding and Execution of State Capital Improvement Grant Agreement for Miami 2 Miami Trail at Gilmore MetroPark
- g. Revised 2020 Budget Plan
- h. Re-activating MetroParks - Status Report Regarding Re-opening Facilities
- i. 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. Actions Relative to Executive Session****X. Adjournment**

### **III. - Public Comment Regarding Agenda Items**

None.

### **IV. - Approval of Minutes**

April 16, 2020, Regular Meeting

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the April 16, 2020, Regular Meeting as presented by staff to the Board. Ms. Trokhan moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson. *Motion No. 31.20*  
(see documents in Proceedings Book)

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 May 21, 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. 32.20*

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

The presiding officer declared the motion carried unanimously.

*Discussion During the Meeting: A Board member asked why MetroParks thought that possibly tax revenues would be going down. Mr. Granville replied that MetroParks' newest revenue projections for 2020 were the same as the projections of the County Commissioners which were projected to be down about 10% due to the pandemic. And, Mr. Granville further noted, MetroParks' fees collected from various sources, such as field usage fees and motor vehicle permit fees from tournaments, would certainly be down as well.*

*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 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 & 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 & VOA Athletic Complex Licenses Approved by Administration & Provided for the Official Record** - Approved - Due to the pandemic and State orders

related to it, no new Special Event Contracts or VOA Athletic Complex Licenses for events were allowed or were presented to the Board.

## **VI. - Old Business**

### **VI. a. - Bi-Monthly Capital Projects Update**

*Discussion During the Meeting:* There was discussion of various projects shown on the bi-monthly report/chart which indicated project status that Park Planner/Project Manager Matt Latham had provided to the Board in the pre-meeting Board packet. A Board member inquired about the bridge project at Sebald and Deputy Director Chad Smith commented that there was currently a high-water closing there due to recent weather. Mr. Latham said that the bridge is a very robust structure and can take a lot of abuse from high-water events. Mr. Granville commented that Elk Creek has flooded multiple times and the bridge pilings underneath had been hit by uprooted trees during flooding. Mr. Latham commented that the item on today's meeting agenda regarding the bridge is to reinforce and/or re-place the pilings. Currently, once debris is cleared and the waters go down, the bridge is still usable. Mr. Granville said that the bridge will continue to be monitored and if it becomes dangerous to use at any time, it will be shut down.

Mr. Latham continued his report, commenting that currently all improvement projects that are not grant-funded have been ended or been postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic and its projected impact on MetroPark funding.

Mr. Latham said that the Mark A. Valentine Memorial Dock project at Voice of America MetroPark is almost complete. He also said staff is continuing to work on the future Voice of America MetroPark Museum Walkway project and that he is trying to get this project done for as close as possible to the \$24,000 Community Foundation grant amount awarded to the VOA Museum which is a partner in this effort. (see documents in Proceedings Book)

### **VI. b. - Monthly Public Safety Activity Summary Report**

*Discussion During the Meeting:* Chief Ranger David VanArsdale had provided a monthly Division of Public Safety Report which had been included in the Board's meeting packet for this meeting. He commented that everything was going well and that the Ranger Department was busier than they have ever been due to the high visitation rates in the parks during the pandemic. A Board member inquired if the Rangers were wearing surgical masks and Mr. VanArsdale replied that the Ranger Department has been provided with balaclava face masks and they were put on during any close contact with other persons.

*A Board member inquired about park playgrounds being re-opened. Deputy Director Chad Smith replied saying that there were no plans to open playgrounds as yet as authority to do so had not been issued by the State. A Board member asked about camps and Mr. Smith said the State announcement regarding the re-opening of camps only applied to campgrounds. He noted that MetroParks campgrounds could be opened but only under certain conditions that would require portalets or pit restroom facilities being opened also. He added that MetroParks had been receiving lots of calls about its campgrounds at Gov. Bebb MetroPark and plans were being explored to re-open that campground.*

*A Board member commented that the park system in general needs to be as open as possible and that staff needs to be very creative and pro-active toward allowing access to park facilities.*

*A Board member commented on hearing very positive comments about the parks being well maintained. A Board member commented that perhaps the park system should explore opening the Timberhill Reservable Area to general public camping, rather than open only to youth groups as it has been. Mr. Granville noted that there are no public campgrounds on the east side of the County and the future trail access point at Timberhill would likely make camping there very popular. Staff will look into possible general public campground use there and report back, he concluded. (see document in Proceedings Book)*

### **VI.c. - Monthly Community and Enterprise Initiatives Summary Report**

*Discussion During the Meeting: Division of Community and Enterprise Initiatives Supervisor Kelly Barkley had submitted the monthly Division Report which had been included in the Board's meeting packet for this meeting. She noted that there had been many cancellations at the Ronald Regan Lodge at Voice of America MetroPark due to the pandemic. A short discussion between Board members then occurred regarding the need to resume programs and re-open facilities sooner rather than later so that fees collected/generated would cover the related costs even if some immediate financial losses are incurred.*

*Deputy Director Chad Smith said that given current State pandemic rules, a program can be provided for as few as 8 people, that social distancing could be maintained with that number of people in attendance.*

*A Board member suggested looking at school programming for the fall because, the member noted, there will be a lot of interest when school starts. Mr. Smith, referring to school visits to the Pioneer Village at Gov. Bebb MetroPark planned for fall, recounted that many schools which had cancelled Spring 2020 enrollment in park historical programming, were now registering for autumn time slots. (see documents in Proceedings Book)*

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

*Discussion During the Meeting:* In addition to providing the monthly Operational Services, Visitor Services Report, and the Park Connections Summary Report which had been included in the Board's meeting packet for this meeting, Deputy Director Chad Smith said that by and large most employees are still out on the job operating in the field, ensuring that the MetroParks are well maintained for visitors. Even as staff is "tightening their belts" to save dollars wherever possible, they are reporting large numbers of visitors in the parks.

He said that a lot of calls are being received by Visitor Services staff regarding refunds and they are being approved and processed quickly. He continued, stating that at the VOA Athletic Complex tournaments that had been re-scheduled from early spring to June dates had ultimately also been cancelled. A number of other summer reservations had been cancelled and staff is now looking at beginning to schedule for fall. He noted that the Athletic Complex Operations team is working at keeping playing fields at a high standard of maintenance while producing about a 50% reduction in projected costs through a variety of means mostly made available through staff time not being otherwise occupied by customer needs at cancelled tournaments.

Mr. Mark Hecquet, representing the Butler County Visitors Bureau (BCVB), was present and commented that the field quality commitment obligation contained in the agreement between the MetroParks and BCVB will be realized this year as the playing fields at VOA MetroPark were looking very good this spring. Mr. Hecquet said that a priority of BCVB was to fulfill its obligation to the MetroParks regarding payments in the existing 10-year agreement and in order to ensure that a new playing field about to be built at VOA was ready for a tournament in June of 2021, he would commit \$50,000 in additional BCVB dollars to help place sod on the new field (see more about this later in these minutes).

Mr. Smith said that some people are rescheduling for fall use of the existing playing fields, noting that MetroParks was doing everything possible to make reservations available to those that want them but that some people are cancelling for the rest of 2020.

(see documents in Proceedings Book)

#### **VI.e. - Monthly Workplace Talent Management Summary Report**

*Discussion During the Meeting:* Supervisor of Workplace Talent Management Jaime Kimbrough had submitted the monthly Division Report for the Workplace Talent Management Division which had been included in the Board's pre-meeting packet for this meeting. She commented that she had been spending a lot of time reading on how her Division was supposed to handle employee situations during the pandemic under numerous new rules and regulations and also filling out the necessary paperwork involved. Mr. Granville added that Ms.

*Amy Pellman, Manager of Volunteer Resources, had been brought back from layoff to part-time employment in order to manage volunteers to safely perform tasks that volunteers routinely were counted on to perform before the pandemic and in conformance with State pandemic rules. (see document in Proceedings Book)*

#### **VI.f. - Bridge Repair Contract (Bid No. 2020-001) - Pick Up From Table**

**1st MOTION:** To pick up from the table for discussion "Award of Bridge Repair Contract (Bid. No. 2020-001) from the previous meeting. Ms. Trokhan moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson.

*Motion No. 33.20*

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

The presiding officer declared the motion carried unanimously.

**2nd MOTION:** To make no award on this project (Bid. No. 2020-001) and to rebid at an unspecified future date and, further, that the Executive Director is instructed to take such actions as are necessary to implement the intent of the Board in these matters.

*Motion No. 34.20*

Ms. Trokhan moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson. (see documents in Proceedings Book)

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

The presiding officer declared the motion carried unanimously.

*Discussion During the Meeting: Mr. Latham said in light of revenue uncertainty, this agenda item had been tabled to take a better look at the MetroParks funding situation. Mr. Granville said that he couldn't recommend awarding this contract at the present time because of the unknown impact of the coronavirus on the MetroParks financial situation during the remainder of 2020. A Board member inquired if the bridge was needed to be repaired at this time in order to keep it safe for use. Mr. Latham responded that repair of the bridge couldn't be put off indefinitely, but it could be delayed for another year or two. A Board member asked if the cost would go up in the future. Mr. Latham replied that any cost increase was expected to be incremental. A Board member asked if only part of the repair work could be done. Mr. Latham said that the alternative of just doing the upstream side could be done, but noted that there would probably be about a \$30,000 increase in the future by performing only part of the work at this time since much of the expense to divert the water from the work site would re-occur if the contract were split into two different contracts, say upstream work now and downstream side work later.*

*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 the apparent low bidder (Sunesis Construction, Inc.) agreed to hold his bid open until May 22nd, long enough for the Board to consider awarding the repair contract at this, the May 21, 2020, meeting. Given recent refined projections of MetroParks 2020 revenue shortfalls, which now are estimated to equal more than \$700,000, Mr. Granville said that at this time once again he could not at this time once again recommend awarding this contract, noting that the project could wait for a year or two. He added that actually, if the Board took no action, the result would be the same as approving the draft motions; however, failure to act could leave the low bid contractor hanging. So, unless the Board wants to wait for the remote possibility that a currently unknown source of funding will become known during the next two weeks, he said he recommended approving the recommended motion above, i.e., not to award the contract. A memo and attachments from the previous (April 16, 2020) Board meeting had been provided to the Board in the pre-meeting Board packet.*

#### **VI.g. - Other – Miscellaneous from Board or Administration**

There were no items/topics discussed or acted upon by the Board in this section of the meeting agenda.

### **VII. New Business**

#### **VII.a. - Administrative Leave Policy - Proposed Addition to Employee Handbook**

*In discussion on this agenda item during the meeting, Mr. Granville began by saying there wasn't a immediate need for this policy, that it was a "housekeeping" item. He said the draft policy would not guarantee someone would get paid during an administrative leave, noting that if the reason for the leave policy turned out to be justified, an employee could be terminated or other disciplinary action taken and that person not paid for the time on leave.*

*A Board member asked Ms. Jaime Kimbrough, Supervisor of Workplace Talent Management, her opinion. She replied that the policy would enable Administration to not have someone in the workplace while an accusation was being investigated and appropriate action decided.*

*A Board member said that action on the policy should be delayed for a month so the Board could more carefully study it, noting that government was different than the private sector and, therefore, there was a need to be careful with public funds. The Board member suggested*

*acting on the policy at the June Board meeting. Mr. Granville indicated that he would put the policy on the Board meeting agenda for June. As a result, no Board action was taken on this topic at the May 21, 2020, Board meeting.*

*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 said that MetroParks has not adopted an Administrative Leave Policy which clearly defines authority to place an employee on Administrative Leave should the need arise to do so. Such policies are standard at other units of local government. He noted that a lack of an official Administrative Leave Policy could lead to an inability to deal effectively and quickly with accusations of employee impropriety. However, delegation of authority to deal with employment and employee matters resides solely in the Board and only it can decide if it is appropriate to assign certain powers to its Administrators. A memo and draft of a Leave Policy dated 5/12/2020 had been provided to the Board in the pre-meeting Board packet. (see documents in Proceedings Book)*

### **VII.b. - Speed Limits for Internal Park Roadways**

**MOTION: Having determined that such action is necessary to maintain public safety and good order within the parks, to adopt the speed limits and to cause them to be posted** on internal MetroParks roadways as indicated on the documents and locations presented to the Board of Park Commissioners at this time by MetroParks Administrative and Public Safety Division Staff with the intent that thereafter such speed limits shall be enforceable pursuant to Section 1545.09 9b of the MetroParks Rules and Regulations; and determining that if not otherwise specifically designated for a location, the default speed limit within the roadways of the MetroParks shall be 15 miles per hour. Further, that the speed limits so established shall be effective July 1, 2020, and shall remain in effect thereafter until such time as the Board acts to alter or make them null or void, and that the Executive Director is instructed to take such actions as are necessary to implement the intent of the Board in these matters. *Motion No. 35.20*  
Ms. Trokhan moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson. (see documents in Proceedings Book)

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

The presiding officer declared the motion carried unanimously.

*Discussion During the Meeting: Mr. Granville, after explaining that speeding was not currently a big problem in the parks, asked Chief Ranger David VanArsdale to address why this item had been brought forward for action at this time. Mr. VanArsdale said that most areas of the MetroParks currently had posted limits of 15 miles per hour, but there were a few exceptions. This Board action will make speed limits more enforceable, he noted. He also commented that the exceptions to the proposed standard speed limit of 15 mph as detailed on the maps*

*provided to the Board were at Voice of America MetroPark Athletic Complex, Gov. Bebb MetroPark, and Chrisholm MetroPark.*

*Mr. Granville said that this matter was being dealt with at this time because the great influx of people into the parks due to the pandemic which had brought to light the likelihood of a need for a comprehensive system-wide speed limit in the future as the visitor population increases.*

*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 said that as the MetroParks become busier, the need for Board action to develop and establish specific speed limits in designated areas becomes greater. He further noted that Board action on this matter will strengthen the ability of MetroParks Rangers to enforce measures to maintain public safety. Although current MetroParks Rules and Regulations contain a provision that requires visitors not to exceed posted speed limits in the parks, the Board has not specifically acted to designate a default speed limit or establish the speed limits at any certain area. He further explained that speed limit signs had been posted over the years by various employees and that lack of official designation by the policy body of the MetroParks could result in an inability to enforce a monetary penalty on the rare occasion when a citation is deemed necessary to deter dangerous behavior. A memo with maps and Section 1545.09 9b of the MetroParks Rules and Regulations had been provided to the Board in the pre-meeting Board packet.*

### **VII.c. - 2021 Tax Budget Adoption Process**

**MOTION:** Ms. Trokhan moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson, to approve the tax budget process as presented. (see document in Proceedings Book) *Motion No. 36.20*

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

The presiding officer declared the motion carried unanimously.

*Discussion During the Meeting: Supervisor of Financial Services Yamini Patel said that the final 2021 tax budget with the latest estimates will be provided to the Board at the June 18, 2020, Board meeting and that there was a need to ready, post, and advertise a draft 10 days before that date in order to meet the requirements of the Revised Code.*

*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 said that according to State law, a Tax Budget for 2021 must be adopted not later than July 15 of the year prior to the year the Tax Budget covers. The policy boards of every political subdivision, including Ohio park*

districts like MetroParks of Butler County, are required to take action to adopt such a document. He noted that the Tax Budget is only a summary and estimate for the coming year. It is not binding, but failure to adopt one can lead to denial of State Local Government Funds. Supervisor of Financial Services Yamini Patel had prepared a plan as to how and when the 2021 Tax Budget adoption process could proceed during the coming weeks. The Tax Budget timeline will be adjusted if the time/date of the June and/or July Board meetings is/are changed. A copy of the 2021 Tax Budget Timeline had been provided to the Board in the pre-meeting Board packet.

**VII.d. - Engineering Contract for Great Miami River Trail Extension to Timberhill (PID 110995)**

**1st MOTION:** To award and approve an Engineering and Surveying Services Contract for the Great Miami River Trail Extension to Timberhill project (a.k.a. # PID 110995) to Barge Design Solutions, Inc., as presented by MetroParks Administration, or another agreement which the MetroParks Executive Director deems is substantially similar, and additionally, to approve and authorize the MetroParks Executive Director to execute on behalf of the Board of Park Commissioners a Local - Let Local Public Authority Project Agreement and/or another similar agreement with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) which he deems necessary and prudent in order to acquire or use grant ODOT funds for the Timberhill Trail Extension Project; and further, to adopt a Resolution as presented to the Board by Administrative Staff to authorize execution of a Local Public Agency Federal Local-Let Project Agreement on behalf of the Board by its Executive Director; and finally, that the Executive Director is instructed to take such related actions as are required to implement the intent of the Board in these matters. Ms. Trokhan moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson. *Motion No. 37.20*  
(see documents in Proceedings Book)

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

The presiding officer declared the motion carried unanimously.

**2nd MOTION:** To authorize the Executive Director to execute a Let-Local Public Authority Project Agreement (**LPA**) agreement to establish a relationship between the MetroParks and the Ohio Department of Transportation for the purpose of acquiring and using ODOT grant funds for the Timberhill Trail Extension Project. Ms. Trokhan moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson. *Motion No. 38.20*

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

The presiding officer declared the motion carried unanimously.

*Discussion During the Meeting: Mr. Latham said that the matter before the Board goes back to the addition of Federal Safety Grant Funding to the project which puts this project under the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) standards and processes for Federal dollars administered by ODOT and causes MetroParks to have to complete a lot more work which was not necessary when the only funds involved were administered by ODNR and/or were local MetroParks dollars. He said the engineering firm company MetroParks had originally contracted with for this project did not meet the criteria for working under this new type of funding and the engineering for the project had to be rebid. In the resulting process, the highest ranked firm's bid was too high and because State Law requires that only one bidder at a time can be dealt with, some time was lost. He said the second-highest ranked firm met the criteria to qualify to work under this type of funding and if the Board acts to award the contract to them (Barge Design Solutions) today, they will be placed under contract to start the work soon. He reported that recently ODOT had agreed to make some additional Federal funding available for this project which will be welcome as design costs are still above the original budgeted amounts. .*

*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 said that Board actions were required to keep the project moving in a timely fashion and to access ODOT and/or other grant funding. He noted that contracts of this size and/or sort require Board action. A revised memo of May 19, 2020, and attachments relative to the Barge Proposal for Engineer and Surveying Services with Sample Barge Contract Using ODOT Formats had been provided to the Board in the pre-meeting Board packet.*

### **VII.e. - Construction Contract for VOA North Athletic Fields (Bid No. 2020-002)**

**MOTION:** Having determined that their bid was lowest and best, to **award the construction contract** for the Base Bid and Alternates 1, 2, 3A and 5A for the Voice of America North Athletic Fields Project (Project #2020-002) to **DER Development, LLC; and also to approve an Agreement with the Butler County Visitors Bureau** for partial funding of the cost of new VOA MetroPark Field #25 as presented by Administrative Staff, or another agreement which the MetroParks Executive Director deems to be substantially similar; and finally, that the Executive Director is instructed to take such actions as are necessary to implement the intent of the Board in these matters. Ms. Trokhan moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson. *Motion No. 39.20*  
(see documents in Proceedings Book)

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

The presiding officer declared the motion carried unanimously.

*Discussion During the Meeting: Mr. Latham said there were two parts to this agenda item, the first regarding building of a new playing field #25 topped with sod so that it will be playable in time for the President's Cup next year, and the second being the building of the other two fields without sod after the 2021 President's Cup is over.*

*A Board member inquired about the cost savings if all fields were built at one time. Mr. Latham responded that currently there are only 19 large fields in the Athletic Complex available for the President's Cup but 20 total large fields are needed due to the size of the event, adding that the Butler County Visitors Bureau had agreed to provide \$50,000.00 toward the cost of the sod for that 20th field in order to ensure that the President's Cup would be held in Butler County at the VOA Athletic Complex.*

*Mr. Mark Hecquet, Executive Director of the Butler County Visitors Bureau, was present and commented that there were more competitors with playing field venues coming into the area. As a result, he noted, there was a growing need for the VOA location to make improvements in order to stay competitive in the future. He said that the President's Cup organizer, Ohio South, wants a long-term relationship at VOA but they will need 20 large fields for the large President's Cup event in 2021. He noted the current preferred size playing field for tournament events is now 120 x 70 yards and this was not the size installed when the VOA complex was built, adding that field expectations at that time were smaller. Ohio South, which is based in Greater Cincinnati, wants VOA to be a long-term destination for annual national-type events. He noted that the Indianapolis area currently has the top-rated complex in the U.S. and that the new athletic complex in nearby Warren County is coming on fast. There is a need, he stated, to continue to make the VOA Athletic Complex more desirable for major events. Mr. Hecquet continued by saying that if local parties are not able to put the 20th larger field in and make it ready for VOA's hosting of the tournament, we could lose the President's Cup event to a different venue. He said he had a meeting scheduled next week with Ohio South about the President's Cup and added that this 25th field project would be an investment in VOA that will derive benefit for many, many years to come. For the reasons stated above, the Butler County Visitor's Bureau was/is willing to contribute \$50,000 toward the cost-of-sod portion of the North Field construction project funding for Field #25.*

*A Board member suggested Hopewell School fields might be used as a 20th large field and if so, that the North Field project wouldn't need to be undertaken in two phases, which would lower total construction costs. However, Mr. Hecquet said he was almost certain that Ohio South required all fields for the event be located at VOA and that if he found that not to be the case, he would inform Mr. Granville before a construction contract was signed. Mr. Granville noted that there was a seasonal construction window going to close and there is a deadline for use of state grant funds. He said that getting \$50,000 from the BCVB for the sod and spending the other moneys required would result in getting facilities that would keep the Athletic Complex competitive. He noted there was a need to act on this and do it now in spite of the pandemic as all costs spent this budget year would be covered by the state.*

*A Board member commented that MetroParks should get started on Phase 1 construction on the project as soon as possible. A Board member thanked Mr. Hecquet for coming to the meeting and working on the project with MetroParks. Mr. Granville said that if it wasn't for the Visitors Bureau, MetroParks would have a tournament facility that it couldn't market for the regional tournaments it was built to accommodate and that the current offer was on-going evidence of the real partnership between MetroParks and the Bureau.*

*Mr. Granville noted that MetroParks has to have a written contract with the Visitors Bureau committing the \$50,000 in funding before assigning a construction contract for the project.*

*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 said that in order to meet a seasonal window for planting and construction; to act in time for new Field #25 to be playable during the June 2021 President's Cup Tournament; and to meet grant funding deadlines, he was recommending the Board take the actions covered in the draft motion presented at this time. He noted, however, that this \$517,000 project will cost the MetroParks about \$124,000 of money from its own budget over the next two years and more from outside sources (the State of Ohio and the Visitors Bureau) so MetroParks would be counting on the end of the pandemic. He further noted that awarding contracts of this size and approving a contract of this type with the BCVB are functions reserved to the Board of Park Commissioners. He also said that not utilizing the State Capital Grant dollars allocated for this project at this time would likely mean that these funds will not ever be available for any local project again and failure to assist with preparations required for a major tournament could make the VOA Athletic Complex a non-competitive venue in an area where other athletic complexes are increasing their presence. A memo with bid tabulations and other attachments of a Project Map, Cost Summary Chart, and a draft contract with BCVB had been provided to the Board in the pre-meeting Board packet.*

**VII.f. - Acceptance of Funding and Execution of State Capital  
Improvement Grant Agreement for Miami 2 Miami Trail at Gilmore  
MetroPark**

**MOTION:** To approve and enter into an agreement with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for a Capital Improvement Community Park, Recreation/Conservation Project Pass Through Grant providing funding for the project entitled "Miami Canal Trail Extension at Gilmore MetroPark, State Reference Number BUTL-010C" (a.k.a. the Miami-2-Miami Trail Section at Gilmore MetroPark) as presented by Administrative Staff or another agreement which the Executive Director deems as substantially similar; and further, that the Executive Director is instructed to take such actions as are necessary to implement the intent of the Board in these matters. Ms. Trokhan moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson. (see documents in Proceedings Book)

*Motion No. 40.20*

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

The presiding officer declared the motion carried unanimously.

*Discussion During the Meeting: Mr. Latham said that affirmative Board action on this agenda item would allow MetroParks to execute a grant agreement with the State of Ohio as soon as the State Controlling Board releases the grant funds allocated for the project.*

*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 said that in order to afford to start design and engineering on the Gilmore trail project, State funds are required. A Design and Engineering Contract for this project is on the agenda for this meeting also, Mr. Granville added. He further said that to receive State grant funds for this project, the MetroParks must approve and execute a standard grant contract with ODNR and the State Controlling Board must then release the necessary funds and that a delay in Board action could subject the MetroParks to the loss of the \$343,000 we need for the trail project. Mr. Granville also recalled that the State grant process requires specific Board approval of the grant agreement before the State will execute the grant contract and release the funds for the trail project, noting that these grant State funds will provide a match for the federal funds also allocated for the same project. He said that unless the Board wishes to drop the project, approval of the State contract was advised at this time. A copy of the Grant Agreement and miscellaneous attachments had been provided to the Board in the pre-meeting Board packet.*

### **VII.g. - Revised 2020 Budget Plan**

There was no motion or Board action on this agenda item. It was a status report only.

*Discussion During the Meeting: Supervisor of Financial Services Yamini Patel said that MetroParks had a brief time to revise this budget and that Financial Services currently had the MetroParks actual financial data to date. She said that staff would be working on the revised 2020 budget through July and expect to have it ready for the August Board meeting. Mr. Granville said that staff didn't want to act too quickly so as to not over estimate the negative impact of the Covid pandemic. Mr. Latham said that postponing all non-grant funded projects could reduce nearly \$500,000 from the original 2020 budget. Mr. Granville added that a lot depends on what park facilities are re-opened and how fast the State relaxes its pandemic restrictions. Ms. Patel said that there had been about \$200,000 in park facility fee refunds issued so far and more were expected. Mr. Smith commented that staff has reduced spending as much as possible. Almost all expenses above \$50 were not being approved before receiving the go-ahead by Administration.*

*A Board member said the projected decline of 10% reduction in property tax revenue was as discussed at earlier meetings uncertain and likely not to be as drastic. Mr. Granville responded that the impact would be in the 2nd half tax settlement revenue. Mr. Granville said that the amount would be better known in the next month or so. Another Board member said that there was a need to be careful about where staff layoffs were made, noting that "smart" decisions needed to be made. Mr. Granville that if that he had to choose, he'd rather a park visitor have no experience in a park than a bad experience, and even so, basic park operations will receive priority funding, he concluded. Mr. Smith noted that Operational staff were doing a great job and that some volunteers had been brought in to help, i.e., fill the bird feeders, etc., where this could be done safely and under the pandemic rules Mr. Granville noted that some things will not be happening as previously scheduled such as opening the Mill Race Preserve for daily use due to revenue concerns.*

*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 said that Administration's planning timeline to revise and rebalance the MetroParks 2020 budget was being presented for Board information. He said that the pandemic has disrupted and will continue to disrupt MetroParks' revenue in 2020 and again in 2021, noting that to date, total refund of facility-related fees has reached over \$185,000 and the latest projections indicate that we can expect a 10% reduction in the collection of property tax revenue from the MetroParks levy, or about \$530,000 based on the current 2020 budget. He added that not yet factored in is an expected reduction in State Local Government Funds and that an additional extensive round of cost cutting will be necessary in June. He further added that the Senior Leadership staff is refining revenue loss projections while eliminating or delaying expenses and that State law mandates that the MetroParks finish each year in the black. He indicated that Board action to revise the MetroParks budget (appropriations) would need to occur not later than August. A 2020 Revised Budget Timeline had been provided to the Board in the pre-meeting Board packet.*

#### **VII.h. - Re-activating MetroParks - Status Report Regarding Re-opening Facilities**

There was no motion or Board action on this agenda item. It was a status report only.

*Discussion During the Meeting: Mr. Granville noted that discussion of re-activating MetroParks had occurred as each previous agenda item had been the acted upon and that staff would make every effort to return to normal operations as soon as possible.*

*Mr. Hecquet said he wanted to echo previous statements that this was a time when the parks can really shine, noting that people are looking for outside activities. He cautioned that people will want to know what the parks are doing to be safe and these efforts should be advertised.*

*Mr. Smith said that he was seeing information about what various other Ohio park districts were doing to provide safe programs to their constituents and that MetroParks is learning from that information.*

*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 said that MetroParks Administration has been concentrating on primary mission during the last two months -- that being giving our customer-owners safe, clean, natural green spaces in which to engage in passive recreational pursuits. MetroParks Senior Leadership Team members have been keeping up to date on Ohio's slow re-opening plans and relaxation of pandemic restrictions. Many of our fee-based functions and activities (equipment rentals, programming, fishing permit sales, campground stays, playing field reservations, cabin use, and meeting room/Lodge use, etc.) remain closed or unavailable to the public as required under State Health Emergency Orders. Some of the listed facilities, however, could be partly opened under such tight restrictions that re-opening would then result in a net loss and so in those cases he didn't recommend re-opening them at this time. A memo regarding plans for re-opening some park facilities had been provided to the Board in the pre-meeting Board packet.*

#### **VII.i. - Other – Miscellaneous from Board or Administration**

There were no items/topics discussed or acted upon by the Board in this section of the meeting agenda.

#### **VIII. - Executive Session**

**MOTION:** To enter into Executive Session at 9:58 a.m., Mr. Nelson moved, seconded by Ms. Trokhan, for the purpose of discussions involving:

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

and to call for a roll call vote in order to do so.

*Motion No. 41.20*

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

The presiding officer declared the motion carried unanimously.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 10:27 a.m. EDT.

**IX. - Actions Relative to Executive Session**

There were no items/topics discussed or acted upon by the Board in this section of the meeting agenda.

**X. - Adjournment**

**MOTION:** To adjourn the meeting at 10:28 a.m., EDT. Mr. Nelson moved, seconded by Ms. Trokhan. *Motion No. 42.20*

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

The presiding officer declared the motion carried unanimously.

**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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director/Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

Unless rescheduled or relocated, the next regular business meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 18, 2020, in the Trophy Room - Ronald Reagan Lodge-Voice of America MetroPark, 7850 VOA Park Drive, West Chester Township, OH 45069-2938.