

METROPARKS OF BUTLER COUNTY
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION & REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, January 22, 2026

The MetroParks of Butler County Board of Park Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, January 22, 2026, at Timberman Ridge MetroPark, 1976 Timberman Road, Hamilton, Ohio 45013.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 a.m. by Ms. Trokhan

I. Roll Call and Agenda

Members present: Cynamon Trokhan, Larry Gersbach

Staff present: Rhiana Barrero, Joe Dumyahn, Jaime Kimbrough, Jackie O'Connell, Amy Pellman, Suzanne Roth, Shelly Schultz, Scott Wingate

III. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the November 20, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

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

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

IV. Consent Agenda

a. Donations – November

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

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

VI. Finance

a. Schedule of Payables – November & December 2025 - Resolutions

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

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

Resolution 26.1 & 26.2

b. YTD Revenue & Expense Report

c. Quarterly Stander Report

d. Approval of Then & Now Payment – Resolution

Staff received an invoice for chemicals after the purchase order was closed at year-end.

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

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

Resolution 26.3

VII. Administrative Reports

Natural Resources: Mr. Joe Dumyahn provided an update on reforestation projects completed in 2025. A total of 1,086 trees of varying sizes were planted at Angst Nature Preserve, Davidson Woods, Green Heron MetroPark, Salamander Run MetroPark, and Timberman Ridge MetroPark. Of those, 529 trees were grown in the MetroPark's greenhouse from seeds or cuttings collected in Butler County, which both offsets costs and increases the total number of trees planted.

Since 2015, over 8,000 trees have been planted. This does not include trees planted by the Planning Department. All trees are planted within exclosures or are fenced for protection.

The north enclosure at Timberman Ridge MetroPark contains approximately 1,600 trees, the majority of which are oak. Mr. Dumyahn anticipates planting approximately 1,000 trees per year going forward. He noted the recent adoption of the pot-in-pot planting method, with trees wintered in the front lawn of the Forest Run Operations Center.

Mr. Dumyahn shared that recycled trees are chipped and used as insulation around pot-in-pot trees. Last year 338 trees were recycled, and 331 trees have been received so far this year, with one week remaining in the collection period.

Ms. Trokhan asked whether programming at the greenhouse had been considered. Mr. Dumyahn stated that it has. Ms. Trokhan suggested a series covering all stages of the process. Mr. Dumyahn also noted that the Southwest Woodland Foundation also provides resources.

Programming & Education: Ms. Suzanne Roth shared highlights and key successes from 2025, noting a high volume of positive feedback and strong program ratings. She expressed that the department is very pleased with the direction it is heading and emphasized the value of numerous successful partnerships developed throughout the year.

In 2025, the department offered new programs such as a Color Powder Party, an Active in the Outdoors series featuring various instructors, and a STEM Summer Series.

Looking ahead to 2026, plans include a Yoga and Mindfulness series and a Stand-Up Paddleboard series. The new Rooted Living series is performing very well.

At Chrisholm Historic Farmstead, Petunia the pony is scheduled to arrive by the end of the month. One of the farm's primary goals is to increase program offerings and revenue. Planning is underway for a Farm Babies program this spring, and the popular Fun on the Farm event will move to the spring.

Ms. Roth also noted that staff has cut underperforming and non-mission programs, emphasizing the importance of quality over quantity and maintaining a strong mission focus.

Visitor & Event Services: Ms. Rhiana Barrero shared that MetroParks has terminated its contract with Sportsman's Solutions due to dissatisfaction.

MetroParks has worked with the same concessionaire for the past six years. Due to recent changes in RFP thresholds, it is no longer necessary to issue a new bid, and staff will proceed with issuing a contract with the established vendor.

Re. the Athletic Complex - two major tournaments were canceled last year due to weather conditions. She emphasized the need to begin planning for the replacement of the current turf, which is nearing the end of its lifespan. The estimated cost for turf replacement is approximately \$1,000,000.

Administration: Mr. Scott Wingate provided an update on Davidson Woods. The goal is to open the park later this year. Former property owner Ms. Davidson had stated that *"the woods are for wildlife first and people second"*. The area has been conserved for nearly 200 years.

Current plans include four hiking trails, one of which will be ADA accessible, with a focus on offering immersive nature experiences. The project is being funded using awarded ARPA funds.

Davidson Woods will be the first sustainable park opened by MetroParks, with every construction element designed to have low overhead and minimal environmental impact. Ms. O'Connell noted that some trees will need to be removed, with work expected to begin early February. Staff has developed a tree replacement formula to determine how many trees must be planted for each tree removed. The original plan was revised to limit environmental impact. The Board concurred that the area should be named Davidson Woods MetroPark.

Ms. O'Connell also shared information regarding an influencer-led cash drop that occurred at Rentschler Forest the previous day at 4:00 p.m. The event drew over 100 vehicles, with cars parking in the grass, aggressive driving inside and outside of the park. Fairfield Township Police Department received numerous complaints and assisted with clearing the park. Several individuals struck police cruisers and yelled at officers. Staff is continuing to monitor related social media activity.

IX. New Business

a. Election of Officers 2026

Mr. Daryl Nelson was nominated as President and Mr. Larry Gersbach will remain as VP.
Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Ms. Trokhan seconded.
Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach

b. Approval of Revised 2026 Budget & Appropriations – Resolution

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

Resolution 26.4

c. Approval of Ohio Benefits Cooperative Agreement – Resolution

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

Resolution 26.5

d. Award Contract for Prefabricated Bridge on GMRT

A question was raised regarding potential erosion issues, and Ms. O’Connell stated that any erosion concerns will be addressed during the bridge install engineering.

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

e. Approval of Concessions Contract

Ms. Barrero explained that she will work with the concessionaire to finalize the contract, including details related to the revenue-split. The contract mirrors the terms used in the previous agreement.

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

X. Commissioner Reports

XI. Executive Session

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

Vote: Aye: Mr. Gersbach, Ms. Trokhan

The Board entered into Executive Session at 9:20 a.m.

The Board returned to Regular Session at 10:10 a.m.

XII. Adjournment

Mr. Gersbach moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 a.m., Ms. Trokhan seconded.

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

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

Approved:

Attest:

Presiding Officer of the Board

Jacqueline O’Connell,
Executive Director/Secretary

Date