

METROPARKS OF BUTLER COUNTY
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION & REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, July 16, 2026

The MetroParks of Butler County Board of Park Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, July 16, 2026, at Timberman Ridge MetroPark, 1976 Timberman Road, Hamilton, Ohio 45013.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 a.m. by Mr. Gersbach.

I. Roll Call and Agenda

Members present: Larry Gersbach, Cynamon Trokhan

Staff present: Rhiana Barrero, Katie Brown, Jaime Kimbrough, Jamie Meyers Eaton, Jackie O'Connell, Frank Robinson, Suzanne Roth, Shelly Schultz, Scott Wingate

III. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the June 25, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes

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

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

IV. Consent Agenda

a. Donations – June

Motion to approve item on the Consent Agenda

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

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

VI. Finance

a. Schedule of Payables – June – Resolution

There was a question regarding the \$11,000 payment to GJ Berding Surveying for the Port Union Trail properties survey. The work was performed to proceed with the transfer of wetlands property from West Chester Township as part of Ellis Lake.

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

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

Resolution 26.18

b. YTD Revenue & Expense Report

c. Quarterly Stander Report

There was a brief discussion which confirmed funds remain earmarked for the Indian Creek bridge.

VII. Administrative Reports

Operations: Ms. Katie Brown reported on early discussions with the Butler County Antique Machine Club regarding a potential partnership. The organization is seeking a new location for its historical agricultural collection and assets. Staff toured the collection and identified Angst Barn as a potential location, although the full collection exceeds the barn's current capacity. The club will hold their August meeting there. Ms. Suzanne Roth added that it could also lead to additional STEM programming opportunities, particularly at Chrisholm.

Ms. Brown also provided an overview of SOPEC (Sustainable Ohio Public Energy Council), noting that membership will provide MetroParks with benefits from energy aggregation services. SOPEC leverages collective purchasing power to secure competitive electricity rates while supporting renewable energy and sustainability initiatives. Mr. Gersbach inquired about potential solar and geothermal energy options and related grant opportunities. Ms. O'Connell noted that geothermal systems are currently in use at the VOA Lodge and that solar opportunities are being explored.

Planning: Mr. Scott Wingate provided an update on the Davidson Woods access project. He reported that the prime contractor began construction several weeks ago and shared progress photos of the entry drive, parking lot, and ADA-accessible path leading to the scenic overlook. The project is anticipated to be substantially complete by mid-August, with a formal opening planned for mid-October. Public access may be available sooner if construction progresses as expected.

Police: Ms. Trokhan had questions regarding the progress of recruiting and hiring new police staff. Mr. Robinson stated the recent hiring of one full-time and one part-time officer and is hiring an additional full-time officer. This will improve evening and weekend coverage, increase the locations of park area coverage, and reduce the need for mutual aid.

Programming & Education: A board member inquired about the status of the Women's Hike Series. Ms. Roth confirmed that the series is ongoing, though participation numbers have declined, likely due to heat.

Administration: Ms. Trokhan inquired about the status of the Country Music Festival. Ms. O'Connell reported that West Chester Township notified Further Festivals that the event could not return next year. Concerns were raised regarding responsibility for potential damages and non-payment given the event's inability to return. To date West Chester Township and the Museum have received their upfront payments as scheduled, and Metroparks's payment is anticipated by July 22.

IX. New Business

a. Duke Energy Easements at Voice of America MetroPark

The proposed easement allows utility line installation in the VOA athletic complex area and advances the Christmas Lights Journey project.

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

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

b. Amend Appropriations to Support Gilmore Ponds Boardwalk – Resolution

Appropriations proposed would close the funding gap for the Gilmore Ponds Boardwalk construction using grant funding from the Hamilton Community Foundation and ODNR, along with private donations from the Hunnicutt and Gilmore Ponds Funds.

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

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

Resolution 26.19

X. Commissioner Reports.

XII. Adjournment

Mr. Gersbach moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 a.m., Ms. Trokhan seconded.

Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: 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