

METROPARKS OF BUTLER COUNTY  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
WORK SESSION & REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, March 19, 2026

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The MetroParks of Butler County Board of Park Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, March 19, 2026, at Timberman Ridge MetroPark, 1976 Timberman Road, Hamilton, Ohio 45013.

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:26 a.m. by Mr. Nelson

**I. Roll Call and Agenda**

Members present: Daryl Nelson, Larry Gersbach

Staff present: Rhiana Barrero, Joe Bruns, Joe Dumyahn, Katie Ely-Wood, Jaime Kimbrough, Jackie O'Connell, Amy Pellman, Frank Robinson, Suzanne Roth, Shelly Schultz,

**III. Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve the January 22, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Mr. Nelson seconded.

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

**IV. Consent Agenda**

**a. Donations – January & February**

Short discussion on the taxidermy donation.

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Mr. Nelson seconded.

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

**VI. Finance**

**a. Schedule of Payables – January & February – Resolutions**

There was a brief discussion regarding the recent biannual bridge inspection, related expenditures, and repairs at Sebald.

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Mr. Nelson seconded.

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

**Resolution 26.6 & 26.7**

**b. YTD Revenue & Expense Report**

Ms. Shelly Schultz highlighted the updated format of the report and explained that the 2025 data will be included throughout the year, as there is not yet a full year of data available in SSI.

**VII. Administrative Reports**

**Programming & Education:** Ms. Suzanne Roth provided an overview of the *Nature in a Blink* series, noting it features brief, seasonal natural experiences. The salamander migration program was highlighted as the series' signature event and was fully booked with approximately 100 individuals on the waiting list.

In response to a question about vernal ponds at Salamander Run MetroPark, Mr. Joe Dumyahn reported that salamanders have been relocated from Indian Creek to help increase the population at that site.

**Communications:** Ms. Katie Ely-Wood shared the spring quarterly initiative of the *Pearmageddon* program, which aims to educate county residents on the impacts of invasive plants and incentivize their removal by offering a native tree in exchange for photographic proof of removal. The program is a collaborative effort between Programming, Natural Resources, and Communications, and has generated approximately a half-million social media impressions as of the meeting.

A recent survey of the lake at VOA MetroPark identified a need for feeder fish. To improve habitat, staff sank callery pear and cedar trees in the lake. The effort received local media coverage.

Mr. Joe Dumyahn reported that 479 Christmas trees were recycled this winter.

**Administration:** Ms. O’Connell updated that the new entrance off of Tylersville Road is complete and the grand opening weekend for the USS Cincinnati is scheduled for the weekend of May 15, 2026. Opening night will be an invitation-only event for partners and major donors, followed by an invitation-only grand opening celebration for 350 people on May 16 prior to opening to the general public.

Additional state capital funds were identified for the Tylersville entrance; West Chester Township is using these funds to create signage at the new entrance and memorial. The existing electronic sign will be removed and replaced with a new digital sign. Staff are currently working with West Chester Township and Sub Cincinnati on a maintenance agreement for the memorial. While the project is fully funded for current installations, the endowment fund has not yet been fully funded.

Ms. O’Connell provided a brief update on the Christmas Lights Journey, noting that easements have been received from NPS and Duke. Next steps include developing an electrical agreement with Mr. Seitz and getting Miami University’s West Chester campus to agree on a shared road usage agreement.

Ms. Katie Brown has been hired as the new Director of Operations and Sustainability and will begin on March 23, 2026. Park Managers participated in the interviews and unanimously supported her selection.

## **IX. New Business**

### **a. Authorization to Award Contract for Design Services for GMRT**

Mr. Joe Bruns stated that the design is expected to be completed by September.

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Mr. Nelson seconded.

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

### **b. Authorization to Submit Application for Clean Ohio Grant – Resolution**

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Mr. Nelson seconded.

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

**Resolution 26.8**

### **c. Authorize Participation in Memorandum of Understanding for Dick’s Creek Stabilization**

Ms. O’Connell provided this agreement outlines MetroParks’ commitment to work with other parties to build the GMRT through Butler County.

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Mr. Nelson seconded.

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

### **d. Authorize Purchase & Sale Agreement for Parcels at Ellis Lake**

West Chester Township will transfer three parcels to MetroParks, while retaining ownership of a fourth parcel that will be maintained by MetroParks. The total acreage is approximately 60 acres.

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Mr. Nelson seconded.

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

## **X. Commissioner Reports**

### **XII. Adjournment**

Mr. Gersbach moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 a.m., Mr. Nelson seconded.

Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Mr. Nelson, 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