

GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
January 21, 2009

The regular meeting of the Geauga Park District Board was held on January 21, 2009 at the Donald W. Meyer Center, Chardon, Ohio. The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. President Robert McCullough was in the Chair. Board members Dr. Mark Rzeszotarski and Mr. Leech were present.

Employees present:

Tom Curtin, Executive Director  
Keith McClintock, Deputy Director  
Sherry Bosworth, Business Affairs Director  
Cindy Ford, Communications Manager  
Tami Gingrich, Field Naturalist  
Emilie Gottsegen, Development Officer  
Kathy Hanes, Executive Secretary  
Bob Keesecker, Development Officer  
Robin Pilarczyk, Human Resources Manager  
Paul Pira, Park Biologist & NRM Zone Leader  
Robert Urban, Chief Ranger  
Diane Valen, Naturalist Services Director  
Aaron Young, Planning Director

Visitors Present:

John Ralph  
Cassie Gosche

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

President Robert McCullough relinquished the chair to Mr. Curtin for the purpose of conducting election of officers.

Mr. Curtin asked for nominations for the Office of President.

Dr. Rzeszotarski moved to nominate Mr. McCullough for Office of President.  
Mr. Leech seconded the motion.

Mr. Curtin asked for nominations for the Office of Vice-President.

Mr. Leech moved to nominate Dr. Rzeszotarski for the Office of Vice-President.  
Mr. McCullough seconded the motion.

There being no further nominations, the Chair declared the nominations closed. The roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Dr. Rzeszotarski	Yes
Mr. McCullough	Yes
Mr. Leech	Yes

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

Dr. Rzeszotarski moved to adopt the revised agenda for the meeting.

Mr. Leech seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Dr. Rzeszotarski	Yes
Mr. McCullough	Yes
Mr. Leech	Yes

**ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 6, 2008**

Dr. Rzeszotarski moved to adopt the minutes of December 6, 2008 as amended.

Mr. Leech seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Dr. Rzeszotarski	Yes
Mr. McCullough	Yes
Mr. Leech	Yes

**ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 9, 2008**

Dr. Rzeszotarski moved to adopt the minutes of December 9, 2008 as written.

Mr. Leech seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Dr. Rzeszotarski	Yes
Mr. McCullough	Yes
Mr. Leech	Yes

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Mr. Curtin introduced visitors John Ralph and Cassie Gosche, volunteer intern for Geauga Park District.

**Geauga Park District**  
**FINANCIAL STATEMENT MONTH ENDED**  
DECEMBER 31, 2008

**GENERAL FUND**

**BEGINNING FUND BALANCE DECEMBER 1, 2008** **\$2,083,251.15**

**EXPENDITURES & OTHER USES** **340,378.99**

Personnel	207,676.57
Medicare	3,268.82
Dental /Hospitalization	36,763.96
PERS	29,880.08
Vouchers	62,789.56

**REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES** **24,326.31**

General Tax Collections

Investment Income 3,788.44

Gifts & Donations 435.00

- In mem of Ken Kinder - TWW animal care - Kinder (\$50)
- In mem of Ken Post - Ernst, & Krum (\$25)
- In mem of Sandy Wilcox - Brick, Melkerson, Gerber (\$70)
- General donation - Western Reserve Federation of Conservationists (\$250)
- Program donation - Geauga Walkers - Birding program (\$40)

Fees

- Programs - Schools - Out-of-county 38.00
- Camping 10.00
- Lodge heat fee 850.00
- Workshops - General - Public program 294.00

Sales

- Tapper's Treasures - MC 159.72
- Tree Tops - TWW 1,219.45
- Credit Card - All facilities 1,326.92
- Water Vending Machine Sales - TWW 65.85

Other Receipts

- Swine Creek house - Harry 400.00
- Burton Wetlands house- Kolar 400.00
- Hyde house - McKinnon 400.00
- Chickagami house - Mast 400.00
- Citation Disbursement 292.00
- Recycling Proceeds 48.30
- Local Government Funds 5,530.62
- Miscellaneous Receipts 8,668.01
  - Regional Parks Conference registration -  
Holden, Portage, WRLC, CMP, Medina (\$1,960)
  - Gasoline reimb (\$59.01)
  - BWC reimb (\$6,649)

**ENDING FUND BALANCE AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2008** **\$1,767,198.47**

**LAND IMPROVEMENT FUND**

**BEGINNING FUND BALANCE DECEMBER 1, 2008**

**\$3,922,927.86**

**EXPENDITURES & OTHER USES**

**49,807.27**

Vouchers

49,807.27

**REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES**

**59,393.38**

Investment Income

6,710.97

Gifts & Donations

50,453.50

- Affelder Trust - Cleveland Foundation (\$453.50)
- Frohring Meadows Development – Paul & Maxine Frohring Foundation (\$50,000)

Royalties

- Oxford Oil Co - Swine Creek property 1,315.71
- Cedar Valley Energy - Hehmeyer property 416.37
- Great Lakes Energy - Hart property 84.08
- Cedar Valley Energy - Sunnybrook property 140.99
- Power Gas - Farley property 271.76

**ENDING FUND BALANCE AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2008**

**\$3,932,513.97**

**VOUCHER RESOLUTION NO. 01-09**

The Board asked for clarification on a few of the voucher items. All questions were answered satisfactorily.

The Board commented on the increased school attendance for the Naturescopes program and thanked the Geauga Park District Foundation for providing funds to cover the school transportation costs.

Dr. Rzeszotarski moved to adopt Voucher Resolution No. 01-09, a copy of which is on file in the Park District office.

Mr. Leech seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Dr. Rzeszotarski	Yes
Mr. McCullough	Yes
Mr. Leech	Yes

**COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD**

Mr. Curtin read a letter he received from Beth Croup of Taylor-Wells Road in Chardon. Mrs. Croup expressed her appreciation for the support the Park is providing to have Geauga County designated as a “Dark Sky Reserve” by the International Dark Sky Association.

**OPEN TO PUBLIC**

There were no comments from the public.

Dr. Rzeszotarski commented that the recent editorials in the paper by Paige Hosier and Chief Urban were very well written.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **READING OF THE MISSION STATEMENT, PHILOSOPHY AND BRAND PROMISE**

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Geauga Park District is to preserve, conserve and protect the natural features of Geauga County and to provide the opportunity for people to enjoy and appreciate these resources.

#### **PHILOSOPHY**

Gauga Park District was created for the purpose of conserving natural resources. The parks are usually large undeveloped tracks of land devoted to conserving and preserving the forests, grasslands, wetlands, geological features, rivers, streams, lakes and ponds, and the plants and animals associated therewith. Prime consideration is given to protecting the natural aesthetic values and scenic landscapes. Only a small percentage of the area is physically developed, and then only when this is not in conflict with the objectives of protection and conservation.

Development in the parks provides the opportunity to use and enjoy the natural resources without diminishing their quality for future visitors. Recreation is primarily limited to passive trail-oriented activities. Most developments should provide an opportunity to learn more about the parks, the plant and animal life and other natural features.

Programs are offered to increase the public's knowledge of the natural and cultural heritage of Geauga County. Programs may be presented anywhere in the county, but will usually be scheduled in the parks.

Gauga Park District strives to maintain clean, safe parks which are enjoyable to visit and which protect valuable natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations. We believe that we are, and we intend to remain, "the best Park District in Ohio."

#### **BRAND PROMISE**

Gauga Park District promises a pure and natural outdoor educational experience that is not centered around traditional recreational venues. Here visitors can experience the joy, the serenity, and the spirit of learning through creative nature programs. The natural wonder of the lands entrusted to Geauga Park District will always be protected, preserved, conserved and celebrated in a safe and visitor-focused way, assuring that the Geauga County quality of life and the quality of this natural connection will continue for all of us – always.

The Board suggested integrating portions of the Brand Promise into the Park's philosophy statement or use it to create a vision statement. Mr. Curtin stated that he will follow-up on the request and report back at a future meeting.

The Board affirmed the Mission Statement, Statement of Park Philosophy, and Brand Promise by unanimous consent.

**RESCISSION OF OBSERVATORY PARK DESIGN & ENGINEERING CONTRACT, RESOLUTION NO. 03-09**

At the December 9, 2008 Board meeting, approval was given for Schmidt Copeland Parker Stevens, Inc. of Cleveland to provide Design and Engineering services for Observatory Park, Phase II.

However, before the contract was signed, Schmidt Copeland Parker Stevens advised Geauga Park District that the company was being dissolved due to economic constraints.

Dr. Rzeszotarski moved to rescind Resolution 54-08 which gave authorization for Geauga Park District to enter into a contract with Schmidt Copeland Parker Stevens, Inc.

Mr. Leech seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Dr. Rzeszotarski	Yes
Mr. McCullough	Yes
Mr. Leech	Yes

**WATER RESOURCE RESTORATION SPONSOR PROGRAM (WRRSP), RESOLUTION NO. 04-09**

Mr. McClintock presented the Board with a sponsorship agreement between Geauga Park District and Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District for the Orchard Hills restoration project.

This agreement allows the Park to receive grant monies from the Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program (WRRSP) as part of the Water Pollution Control Loan Program within the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and Clean Ohio (Ohio EPA) to assist in restoration and protection projects at Orchard Hills Park.

Dr. Rzeszotarski moved to accept the sponsorship agreement between Geauga Park District and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District as part of the Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program (WRRSP).

Mr. Leech seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Dr. Rzeszotarski	Yes
Mr. McCullough	Yes
Mr. Leech	Yes

**PARK UPDATES**

2009 Budget

Sherry Bosworth, Business Affairs Director, distributed the 2009 Budget for the Board's review. There was no action taken on the budget. Formal action will be taken at the February 10, 2009 Board meeting.

Affelder House

The Park is in the process of finalizing construction documents for landscape improvements.

Asphalt Improvements

The Planning Department is reviewing final requests for proposals.

### Bass Lake Dam

The Park is awaiting receipt of the plans for the improvements to the dam at Bass Lake.

### Swine Creek Reservation

The Park is discussing replacement of the restroom facilities at Swine Creek Lodge.

### Big Creek Park

The Planning Department is in the process of finalizing construction documents for improvements to Tupelo Pond, the Big Creek Spur and the Woodin Road parking lot areas.

### Camp Chickagami

The construction documents for improvements to Camp Chickagami are in progress.

### Headwaters Park

The Planning Department is working on the construction documents.

### Observatory Park

The Park is waiting for a proposal for architectural services.

### Orchard Hills

A public input meeting is scheduled for January 29, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at the Orchard Hills Party Center.

### Best Preserve

Mr. Curtin distributed conceptual plans for improvements to Best Preserve. Proposed plans include the addition of a picnic shelter, a new fishing platform and improvements to the parking area. The project will be going out to bid in February.

### **Newspaper Article on Observatory Park**

Mr. Curtin distributed a news article from the Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch written about future plans for Observatory Park, the Nassau Observatory and also the dark-sky designation. The Board commented that it was a well-written article.

### **Sponsorship of Decal for Park Vehicles**

Mr. Curtin asked if the Board would be in favor of having a local business sponsor the cost of a "van wrap" (decal applied to side of van). The cost of having it done without a sponsor would be approximately \$2,500.00. The Board tabled the matter for further discussion.

### **Safety Signs**

The Park's legal counsel, David Ondrey, has reviewed the wording on the safety sign to be placed in the shelter at Frohring Meadows. The sign advises patrons to seek refuge out of harm's way in the event of a storm. Dr. Rzeszotarski suggested putting these signs in all shelters.

**Sick Leave Policy Revision, Resolution No. 05-09**

Mr. Curtin recommended that a minor change be made in paragraph five of Geauga Park District's Sick Leave Policy. The current policy reads as follows:

*Failing repeatedly to follow the rules and regulations regarding use of sick leave and reporting procedures will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.*

It was recommended that the phrase "Failing repeatedly" be stricken and the phrase "Any failure" be inserted.

Mr. Leech moved to accept the revision to section 401.2 of the Sick Leave Policy. Dr. Rzeszotarski seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Dr. Rzeszotarski	Yes
Mr. McCullough	Yes
Mr. Leech	Yes

The revised policy reads as follows:

*Any failure to follow the rules and regulations regarding use of sick leave and reporting procedures will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.*

**Transmission Lines**

Mr. Curtin advised the Board that Citizens Advocating Responsible Energy (CARE) has asked the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) to reconsider the decision rendered in November 2008. The OPSB granted a rehearing which is scheduled for January 26, 2009.

**COBRA Pipeline**

A gas pipeline runs under the railroad right-of-way in Middlefield. The Park District is negotiating a maintenance agreement with John D. Oil and Gas, owner of the pipeline.

**Donald Meyer Center – Office Renovation**

Mr. Curtin distributed the proposed plans for converting portions of the lower level at the Meyer Center into offices for the Natural Resources Management staff. The Board was asked to consider the gradual phase-in of the Meyer Center as an Administrative Center. This would entail closing the Meyer Center on weekends.

The Board agreed by unanimous consent to the conversion of the lower level of the Meyer Center to offices, but tabled the Meyer Center phase-in closure plan for further discussion.

**Miscellaneous Items**

Mr. Curtin reported that 231,200 kilowatt hours of electricity at the Meyer Center were used in 2008.

After review by the Natural Resources Management staff, it was determined that there is not enough water to support the placement of wood duck boxes at Frohring Meadows.



A local group asked for permission to host an ATV Family Fun Ride. It was the consensus of the Board to deny the request.

Mr. Curtin advised the Board that the Volunteer Advisory Committee will not be raising funds in the future. It was suggested that the remaining funds (\$3,000.00) go toward the purchase of replacement canoes.

**GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT FOUNDATION REPORT**

The Foundation Finance Committee will be meeting on January 22, 2009 and the Foundation Trustees will be meeting on February 26, 2009.

**CONTRACT REVIEW**

Mr. Curtin reported that bids for the majority of park projects will go out in February. The bid package for Best Preserve will go out in March.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**APPOINTMENT OF LEGAL COUNSEL**

As required by the Ohio State Auditor, legal counsel must be appointed each year. Mr. Curtin asked the board to consider the appointment of Thrasher, Dinsmore & Dolan as legal counsel for 2009.

As part of the Park's three-year cycle, RFPs for legal services will be sent out this year.

Mr. Leech made a motion to appoint the law firm of Thrasher, Dinsmore & Dolan as legal counsel for Geauga Park District for 2009.

Dr. Rzeszotarski seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Dr. Rzeszotarski	Yes
Mr. McCullough	Yes
Mr. Leech	Yes

**2009 YEAR OF THE RIVER, RESOLUTION NO. 02-09**

The Board was asked to approve the following resolution in recognition of 2009 Year of the River:

WHEREAS, the Cuyahoga River has played a pivotal role in the history of Northeast Ohio, providing cultural, environmental, recreational and economic opportunities for its residents;

WHEREAS, the health of the streams in Geauga Park District directly affect the health of the Cuyahoga River and Lake Erie, into which they flow;

WHEREAS, the Cuyahoga River headwaters lie within four Geauga Park District parks and are a focal point for nature education programs which attract thousands of Northeast Ohio residents;

WHEREAS, the Cuyahoga River watershed is a vital natural resource which must be conserved, restored and protected so that future generations will be able to enjoy its beauty and appreciate its historical significance;

WHEREAS, Geauga Park District will help preserve the Cuyahoga River watershed by promoting conservation-friendly land use and building practices, collaborating with communities that share the Cuyahoga River watershed and organizations that work to restore it, and encouraging residents and property owners to support conservation and stewardship of streams and watersheds;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, on this twenty-first day of January, 2009, the Geauga Park District Board of Commissioners recognize 2009 Year of the River and celebrate the progress that has been made in the restoration of the Cuyahoga River.

Mr. Leech made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 02-09, recognizing 2009 Year of the River.

Dr. Rzeszotarski seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Dr. Rzeszotarski	Yes
Mr. McCullough	Yes
Mr. Leech	Yes

### **2009 SMALL RESEARCH GRANTS**

After reviewing the 2009 Small Research Grant proposals which were submitted, the Natural Resources Management Department asked the Board to approve the following proposals for 2009:

#### **Northern Breeding Bird Survey in Hemlock Stands in Geauga County**

Fully funded, two-year study - \$3,715.00 (\$1,857.50 for 2009, \$1,857.50 for 2010)  
Submitted by Larry Rosche

#### **Declining Amphibians in Northeastern Ohio: A Look at Pathogenic Bacteria, Chytrid, and Potentially Toxic Metals**

Fully funded, one-year study - \$3,000.00  
Submitted by Tim Matson, Cleveland Museum of Natural History

#### **Predictive Model & Hydrology of Headwater Streams and the Groundwater/Surface Water Interactions Supporting Brook Trout Habitat in Northeastern Ohio**

Partially funded, two-year study - \$4,195.00 (\$2,195.00 for 2009, \$2,000.00 for 2010)  
Submitted by Katherine Amey, Kent State University

#### **Distribution, Occurrence & Diversity of Salamander Species in Hemlock Ravine Habitats on Geauga Park District Lands**

Partially funded, one-year study - \$995.00  
Submitted by Jonathan White

#### **A Study of Tree Diseases in Forested Locations in the Geauga Park District**

Partially funded, one-year study - \$2,000.00  
Submitted by Sam Mazzer, Wetland Systems Inc.

#### **A Survey of the Crickets & Katydid of Observatory Park and Oakton Park Preserve**

Fully funded, one-year study - \$500.00  
Submitted by Lisa Rainsong

**Distribution & Abundance of Rusty Blackbird on Geauga Park District Lands and Nearby Wetlands**

Fully funded, one-year study - \$975.00  
Submitted by Judy Semroc

**The Effects of Natural Nest Incubation Regimes on the Secondary Sex-Ratio and Fitness of Hatchling Painted Turtles, a Species that Exhibits Temperature-Dependent Sex Determination**

Partially funded, two-year study - \$1,755.00 (\$975.00 in 2009, \$780.00 in 2010)  
Submitted by Jason Cotter, John Carroll University

Due to the overwhelming number of grant proposals received, the Natural Resources Management staff asked the Board to consider increasing the funds for the Small Research Grants to \$15,000.00, an increase of \$3,000.00. These additional funds would allow for the full funding of some proposals submitted rather than just partial funding. The research data provided by the grants is used extensively by the Natural Resources Management staff.

The Board commented that they were impressed with the quality of proposals submitted.

Dr. Rzeszotarski moved to approve the 2009 Small Research Grant proposals and increase the amount of funding for the Small Research Grants to \$15,000 per year. Mr. Leech seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Dr. Rzeszotarski	Yes
Mr. McCullough	Yes
Mr. Leech	Yes

**DECLARATION OF SURPLUS PROPERTY**

The Board was asked to declare the following items as surplus property for the Geauga County auction: kitchen cabinets, water heater, oil-fired boiler, computer desk, metal desk, chimney sections, chimney covers, tilt/pan control unit, tilt trailer, landscape trailer, vinyl windows, sliding patio doors, interior doors.

Mr. Leech moved to declare the kitchen cabinets, water heater, oil-fired boiler, computer desk, metal desk, chimney sections, chimney covers, tilt/pan control unit, tilt trailer, landscape trailer, vinyl windows, sliding patio doors, interior doors as surplus property for the Geauga County auction.

Dr. Rzeszotarski seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Dr. Rzeszotarski	Yes
Mr. McCullough	Yes
Mr. Leech	Yes

**COMMISSIONERS' TIME**

Mr. Leech commented that two of the Wild Nights Speakers' Series programs he attended were spectacular.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION – ROLL CALL**

Dr. Rzeszotarski moved to go into Executive Session at 5:14 p.m. for the purpose of discussing land acquisition only, as there were no personnel items to be discussed. Mr. Leech seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Dr. Rzeszotarski	Yes
Mr. McCullough	Yes
Mr. Leech	Yes

The Board returned from Executive Session at 5:48 p.m. The following was brought forward for resolution:

**LAND ACQUISITION – BURTON TOWNSHIP**

Dr. Rzeszotarski moved to authorize the Executive Director to enter into negotiations for real property located in Burton Township.

Mr. Leech seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Dr. Rzeszotarski	Yes
Mr. McCullough	Yes
Mr. Leech	Yes

**REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD**

There were no reports from committees of the Board.

**REPORTS FROM OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE BOARD**

Departmental reports from the Supervisors were submitted for the month of December to the Executive Director and a summary sheet was forwarded to the Board in their packets prior to the Board meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

**SUNSHINE LAW COMPLIANCE**

The rules of the Park Board were complied with by sending notice pursuant to the rules adopted by the Board.

Respectfully submitted,

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Thomas G. Curtin, Executive Director

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Robert McCullough, President