

**GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
May 19, 2009**

The regular meeting of the Geauga Park District Board was held on May 19, 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. John Leech were present.

Employees present:

Tom Curtin, Executive Director
Keith McClintock, Deputy Director
Kathy Hanes, Executive Secretary
Dan Best, Senior Naturalist
Cindy Ford, Communications Manager
Paige Hosier, Marketing Director
Bob Keesecker, Development Officer
John Kolar, Naturalist
Michele Pennell, Accountant
Robin Pilarczyk, Human Resources Manager
Holly Sauder, Volunteer Coordinator
Diane Valen, Naturalist Services Director
Aaron Young, Planning Director

Visitors Present:

Dorothy Kostrab
Justin Gingerich
Bruce Hennes, Hennes Communications
Lillian Hill
Andy Kirtpatrick, Western Reserve Land Conservancy
Ed Meyers, Western Reserve Land Conservancy
Alice Merryman
Jean Strojan

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Leech moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting.

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

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF APRIL 14, 2009

Dr. Rzeszotarski moved to adopt the minutes of April 14, 2009 as amended.

Mr. McCullough 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 MAY 7, 2009

Mr. Leech moved to adopt the minutes of May 7, 2009 as written.

Mr. McCullough 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

Visitors Alice Merryman, Dorothy Kostrab, Lillian Hill, Jean Strojan and Justin Gingerich were welcomed to the meeting by Tom Curtin, Executive Director.

PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT

**Geauga Park District
FINANCIAL STATEMENT MONTH ENDED
APRIL 30, 2009**

GENERAL FUND

BEGINNING FUND BALANCE APRIL 1, 2009 **3,652,865.95**

EXPENDITURES & OTHER USES **1,262,904.44**

Personnel	211,140.24
Medicare	2,950.51
Dental /Hospitalization	34,012.48
PERS	30,449.22
Unemployment Transfers	72.42
Transfer to Land Improvement Fund	750,000.00
Vouchers	234,279.57

REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES **427,892.04**

General Tax Collections

- Real Estate Tax 404,553.43

Investment Income 929.95

Gifts & Donations 1,890.50

- General donation - Cobra Pipeline (\$1,000)
- Nature Scopes - VAC (\$819)
- TWW general donations (\$71.50)

Fees

- Shelters 75.00
- Bid Plans 375.00
- NAF Table Fees 245.00
- Lodge heat fee 345.00
- Workshops - General - Public program 90.00
- Programs - General - Public Program 755.00

Sales

- Tapper's Treasures - MC 178.95
- Tree Tops - TWW 1,119.07
- Credit Card - All facilities 2,156.38

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 180.00
- Recycling Proceeds 674.14
- Local Government Funds 5,939.28
- Auction Proceeds (McGrath house items, vehicles) 6,182.12

- Miscellaneous Receipts	603.22	
Syrup winnings - Geauga Maple Festival Board (\$102)		
Public records request - Anonymous (\$1.22)		
Lease agreement fee - Cobra Pipeline (\$500)		
ENDING FUND BALANCE AS OF APRIL 30, 2009		\$ 2,817,853.55
LAND IMPROVEMENT FUND		
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE APRIL 1, 2009		3,066,913.91
EXPENDITURES & OTHER USES		553,427.56
Vouchers	553,427.56	
REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES		757,233.46
<i>Investment Income</i>	1,305.40	
<i>Transfer from General Fund</i>	750,000.00	
<i>Gifts & Donations</i>	4,500.00	
- Trees at Sunnybrook - Fairmount Minerals Foundation (\$2,000)		
- Bessie Benner Metzenbaum - Cleveland Foundation (\$2,500)		
- Affelder Trust Interest		
<i>Royalties</i>		
- Oxford Oil Co - Swine Creek property	184.61	
- Cedar Valley Energy - Hehmeyer property	302.20	
- Great Lakes Energy - Hart property	27.62	
- Cedar Valley Energy - Sunnybrook property	325.60	
- Power Gas - Farley property	588.03	
<i>Other</i>		
ENDING FUND BALANCE AS OF APRIL 30, 2009		\$ 3,270,719.81

VOUCHER RESOLUTION NO. 21-09

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

Mr. Leech moved to adopt Voucher Resolution No. 21-09, a copy of which is on file in the Park District office.

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

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD

Mr. Curtin read a letter from the first and second grade teachers at Troy Elementary thanking the Park District for the wonderful time their classes had during a recent field trip to The West Woods.

A letter was received from Jane McCullam of Newbury expressing her disappointment in the landscaping changes made at The West Woods Nature Center.

Mr. McCullough read a letter he received from Paul Harris, Secretary of the Geauga County Agricultural Society, thanking the Park District for the donation of the tilt trailer to the Society's Grounds and Maintenance Dept.

OPEN TO PUBLIC

2009 Robert McCullough Lifetime Achievement Award

Mr. McCullough presented Alice Merryman, Geauga Park District Volunteer of Year, with the 2009 Robert McCullough Lifetime Achievement Award. Mrs. Merryman has been a volunteer since 1994 and has served as a wagon ride guide, worked at Saps a Risin', the Nature Arts Festival, musical events, Naturescopes and special exhibits. Mrs. Merryman thanked the Park for the award and stated she felt privileged to be able to assist the Park District.

Communications Presentation

Bruce Hennes, Communications Specialist at Hennes Communications, presented an overview of his company and the services they provide in communication support, media training and media relations. The Board thanked Mr. Hennes for his presentation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

PARK UPDATES

Asphalt Improvements

The asphalt improvements are complete at Beartown Lakes Reservation and Swine Creek.

Bass Lake Preserve

Work on improvements to the dam at Bass Lake Preserve is scheduled to begin August 1, 2009.

Big Creek Park Improvements

Improvements to the Big Creek Park parking areas at Tupelo Pond and Woodin Road will begin in late May.

Camp Chickagami

Work is progressing on the camping area improvements. The excavating is complete and construction of the lean-tos is in progress.

Dam Inventory and Analysis

A request for proposals will be sent out for an inventory and analysis of the dams located within the Park District.

Headwaters Park

The Park Operations Department will begin construction of a new camping area in June, 2009.

Mountain Run Station

Chardon Rotary will be constructing a new picnic pavilion. Dedication of the pavilion is scheduled for July 20, 2009.

Walter C. Best Preserve

Work on expansion of the parking area, construction of a pavilion, restroom and trail enhancements will begin in late May and will continue through September.

Citizens Advocating Responsibility Energy (CARE)

CARE has filed an appeal with the Supreme Court of Ohio asking the Court to review the decision made by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) in regard to construction of transmission lines by First Energy. The Court will hear the case.

Erroneous Lawsuit

The Park District was erroneously named as a defendant in a lawsuit filed by a mortgage company. The lawsuit identified right-of-way property owned by the Park District as part of the legal description of the property in question. Geauga Park District legal counsel, David Ondrey, has responded to the complaint and has asked that the railroad right-of-way property be removed from the legal documents. A pretrial hearing is scheduled for June 11, 2009.

The Maple Highlands Trail - Encroachment

A house located adjacent to The Maple Highlands Trail right-of-way is encroaching on Park property. The house is currently in foreclosure and the Park District is exploring options to deal with the situation.

Recreational Immunity

Mr. Curtin distributed results of a survey of other park districts in Ohio and their experiences with recreational immunity and user fees. The Board was asked to review it for discussion at a future meeting.

Letter of Support – The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy is working to preserve Ohio's largest undeveloped tract of forested land, The Raccoon Ecological Management Area (REMA) and Vinton Furnace Experimental Forest. The Nature Conservancy has asked the Park District to write a letter of support for the project. The Board agreed that it was a worthwhile project and that the Park would support The Nature Conservancy's efforts.

Geauga Park District By-Laws

Mr. Curtin asked the Board to review Article XII of the Geauga Park District By-laws. Article XII deals with contractual relationships with the Board and the Executive and Deputy Directors' ability to approve contracts and agreements up to \$25,000.00 without Board approval. Mr. Curtin asked the Board for clarification of Article XII and if he is permitted to enter into contracts when the funds are not budgeted. The Board agreed that it was their intent to permit the Executive Director to enter into contracts for unbudgeted items and suggested that Mr. Curtin contact David Ondrey, Park legal counsel, to review and suggest revisions to Article XII.

Surplus Property

Mr. Curtin informed the Board that over \$7,000.00 has been raised from the sale of Park surplus property at the online auction.

GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT FOUNDATION REPORT

The Foundation trustees will be meeting on May 26, 2009.

CONTRACT REVIEW

The Board was provided with contract review documents prior to the meeting. Progress reports were provided to the Board under Park Updates.

WEBSITE DEMONSTRATION

Cindy Ford, Communications Manager, presented the Board with an overview of the design changes to the Park website. The new design incorporates short videos, graphics and updated pages for easier navigation.

DOG PARK DISCUSSION

Mr. Curtin reported that the Park District has received several requests to establish a dog park. The Board was given a summary of data compiled from various dog parks in the United States. The data indicated that it would be both costly and labor-intensive to maintain a dog park due to mowing, grass replacement, dog waste removal and habitat fragmentation. The consensus of the Board was that it would not be in favor of creating a dog park at this time.

STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW

The Board received a draft copy of the strategic plan prior to the meeting. After some discussion, the Board felt the strategic plan was too specific and that the public document should include concepts rather than detailed objectives. However, they did agree that the current document would be good for internal use as each department develops its annual plan of operations. The plan will be sent back to the supervisory staff for review and revisions.

The Board took a break at 5:03 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

CHANGE IN AGENDA

Ed Meyers, Mark Skoronski and Andy Kirtpatrick from Western Reserve Land Conservancy arrived and were introduced by Mr. McClintock.

In the interest of time, Board President Robert McCullough asked to revise the agenda so the Board could go into Executive Session to discuss land acquisition with representatives from Western Reserve Land Conservancy. The Board agreed by unanimous consent

EXECUTIVE SESSION – ROLL CALL

Mr. McCullough moved to go into Executive Session at 5:11 p.m. for the purpose of discussing land acquisition. 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 5:37 p.m. The following items were brought forward for resolution:

Welton’s Gorge, Burton Township, Resolution 23-09

Mr. McCullough made a motion to enter into an agreement with Western Reserve Land Conservancy for the purchase of approximately 79 acres in Burton Township, known as Welton’s Gorge, in the amount of \$7,500.00 per acre, with the exact figure to be determined after survey of the property.

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	Abstained

BAK Property, Middlefield Village, Resolution 24-09

Dr. Rzeszotarski made a motion to enter into an agreement with Western Reserve Land Conservancy for the purchase of a 203-acre parcel, known as the BAK property, Permanent Parcel Nos. 19-005700 and a portion of 19-071415 located in Middlefield Village, Ohio. The purchase price will be \$7,500.00 per acre, with the final price to be determined after survey of the property. The maximum expenditure to Geauga Park District will be \$700,000.00 (which will be funded through the WRRSP grant).

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

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

Estadt Property, Montville Township, Resolution 25-09

Dr. Rzeszotarski moved to authorize the Executive Director to purchase 25 acres of real property located in Montville Township, identified as Permanent Parcel Nos. 20-031600 (split) and 20-071054, from Clinton D. Estadt for the purchase price of \$2,500.00 per acre with final purchase price based on a survey of the above-listed lot split.

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

NEW BUSINESS

OBSERVATORY PARK MARKET SURVEY PRESENTATION

Bob Keesecker, Development Officer, presented a summary of the Observatory Park market survey he conducted. The results of the survey indicate that raising \$2.5 million to fund the construction of Observatory Park is realistic and that the public would be receptive to a fund-raising campaign. Mr. Keesecker has developed a Case for Support which he will be finalizing in the next few weeks. The Board thanked Mr. Keesecker for his informative and interesting presentation.

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST POLICY, RESOLUTION 22-09

The Board was presented with the Public Records Request Policy for their review and comment. The Policy was developed in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 149.43 (E)(2) and is the standard policy recommended by the Ohio Attorney General’s Office. Copies of the policy are available at the Donald Meyer Center and on the Park District website. The Policy will also be incorporated into the Geauga Park District Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual, Section 217.1.

Mr. Leech moved to adopt the Public Records Request Policy, Resolution 22-09, effective May 19, 2009, a copy of which will be available at the Donald Meyer Center, on the Park District’s website and in the Geauga Park District Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual, Section 217.1.

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

DECLARATION OF SURPLUS PROPERTY

The Board was asked to declare the following items as surplus property: Gledhill road grader, ten picnic tables, and four bikes. The Gledhill road grader and four bikes will be sent to the Geauga County auction.

Mr. Leech moved to declare the Gledhill road grader, ten picnic tables, and four bikes as surplus property. The Gledhill road grader and four bikes will be sent to 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

DONATION OF PICNIC TABLES

A request was received from Munson Township asking if the Park District would be willing to donate surplus picnic tables to the Township. Dr. Rzeszotarski suggested sanding off the Geauga Park District name stamp before giving the tables to Munson Township.

The Board agreed by unanimous consent to donate ten picnic tables to Munson Township.

COMMISSIONERS' TIME

Mr. McCullough commented that he liked the design of the new Park brochure, but would like the map to include the names of towns and cities in the future.

The Board suggested that the engraved stone at Sunnybrook Preserve include the date of dedication.

Mr. McCullough commented that he would like the Park to purchase a Geauga Park District banner which could be used as a speaker's backdrop during events at the Donald Meyer Center and The West Woods Nature Center.

Dr. Rzeszotarski suggested providing hats with the Voices of Nature logo on them to every Foundation member, individual donors and other Park friends.

The Board discussed the Park's 50th Anniversary in 2011 and suggested putting up banners on light poles at major street intersections; forming an ad hoc committee comprised of citizens and Geauga Park District staff; and honoring Judge Ford for his contributions to the Park District over the years.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

There were no reports from committees of the Board.

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE BOARD

Levy Information

Mr. Curtin reported that the Geauga County Auditor's office provided the park with different scenarios regarding millage if the Park were to place a levy on the ballot in 2012. The Board will be discussing the information at a later date.

Privacy Screening – Stratherns

Keith McClintock, Deputy Director, stated that the Stratherns have not made a decision on the proposal presented to them regarding fencing and screening for their property near Sunnybrook Preserve.

Tuition Reimbursement

Mr. Curtin expressed to the Board his desire to enroll in a Master's program through Hiram College. Cost of the program is \$450.00 per credit hour.

Mr. Curtin asked if the Board would consider paying tuition reimbursement for the cost of the program. The Board agreed by unanimous consent to provide tuition reimbursement to Mr. Curtin per the terms of the Executive Director's contract.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 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,

Thomas G. Curtin, Executive Director

Robert McCullough, President