

**GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
February 14, 2012**

The regular meeting of the Geauga Park District Board was held on February 14, 2012 at the Donald W. Meyer Center, Chardon, Ohio. The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. Vice-President John Leech was in the Chair. Commissioner Michael Petruziello was present. President James Patterson was absent.

Employees Present:

Thomas Curtin, Executive Director
Keith McClintock, Deputy Director
Kathy Hanes, Executive Secretary
Brett Bellas, Maintenance Supervisor
Dan Best, Senior Naturalist
Joel Firem, Ranger
Gloria Freno, Accountant
Linda Gilbert, Naturalist
Emilie Gottsegen, Development Director
John Hayhurst, Ranger Lt.
Paige Hosier, Marketing & Admin. Services Director
John Kolar, Naturalist
Don Lombardy, Information Technology Manager
Dottie Mathiott, Naturalist
Janet Moster, Part-time Secretary
Michele Pennell, Chief Financial Officer
Robin Pilarczyk, Human Resources Manager
Paul Pira, Natural Resource Management Director
Teresa Runion, Special Events Coordinator
Eileen Smith, Administrative Services Coordinator
Amanda Stith, Development Associate
Dawn Sweeney, Part-time Secretary
Jerome Tvergyak, Maintenance Tech II
Diane Valen, Naturalist Services Director
Sandy Ward, Communications Specialist
Aaron Young, Planning Director

Guests:

Skip Claypool
Jeff Frischkorn, *The News Herald*
Joy Keco, Ohio Horseman's Council
Glen Miller, *The Maple Leaf*
Iola Skinner
Nora Stanton, Ohio Horseman's Council
Tom Sterlekar

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Petruziello 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:

Mr. Petruziello	Yes
Mr. Patterson	Absent
Mr. Leech	Yes

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

Mr. Petruziello moved to adopt the minutes of January 10, 2012 as written.

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

Mr. Petruziello	Yes
Mr. Patterson	Absent
Mr. Leech	Yes

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Curtin welcomed staff members and all visitors in attendance.

Eileen Smith, Administrative Services Coordinator, introduced Dawn Sweeney, the new part-time secretary.

PRESENTATION OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Geauga Park District		
FINANCIAL STATEMENT MONTH ENDED		
JANUARY 31, 2012		
<u>GENERAL FUND</u>		
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE JANUARY 1, 2012		4,146,957.91
EXPENDITURES & OTHER USES		394,938.23
Personnel	203,351.04	
Medicare	2,919.28	
Dental /Hospitalization	40,028.08	
PERS	29,629.24	
Vouchers	119,010.59	
REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES		25,028.95
<i>Investment Income</i>	111.24	
<i>Gifts & Donations</i>	370.37	
- Patrons - TWW donation box/bird seed (\$370.37)		
<i>Fees</i>		
- Programs - Schools - Out-of-county	38.00	
- Utility fees	1,025.00	
- Workshops - General - Public program	138.00	
<i>Sales</i>		
- Tapper's Treasures - MC	247.21	
- Tree Tops - TWW	2,915.72	
<i>Other Receipts</i>		
- Tax reimbursement - Exempt properties	2,110.00	
- Swine Creek house - Harry	400.00	
- Burton Wetlands house- Kolar	400.00	
- Hyde house - McKinnon	400.00	
- Chickagami house - Mast	400.00	
- Local Government Funds	9,846.91	

- Miscellaneous Receipts	6,626.50	
Various agencies - Regional Parks Conference fee (\$6,345)		
Geauga Arts Council - Art Takes a Bough commission (\$281.50)		
ENDING FUND BALANCE JANUARY 31, 2012		\$ 3,777,048.63
<u>LAND IMPROVEMENT FUND</u>		
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE JANUARY 1, 2012		1,161,647.08
EXPENDITURES & OTHER USES		308,448.40
Vouchers	308,448.40	
REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES		1,858.37
<i>Investment Income</i>	33.19	
<i>Royalties/In-Lieu Fees</i>	1,825.18	
- Farley, Troyer, Kuhns, Kovacs, Hehmeyer, Hart, Sunnybrook, Swine Creek, Stinchcomb		
ENDING FUND BALANCE JANUARY 31, 2012		\$ 855,057.05
<u>RETIREMENT RESERVE ACCOUNT</u>		
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE JANUARY 1, 2012		82,316.49
REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES		2.13
<i>Investment Income</i>	2.13	
ENDING FUND BALANCE JANUARY 31, 2012		\$ 82,318.62

VOUCHER RESOLUTION NO. 06-12

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

Mr. Petruziello moved to adopt Voucher Resolution No. 06-12, 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:

Mr. Petruziello	Yes
Mr. Patterson	Absent
Mr. Leech	Yes

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD

A thank you note was received from Hawken Middle School expressing appreciation to Mr. Curtin for facilitating a program on Optics for the students.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Public Comment

Joy Keco of the Geauga Ohio Horseman's Council wished everyone in attendance a Happy Valentine's Day.

Honoring Dan Best, Resolution No. 05-12

On behalf of the Board, Mr. Leech presented Dan Best with the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, Dan Best has faithfully served the mission of Geauga Park District since 1987 for a tenure of twenty five years;

WHEREAS, Dan Best served as Chief Naturalist for sixteen of those years, directing all naturalist staff, visitor services, programs and activities;

WHEREAS, Dan Best played a key role in the planning and development of interpretive displays in The West Woods Nature Center, and has continued to be the master mind and project manager behind four wildly popular major exhibits – Engage the Ice Age, Bio-Centennial, Wild Nights and Snowbelted;

WHEREAS, Dan Best, serving as Senior Naturalist, has taken the lead role in the development of interpretive signage in Observatory Park;

WHEREAS, Dan Best has independently designed and monitored an innovative Prothonotary Warbler project along the upper Cuyahoga River for more than twenty years;

WHEREAS, Dan Best has been responsible for formulating interpretive master plans to be incorporated into the development of new park properties;

WHEREAS, Dan Best is highly respected in the environmental community, is regularly relied upon for his knowledge and expertise, and consistently serves as an Ambassador for Geauga Park District;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, on this fourteenth day of February 2012, the Board of Commissioners of Geauga Park District extends its gratitude and congratulations to Dan Best for his twenty five years of faithful service.

Dan expressed his gratitude and stated that he has enjoyed his tenure at the Park District working with staff, other agencies, community members and volunteers.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

PARK UPDATES

Snowbelted Exhibit

Mr. Curtin reported that 10,491 have attended the Snowbelted Exhibit since it opened in November.

Park Projects

Mr. Curtin reported on the following:

- The Planning Department is continuing to seek proposals for additional plantings at Orchard Hills Park along the riparian corridors where restoration work has been done.
- Master plans are being developed for the Ellerin and Hyde-Kaplan properties. A meeting was held with representatives from Chagrin Falls Park to discuss developing a plan to connect the Ellerin property to Chagrin Falls Park.

Nature Center of Shaker Lakes

Mr. Curtin reported that the Nature Center of Shaker Lakes is applying for a \$25,000 grant to fund a stream restoration project. The Park District is listed as a partnering organization on the grant and the Natural Resource Management Department will provide assistance to the project. There is no financial obligation on the part of the Park District. The Board agreed that it is a worthwhile project.

Worker's Compensation Update

A park employee who was injured on the job has been awarded disability benefits through the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System. Mr. Leech asked if this was a final decision and Mr. Curtin indicated that it was.

Asset Summary

The Board was provided with a list of park assets. Mr. Petruziello asked if the Industrial Appraisal report was for insurance purposes and Mr. Curtin indicated that it was and that it is updated annually.

2012 IRS Mileage Reimbursement Rate

Mr. Curtin advised the Board the 2012 IRS mileage reimbursement rate will remain the same (\$0.55 per mile). No approval from the Board was necessary, as the Board adheres to guidelines established by the Internal Revenue Service.

White-Nose Syndrome (Bats)

The Board was provided with information from the Natural Resource Management Department about the recent discovery of white-nose syndrome within Geauga Park District, specifically at The West Woods. The disease is associated with a fungus which often grows onto the white tufts of bats and has been devastating to bat populations in eastern North America.

The Natural Resource Management Department is recommending that all off-trail access to Ansel's Cave and other known bat hibernacula areas be prohibited and that all backcountry hikes in the identified areas be changed to "on the trail only" hikes.

Observatory Park Signage

Mr. Curtin showed the Board renderings for a sign which will be posted at Observatory Park identifying it as a certified International Dark Sky Park. The proposed sign will be fabricated in-house and placed either near the entrance to the park or near the parking lot area. The Board agreed that the design was nice and discussed a stainless steel sign vs. an aluminum sign with powder coating. Mr. Curtin indicated that he will get information regarding the price difference.

Waterfowl Hunting

Mr. Curtin reported that the EPA has recommended opening up the East Branch Reservoir (Headwaters Park) for waterfowl hunting as a means to control outbreaks of *Cryptosporidium* caused by Canada geese. A meeting was held with officials from the City of Akron to discuss how waterfowl hunting could be implemented. One of the options discussed was closing the park and setting up predetermined blind locations. Mr. Curtin will keep the Board updated on further developments.

Deer Management Program

The Board was provided with an update on the deer management program. Mr. Curtin commented the number of deer harvested are down, both locally and state-wide. A final report will be issued in March.

Orchard Hills Park Sledding Hill

The Natural Resource Conservation Service has been contacted to assist with planning for the repair of the sledding hill at Orchard Hills Park. Due to safety concerns, the hill has been closed for repair until further notice.

Amish Heritage Center

Mr. Curtin reported that Ken Lawton, son of Amish watercolor painter Florian Lawton, would like to open an Amish Heritage Center in Middlefield. He has created a non-profit foundation to help raise money for the project and would like to host a fundraiser at The West Woods. The event would take place sometime in March or April and include appetizers and a silent auction. The Board thought it was a good idea to allow the group to host the fundraiser at The West Woods.

Science Nights at Chardon BrewWorks & Eatery

Chardon BrewWorks will be sponsoring "Science Nights" and has asked if the Park District would be willing to be part of their speaker series. Mr. Leech asked if the Park District would be part of a steering committee and Sandy Ward, Communications Specialist, indicated that GPD's role would be to provide a speaker on an occasional basis. The Board commented that it is a good way to educate the public about nature and science-related topics.

Management Team Assessment

Mr. Curtin reported that Sally Parker of the Currere Company will be submitting a proposal for a management team assessment.

Fishing Program - Union Sportsmen's Alliance

The Union Sportsmen's Alliance, a non-profit organization affiliated with the Bricklayer's Union, asked if the Park District would be willing to partner with them to host a fishing program for children with disabilities. The Alliance provides recreational opportunities such as hunting and fishing for children with physical and medical challenges. The organization would assume all costs and supply volunteers for the day-long event which could be held at various park fishing venues, such as Big Creek Park, Bass Lake and Headwaters. Mr. Leech suggested the program be implemented as part of the Chip Henry Institute for Outdoor Adventure and Mr. Petruziello agreed. Mr. Curtin will provide additional details at the March meeting.

GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT FOUNDATION

Amanda Stith, Development Associate, reported that the Foundation held its annual retreat at which time they developed plans for 2012, welcomed three new trustees and worked on their strategic plan. The next meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2012.

CONTRACT REVIEW

There were no contracts presented for review.

2012 FINAL APPROPRIATIONS, RESOLUTION NO. 07-12

The Board was presented with the final budget for review.

The following items were discussed:

- Mr. Petruziello asked about an increase in the Marketing budget and asked if any part of the budget is distributed to Geauga County Tourism. Mr. Curtin replied that although the Park District partners with Geauga County Tourism, none of the Park District's budget is given to Tourism.
- Mr. Petruziello asked about the \$600,000 contingency in the budget. Mr. Curtin noted that the contingency fluctuates from year-to-year, anywhere from \$300,000 to \$600,000. Mr. Leech also mentioned that the amount of the contingency was questioned when the budget was presented to the Geauga County Budget Commission. It was explained that the contingency was put in place because it is difficult to predict what may "be coming down the pike."
- Mr. Petruziello asked why the budget was increased 16% and commented that the Park District should be looking at austerity measures. Michele Pennell, Chief Financial Officer, explained that there is not a 16% increase in the budget and that the figures reflect what the Park District is planning on spending this year versus what was actually spent in 2011. She noted that the figures are only estimates and that actual year-end expenditures could be less than the projected amount. Mr. Curtin commented that the final budget is actually 12% less than the temporary budget which was reviewed and approved by the Geauga County Budget Commission last fall. Ms. Pennell explained that the Commission will review it again closer to the end of year to ensure that actual expenditures are in line with revenue.
- Mr. Petruziello asked about two items in the technology budget. One was the backup system at a cost of \$17,500 which he felt was expensive. Don Lombardy, Information Technology Manager, explained that the figure is quite conservative as it represents the cost of a multiple backup system. The Park District currently uses a single backup system which is not able to hold all the data on the server. Mr. Petruziello asked if the Park District was purchasing "New World" software and also the licensing fees associated with it. Mr. Lombardy explained that the accounting software was purchased by Geauga County for use in the Park District. Ms. Pennell noted that the \$10,000 fee represents the cost of customizing the software so that it can be used by the Park District. Mr. Petruziello asked if just a licensing fee could be bought for the software and Ms. Pennell indicated that it could not.
- Mr. Petruziello asked if the budget was a conservative budget estimate and if the Park District typically comes in under budget. Ms. Pennell confirmed that it is a "not to exceed" budget.

Mr. Claypool asked if the budget has stayed "flat" and Ms. Pennell responded that the operations budget has stayed flat, but that the land improvement budget, which is another fund, has fluctuated. Mr. Curtin noted that fluctuations are based on grant and foundation money received.

Mr. Leech asked if there were any additional questions and there were none.

Mr. Petruziello made a motion to approve the 2012 Final Appropriations, Resolution No. 07-12.

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

Mr. Petruziello	Yes
Mr. Patterson	Absent
Mr. Leech	Yes

NEW BUSINESS

OPRA AWARDS

Mr. Curtin announced that the Park District has been recognized by the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA) and received two awards. One was for second place in the Marketing Category for the Caveman Crawl 5K Run and the other was first place in the Historical Category for the 50th Anniversary Time Capsule project.

The Board congratulated the staff.

AUDIT COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

As recommended by the Ohio State Auditor, the Park District maintains an Audit Committee comprised of five members (two members of the public, two members of Park staff and one Board member). The committee is charged with reviewing and recommending areas of improvement, if needed, in regard to fiscal accountability and internal controls.

The Board was asked to select a member for the committee due to the departure of Dr. Mark Rzeszotarski from the Board. Mr. Leech asked Mr. Petruziello if he would be willing to serve on the committee and Mr. Petruziello indicated that he would be happy to.

Mr. Leech made a motion to appoint Michael Petruziello as a member of the Audit Committee. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Mr. Petruziello	Yes
Mr. Patterson	Absent
Mr. Leech	Yes

AMPHITHEATER USAGE FEE

The Board was presented with a recommendation to add the Amphitheater at Big Creek Park to the list of reservation options available for patrons in 2012. There would be no usage fee for in-county patrons; however, the fee for out-of-county patrons would be \$100.00.

Because the 2012 Facility Usage Fee Schedule was approved at the September 2011 board meeting, the Board was asked to amend Resolution No. 39-11 and add the fee for amphitheater usage.

Mr. Petruziello made a motion to amend Resolution No. 39-11 to include the Amphitheater usage fee of \$100.00 for out-of-county patrons.

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

Mr. Petruziello	Yes
Mr. Patterson	Absent
Mr. Leech	Yes

ELDON RUSSELL PARK LEASE RENEWAL

The Board was presented with the 2012 lease for Eldon Russell Park in the amount of \$159.78 (a 10% increase). Mr. Curtin explained that when Eldon Russell Park was being developed, the Park District asked the City of Akron if acreage could be leased for construction of a trail. They agreed and the Park District leases 97 acres from the City annually.

Mr. Petruziello asked if the Park District was responsible for improvements to the property and Mr. Curtin said that the only maintenance performed is to the hiking trail.

The Board asked if a longer lease could be negotiated and Mr. Curtin indicated that the City of Akron is reviewing the lease agreement but, in the past, they have not wanted to extend the lease.

Mr. Leech made a motion to approve the Eldon Russell Park lease renewal with the City of Akron in the amount of \$159.78.

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

Mr. Petruziello	Yes
Mr. Patterson	Absent
Mr. Leech	Yes

ENVIRON RESEARCH AGREEMENT

Mr. Curtin presented the ENVIRON Research Agreement to the Board for their review. The agreement outlines the proposed scope of work to be performed by ENVIRON, a global company who has a local office located in Burton. ENVIRON approached the Park District and offered to provide ecosystem valuation services free of charge. The work would include using available data and information to provide an estimate of the monetary value of ecosystem services provided by park-owned/managed properties. Mr. Curtin explained that all reports and products of the work would belong to the Park District.

Mr. Claypool stated that he didn't know if the agreement was a "good thing or bad thing," but that the agreement "seems like nonsense" and "is suspicious" and asked what purpose it would serve. Mr. Curtin explained that studies such as this have been done before and the resulting data provides organizations with a monetary value for ecosystem services. Mr. Curtin referenced a study that was undertaken in New York City with regard to the city's drinking water. The Adirondack watershed provides drinking water to the city. An ecosystems valuation study compared the cost of building a new water filtration system (approximately \$3.5 billion) to the economic value (\$1 billion) of protecting the watershed to preserve the natural purification process.

Mr. Leech made a motion to accept the proposed ENVIRON Research Agreement as presented.

Mr. Petruziello did not second the motion.

The motion failed for lack of a second.

Mr. Petruziello explained that he voted no because he does not feel that an "artificial value can be put on an ecosystem created by God." He also stated that previous studies he has reviewed are hypothetical and that no data was provided to support numbers placed on ecological services. Mr. Curtin and Mr. Leech commented that since the ENVIRON study is being provided at no cost to the park district, they felt it would not be harmful to enter into the agreement and that the study could always be rejected after review by the Board. Mr. Petruziello stated that he feels the data from the report will set a precedent and that the Park District, "whose objective it is to preserve land, would be going down a slippery slope when dollar amounts are put on trees and water." Mr. Curtin stated that he felt the report would help direct the Park District in the future in regard to land preservation efforts.

Mr. Petruziello made a motion to bring the ENVRION Research Agreement forward for a vote.
 Mr. Leech seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Mr. Petruziello	No
Mr. Patterson	Absent
Mr. Leech	Yes

After the vote, Mr. Petruziello stated that he wanted those in attendance to know that he wants to “keep this as a nature park and voted no because it’s about God’s rights and the nature we are protecting.”

DECLARATION OF SURPLUS PROPERTY

The Board was asked to declare the following items as surplus property. All items will go to the Geauga County auction, except those identified as scrap.

Inventory No.	Description	Starting Bid
1800	Computer - replacement schedule	\$ 25.00
1802	Computer - replacement schedule	\$ 25.00
1804	Computer - replacement schedule	\$ 25.00
1806	Computer - replacement schedule	\$ 25.00
1824	Computer - replacement schedule	\$ 25.00
1826	Computer - replacement schedule	\$ 25.00
1829	Computer - replacement schedule	\$ 25.00
1839	Computer - replacement schedule	\$ 25.00
2122	Computer - replacement schedule	\$ 25.00
2124	Computer - replacement schedule	\$ 25.00
2151	Computer - replacement schedule	\$ 25.00
n/a	Server - replacement schedule	\$ 100.00
n/a	Cisco 1701 Routers (qty. 2) - no longer used	\$ 25.00
n/a	IxPort Prism 3111 (qty. 2) - no longer used	\$ 25.00
n/a	APC Backups ES500 (will not keep charge)	scrap
1891	Computer - replacement schedule - repairs cost more than worth	scrap

Mr. Petruziello made a motion to declare the above-mentioned items as surplus property.
 Mr. Leech seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Mr. Petruziello	Yes
Mr. Patterson	Absent
Mr. Leech	Yes

COMMISSIONERS’ TIME

Mr. Petruziello thanked everyone for listening to his point of view and said he would be willing to answer any questions after the meeting.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the public.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – ROLL CALL

There were no items brought forward for Executive Session.

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

Departmental reports for the month of January were submitted to the Executive Director and a summary sheet was forwarded to the Board prior to the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

SUNSHINE LAW COMPLIANCE

It is declared that notification of this meeting and any business conducted therein by the Geauga Park District Board of Commissioners was in compliance with Ohio's Sunshine Laws.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Curtin, Executive Director

John Leech, Vice-President