

**GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT BOARD
OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 19, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Geauga Park District Board was held September 19, 2022 at the Meyer Center, Big Creek Park. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. Commissioners Howard Bates, Pat Preston, Jolene Carnabuci and Mario Innocenzi were present, Ray Guarino was not present.

Mr. Oros called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Park District Employees	GUESTS
John Oros, Executive Director	
Dawn Sweeney, Finance Assistant	
Christine Ward, HR Manager	
Dennis Sloan, Chief Ranger	
Matt McCue, Deputy Executive Director	
Sheryl Hatridge, Administrative Services Manager	

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Oros requested a motion to approve the agenda and addendum items. Mr. Bates made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Preston seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. Preston	Yes
Mr. Innocenzi	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Mr. Oros requested a motion to approve the August 15, 2022, regular board meeting minutes. Mr. Preston made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Innocenzi seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Innocenzi	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Preston	Yes

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR SPECIAL MEETING

Mr. Oros requested a motion to approve the August 24, 2022, special board meeting minutes. Mr. Preston made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Innocenzi seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Preston	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Innocenzi	Yes

PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Ms. Pae was not present however, Ms. Sweeney, finance assistant, was available to answer questions. Mr. Preston requested that large purchases be noted on statements.

PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL PAYMENT REPORT

Mr. Preston asked what two payments on the report were for and Mr. McCue explained one was for the roof replacement at The West Woods for \$54,000, and the second was a \$32,000 installment for the pollinator garden at Frohring Meadows.

OLD BUSINESS

GRANT STATUS UPDATE

Mr. Oros said there are no updates to the status of grants the park has applied for at this time. Mr. McCue added the Brede property improvements would be discussed further during the Capital Improvement presentation and the park district was waiting on a grant status update from ODNR.

UNION CHAPEL UPDATE

Mr. Oros gave an update on the status of Union Chapel. An assessment was done with two plans were submitted in 2021. The first is to stabilize the structural issues with an architectural fee of \$22,000 and estimated cost of \$200,000 and the second is a restoration addressing all structural issues, upgrade systems, a restroom and site work with an architectural fee of \$59,500 and estimated cost of \$565,000. Option two was discussed as a better option since it addresses the structural issues. This information was previously shared at the July board meeting. Mr. Oros stated option one is more of a band-aid approach, versus option two as a long-term solution. Mr. McCue said decision would need to be made by Spring 2023, if the improvements are to be scheduled for 2025. Information was shared with the Union Chapel Trustees regarding the assessments and plans for the location.

Trustees from Union Chapel were in attendance: Bill Ward, Carol Drabek and Barry Stith. The trustees were asked about grant opportunities they are pursuing to pay for these plans. Mr. Ward mentioned he had been speaking with the Cleveland Foundation and had a tour scheduled with that organization. Mr. Preston asked that Mr. McCue be included in that meeting. When asked about funding for repairs, the trustees said the site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and the trustees are pursuing additional grant money through state and federal opportunities. Mr. Oros commented that tracking the number of programs and number of attendees to the Chapel would help with the grant application process. The trustees agreed and said they are tracking these numbers. Mr. Preston discussed the trustees' vision for the facility for the future and mentioned more involvement with the local schools to feature the history of the Chapel and its importance. Currently the Chapel hosts group activities, memorials, history classes and other functions. They would like to host more events. Mr. Oros stated the planning department will put together a timeline for the planning process and encouraged the trustees to look for grant opportunities for capital projects.

NEW BUSINESS

NATURALIST PRESENTATION

Mr. John Kolar's presentation was postponed until the next board meeting.

PLANNING AND OPERATIONS UPDATE

Mr. Oros mentioned Bessie Benner Metzenbaum Park is moving along well with improvements. Mr. McCue said they have a little asphalt work to finish at Walter C. Best and the roof completion at The West Woods before the weather changes.

2023 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PRESENTATION

Mr. McCue presented 2023 Capital projects to the board. He noted that most of the projects presented today had also been addressed in previous meetings throughout the summer either in the capital plan or in the design phases based on grant availability at the time. Mr. McCue presented 2023 projects to the board. He began with the replacement of the West Woods bridge due to deterioration. He said Veterans Legacy Woods Phase II will include updates to the club house, development of an overall trail system rather than the golf paths and a memorial grove area. A master plan was developed in 2019 and 2020 with Phase I being completed in early 2022. Phase I included the existing parking area near the lodge, restrooms with flush toilets, a pavilion area, nature based play area and an honor memorial for the different Armed Forces. Phase II focused on the HVAC in the lodge, a drop ceiling in the basement space, and how to make it more updated by brightening the interior with paint and fixtures. Most of the interior work will be done by the construction crew over the winter. He mentioned he anticipates the opening and full use of the lodge in early 2023. Phase II for the trails eliminates the golf cart paths with a loop instead of breaking up nature. More skill levels will be represented in the new/existing trails with elevation and access. He said boardwalks will be added by the pond and along with additional benches. A combination of GPD construction crews and an outside contractor will be used for the aggregate and asphalt

trails. The memorial grove will have 21 trees at the entrance and then a grove at the side, creating an area for patrons to enjoy nature and reflect on service.

Mr. McCue stated Holbrook Hollows will have a trail connection to a larger trail network with Solon and Chagrin Falls off of S. Franklin St. using \$400,000 of grant funds from the state capitol budget. He said this will include a picnic pavilion, flush toilets, parking, and a nature-based play area. Mr. McCue added this park is in a densely populated area with more than 60,000 people within a 2-mile drive and the S. Franklin access will allow for parking up to 20-25 cars. An RFP is going out for engineering and consulting services and the landscaping architecture portion in house.

Mr. McCue shared the Brede Property is a 60-acre property with mostly wetlands which was acquired in 2003 and would include property access with a boardwalk, primitive trails and a small aggregate parking lot. He said they are waiting on a small grant from ODNR with most of the construction being handled by GPD staff.

Mr. McCue stated the replacement of The West Woods bridge is due to rapid deterioration of supporting steel and wood utilizing ODOT funding next year which is now available for Metroparks. The bridge is over 20 years old and will be out for bid in 2023. He mentioned an application for the full \$850,000 cost was submitted and hope to have some or most of it covered. Mr. McCue said the bridge will likely be a steel superstructure with a concrete road deck, or a 3-sided box culvert after the water flow study is complete.

Lastly, Mr. McCue said Swine Creek, one of our older parks with larger parking areas, needs asphalt repair improvements to the lot, along the entry drive, and edges of certain lots. He said the estimate for repairs is \$275,000.

RESOLUTION No. 8-2022 – TRANSFER REQUEST

Mr. Oros presented transfer request via a memo from Ms. Pae asking for \$1,341,060 to be moved from general fund to the land improvement fund as permitted by Ohio Revised Code 57.05.14-57.05.16 as a result of the budget commission meeting. He said the source of revenue is wetland mitigation credits of which \$249,000 will be utilized in the purchase of the Brubaker property which is in process. Mr. Oros mentioned the importance of grant funding since the park district has had a known real estate associated millage collection of \$6,902,000 in 2020, \$6,735,000 in 2021 and \$4,778,000 in 2022. Ms. Pae updated the appropriations and because of some of the grants and revenue streams, our appropriations far outpaced our known real estate revenue collection. Also Mr. Oros made note of personnel services appropriations as correlated to the known real estate revenue collection and said that number is \$5,360,000.

Mr. Innocenzi asked Mr. McCue to clarify a grant that had been applied for regarding the Brede Property and for what amount. He responded that ODNR NatureWorks grant was \$16,000 with the total project costing \$92,000 and most of the work was done with in-house staff.

Mr. Bates made a motion to approve the transfer request, Mr. Preston seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Innocenzi	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Preston	Yes

RESOLUTION No. 9-2022 – CERTIFICATION OF TAX LEVIES

Mr. Oros presented a request to certify tax levy amounts and rates as determined by the budget commission.

Mr. Bates made a motion to certify the tax levy amounts and rates, Mr. Preston seconded the motion. After roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Preston	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. Innocenzi	Yes

PERSONNEL POLICY – VACATION LEAVE

Ms. Ward presented a request a change in the park personnel policy for vacation leave. She explained the request takes into consideration private sector work service towards vacation leave. She added the change to the policy would also allow vacation use as it is accrued rather than wait for it to be available after the first year. Ms. Ward said changing this policy may help attract more applicants in this current job market. Mr. Preston asked how many positions were currently available within the park, Ms. Ward said 2 maintenance and 2 construction positions which need to be filled while we have lost 9 staff in the past year. Mr. Preston said he was not in favor of changing the policy as it is currently very generous nor the additional costs changing the policy may add as the board had done much this year regarding pay.

Mr. Oros called for a vote Mr. Bates made a motion to table this until the next meeting, Mr. Innocenzi seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was tabled to be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Preston	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Innocenzi	Yes

SURPLUS PROPERTY

Mr. Oros requested approval to scrap 4 monitors. Mr. Bates made a motion to approve declaring the items as surplus, Mr. Innocenzi seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. Preston	Yes
Mr. Innocenzi	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes

COMMISSIONERS TIME

Mr. Oros shared the following staff and department updates :

- The Nature Arts Festival had 1,368 attendees
- Scout Justice Kraber volunteered 4 hours of service to the Parks
- 73 programs were held in August serving 3,695 patrons
- The West Woods had 2840 visitors
- Moths & Meteors had 300 participants
- Home School Days had 208 attendees
- Movie night had over 200 people at Observatory Park

Mr. Preston shared his thoughts regarding recent editorials in the newspaper. He mentioned incorrect information about a restaurant at Veterans Legacy Woods Lodge and allowing patrons to bring caterers in when renting the lodge. He also commented regarding properties acquisition and preservation/protecting property during his time on the board and said the public deserves access to land. Mr. Preston also shared his views on GPD transparency with information to the public regarding activities and recreation, county auditor issues and some media reports.

PUBLIC REQUEST

Mr. Partington asked that a motion be made to return to public comment during board meetings. Mr. Bates said it is not on the agenda for this meeting but if someone wants to put it on next month's agenda that is fine. Mr. Preston suggested waiting until the next meeting and place it on the agenda for October.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Oros requested a motion to go into executive session for personnel matters to consider the compensation of public employees. Mr. Bates made a motion to go into executive session, Mr. Innocenzi seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Preston	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes

Mr. Innocenzi Yes

Ms. Carnabuci Yes

No item was brought forward. The Board entered Executive Session at 9:36 a.m. and came out of Executive Session at 10:05 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT BOARD MEETING

Mr. Oros announced the next board meeting would be October 17, 2022, at 8:30am.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Preston made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Innocenzi seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved:

Mr. Preston Yes

Ms. Carnabuci Yes

Mr. Bates Yes

Mr. Innocenzi Yes

The meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.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,

John Oros, Executive Director

Howard Bates, President