

**GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT BOARD
OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
November 18, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Geauga Park District Board was held November 18, 2024, at the Meyer Center, Big Creek Park. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. Commissioners Howard Bates, Ray Guarino, Frank Stein and Jolene Carnabuci were present. Mr. Les LaGatta was absent.

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

Park District Employees	GUESTS
John Oros, Executive Director	
Matthew McCue, Deputy Director	
Dennis Sloan, Chief Ranger	
Christine Cychk, HR Manager	
Paul Pira, Park Biologist	
Lucas Beamer, IT Manager	
Sandy Ward, Marketing Manager	
Dawn Sweeney, Finance Manager	
Jessica Alpers, Administrative Assistant	

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ADDENDUM ITEMS

Mr. Oros asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Guarino made a motion to approve the agenda; Ms. Carnabuci seconded the motion. After a roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Guarino	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. LaGatta	Absent
Mr. Stein	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes

APPROVE OR AMEND MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Oros asked for a motion to approve last month’s meeting minutes. Mr. Bates made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 21, 2024, Mr. Guarino seconded the motion. After a roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. LaGatta	Absent
Mr. Stein	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes

PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT – OCTOBER FINANCE

Ms. Dawn Sweeney stated that for the month of October the General Fund had a beginning balance of \$5,501,816 with an ending balance of \$5,219,766. The Land Improvement Fund had a beginning balance of \$1,834,043 with an ending balance of \$1,769,022. Ms. Sweeney shared that all funds combined had an ending balance of \$6,988,788. Mr. Oros asked if there were any questions about the financial statement. No questions were asked.

PRESENTATION OF PAYMENT REPORT – OCTOBER FINANCE

Mr. Oros asked if there were any questions about the payments made in October. Ms. Carnabuci asked Mr. Lucas Beamer about Land Logics Group – Arrow 100 Receiver with Antenna and Battery. Mr. Beamer explained this was a system upgrade to increase the accuracy of the GPS system used by the Natural Resource Management team. Mr. McCue explained the NRM team uses this system when surveying in the field. Mr. Paul Pira stated that the new system pinpoints within 6-8 inches of a noted site rather than feet. Mr. Oros thanked Mr. Beamer for keeping the system updated. Mr. Oros asked if there were any additional questions; no questions were asked.

OLD BUSINESS

Planning Update

Mr. Matt McCue shared the status of existing capital improvements as shared in the October meeting, most have been completed. Mr. McCue said Veterans Legacy Woods Coldwater stream restoration project is the main focus right now, most of the stream work has been completed with plantings happening in Spring 2025 along with boardwalk work. Mr. McCue said he would be addressing the reforestation project in ‘New Business.’

Mr. Oros shared a few photos of The West Woods Bridle Trail expansion and complimented the construction team on their work and how nice it turned out. Mr. Oros encouraged the commissioners to take a walk on the new expansion area to see the work. Mr. Oros also complimented the contractors and park construction teams on their work at Veterans Legacy Woods Coldwater stream restoration.

Mr. Oros asked if there were any questions regarding the planning update. Mr. Bates asked about The West Woods bridge replacement project. Mr. McCue stated updated plans will be submitted to ODOT central office November 25 to be filed and then possibly sent out to bid right after the new year or by mid-February 2025. Mr. McCue shared that the project timeline must start mid-May 2025 and finish by mid-September 2025 due to working *in* the stream. Mr. Oros reminded the commissioners that the utility did not get moved prior to the estimated 2024 construction at The West Woods so the contract was cancelled and the project must go out to bid again.

Mr. Oros asked if there were any questions regarding the Planning Update; no questions were asked.

NEW BUSINESS

2025 Printing & Mailing Services for Activity Guide / Contract Award

Mr. Oros shared the bid results and award for the 2025 Activity Guide printing compiled by Ms. Sandy Ward, Park Marketing Manager; On October 25, 2024, three (3) bids were received for our 2025 Printing & Mailing Services for Activity Guides. Submissions were based on our Invitation to Bid published October 3, 2024. The apparent low bid of \$63,543.70 came from KK Stevens Publishing Company of Astoria, Illinois. However, due to the company’s drastically reduced printing quality as demonstrated by submitted work samples, my recommendation is to instead work with Premier Printing Corporation of Warrensville Heights, Ohio, for its bid of \$76,063.32.

Mr. Oros asked Ms. Ward how many mailings are sent out through the U.S. Post Office. Ms. Ward stated about 42,000 activity guides are sent out with an additional 300 sent to patrons outside Geauga County. Ms. Ward said that the number fluctuates based on the time of year and demand for the guide. Mr. Oros said that the activity guide has been sent out for a number of years and hits most of the residents in Geauga County.

Ms. Carnabuci asked if there was a downloadable version of the activity guide. Ms. Ward shared that a digital version of the activity guide can be found on the park district website every quarter under ‘About GPD’ and is also shared through the park district social media.

Mr. Oros asked for a motion to approve the 2025 contract award for printing and mailing services for the activity guides. Mr. Bates made a motion to approve; Mr. Guarino seconded the motion. After a roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. LaGatta	Absent
Mr. Stein	Yes

Veterans Legacy Woods Cuyahoga River Reforestation Bid Award

Mr. Oros shared the bid award for the Veterans Legacy Woods reforestation project; On October 21st, 2024 (2) proposals for Design/Build Services were received and evaluated for the Veteran’s Legacy Woods Cuyahoga River Reforestation Project. Based on a standardized scoring matrix that included the Guaranteed Maximum Price (G.M.P.) of \$149,860 for this project both firms were evaluated and scored.

Mr. Oros shared that Ms. Kaylee Acres Eclov (Project Manager– CRWP), Meredith McKeon (Park Planner – GPD), and Paul Pira(Park Biologist – GPD) reviewed and discussed each proposal and the approaches to the project. Proposals were evaluated based on quality of approach/plan, qualifications of staff, similar project experience, deliverables, comprehensiveness of solution, and cost (lowest and best). This project had a G.M.P. of \$149,860 for Design and Construction.

Mr. Oros stated that based upon the standardized scoring matrix criteria EnviroScience was selected by all reviewers as the lowest and best proposal. Therefore, it is recommended that the Board of Park Commissioners accept the bid and award a contract to EnviroScience for \$149,767 for the Veteran’s Legacy Cuyahoga River Reforestation Project.

Mr. Oros asked Mr. Paul Pira and Mr. McCue to elaborate on the funding mechanism for this project as grant money was received. Mr. Pira stated this project was funded through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, federal funding and USDA and U.S. Forestry are involved with the project. Mr. Pira shared that there are many projects happening around Ohio right now with invasive species work on the Great Lakes and quite a bit of reforestation

Mr. McCue shared that with the project, it is closer to \$199,000 with a match of funds on this project with the Natural Resource Management Team supplementing the work, post-watering of the plants after they are in and handling some o the initial prep work. Mr. Oros said there were some good funding sources out there for nature restoration.

Mr. Oros asked if there were any questions; no questions were asked.

Mr. Oros asked for a motion to approve the resolution to accept the bid for EnviroScience. Mr. Guarino made a motion to approve; Ms. Carnabuci seconded the motion. After a roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. LaGatta	Absent
Mr. Stein	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes

Resolution 7-2024: Then & Now Purchase Order Great Lakes Crushing

Mr. Oros presented Resolution 7-2024 verifying the 2024 actions of a ‘Then and Now Payment’ for the Holbrook Hollows Park Franklin Street Connection designed and constructed in 2023 and 2024. Mr. Oros stated the original purchase order for this project was closed before the district issued a check for the contractor’s final payment application so a then and now Purchase Order #159-2025 is requested to pay the final pay application and final invoice in the amount of \$27,759.96 to Great Lakes Crushing.

Mr. Oros explained that the auditor’s office requires a ‘then and now’ payment since the purchase order had already been closed, and it is required that it be brought before the commissioners for payment at this time.

Mr. Oros asked for a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Bates made a motion to approve; Mr. Guarino seconded the motion. After a roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Stein	Yes
Mr. LaGatta	Absent
Mr. Bates	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes

2025 Final Budget Draft

Mr. Oros presented the 2025 Final Budget Draft to the commissioners for review with the final vote being held at the December 2024 meeting. Mr. Oros asked Ms. Dawn Sweeney to share a quick summary of the final budget numbers with the commissioners.

Ms. Sweeney stated the park district is estimating the 2025 General Fund Revenue to be \$7,158,503 with

expenditures to be \$6,872,702.07 with an ending fund balance of \$3,452,323.25; 2025 Land Improvement Revenue estimates to be \$536,821 with expenditures to be \$1,205,000 with an ending fund balance of \$1,463,955.20. Ms. Sweeney shared the final (Draft) total revenue for 2025 is estimated at \$12,062,330.52

Mr. Oros said that the above numbers correlate strongly with the tax budget, which is approved by the budget commission, with minor adjustments as we get ready for projects. Mr. Oros also stated that in addition as a supplement we have presented our 5-year capital improvement plan with 2025 projects listed that had discussed in September, running all the way through 2029 projects. Mr. Oros said the commissioners have a month to review the budgets and ask questions with a final vote being in December.

Mr. Bates mentioned that he noticed a decrease in the Grounds & Facilities budget. Mr. McCue shared that in the last few years, with large equipment purchases, the budget has reduced as no new or additional equipment needs to be purchased in 2025.

Mr. Oros asked if there were any questions; no questions were asked.

Surplus Property

Mr. Oros presented surplus property items for auction: Da-Lite 5'x6' Projector Screen, Kimbell Upright Piano, 250 linear feet of assorted reclaimed wormy Chestnut boards; for trade-in: Kubota K7473A Tilt Grading Bucket and for donations: 'Nature's Neighborhoods' exhibit.

Mr. Guarino asked what happens if the piano doesn't sell, does the park donate it? Ms. Sweeney stated it was originally listed at \$100 on www.govdeals.com but has since dropped the price to \$25 when relisted. Mr. Oros said we would wait a bit and then possibly find a donation option since the pianos (both at The West Woods and Meyer Center) were donated to the park district. Ms. Carnabuci shared she would make a few inquiries to see if anyone wanted a piano.

Mr. Oros asked for a motion to approve items sent to auction and donation. Mr. Bates made a motion to approve; Mr. Guarino seconded the motion. After a roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Guarino	Yes
Mr. Stein	Yes
Mr. LaGatta	Absent
Mr. Bates	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes

COMMISSIONERS TIME

Mr. Oros shared the following information for the month of October:

The West Woods Nature Center was the place to be on November 1 and 2 as we hosted our annual Holly Days Artisan Boutique. Forty-eight vendors, onsite food trucks, and live hammered dulcimer music greeted more than 1,800 visitors over Friday evening and Saturday. Shoppers also patronized youth vendors in our Mistletoe Market. The variety of unique handmade, Nature-themed items each year is what brings people back and fuels some great word of mouth. Another job well done by Special Events Coordinator Holly Sauder and West Operations staff.

Also at The West Woods, a new trail is ready to explore! Tulip Trail is named for the second largest tulip tree in Ohio, which it passes by. The tree is also among the tallest trees in the state, standing about 175 feet tall with a crown spread of 89.15 feet and circumference of 181.2 inches. Tulip Trail also has a nice mix of mature forest and early successional forest and transects a beautiful pine tree plantation. To find the start of the trail, park at Affelder House and walk about 7/10 of a mile along the Falls Trail and a portion of the Affelder Trail to the trailhead.

And finally, out of the Naturalist Department in October, 786 fifth graders completed the schoolyard exploration portion of Nature Scopes, and naturalists held a total of 121 programs serving 3,412 park patrons, including 1,010 attending programs at Observatory Park.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Oros asked for a motion to move into Executive Session to discuss a pending court action and to consider 2025 compensation of public employees. Mr. Guarino made a motion to approve; Ms. Carnabuci seconded the motion. After a roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Stein	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. LaGatta	Absent

Executive Session began 8:56am

Executive Session concluded at 9:35am at which point attendees returned to the meeting. No items were brought forward from Executive Session.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT BOARD MEETING: Mr. Oros announced the next meeting is Monday, December 16, 2024 at 8:30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Oros asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Guarino made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Carnabuci seconded the motion and after a roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. LaGatta	Absent
Mr. Stein	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 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

Ray Guarino, President