

**GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT BOARD
OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
October 21, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Geauga Park District Board was held October 21, 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	Todd Hicks
Matthew McCue, Deputy Director	
Dennis Sloan, Chief Ranger	
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.

- Ms. Carnabuci Yes
- Mr. LaGatta Absent
- Mr. Stein Yes
- Mr. Bates Yes
- Mr. Guarino 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 September 16, 2024, Mr. Guarino 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

PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT – AUGUST FINANCE

Ms. Dawn Sweeney stated that for the month of September the General Fund had a beginning balance of \$5,587,972 with an ending balance of \$5,501,816. The Land Improvement Fund had a beginning balance of \$1,317,388 with an ending balance of \$1,834,043. Ms. Sweeney shared that all funds combined had an ending balance of \$7,335,859 Mr. Oros asked if there were any questions about the financial statement. No questions were asked.

PRESENTATION OF PAYMENT REPORT – AUGUST FINANCE

Mr. Oros asked if there were any questions about the payments made in September; no questions were asked.

OLD BUSINESS

Planning Update

Mr. Matt McCue shared the status of existing capital improvements as shared in the September meeting, most being completed by this Fall. Mr. McCue said Veterans Legacy Woods Coldwater stream restoration is still being worked on, working on. Mr. McCue stated that construction crews finished up at The West Woods with trail

improvements on the Gallo property. Construction crews will be moving over to the primitive trails and conservation sites at Veterans Legacy Woods for the rest of Fall. Mr. McCue shared that the utility lines at The West Woods have been moved in preparation for bridge work. Mr. McCue showed pictures of the trails and boardwalks that connect into the Affelder trail as it moved into the Gallo property (about a 1-mile loop trail) Mr. McCue shared updated pictures and maps of the cold-water stream restoration and beaver pond. Mr. Guarino asked if the restoration project will be completed this year. Mr. McCue stated the seeding and planting will be completed this Fall, but live planting and reforestation work would be done in Spring 2025.

NEW BUSINESS

2025 Healthcare

Mr. Oros shared with the Commissioners the 2025 Healthcare rates for Geauga County Employees as prepared by HR Manager, Ms. Christine Cycyk. Mr. Oros stated the 2025 contribution rates increased from 2024 by 8.6% with the 2025 Geauga Park District employer contribution estimated to increase by \$62,297.16 annually. Mr. Oros shared that this annual increase is based on our current employee enrollment; the 2025 individual employee contribution will increase annually by \$240.00 for those who contribute to a family plan, and \$84.00 for those who contribute to a single plan. Mr. Oros said in 2025 we are requesting the Park Board consider the same plans & contribution rates as the County.

Mr. Bates asked what the 2024 contribution is for single and families. Mr. Oros shared that a family plan is estimated at \$164 currently but more detailed information could be shared with the Commissioners at a later date. Mr. Bates wanted to clarify that the rates would be increasing for all staff contributions in 2025 and Mr. Oros confirmed rates would go up. Mr. Oros also shared that most of the Park Staff participates with a 'Wellness Program' which impacts the contribution amounts.

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

Resolution 6-2024: Ohio Department of Transportation Easement

RESOLUTION APPROVING OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT) PERPETUAL EASEMENT TO CONSTRUCT AND MAINTAIN A CHANNEL ABUTTING GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT BEAVER CREEK PRESERVE WHEREAS, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) is preparing to replace a culvert on US Route 322, Mayfield Road, in Munson Township Ohio abutting Geauga Park District Beaver Creek Preserve; WHEREAS, ODOT has made a Notice of Intent to Acquire a 0.007-acre perpetual easement to construct and maintain a channel to accommodate stated culvert replacement; WHEREAS, ODOT made a Good Faith Offer of Three Hundred Dollar (\$300.00), Two Hundred Ninety-Five Dollars Eighty Cents (\$295.80) for the Real Property to be Acquired, and Four Dollars Twenty Cents (\$4.20) for a temporary construction easement; WHEREAS, the perpetual easement is defined in the Easement Document (ODOT RE 208); and Exhibit A, Perpetual Easement to Construct and Maintain a Channel (RX 278 CH), and includes a surveyor's description of the premises; WHEREAS, ODOT has included a Temporary Easement (RX 286 T) for the purpose of performing the work necessary to complete construction and grading for 12 months from date of entry to the project location; WHEREAS, ODOT has provided a project description with project plans, and the Geauga Park District Planning Department has provided a site map, both showing project locations.

Mr. Oros asked if there were any questions. Mr. Guarino questioned if ODOT maintains the easement, Mr. McCue said yes, ODOT takes care of the area right beyond the right-of-way based on the new culvert.

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.

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

Surplus Property

Mr. Oros presented surplus property items for donation to a similar conservation organization; Building Blocks of Geauga exhibit; Water Cycle exhibit; Water In Water Out exhibit; Display Walls. Mr. Oros also stated there is a 1971 Story & Clark Upright Piano at the Big Creek Meyer Center being sent to auction.

Mr. Oros asked for a motion to approve items sent to auction and donation. 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. LaGatta	Absent
Mr. Bates	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes

COMMISSIONERS TIME

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

Gauga Park District's 3rd annual SPACE RACE at Observatory Park was a huge success, completely selling out with an attendance of 310 participants! Held Saturday, October 5, this timed event encourages people to run, jog or walk as many laps of the Planetary Trail (0.85 miles) as they can over two hours in the evening, from 4 to 6 p.m. Everyone gets a finishers medal, a T-shirt, and a ribbon reflecting laps completed - which, at the Space Race, equates to travel through outer space. For instance, one lap gets you to Mercury, two to Venus, five to the asteroid belt, etc., all the way to "Interstellar" at 13.6 miles or 16 laps, which is just over a half marathon. Thank you to Special Events Coordinator Holly Sauder and Recreation Specialist Trevor Wearstler for their work on this successful event.

More news from Observatory Park: all-new updated interpretive signs have now been installed. This was a great collaboration between the Naturalist, Marketing, Planning and Operations departments to replace the park's original signs, damaged by the elements, and continue to help visitors learn about the planets and weather systems as they make their way around the trails. Thanks to the Foundation for Geauga Parks for the funding that allowed us to accomplish this goal.

During the month of September, our Naturalist Department held a total of 84 programs serving 2,127 park patrons.

Mr. Oros also shared the State Auditor's Office issued a Certificate of Outstanding Achievement in open and transparent government for the 2021-2022 audit period. Geauga Park District received 3 stars based on their star rating system for implementing best practices for public record requests.

Mr. Bates asked about 2025 and future reservations to assist patrons who wish to book in January and February dates. Mr. Bates stated that he has had patrons ask if January and February reservations could be opened sooner than December so they can better plan events instead of only one- or two-month lead time. Mr. Bates stated changing the opening date could be explored for next year to open possibly in October 2025. Mr. Guarino stated he thought possibly opening for reservations for two years might be an option. Mr. Bates and Mr. Guarino both stated they did not know the process for reservations but would like a different reservation opening system explored. Mr. Oros said he would review the system and provide information to see if changing the reservation opening system would be feasible.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

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

Executive Session began 8:49am

Executive Session concluded at 9:11am 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, November 18, 2024 at 8:30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 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