

**GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT BOARD
OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
April 21, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Geauga Park District Board was held April 21, 2025, at the Meyer Center, Big Creek Park. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. Commissioners Howard Bates, Jolene Carnabuci, Frank Stein and Ray Guarino 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
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. Bates made a motion to approve the agenda; Mr. Guarino 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 again asked for a motion to approve last month's meeting minutes. Mr. Guarino made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from March 25, 2025. 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

PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT – MARCH FINANCE

Ms. Dawn Sweeney stated that for the month of March 2025 the General Fund had a beginning balance of \$5,011,083 with an ending balance of \$6,034,100. The Land Improvement Fund had a beginning balance of \$1,539,938 with an ending balance of \$1,869,846. Ms. Sweeney shared that all funds combined had an ending balance of \$7,903,946. Mr. Oros asked if there were any questions about the financial statement; no questions were asked.

PRESENTATION OF PAYMENT REPORT – MARCH FINANCE

Mr. Oros asked if there were any questions about the payments made in March 2025; no questions were asked.

OLD BUSINESS

Planning Update

Mr. McCue shared that The West Woods bridge project in conjunction with ODOT would begin June 9; Veterans Legacy Woods a contractor is moving forward with additional plantings and reforestation. Mr. Bates asked how involved ODOT would be with the bridge replacement and Mr. McCue stated ODOT is managing and overseeing the project for the day-to-day work. Mr. McCue shared that ODOT funded about 95% of the project.

NEW BUSINESS

2026-2030 Capital Plan

Mr. McCue shared a brief presentation about the Capitol Improvement Plan for the next 5 years. Mr. McCue explained how projects are prioritized and the criteria used for assessing capital improvements. Mr. McCue shared that the capital improvement plan includes major improvements within the park district including infrastructure and facilities as well as large maintenance and restoration projects. Mr. McCue conveyed that over the last 20 years the park district has nearly doubled the amount of acreage it manages to approximately 10,500 acres and has opened access to 13 new parks and made a variety of improvements to the park districts properties and holdings through capital improvements. Mr. Guarino asked about restroom improvements for the parks. Mr. Oros shared that the Park District has a vision of adding or improving existing restrooms to include running water and flush toilets as a priority for patrons in the future. Mr. McCue said the capital plan does include improvements to the restrooms at Deep Woods Lodge & Swine Creek Lodge in the next five years.

Resolution 6 – 2025 / Requesting the County Auditor to certify to the Geauga Park District the total tax valuation of the Geauga Park District and the dollar amount of revenue that would be generated by a specific number of mills for a renewal levy.

Mr. Oros presented the resolution for a levy renewal; the levy is at a rate of .7 mills for one dollar of taxable value, for a period of 20 years and is renewal of an existing .7 mills levy first voted on in 1985. Mr. Oros asked that this levy be placed on the ballot at the election held on November 4, 2025 and be first levied in tax year 2026 with collection in 2027.

Mr. Oros asked for a motion to approve this resolution. 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. Guarino	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Stein	Yes

Resolution 7 – 2025 / Requesting the County Auditor to certify to the Geauga Park District the total tax valuation of the Geauga Park District and the dollar amount of revenue that would be generated by a specific number of mills for a renewal levy with an increase.

Mr. Oros presented the resolution for a levy renewal with an increase; the levy is at a rate of 1.2 mills for one dollar of taxable value, for a period of 20 years and is renewal of an existing .7 mills levy first voted on in 1985, being an increase of .5 mills. Mr. Oros asked that this levy renewal with increase be placed on the ballot at the election held on November 4, 2025 and be first levied in tax year 2026 with collection in 2027.

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

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

Resolution 8 – 2025 / Requesting the County Auditor to certify to the Geauga Park District the total tax valuation of the Geauga Park District and the dollar amount of revenue that would be generated by a specific number of mills for a replacement levy.

Mr. Oros presented the resolution for a replacement levy; the levy is at a rate of .7 mills for one dollar of taxable value, for a period of 20 years and would replace an existing .7 mills levy first voted on in 1985. Mr. Oros asked that this levy be placed on the ballot at the election held on November 4, 2025 and be first levied in tax year 2026 with collection in 2027.

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

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

Informed Consent of Conflict of Interest, Village of South Russell and Geauga Park District

Mr. Oros shared the agenda item, informed consent of conflict of interest, Village of South Russell and Geauga Park District. The District was asked to conduct a prescribed burn on South Russell property with our prescribed fire manager Paul Pira, Park Biologist. Mr. Oros explained, when conducting prescribed burns for a third party, the District seeks a waiver of liability. The District law firm Thrasher, Dinsmore & Dolan represents both Geauga Park District and the Village of South Russell. Mr. Hicks explained the letter from Ms. Matheney cites the conflict of interest and asks for the Board to consent to Ms. Matheney's representation of both parties. Mr. Hicks did not foresee any conflict with representing both parties. Mr. Oros asked for a motion to acknowledge the conflict of interest and consent to legal representation.

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. Stein	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. LaGatta	Absent

Surplus Property

Mr. Oros presented one item to be sent to scrap: Overhead vehicle warning lights & associated electronics (items are defective)

Mr. Oros asked for a motion to approve these items for scrap. Mr. Guarino made a motion to approve the surplus, Mr. Stein seconded the motion. After a roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

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

COMMISSIONERS TIME

Mr. Oros shared the following information with the board from March:

- Ranger Department: On April 3 and 4, Ranger Brian Kerr attended a class hosted by Axon at Timberlake Police Department to become certified as a Taser instructor. Ranger Kerr can now officially certify Taser users, allowing our Ranger Department to train in-house, saving the Park District money, and ensuring our rangers are regularly certified in this crucial, non-lethal use-of-force tool.
- Naturalist Department: Observatory Park was determined the best place to view the March 13 total lunar eclipse by 250 people who visited between midnight and 2:30 AM. "Astro-Nat" Chris Mentrek was present during those early-morning hours to host, interpret, and answer any questions.
- Chief Naturalist John Kolar: During various recent Bald Eagle van trips and hikes, participants have now viewed nine of the 13 Bald Eagle nests in Geauga County, a few of which reside in our parks.
- Naturalists held a total of 113 programs during the month of March with total attendance of 3,209.
- Construction Department: Mr. Isaiah Shipman shared that the Geauga Park District placed 2nd for Amber Maple Syrup at the Annual Maple Festival. Congratulations to the team in charge of syrup production at Swine Creek Reservation!

- The Geauga Park District would like to recognize and thank Ms. Jolene Carnabuci, who has resigned from the Board of Commissioners, for her support and dedication over the past 3+ years. Mr. Oros presented Ms. Carnabuci with a cutting board made by park staff member, Jerome Tvergyak, a long-time woodworker.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Oros asked if there were any issues to be brought to Executive Session; no issues were brought forward.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT BOARD MEETING: Mr. Oros announced the next meeting is Monday, May 19, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. at the Big Creek Meyer Center.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 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