

**GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT BOARD
OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
April 18, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Geauga Park District Board was held April 18, 2022 at the Meyer Center, Big Creek Park. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. Commissioners Howard Bates, Pat Preston, Ray Guarino and Mario Innocenzi were present.

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

Park District Employees	GUESTS
John Oros, Executive Director	
Sheryl Hatridge, Administrative Service Manager	
Jennifer Pae, Director of Finance	
Christine Ward, HR Manager	
Dennis Sloan, Chief Ranger	
Matt McCue, Deputy Director	

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

Mr. Preston	Yes
Mr. Innocenzi	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Mr. Bates requested a motion to approve the March 21, 2022, regular board meeting minutes. Mr. Preston seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Guarino	Yes
Mr. Innocenzi	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Preston	Yes

PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Ms. Pae presented the March 2022 financial statement.

PRESENTATION OF VOUCHERS

Mr. Oros presented vouchers from March 2022. Mr. Bates made a motion to approve all vouchers except ARMS and Preston. Mr. Innocenzi seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Preston	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes
Mr. Innocenzi	Yes

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

Mr. Guarino	Yes
Mr. Innocenzi	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Preston	Abstained

Mr. Preston made a motion to approve vouchers for ARMS Trucking. Mr. Innocenzi seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Preston	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes
Mr. Innocenzi	Yes
Mr. Bates	Abstained

OLD BUSINESS

FINANCE WORK SESSION

Ms. Pae discussed park district expenditures and presented state auditor data from 1998 to 2018 which have been audited by the state, and 2019-2020 is currently underway. She added that 2022 amounts are the budgeted amounts passed by the board in December 2021. Ms. Pae shared salaries, benefits and operations have been flat the past 10 years; however, land acquisition and capital improvements vary greatly. Since 1998, the park district has acquired over \$26M in land/acreage for expansion of the parks and has made over \$55M in capital improvements. She added since 2012 there has been no average annual growth in salary and benefits. Operating costs have also remained flat over the past 10 years, but capital projects have fluctuated. Ms. Pae shared property tax revenues and explained that as time goes on the property tax revenues (not including donations or grant money) do not cover park district costs, so it is imperative that the park district has grants and donations. Mr. Preston asked about how the \$11M budget in 2022 will be paid, and Ms. Pae responded that the prior fund balances have enough for this, however by 2023 the park district cannot sustain. Ms. Pae said she highly doubts the park will spend \$11M, perhaps more likely \$9-10M. She stated that if we are not made whole by the state in our appeal for the amount the budget commission took away, the park will have to go back to the voters since it can't sustain what was cut by the budget commission. Mr. Preston asked where things were at with the appeal/legal case and if this data could be shared since it is the most clear-cut example he has seen. Legal counsel said the case is currently pending. Mr. Preston also pointed out that going back 22 years in 2000, the park had spent less than \$6M at that time. He mentioned spending has been about \$1.2M on Operations and \$4M on wages, and with capital improvements of \$1M to \$2M, nearly \$7M is needed per year. He suggested a cover letter demonstrating this need, however Ms. Pae explained up until June of 2021 the county auditor was the park's fiscal agent, so they have this information and knew this. Mr. Oros added that part of what was so shocking about the decision of the budget commission on August 16, 2021 to remove the funds, was that the capital improvement plan was presented expressing the will and intention of the voters and donors. Mr. Oros also mentioned The West Woods and Observatory Park donor campaigns, individual donors, grants written by staff, and opening several parks that were previously inaccessible to residents with the first example being Claridon Woodlands, demonstrating that the park district has done what voters and taxpayers have wanted. Mr. Preston stated he met with Mr. Keith Farber, Auditor of State, who said he would like to get involved. Mr. Preston also requested that if something is written up to please copy Mr. Farber.

NEW BUSINESS

PLANNING AND OPERATIONS UPDATE

Mr. McCue updated the board regarding current projects, as well as some carry over from last year, such as Beaver Creek which has some plantings to be finished up. Mr. Preston asked if the park could hold off on The West Woods roof for another year. Mr. McCue said he would not recommend holding off and that it would end up costing more since the roof is 20 years old and has issues. Mr. Oros also added since it is one of our largest facilities, he would not recommend holding off another year.

CONTRACT AWARD FOR THE WEST WOODS NATURE CENTER – ROOFING PROJECT

Mr. Oros requested the board approve a bid received on March 30, 2022 for \$343,925 submitted by A-Star to replace the roof at The West Woods Nature Center. The bid is within the amount budgeted amount of \$625,000. Mr. Preston made a motion to approve the bid, Mr. Guarino seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Innocenzi	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Preston	Yes

Mr. Guarino Yes

AMENDMENT TO CURRENT BARGAINING AGREEMENT WITH THE FOP

Mr. Oros requested the board approve an amendment to the current bargaining agreement with the Fraternal Order of Police union to increase wages 3% effective the first pay in January 2022, limit unexcused sick leave to 32 hours per calendar year, and the board may require a doctor’s note after 3 continuous workdays out of work. Mr. Preston made a motion to approve the amendment with Mr. Guarino seconding the motion. After a roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Preston Yes
Mr. Innocenzi Yes
Mr. Bates Yes
Mr. Guarino Yes

COMMISSIONER TIME

Mr. Oros shared staff highlights:

- o Maple Sugaring has wrapped up with 550 trees tapped, 8,200 gallons of sap, and staff made 143 gallons of syrup
- o Naturalists hosted 74 programs in March, serving 2,600 people and of those 1,456 were maple sugaring programs
- o Andy Avram was hired as a Naturalist & Volunteer Coordinator, he previously worked for Lake Metroparks. Holly Sauder is now the Special Events Coordinator
- o Astro-Nat Chris Mentrek worked with volunteers from the Chagrin Valley Astronomical Society to perform the 5-year cleaning of the big mirror on the telescope Nassau at Observatory Park.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mr. Oros requested a motion to go into executive session at 8:53am for matters related to land purchase. Mr. Bates approved the motion with Mr. Innocenzi seconding the motion. After roll-call vote, all approved, motion passed.

Mr. Preston Yes
Mr. Innocenzi Yes
Mr. Bates Yes
Mr. Guarino Yes

Mr. Bates made a motion to authorize John Oros, Executive Director to negotiate and acquire an appraisal a 32-acre parcel of property in Newbury Township adjacent to The Rookery. Mr. Preston seconded the motion. After roll-call vote, all approved, motion passed.

Mr. Guarino Yes
Mr. Innocenzi Yes
Mr. Preston Yes
Mr. Bates Yes

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:53 a.m. The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:09 a.m.

Mr. Oros shared information regarding the Ranger vehicles and said in 2022 two vehicles are scheduled for replacement. They will be replaced with Ford Ranger crew cab trucks. Mr. Bates asked Mr. Preston what the optimum mileage would be to trade them off, and Mr. Preston explained they are not well equipped and the interior is very basic.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Preston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:15am, Mr. Guarino seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved:

Mr. Preston Yes
Mr. Innocenzi Yes
Mr. Bates Yes

Mr. Guarino

Yes

The next board meeting will be held Monday, May 16, 2022 at 8:30am at the Meyer Center, Big Creek Park.

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