

**GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT BOARD  
OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
June 20, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Geauga Park District Board was held June 20, 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 Jolene Carnabuci were present.

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

<b>Park District Employees</b>	<b>GUESTS</b>
John Oros, Executive Director	
Sheryl Hatridge, Administrative Service Manager	
Jennifer Pae, Treasurer and Fiscal Officer	
Christine Ward, HR Manager	
Dennis Sloan, Chief Ranger	
Matthew McCue, Deputy Director	

**INTRODUCTION OF A NEW BOARD MEMBER**

Mr. Oros introduced new board member Ms. Jolene Carnabuci. She expressed her excitement to serve on the board and has been a resident of Geauga County for twenty years.

**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. Bates	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Mr. Oros requested a motion to approve the May 16th, 2022, regular board meeting minutes. Mr. Preston made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Guarino seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Guarino	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Abstained
Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Preston	Yes

**PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

Ms. Pae presented the financials through May 31<sup>st</sup> which includes the Land Acquisition Fund passed by the board last meeting. Mr. Preston asked for clarification regarding how to read the document. Ms. Pae explained this shows the revenues to date less expenditures which leaves the fund balance to date. Mr. Preston then asked the difference between the general fund ending balance versus all funds. Ms. Pae stated that the general fund balance is the major fund that most expenses come from, while all of the funds together represent the all funds balance. Mr. Preston asked about the origins of the money in the land improvement fund and Ms. Pae responded that the funds have come from multiple sources over the years but primarily transfers out of the general fund, donations and grants that came out of specific projects, and it is the major capital improvement fund. Furthermore, Ms. Pae clarified that the land acquisition fund is solely for the purchase of land which came from the wetland mitigation credits received.

**PRESENTATION OF VOUCHERS**

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

Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Preston	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes

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

Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes
Mr. Preston	Yes
Mr. Bates	Abstained

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

Mr. Bates	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes
Mr. Preston	Abstained

**OLD BUSINESS**

**FINANCE WORK SESSION**

Finance Work Session (See Resolution NO.5-2022-2023 Tax Budget)

**NEW BUSINESS**

**RESOLUTION NO.4-2022 PROPOSED BYLAW CHANGES**

Mr. Oros presented proposed bylaw changes. Mr. Preston made a motion to discuss the proposed bylaw changes. Mr. Bates seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Preston	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes

Ms. Pae presented proposed changes to the bylaws to better reflect the fiscal operations of the Geauga Park District. The proposed bylaw changes consist of the elimination of approving monthly vouchers since the board has been approving payments already made. A monthly financial report per article 3, paragraph 3, sentence 2 of the current bylaws will be provided, along with a listing of monthly vendor payments with year to date totals beginning with the July 2022 meeting to further enhance the report.

Furthermore, current bylaws have the Executive Director responsible for fiscal practices, proposed changes in Articles 3 and 11 now relegate these responsibilities to the Director of Finance. Article 3 states that only the executive director has the authority to execute legal documents on behalf of the board. The proposed change in article 3 permits both the executive director and the director of finance to execute legal documents. Further, proposed changes to Articles 13 and 17 permit the director of finance to certify availability of funds for professional services (Article 13) as well as the compensation of Geauga Park District positions in terms of services or contracts (Article 17).

Mr. Oros requested a motion to approve proposed bylaw changes. Mr. Preston made a motion to approve bylaw changes. Mr. Bates seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

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

Ms. Carnabuci                      Yes

Mr. Preston added several comments in support of Ms. Pae and the financial practices being implemented at the park district.

**RESOLUTION NO.5-2022-2023 TAX BUDGET**

Ms. Pae presented the 2023 tax budget requirements that must be passed by July 15, 2022 and submitted to the county auditor on or before July 20, 2022 per ORC 5705.28. Ms. Pae added this is separate from the annual appropriations budget that sets expenditure limits. The tax budget process establishes need of taxing authorities which is then presented to the county tax budget commission. Therefore, 2.6 mills voters approved to support Geauga Park District are collected by the county auditor based on the property values they assigned and are distributed to the park district in the following year. Ms. Pae presented schedules A and B which are the 2023 property tax collection estimates provided by the county auditor’s office to prepare the tax budget document which must include actual revenue and expenses from the previous two years, estimates for the current fiscal year, as well as projected budget figures for 2023. After the 2023 tax resolution is approved by the park district Board of Commissioners it will be forwarded to the county budget commission along with supporting documents in preparation for the scheduled hearing on August 16, 2022. Mr. Preston asked several questions and noted we should be well prepared for the meeting in August and Ms. Pae assured him that the Park District will be fully prepared. Mr. Oros noted the total collection is based on the will of the voters at 2.6 mills.

Mr. Guarino made a motion to approve the Resolution No.5 2022-2023 Tax Budget, Mr. Preston seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Preston                      Yes  
Mr. Bates                        Yes  
Ms. Carnabuci                Yes  
Mr. Guarino                    Yes

**GRANTS STATUS UPDATE**

Ms. Pae presented grant application and project updates and informed the board they will be provided regular updates to the list of various grants. She explained that often grants are one-time revenues with many constraints attached. She added many are reimbursed, so funds must be fronted and will be reimbursed after a project is finished, which may take years. Ms. Pae noted that grants are very competitive and cannot be depended on as a reliable source of funding annually for park projects, especially those for routine upkeep and maintenance. Mr. Preston mentioned that the County Commissioners have received COVID-19 grants and this could possibly be explored for park projects.

**PLANNING AND OPERATIONS UPDATE**

Mr. McCue presented the newest member of the Planning department, Amanda Mumford, a recent graduate from Kent State University with a master’s degree in Landscape Architecture. Mr. McCue shared that ground was broken for the Pollinator Playground funded through the Geauga Foundation for Parks at Frohring Meadows. He added Beaver Creek is nearly complete and Veterans Legacy Woods is set to be dedicated on June 30, 2022 after minor finishing touches, and The West Woods roof project will begin in August.

**VETERANS LEGACY WOODS-REQUEST TO ADVERTISE TO BID**

Mr. Oros presented a request to advertise to bid for Veterans Legacy Woods for the replacement of the HVAC system. Mr. McCue stated that one unit is non-functional, and the current location is difficult to access. Further, Mr. McCue added that the current plan is to move the mechanical room to the basement area and to put in two new units with new duct and electrical work. Mr. Preston stated he would like to look at the plans.

Mr. Preston made a motion to approve the request to advertise to bid for the HVAC system for Veterans Legacy Woods, Mr. Guarino seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

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

Mr. Guarino Yes

**W.C. BEST- REQUEST TO ADVERTISE TO BID**

Mr. Oros presented a request to advertise to bid for the asphalt resurfacing and overlay of Walter C. Best park. Mr. McCue stated that he received an estimate of approximately \$110,000.00 and explained that it was both for repair areas and an overlay of the lots.

Mr. Guarino made a motion to approve the request to advertise W.C. Best to bid, Mr. Preston seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Bates Yes  
Mr. Guarino Yes  
Ms. Carnabuci Yes  
Mr. Preston Yes

**THE WEST WOODS ENTRY BRIDGE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AGREEMENT**

Mr. McCue explained that the bridge entry was built in 2002 with wood timbers and steel, and approximately two years ago the county engineer’s office flagged some repairs that were done internally. It was recommended the bridge needed replaced within 3 to 5 years. The park is looking at two options, a box culvert, or a truss style bridge. The style chosen will be dependent on the hydraulic analysis which looks at the stream levels and flow rates after storms.

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

Mr. Bates Yes  
Mr. Preston Yes  
Mr. Guarino Yes  
Ms. Carnabuci Yes

**BREDE PROPERTY MASTER PLAN**

Mr. McCue presented a master plan for the Brede property consisting of 60 acres of mainly wetlands, which is part of the Mahoning Watershed, with 1/3 being hard wood forest. The property was acquired in 2003 and is situated in the southeast corner of Troy township. The plan proposes an aggregate access drive with parking accessible from Route 700, boardwalk viewing of ponds, a primitive hiking path, and a potential small area for picnicking done by the in-house construction staff. Mr. McCue explained that they intend to pursue grant funding for this project for the estimated costs of \$100,000, and recently held a neighborhood meeting at Chickagami Park regarding this project where he received positive feedback. Mr. Preston asked a question regarding the purpose of changing the lake into a stream. Mr. Pira responded that it was both a water quality issue and that the dam was failing.

**RESOLUTION NO. 6-2022-RESOLUTION OF AUTHORIZATION FOR ODNR NATUREWORKS FUNDING**

Mr. McCue presented the Resolution of Authorization for ODNR NatureWorks Funding intended to be used for the Brede property.

Mr. Preston made a motion to approve the authorization for ODNR NatureWorks funding. Mr. Guarino seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Ms. Carnabuci Yes  
Mr. Bates Yes  
Mr. Preston Yes  
Mr. Guarino Yes

**BIO BLITZ PRESENTATION**

Mr. Paul Pira gave a presentation on the importance of biodiversity regarding protecting and connecting with nature. Mr. Pira discussed the extinction of species and the environmental impact humans have on the environment. Mr. Pira discussed the Bio-Blitz event the park district hosted on the first Saturday of June at

Observatory Park. The Bio-Blitz event started in 2003 and is a 24-hour collaborative event between scientists and specialists all over Ohio to document species and plants within park property and thus far there have been over 1,000 species documented. Mr. Pira emphasized the importance of the Bio-Blitz event in relation to biodiversity and understanding its value within both the world and our parks.

#### **SURPLUS PROPERTY**

Mr. Oros presented items to be declared surplus property. Mr. Preston made a motion to approve items as surplus property, Mr. Guarino seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Preston	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes

#### **COMMISSIONERS TIME**

Mr. Oros informed the board that the park district received a \$375,000.00 grant award through House Bill 687 towards the expansion of Holbrook Hollows allowing expansion for opportunities to connect to the community through walking, hiking, jogging and biking possibilities through a larger regional network of trails that should be completed in the next few years. It will also assist in including a small access drive with parking area, restrooms, nature-based playgrounds, picnic shelters, trails, and wetland boardwalks for nature viewing. Mr. Oros gave special thanks to staff, government representatives, and McCaulley & Company.

Mr. Oros shared that the Naturalist department held 119 programs in May, serving 2,881 patrons. Among those, NatureScopes held at the Rookery had over 900 5<sup>th</sup> grade attendees.

Mr. Oros shared that Naturalist Chris Mentrek hosted a special program for the total lunar eclipse with 315 attendees.

Mr. Oros suggested naming the lodge at Veterans Legacy Woods Tribute Lodge after discussions with staff.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Mr. Oros requested a motion to go into executive session for matters related to the purchase of property. Mr. Bates made a motion to go into executive session, Mr. Preston seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

Mr. Preston	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes

Prior to voting, Mr. Pira shared his evaluation of the property adjacent to the Rookery, and found that much of the watershed of this property drains into one of the streams that has native brook trout which is an endangered species. He emphasized the importance of protecting it.

Mr. Preston made a motion to allow Executive Director, John Oros to work with legal counsel to execute a purchase and sale agreement for 32 acres of property adjacent to the Rookery with Mr. Richard C. Brubaker for \$249,900.00, Mr. Guarino seconded the motion. After roll-call vote, all approved.

Mr. Preston	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes
Ms. Carnabuci	Yes

The Board entered Executive Session at 9:54 a.m. to discuss the purchase of property. The Board came out of Executive Session at 10:05 a.m.

The next board meeting will be July 18, 2022 at 8:30 a.m.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Ms. Carnabuci	Yes
Mr. Preston	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes

The meeting was adjourned at 10:07 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,

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John Oros, Executive Director

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Howard Bates, President