

**GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT BOARD
OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
June 20, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Geauga Park District Board was held June 20, 2023, at the Meyer Center, Big Creek Park. The meeting was called to order at 8:32 a.m. Commissioners Howard Bates, Jolene Carnabuci, Frank Stein Ray Guarino and Les LaGatta were present.

Mr. Bates 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	
Dawn Sweeney, Fiscal Manager	
Christine Ward, HR Manager	
Chief Dennis Sloan, Ranger	
Paul Pira, Park Biologist	
Sandy Ward, Marketing Manager	
Linda Gilbert, Naturalist	
Lucas Beamer, Interim IT 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	Yes
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. LaGatta made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from May 15, 2023, Mr. Guarino seconded the motion. After a roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

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

PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT – MAY FINANCE

Ms. Sweeney stated the beginning balance for the General Fund was \$3,975,575 with an ending balance of \$3,412,509 as of May 31, 2023. The Capital Land Improvement Fund beginning balance was \$2,826,918. with an ending balance of \$2,782,550. The Capital Reserve Fund ending balance was still \$89,190. The total balance ending May 31, 2023, is \$6,284,249.

Mr. Oros asked if there were any questions regarding May’s statement. No questions were asked.

PRESENTATION OF PAYMENT REPORT – MAY FINANCE

Mr. Oros asked if there were any questions regarding May’s paid bills. Ms. Carnabuci questioned if the liability insurance policy premium expense totaling \$94,816.34 had been or will be renegotiated. Mr. Oros stated that occasionally the policy is renegotiated. Mr. Oros detailed that Geauga Park District previously used the Ohio Plan, but in recent years switched to Public Entity Pools of Ohio. Mr. Oros explained that there is a plan to send a request for proposal this fall to potentially consider other vendors for insurance in 2024. Ms. Carnabuci asked if

there was a plan outside of the Ohio Plan or PEP (Public Entity Pools of Ohio). Mr. Oros stated that he would check in with other park districts to see what vendors they are utilizing.

Ms. Carnabuci asked if grant status initiatives had been skipped. Mr. Oros assured that nothing had changed regarding grant initiatives, but there was a copy of the grant initiatives which accompanied the Monthly Financial Statement showcasing sources of forthcoming revenue.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution No. 8-2023 – Ranger Larry McKinnon: Chief Dennis Sloan presented the resolution of appreciation recognizing the long and distinguished career of Larry McKinnon. Ranger McKinnon began his career at Geauga Park District on June 3rd, 1997, and honorably served the residents of Geauga County for 26 years. Mr. Oros thanked and congratulated Ranger Larry McKinnon on his career and service at the Geauga Park District.

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

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

Planning Update

Mr. McCue shared updates regarding several ongoing Capitol projects. Mr. McCue said that work on Veteran’s Legacy Woods Phase II interior work is nearing completion, and there will be work done on trails with in-house construction crews later this summer. Mr. McCue stated that the HVAC project is also near completion, but they are waiting for one more heat pump unit to be installed. Mr. McCue stated that the other ongoing projects like Swine Creek and Holbrook Hollows are in the initial stages and have been issued notice of awards. Mr. McCue stated that construction started this week on the Brede Property (Troy Wetlands). Mr. McCue detailed that there are several other projects with Bid Awards to be discussed later in the meeting. Mr. McCue said that a notice to proceed with asphalt repairs at Observatory Park has been issued. Mr. McCue asked if there were any questions regarding the planning update. No questions were asked.

Meyer Center – Roofing Project Contract Awards

Mr. McCue shared the Meyer Center Roofing Project received two bids on May 31st, with attached memo from Daniel McConnaughy detailing the bid results. Mr. McCue stated that based on the information provided within the bid documents Lindsey Construction and Design had fulfilled the requirements to execute the project in accordance with the contract documents. Mr. McCue recommended that the Park Commissioners accept the bid from Lindsey Construction for a total of \$62,850.00. Mr. McCue stated the bid process is complete because the bid result is within \$130,000 estimate cost with no issues revealed after checking the company references, and searching the Ohio Auditor Findings for Recovery Database yielded no results. Mr. Oros asked if there were any questions. No questions were asked.

Mr. Oros asked for a motion to accept and award Lindsey Construction and Design bid for the project. Mr. Bates made a motion to pass the resolution; Mr. Guarino 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	Yes

Veterans Legacy Woods - Cold Water Stream Restoration Contract Award

Mr. McCue stated that on March 29, 2023 three bids for design and building services were received and evaluated from River Reach Construction, Marks Construction/Davey Resource Group, and BioHabitats respectively for this project. Mr. McCue detailed that the companies were interviewed and discussed by a team of people including the Deputy Director of Chagrin River Watershed Protection, Kimberly Brewster-Shefleton, GPD Planner Amanda Krakower, GPD Park Biologist Paul Pira and GPD Deputy Director Matthew McCue. Mr. McCue stated that the proposals were evaluated and scored based on quality of the approach to the project and the staff, as well as previous similar experience, comprehensiveness, and cost effectiveness. Mr. McCue stated that River Reach Construction scored an 85.6, Marks Construction/Davey Resource Group scored an 83.3, and Biohabitats scored an 80.8 based on the outlined criterion. Mr. McCue recommended that the Park Commissioners accept the bid from River Reach Construction for a total of \$1,099,162. Mr. McCue detailed that this recommendation complete because the price was within the Gross Maximum Price of \$1,107,662.00 and no issues were revealed after checking their references, and searching the Ohio Auditor Findings for Recovery Database yielded no results. Mr. Oros asked if there were any questions. No questions were asked.

Mr. Oros asked Paul Pira to speak briefly about the successes that Geauga Park District has had in working with River Reach Construction in other stream restoration projects. Mr. Pira spoke about the successes of the stream restoration project located at Sunnybrook Preserve as well as the success of the Springbrook Brook Trout Stream restoration project. Mr. Pira stated that the staff at River Reach employes specialized people who have done phenomenal work recognized statewide. Mr. Oros asked Paul Pira to detail specific people that have seen and praised the stream restoration at Springbrook. Mr. Pira said that the Director of Department of Natural Resources, Mary Mertz, along with the Ohio Division of Wildlife Chief Kendra Wecker were impressed after viewing Springbrook. Mr. Pira shared that people have been paying attention to Geauga County and the conservation work being done.

Mr. Guarino asked how payment for this project would work; if it would occurs in draws or another approach. Mr. McCue explained that because the project is a design and review process, River Reach would handle everything in terms of design and construction. Mr. McCue further noted that as we start to develop plans and review them, River Reach will submit payment applications for the stage they are at in the process. Mr. McCue stated that the project is funded through a WRRSP loan which allows the Park District to pay quarterly as River Reach submits their expense reports. Mr. McCue stated that typically there is a 30%, 60%, % and 100% design review, and construction would potentially start later this year or early next spring. Ms. Carnabuci asked what made River Reach Construction distinct from the other companies interviewed. Mr. McCue said that while the Park District has worked with all three companies in the past and very well respected, River Reach had spent a lot of time working in the field and on designing their solution which included alternative solutions to the restoration within budget.

Mr. Oros asked Paul Pira to speak about the goals of this project. Mr. Pira shared that Veteran's Legacy Woods has a ground water spring source that bubbles up that meets up with a warm water stream and ditch waters which dilutes the quality of the water. Mr. Pira shared that the plan is to disconnect the waterways and make it cold to reintroduce endangered Brook Trout native to Geauga County. Mr. Pira explained that a second goal is to restore some of the warm water stream and remove two ponds to restore those waterways. Mr. Pira noted that there may be potential to add wetlands to either side of the waterways. Mr. Pira also shared that another goal was reforestation alongside removal of the asphalt cart paths, and in place of that potentially a primitive trail around the reconstructed waterways that allows for educational opportunities. Ms. Carnabuci questioned if this was done anywhere else in the country. Mr. Pira stated that there are not many streams made from scratch, with one in Kentucky utilized to house trout. Mr. Oros stated that historically we had reconstructed two streams with the help of Chagrin River Watershed Partners at Springbrook and later at Woodybrook, both housing the native Brook Trout.

Mr. Oros asked for a motion to accept and award River Reach Construction bid for the project. Mr. Bates made a motion to pass the resolution; Ms. 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	Yes
Mr. Stein	Yes

Resolution No. 9-2023 – ODNR NatureWorks Capital Project Fund

Mr. Oros shared a resolution to establish a separate capital projects fund for the grant money received from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources NatureWorks Local Assistance Grant to be utilized for the Brede Property project; known as the NatureWorks Brede Property. Mr. Oros stated this fund would be used for establishing trails and constructing a parking space along with other enhancements. Mr. Oros detailed that this fund would be utilized to account for the grant monies expended on the project and cannot exceed the amount of \$16,409.00.

Mr. Oros asked for a motion to establish the NatureWorks Capital Project Fund. Mr. Guarino made a motion to approve; Mr. LaGatta seconded the motion. After a roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

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

Resolution No. 10-2023 – 2023 Revised Budget Resolution

Mr. Oros read a resolution to adopt the Revised 2023 Appropriations. Mr. Oros shared that the revised appropriations are in accordance with the legal level of budgetary control as per Ohio Revised Code 5705.38. Mr. Oros detailed that this code also requires the budget appropriation must be classified in a context that sets forth separately the amounts appropriated for each office, department, and division as well as the amount appropriated for personal services. Mr. Oros elaborated that the budget format is set up as follows: By Fund, By Department, Personal Services (salaried & benefits) and all other non-personal services expenditures. Mr. Oros stated that this resolution reflects a transfer from the 2016 Capital Reserve Fund to the General Fund in accordance with Resolution 7-2023 passed in May of this year. Mr. Oros asked if there were any questions. No questions were asked.

Mr. Oros asked for a motion to pass the 2023 Revised Budget Resolution. 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. LaGatta	Yes
Mr. Stein	Yes
Mr. Bates	Yes
Mr. Guarino	Yes

Resolution No. 11-2023 – 2024 Tax Budget

Mr. Oros stated that in accordance with Ohio Revised Code 5705.28 the Park District must pass their tax budget annually by the 15th of July to establish the need of the organization which is presented to the County Auditor on or before July 20th. This legal requirement is separate from the annual appropriation resolution (i.e. the budget) which sets expenditure limits via the legal level of budgetary control and is typically passed by the end of each fiscal year (December 31) for Geauga park District). Once the 2024 Tax Budget Resolution is approved by the Geauga 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 22, 2023. Mr. Oros stated that all

submitted tax budgets must present actual revenue and expenses for the previous two years (2021 and 2022), estimates for the current fiscal year (2023), as well as projected budget figures for 2024.

Mr. Oros presented the 2024 Tax Budget to the board along with supporting documentation and requested Ms. Sweeney review the main points of the 2024 revenue and expenditures. Mr. Oros shared that the County Budget Commission office asked for the budget to be submitted in the Uniform Accounting Network Software (UAN) which is why the accompanying papers were formatted differently from last month. Ms. Sweeney stated that the anticipated revenue for the General Fund is \$7,573,575 with expected expenditures being \$7,221,763 and an ending fund balance of \$1,971,507 Ms. Sweeney said that the Land Improvement Fund expected revenue is \$913,255 with expected expenditures being \$499,860 and the ending fund balance being \$1,304,966 Ms. Sweeney noted that the Special Revenue Funds 2901 the Retirement Reserve, 2902 the K9 Fund, and 4901 the 2016 Capital Reserve Fund have all been closed and therefore have a \$0.00 balance. Mr. Oros detailed that there was a Schedule A and Schedule B included based on need, alongside a five-year capital improvement plan and construction project update which will be submitted to the County Auditor and Budget Commission respectively.

Mr. Oros asked for a motion to pass the 2024 Tax Budget. Mr. Guarino made a motion to approve; Ms. Carnabuci seconded the motion. After a roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved.

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

SURPLUS PROPERTY

Mr. Oros requested a motion to approve surplus property. The Park District would send a 2000 Honda North Star 6000W Generator, Lot of miscellaneous bolts, lag screws & nails, Lot of various office supplies and a 2007 Leader 18-gallon water jacketed canning tank to auction. Mr. Guarino made a motion to approve the remaining surplus. 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	Yes

NATURALIST PRESENTATION

Ms. Linda Gilbert, a Geauga Park District Naturalist of 18 years, shared a presentation on important dragonflies and damselflies in the Geauga Park District. Ms. Gilbert detailed that the important portions of a dragonfly's life cycle can be split into a submarine (nymph) stage and helicopter (winged) stage. Ms. Gilbert stated that the nymph stage takes place in the water which can range in duration of a month to up to six years depending on the species, but at some point, they will crawl out and begin to fly. Ms. Gilbert shared that the preferred environment for dragonflies is almost any type of wetland and can be indicators of healthy and unique habitats. Ms. Gilbert stated that the parks provide critical environments for specific and potentially endangered dragonflies and damselflies. Ms. Gilbert said that both dragonflies and damselflies rely on the pristine waterways, protection of part of the Cuyahoga River through tributaries, and the protection of Geauga County wetlands to survive. Ms. Gilbert detailed that Park District properties such as Burton Wetlands, Welton's Gorge, The West Woods, Pinebrook Preserve, Veteran's Legacy Woods, Headwaters, Bass Lake Preserve, and Lake Kelso among others provide critical environmental protection to endangered or critically threatened species meaning that the protection of these habitats is key to preserving the food web and environmental biodiversity. Ms. Gilbert highlighted a multitude of species during the presentation like the Lilypad Forktail, spotted at Burton Wetlands in 2015 which was a county record, has now moved up from an endangered species to a species of concern. Ms. Gilbert shared that we have also been invaded by an endangered species known as the Four Spotted Skimmer that previously only had thirty-three historical record sightings in fourteen Ohio counties, and in the years 1996,

1979, and 2009 sightings declined from thirteen sightings across seven counties in 1996 to four sightings in both 1979 and 2009. Ms. Gilbert stated that since June of this year there have been countless sightings of this endangered species in park properties which will take several years to truly understand what is occurring. Ms. Gilbert urged the importance of recognizing, protecting, and promoting these unique environmental niches for dragonflies and damselflies as well as an indicator of adequate water quality. Ms. Gilbert asked if there were any questions. Mr. LaGatta asked if we are being invaded by an endangered species, will they hybridize with other dragonflies. Ms. Gilbert responded that they hybridizing behavior has only been seen in River Cruisers and the other dragonflies are mostly male and have been engaging in harassing behavior rather than mating behavior. Ms. Carnabuci asked how difficult it is to find a nymph in the water and what the timeline on finding one might be. Ms. Gilbert said that you can find a nymph almost any time with a dip net and looking in covered areas in the water, but the specialized nymphs are harder to find unless you know where to locate them. Mr. Pira inquired about the importance of dragonflies and damselflies. Ms. Gilbert stated that they are predators throughout their entire lives that eat flies, mosquitoes, and each other while also being food sources for ducks and birds, they are a foundational part of the food web. Mr. Oros inquired about the ideal survey season for adult dragonflies and damselflies. Ms. Gilbert said that it was dependent on the year; she has seen some on the wing as early as March and as late as November, but the summer months tend to be the peak observation period.

COMMISSIONERS TIME

Mr. Oros shared the following staff and department updates from the month of May 2023:

- 28th Nature Writing contest had 222 entries of all ages and genres which is the largest participation the park has had and congratulated the winners in each category.
- Nature Scopes at The Rookery finished in May with 10 schools graduating 805 students in the program.
- May 20th had 'Touch A Truck' with 3 GPD departments participating (Operations, Rangers, and Naturalists) hosting 803 attendees.
- Boat rentals began at Headwaters and the High Ropes course opened at Claridon Woodlands.
- The Naturalist Department held a total of 117 programs serving 3,459 patrons.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Oros stated there were no items to be brought forward to executive session.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT BOARD MEETING: Mr. Oros announced the next meeting is Monday, July 17, 2023, at 8:30am.

ADJOURNMENT

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.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 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

Howard Bates, President