

**REGULAR MEETING****April 17, 2025**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of Great Parks of Hamilton County was held on this day, 1:00 p.m., at 10245 Winton Road, Cincinnati, OH 45231.

Board President Melissa Wegman opened the meeting and led the Board, staff, and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Present were Commissioners: Wegman, Burwinkel, Lavery, Thompson.  
 Staff: Palmeter, Henninger, Collins, Carleton, DeJesus, Messerschmitt, Broughton Murray, Rahe, Snow, Tracy, Lambing, Hodge, Nevius, Volk, Miller, Coler, Flynn, Riddle, Davis, Dickensheets, Anklan, Herbert, Bacher, Roselle, Bruce, Reddy, Hake, Swigart, Hale, Ference  
 Guests: Peter Osborne, Alana Tucker, Jens Sutmoller, Scott Weikel

**GENERAL**

1. PUBLIC COMMENTS: No one requested to address the Board.
2. AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS:

Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter notified the Board of the following:

- Chief of Conservation & Parks Jason Rahe introduced newly promoted employee Regan Tracy, Park Supervisor, East Region.
- Chief of Guest Experiences Rachel Messerschmitt introduced newly promoted employee Rachel Hodge, Director of Guest Experiences, Central Region.
- Chief of Guest Experiences Rachel Messerschmitt introduced newly promoted employee Scott Nevius, Clubhouse Manager, Little Miami Golf Center.
- Ranger Chief Scott Snow introduced newly promoted employee McCoy Lambing, Ranger Sergeant, Central Region.
- Jason Rahe and Rachel Messerschmitt graduated from the NRPA Directors School in March 2025. They received special recognition for leading fundraising efforts for the Edroy Jenkins Scholarship fund.
- Stephanie Bacher, Sustainability Coordinator, was featured in the Movers and Makers Cincinnati magazine in The Notables section. The Notables section for the month of April recognizes individuals within the recycling and reuse space who are making a difference within Greater Cincinnati's ecosystem.
- GovDeals recognized Great Parks with a Certificate of Appreciation for reaching \$1,000,000 in assets sold and providing exemplary service and the highest returns to our customers.
- On Tuesday, April 8, Great Parks accepted a \$4,805 check from Cohen Recycling for collecting 16,015 pounds of holiday lights that were recycled this year, representing the highest total in the 12-year holiday lights recycling program.

Ms. Wegman noted the success of all recycling events and thanked the staff for their efforts to protect the park facilities from flooding.

3. NEXT BOARD MEETING DATES:

Thursday	May 15, 2025	1:00 p.m.	Winton Centre
Wednesday	June 18, 2025	1:00 p.m.	Winton Centre

**ACTION**

4. RESOLUTION #3833 – BILLS & PAYROLL RESOLUTION: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the Bills & Payroll Resolution to the Board. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Thompson, the Board approved the Bills & Payroll Resolution. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Mr. Burwinkel – Aye, Ms. Laverty – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye.
5. RESOLUTION #3834 – THEN & NOW RESOLUTION: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the Then and Now Resolution to the Board. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Wegman, the Board approved the Then & Now Resolution as presented. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Ms. Laverty – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye, Mr. Burwinkel – Aye.
6. RESOLUTION #3835 – REQUEST FOR FUNDS FROM THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT) AND DESIGNATION OF PROJECTS FOR OHIO PARK DISTRICTS ROADWAY FUND FY 2026–2027 THROUGH THE OHIO PARKS & RECREATION ASSOCIATION (OPRA): Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the resolution to the Board. Mr. Burwinkel asked if the budgeted amount was the same as the previous biennium. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the funding process and funding amounts. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Burwinkel, the Board approved the resolution authorizing Great Parks of Hamilton County to participate in the Request of Funds from the Ohio Department of Transportation for the Ohio Park Districts Roadwork Fund FY 2026–2027. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye, Mr. Burwinkel – Aye, Ms. Laverty – Aye.
7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Upon motion duly made by Thompson, seconded by Laverty, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Final Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of March 20, 2025.

8. BID TAB – WINTON WOODS BOATHOUSE TEMPORARY RELOCATION: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter, Architectural Design Project Manager Melissa Reddy, and Chief of Guest Experiences Rachel Messerschmitt presented the bid to the Board. Mr. Thompson asked about pre-bid meeting conversations. Mr. Burwinkel inquired about adjusting the revenue and temporary operations during the repair. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the pre-bid meeting attendance, temporary rental facilities, scope of the project, and project completion date. Upon motion duly made by Lavery, seconded by Thompson, and unanimously carried, the Board awarded a contract in the amount of \$119,341 to Robco Mfg Inc. (dba Alumadock Marine Structures) for the Winton Woods Boathouse Temporary Relocation project.
9. CAPITAL PURCHASE – MEAN GREEN EVO ELECTRIC MOWERS: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Chief of Conservation & Parks Jason Rahe presented the capital purchase to the Board. Ms. Wegman asked about battery life. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the mower's battery life and reliability. Upon motion duly made by Lavery, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the purchase of two Mean Green EVO Electric Mowers from Generac Power Systems, Inc. The final purchase amount will be specified in Sourcewell's contract pricing and in line with current appropriations.
10. PROFESSIONAL DESIGN SERVICES CONTRACT – WERK ROAD PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Architectural Design Project Manager Melissa Reddy presented the professional services contract to the Board. Mr. Thompson asked about the master plan and public input consultants. Mr. Burwinkel complimented the master plan and the site's cultural history and asked about the timeline for guest opportunities to start using the park's new amenities. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the design of the project, the phased construction, and the construction priorities. Upon motion duly made by Lavery, seconded by Burwinkel, and unanimously carried, the Board awarded a professional design services contract in the amount of \$862,085 to emersion DESIGN for the Werk Road Property Improvements project.
11. PROFESSIONAL DESIGN SERVICES CONTRACT – ENGINEERING PARTNER FOR PROFESSIONAL DESIGN AND CONSULTING SERVICES: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Chief of Planning Janet Murray presented the professional design services contract to the Board. Ms. Lavery asked about how projects were assigned. Mr. Thompson inquired about the timeline for the work and the rebid. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the success of using a partner engineer, the timeframe for the work, and the process of selecting a partner in mid-2025. Upon motion duly made by Burwinkel, seconded by Thompson, and unanimously carried, the Board authorized the staff to increase the contract amount

for Strand Associates, Inc. from \$2,000,000 to \$2,500,000 for the Engineering Partner for Professional Design and Consulting Services.

### **MONITORING REPORTS**

12. **FINANCIAL CONDITION & ACTIVITIES:** Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins and Chief of Guest Experiences Rachel Messerschmitt presented the Financial Condition & Activities report to the Board. Ms. Lavery asked if market volatility has impacted investments. Mr. Burwinkel inquired about the capital improvements budget and commented that the public will see the work on their assets. Mr. Thompson thanked the staff for updating the report to note operating expenses data. Ms. Lavery commented that our losses are good compared to how others fare in the market. Ms. Wegman asked about the sales breakdown and projections for the e-commerce site. Ms. Lavery asked about the liquidation of the Burchenal fund stocks. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter revenue and expenditures, stock investments, and the e-commerce site. After a thorough discussion, the Board determined the report to be reasonable and acceptable. The Board then ordered the report filed for the record.
13. **TREATMENT OF STAFF & VOLUNTEERS:** Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter, Chief of Human Resources Molly deJesus, and Director of Volunteer Engagement Kris Roselle presented the Treatment of Staff & Volunteers report to the Board. Ms. Wegman asked if the handbook was a hard or digital copy. Mr. Burwinkel asked about opportunities for improvement from the survey and the percentages of staff participation. Mr. Burwinkel complimented the staff on these numbers. Ms. Wegman asked about the anonymity of staff surveys. Mr. Thompson asked if part-time staff are invited to all-staff meetings. Ms. Wegman noted the generational diversity and the dedication of volunteers. Ms. Lavery pointed out that with so many volunteer options, Great Parks does a terrific job recruiting and retaining volunteers. Mr. Thompson asked about Legacy status. Mr. Burwinkel stated that he appreciates the Acorn newsletter and communication with volunteers. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the perks of volunteering and employee survey data. After a thorough discussion, the Board determined the report to be reasonable and acceptable. The Board then ordered the report filed for the record.

### **GENERAL REPORTS**

14. **PHILANTHROPY DIVISION REPORT:** Chief of Philanthropy Tom Carleton presented the Philanthropy Division report to the Board. Ms. Wegman offered kudos to the staff for partnering with sponsors. Mr. Burwinkel and Ms. Lavery offered congratulations on the report. After a thorough discussion, the Board determined the report to be reasonable and acceptable. The Board then ordered the report filed for the record.

15. PURCHASING CARD COMPLIANCE OFFICER: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the Purchasing Card Compliance Officer report to the Board, reporting compliance. Ms. Wegman thanked the Compliance Officer for the report. The Board ordered the report filed for the record.
16. FUTURE FUNDING UPDATE: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the Future Funding Update report to the Board. The report focused on the 2016 Levy Summary and Funding, the 2021 Levy Summary, and an overview of the next steps, which will be presented at the May Board meeting. The Board reviewed the renewal levy scenario presented by the Chief Executive Officer. Ms. Wegman noted attendance at the Nature Center at The Summit. Mr. Thompson asked about the visitation comparison. Ms. Wegman pointed out that the trend of visitation is increasing and that it is an honor to be part of the organization and celebrate the pride and passion of staff and volunteers. Ms. Wegman stated it was good to review these items before upcoming decisions on the renewal levy. After a thorough discussion, the Board determined the report to be reasonable and acceptable. The Board ordered the report filed for the record.

#### **ACTION**

17. RESOLUTION #3836 – HAMILTON COUNTY AUDITOR'S CERTIFICATION: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the Resolution to the Board. Mr. Thompson noted that if a renewal is pursued, it was good to have had the prior presentation. Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter stated that a press release is scheduled to be sent out after the meeting, pending Board action. Upon motion duly made by Lavery, seconded by Burwinkel, the Board approved the necessary resolution for certification of a 1.0 mill renewal levy in support of the current and future funding needs of the park district. This certification will provide the amount of funds generated by the millage amount for consideration at the May 15, 2025, Regular Board Meeting. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Mr. Thompson – Aye, Mr. Burwinkel – Aye, Ms. Lavery – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A motion was made by Lavery and seconded by Thompson to go into Executive Session at 2:45 p.m. to consider the sale or other disposition of property. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Mr. Thompson – Aye, Mr. Burwinkel – Aye, Ms. Lavery – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye.

Following the Executive Session, a motion was made by Lavery and seconded by Burwinkel to reconvene the Regular Meeting at 3:00 p.m. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Mr. Burwinkel – Aye, Ms. Lavery – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye.

18. LAND ITEM: Upon motion duly made by Lavery, seconded by Burwinkel, and unanimously carried, the Board authorized the CEO and his designees to negotiate with Duke Energy and to execute the necessary documents for three public utility permanent easements in the west region of Hamilton County.

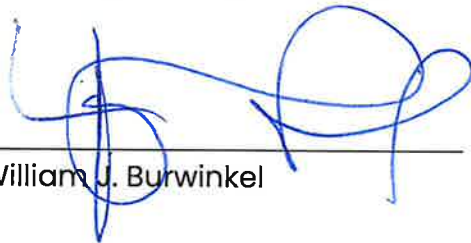
**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further matters to come before the Board, a motion was made by Thompson, seconded by Lavery, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 3:05 p.m.

Board of Park Commissioners  
Great Parks of Hamilton County



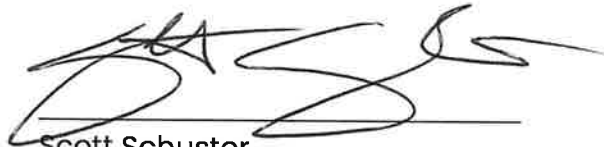
Melissa Wegman, President



William J. Burwinkel



Caren Lavery

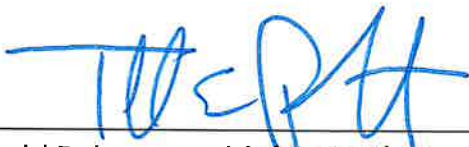


Scott Schuster



Marcus Thompson

ATTEST:



Todd Palmeter, Chief Executive Officer