

REGULAR MEETING**May 15, 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, Schuster, Thompson
 Staff: Palmeter, Henninger, Collins, Carleton, deJesus, Doellman, Messerschmitt, Broughton
 Murray, Rahe, Snow, Curliss, Derbyshire, Christner, Rosenberger, Herbert, Anklan, Senefeld,
 Bell, Dickensheets, Reddy, Ference
 Guests: Tony Rosiello, Peter Osborne, Alana Tucker, Thomas Norris, Mike Woeste, Jens
 Sutmoller

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 Marketing and Brand Strategy Rachel Doellman introduced new employee Todd Curliss, Director of Events.
- Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins introduced new employee Ryan Derbyshire, Computer Systems Specialist.
- Chief of Conservation & Parks Jason Rahe introduced new employee Gerd Christner, Facilities Manager.
- Chief of Guest Experiences Rachel Messerschmitt introduced new employee Chloe Rosenberg, Internal Content Coordinator.
- In April 2025, Jason Dickensheets earned his Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) certification from the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA).
- Great Parks received the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the 2025 budget.
- Director of Finance Kathy Volk and Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins received the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) Certificate of Recognition for Budget Preparation.

Mr. Thompson asked about the nature of the GFOA awards. Ms. Wegman welcomed new employees and congratulated staff on the awards. Mr. Burwinkel recognized the great work by the staff at a recent event in Miami Whitewater Forest.

3. NEXT BOARD MEETING DATES:

Wednesday	June 18, 2025	1:00 p.m.	Winton Centre
Thursday	July 17, 2025	1:00 p.m.	Winton Centre

ACTION

4. RESOLUTION #3838 – BILLS & PAYROLL RESOLUTION: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmetter presented the Bills & Payroll Resolution to the Board. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Wegman, the Board approved the Bills & Payroll Resolution. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Mr. Burwinkel – Aye, Ms. Laverty – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye.

5. RESOLUTION #3839 – RESOLUTION OF AUTHORIZATION TO EXECUTE AND FILE AN APPLICATION THROUGH THE STATE OF OHIO NATUREWORKS GRANT PROGRAM: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmetter and Architectural Design Project Manager Melissa Reddy presented the Resolution to the Board. The Chief Executive Officer stated that Great Parks has received a \$1.25 million State of Ohio Capital Budget Prioritization grant for this project. Mr. Burwinkel inquired when parking would be available during the project's phasing. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the funding sources and project construction phases. Upon motion duly made by Thompson, seconded by Laverty, the Board approved Resolution #3839 authorizing the Chief Executive Officer and his designees to apply and execute an application with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources under the NatureWorks Grant Program. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Ms. Laverty – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye, Mr. Burwinkel – Aye.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Ms. Laverty asked about the procedure for approval of the minutes from two Board meetings in April. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Final Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of April 17, 2025. Mr. Schuster abstained from voting on this motion.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Upon motion duly made by Schuster, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Final Minutes of the Special Board Meeting of April 24, 2025. Mr. Thompson abstained from voting on this motion.

8. CONSTRUCTION MANAGER AT RISK SERVICES CONTRACT – SHARON WOODS HARBOR REVITALIZATION: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Chief of Planning Janet Broughton Murray presented the bid to the Board. Mr. Thompson asked about the Construction Manager at Risk selection process and the architecture firm used for the project. Ms. Wegman stated that she was excited about the project. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the construction manager at risk process, upcoming project plans, and the architecture firm for the project. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Thompson, and unanimously carried, the Board awarded a contract in the amount of \$115,759 for the pre-construction phase of Construction Manager at Risk Services to HGC Construction for the Sharon Woods Harbor Revitalization project. A Guaranteed Maximum Price contract amendment will be presented to the Board for approval ahead of the construction phase commencing.

MONITORING REPORTS

9. ENDS PRIORITY 2: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Chief of Guest Experiences Rachel Messerschmitt presented the Ends Priority 2 report to the Board. Mr. Thompson asked about comparing the attendance numbers of the Total Eclipse in the Park with the Fairytale Festival and the Outdoor Adventure Expo. Mr. Thompson offered the staff kudos for the coordination needed to execute Total Eclipse of the Park. Ms. Laverty asked if this was the largest event in our history. Ms. Wegman noted that attendees are still talking positively about this event and noted how efficiently the event was run, including parking, and complimented the Rangers on parking. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on attendance for Great Parks Events, Great Parks' alignment with the National Parks, and Great Parks team efforts to ensure the success of our events. 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

10. PARK VISITATION & TRAIL USAGE REPORT: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Chief of Guest Experiences Rachel Messerschmitt presented the report to the Board. Mr. Schuster asked about how visitors were counted. Ms. Wegman inquired about the impact of the Sharon Woods playground on the number of Sharon Woods visits. Ms. Laverty asked about trail use at Sharon Woods during lake dredging and trail construction. Mr. Schuster asked about revenue from welcome booths and the correlation with visitation numbers. Ms. Wegman asked about mountain bike trail numbers and mountain bike events at Mitchell Memorial Forest. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the 2025 first-quarter trail usage and park visitation, staffing of the welcome booths, and the future event for the opening of the pump track at Mitchell Memorial Forest. After a thorough

discussion, the Board determined the report to be reasonable and acceptable. The Board then ordered the report to be filed for the record.

11. **ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY:** Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins presented the 2024 Economic Impact Study report to the Board. Ms. Laverty noted the impressive increase from \$16.8 million in 2015 to \$47.0 million in 2024 in new money brought into Hamilton County. Mr. Thompson asked about benchmarks and if the University of Cincinnati Economic Center had comparisons of data to other similar agencies. Mr. Burwinkel noted that our expenditures on current capital projects may not be reflected in the study. He asked if the University of Cincinnati could forecast future economic impacts. Ms. Laverty asked how the consultant defined economic activity. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the Economic Impact Study. The Chief Executive Officer stated that the Board would receive a copy of the full report when finalized. After a thorough discussion, the Board determined the report to be reasonable and acceptable. The Board then ordered the report filed for the record.
12. **FUTURE FUNDING UPDATE:** Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the Future Funding Update report to the Board. He noted that the capital campaign fund is 44% complete, and the Farmer Foundation match of \$2 million has been met. The report focused on the overview of the 2016 and 2021 levies, the 2016 Levy Summary, and the 2021 Levy Summary. The Board reviewed the renewal levy scenario that the Chief Executive Officer presented. The Board then ordered the report filed for the record.
13. **CERTIFICATE OF ESTIMATED PROPERTY TAX REVENUE:** Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins presented the Hamilton County Auditor's Certificate of Estimated Property Tax Revenue dated May 1, 2025, to the Board, noting that the levy is estimated to produce \$20,265,255 annually. Ms. Laverty asked about recent tax-related issues in Hamilton County and the State of Ohio. Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter noted that he has spent considerable time speaking with legislators on various issues, including those that impact levies. After a thorough discussion, the Board determined the report to be reasonable and acceptable. The Board then ordered the report filed for the record.

ACTION

14. LEVY RESOLUTION: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the resolution to the Board. Mr. Schuster asked about the language used in the resolution and ballot compared to previous levies. Mr. Thompson asked about communication strategies. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the levy ballot language and the timing of the levy. The Chief Executive Officer noted planned messaging if the resolution was approved. Upon a motion duly made by Lavery, seconded by Wegman, the Board approved Resolution #3840 – A Resolution to Submit the Question of the Renewal of a 1.0 Mill Tax Levy. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye, Mr. Burwinkel – Aye, Ms. Lavery – Aye.

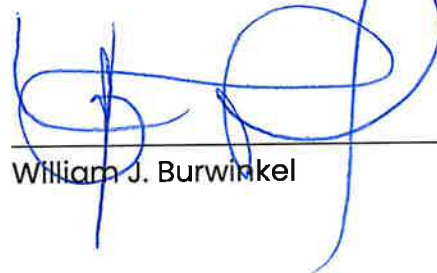
ADJOURNMENT

There being no further matters to come before the Board, a motion was made by Schuster, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried to adjourn the special meeting at 2:07 p.m.

Board of Park Commissioners
Great Parks of Hamilton County



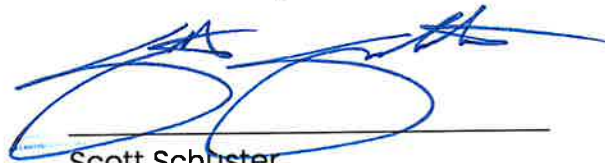
Melissa Wegman, President



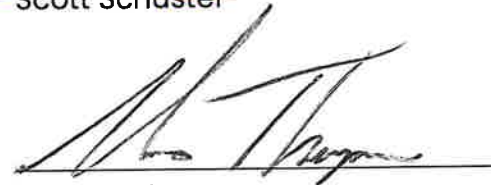
William J. Burwinkel



Caren Laverty



Scott Schuster



Marcus Thompson

ATTEST:



Todd Palmeter, Chief Executive Officer