

**REGULAR MEETING****January 16, 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. Mr. Thompson was absent at roll call but arrived at 1:55 p.m.

Staff: Palmeto, Henninger, Collins, Carleton, Broughton Murray, Doellman, Messerschmitt, Rahe, Snow, Moore, Hudson, Fightmaster-Sink, Sides, Short, Dickensheets, Bruce, Herbert, Anklan, Coler, Flynn, Miller, Volk, Roselle, Masella, Hake, Ference

Guests: Tony Rosiello, Kendall Bales

**GENERAL**

1. PUBLIC COMMENTS: No one requested to address the Board.

2. AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS:

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

- Chief of Conservation & Parks Jason Rahe introduced newly promoted employee Jerrod Moore, Conservation & Parks Technician, Sharon Woods.
- Chief of Conservation & Parks Jason Rahe introduced newly promoted employee Alex Hudson, Conservation & Parks Technician, Sharon Woods.
- Ranger Chief Scott Snow introduced new employee Alina Fightmaster-Sink, Ranger Clerk.
- Chief of Guest Experiences Rachel Messerschmitt introduced newly promoted employee Scott Sides, Clubhouse Manager, Sharon Woods.
- Commissioner Marcus Thompson was sworn in for a third term by Judge Winkler on January 13, 2024.
- The Finance Department received the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for Great Parks' annual financial report for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. This is the 16<sup>th</sup> year in a row that Great Parks has won this award.
- Director of Finance Kathy Volk and Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins received the Government Finance Officers Association's Award of Financial Reporting Achievement. This award is presented to the individuals designed as instrumental in the governmental unit achieving the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

Ms. Wegman attended the Winter Hike last Saturday and offered the staff kudos for a great event. She saw an immature eagle while hiking. Ms. Wegman congratulated the Finance team for their hard work and for receiving the awards.

Mr. Burwinkel congratulated Mr. Thompson on his reappointment to the Board for a third term and noted the length of his term of service on the Board. He stated that he was excited to serve; he cited the Great Parks mission, thanked the community for their support of Great Parks, and thanked the donors for supporting the capital campaign.

Ms. Lavery noted that she completed her fourth year on the Board and thanked Mr. Burwinkel for his heartfelt words. Ms. Lavery expressed that she was excited to continue serving on the Board.

3. NEXT BOARD MEETING DATES:

|          |                   |           |               |
|----------|-------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Thursday | February 20, 2025 | 1:00 p.m. | Winton Centre |
| Thursday | March 20, 2025    | 1:00 p.m. | Winton Centre |

**ACTION**

4. RESOLUTION #3828– BILLS & PAYROLL RESOLUTION: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmetter and Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins presented the Bills & Payroll Resolution to the Board. The Board submitted two payment items – Prus Construction for various projects at Sharon Woods and the number of voided checks on this report. Ms. Lavery also inquired about the total cost of the Sharon Woods Playground project. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the scope of the payment items, the total cost of the destination playground, and the reason for the void checks. Upon motion duly made by Lavery, seconded by Wegman, the Board approved the Bills & Payroll Resolution. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Mr. Burwinkel – Aye, Ms. Lavery – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Schuster – Aye.
5. RESOLUTION #3829 – BUDGET ADJUSTMENT: Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins presented the Budget Adjustment Resolution to the Board. Upon motion duly made by Schuster, seconded by Burwinkel, the Board approved the budget adjustment as presented in the resolution. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Ms. Lavery – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Burwinkel – Aye.
6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Upon motion duly made by Lavery, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Final Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of December 19, 2024. Mr. Schuster abstained from voting on this motion.

7. BID TAB – WINTON WOODS LOCUST DELL CULVERT REPLACEMENT: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Park Engineer Ron Masella presented the bid to the Board. Ms. Lavery asked about the width of the culvert. Mr. Schuster and Ms. Lavery stated that they appreciated the photos. Mr. Burwinkel asked about the engineer's estimate process, how many engineers were on staff, and how consultant engineers were utilized. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the scope of the project, the Glenwood Gardens to Winton Woods trail alignment, and the use of our partner engineering consultants. Upon motion duly made by Lavery, seconded by Wegman, the Board awarded a contract in the amount of \$796,500.00 to Rack and Ballauer Excavating Company, Inc. for the Locust Dell Culvert Replacement project.
8. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT – DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION PROJECT – PHASE 2: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins presented the professional services contract to the Board. Ms. Wegman inquired about special event mobile point-of-sale software improvements, wi-fi connections, and the registration process. Ms. Lavery inquired about training for the new systems. Mr. Schuster asked about the timeline and implementation of the acquisition of the digital platform. Mr. Burwinkel asked about the ongoing expenses and whether this would be the final phase of the project. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the timeline, scope, and costs of the project, as well as improvements to the customer journey with the new products. Upon motion duly made by Lavery, seconded by Burwinkel, the Board awarded a professional services contract in the amount of \$1,056,000 to Synoptek, LLC for the Digital Transformation Project.
9. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT – LEGAL SERVICES – ADMINISTRATION: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the professional services contract to the Board. Ms. Lavery stated that she appreciates Ms. Abrams's hard work, and Mr. Burwinkel appreciates her training on Board Governance. Upon motion duly made by Schuster, seconded by Wegman, the Board awarded a professional services contract in the amount of \$135,000 to The Abrams Law Firm, LLC for legal services.
10. NATURAL RESOURCE ASSISTANCE COUNCIL: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the Natural Resource Assistance Council agenda item to the Board. Upon motion duly made by Lavery, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried, the Board nominated Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter to serve on the NRAC committee for a new three-year term beginning March 5, 2025 and authorized the Board President to forward a letter of nomination to the Hamilton County Integrating Committee.

**MONITORING REPORTS**

11. **FINANCIAL CONDITION & ACTIVITIES:** Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins presented the Financial Condition & Activities report to the Board. Ms. Wegman commented on the Capital Improvements line and its influence on operating expenditures. Ms. Lavery noted the ebb and flow of capital projects and agreed that operating should be separate. Mr. Burwinkel pointed out the clarity to the public in explaining long-term projects with monies encumbered but unspent. Mr. Schuster asked if salaries are noted in this report and about total salaries as a percentage of operational expenses. He stated that he felt we operated very efficiently. Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter noted that in June and December, the financial reports noted salary trends. Ms. Wegman asked if the new bid threshold change in state law would need Board action. 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. **ASSET PROTECTION:** Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Risk Manager Dave Bruce presented the Monitoring Report for Asset Protection to the Board. Mr. Burwinkel inquired about the park district's insurance carrier. 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**

13. **PHILANTHROPY DIVISION REPORT:** Chief of Philanthropy Tom Carleton presented the Philanthropy Division report to the Board. Ms. Wegman noted a fantastic fourth quarter. Ms. Lavery noted the Rootball was a great event. Mr. Schuster asked if we could get an idea of where we think we might be in progress for the year for the capital campaign. Ms. Wegman asked about the potential of a joint workshop for the Forever Board and GP Board. The Board congratulated the Philanthropy staff on a successful year. After a thorough discussion, the Board determined the report to be reasonable and acceptable. The Board then ordered the report filed for the record.
14. **PURCHASING CARD COMPLIANCE OFFICER:** Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the Purchasing Card Compliance Officer report to the Board, reporting compliance. The Board ordered the report filed for the record.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A motion was made by Lavery and seconded by Wegman to go into Executive Session at 2:05 p.m. to consider the employment and compensation of public employees. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye, Mr. Burwinkel – Aye, Ms. Lavery – Aye.

Following the Executive Session, a motion was made by Lavery and seconded by Thompson to reconvene the Regular Meeting at 3:38 p.m. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye, Mr. Burwinkel – Aye, Ms. Lavery – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye.

**ACTION**

15. COMPENSATION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES: Upon motion duly made by Burwinkel, seconded by Lavery, and unanimously carried, the Board authorized the Board President, Chief Executive Officer, and his designees to execute the necessary documents for compensation of public employees.

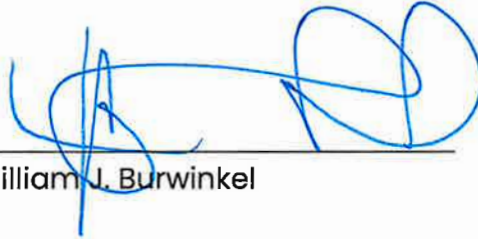
**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further matters to come before the Board, a motion was made by Thompson, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 3:40 p.m.

Board of Park Commissioners  
Great Parks of Hamilton County



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Melissa Wegman, President



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William J. Burwinkel



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Caren Laverty



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Scott Schuster



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Marcus Thompson

ATTEST:



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Todd Palmeter, Chief Executive Officer