

**REGULAR MEETING****November 16, 2023**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of Great Parks of Hamilton County was held on this day, 2:00 p.m., at 10245 Winton Road, Cincinnati, OH 45231.

Board President Caren Laverty opened the meeting and led the Board, staff, and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Present were Commissioners: Laverty, Abrams, Burwinkel, Wegman  
Staff: Palmeto, Henninger, Collins, Carleton, de Jesus, Doellman, Messerschmitt, Rahe, Snow, Zelek, Helmes, Bilyeu, Palm, Warren, Zelak, Busofsky, Barkley, Moeller, Roselle, Spencer, Ference  
Guests: Susan Luken

**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 Guest Relations Rachel Messerschmitt introduced new employee Kat Zelak, Education Manager, Central Region.
- Chief of Planning Tim Zelek introduced newly promoted employee Ben Helmes, Manager of Design.
- Chief of Conservation and Parks Jason Rahe introduced newly promoted employee Gavin Warren, Trails Specialist.
- Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins introduced new employee Anthony Palm, Senior Systems Engineer.
- Chief of Philanthropy Tom Carleton introduced new employee Suzanne Bilyeu, Philanthropy Administrator.
- Great Parks received the Ohio Auditor of State Award with Distinction for our 2022 audit. The Auditor of State's office presents awards to public entities that meet specific criteria during their financial audit.
- Great Parks received a Certificate of Recognition from the Ohio House of Representatives congratulating us on earning the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States & Canada. Representatives Jessica Miranda, Dani Isaacsohn, Cecil Thomas, Sedrick Denson, and Rachel Baker sponsored this recognition.

Mr. Burwinkel attended the Veterans Day Celebration at Sharon Woods on Saturday, November 11. He commented on how well the event was organized and how important the event was to him since he was a veteran. Mr. Burwinkel mentioned that he met a volunteer from Ukraine named Victoria and, during their conversation, learned that she started volunteering for Great Parks because Sharon Woods reminded her of a park near her home in Kyiv.

Ms. Lavery thanked Mr. Burwinkel and all veterans for their service.

3. NEXT BOARD MEETING DATES:

Thursday	December 14, 2023	1:00 p.m.	Winton Centre*
Thursday	January 18, 2024	1:00 p.m.	Winton Centre

\*The December Regular Board meeting will be held on the second Thursday of December.

**ACTION**

4. RESOLUTION #3780 – BILLS & PAYROLL RESOLUTION: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmetter presented the Bills & Payroll Resolution to the Board. Upon motion duly made by Abrams, seconded by Wegman, the Board approved the Bills & Payroll Resolution. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Mr. Abrams – Aye, Mr. Burwinkel – Aye, Ms. Lavery – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye.
5. RESOLUTION #3781 – BUDGET ADJUSTMENT: Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins presented the Budget Adjustment Resolution to the Board. Upon motion duly made by Burwinkel, seconded by Abrams, the Board approved the budget adjustment as presented in the resolution. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Mr. Burwinkel – Aye, Ms. Lavery – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Abrams – Aye.
6. RESOLUTION #3782 – RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION – John Zinser: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmetter presented the Resolution of Appreciation to the Board. Upon motion duly made by Wegman, seconded by Abrams, the Board approved the Resolution of Appreciation for John Zinser, Mechanic, who has retired with 21 years of service with Great Parks of Hamilton County. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Ms. Lavery – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Abrams – Aye, Mr. Burwinkel – Aye.
7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Upon motion duly made by Wegman, seconded by Abrams, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Final Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of October 19, 2023.

8. CONSTRUCTION MANAGER AT RISK SERVICES CONTRACT – SHAKER TRACE NURSERY IMPROVEMENTS: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Manager of Design Ben Helmes presented the bid to the Board. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the design team and the scope of the project. Upon motion duly made by Abrams, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried, the Board awarded a contract in the amount of \$30,324.00 for the preconstruction phase of Construction Manager at Risk Services to Pepper Construction for the Shaker Trace Nursery Improvements project. A Guaranteed Maximum Price contract amendment will be presented to the Board for approval ahead of construction phase services commencing.

Ms. Lavery asked about the disposition of the old greenhouse. Mr. Burwinkel asked who was part of the design team. Ms. Wegman complimented Ben Helmes on his Shaker Trace Nursery presentation during the Root Ball on October 27, 2023.

9. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT – GENERAL LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS SERVICES: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the bid to the Board. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the scoring process. Upon motion duly made by Burwinkel, seconded by Abrams, and unanimously carried, the Board awarded a professional services contract in the amount of \$66,000.00 to Government Strategies Group, LLC for general local and state government affairs services.

#### **GENERAL REPORTS**

10. GROUNDWORK OHIO RIVER VALLEY – GREEN TEAM: Volunteer Engagement Specialist Elise Moeller and Senior Park Manager Jeremy Barkley presented the report to the Board. Ms. Wegman inquired how the participants were chosen for the Green Team. Ms. Lavery asked about the age of the team members and team leaders. Mr. Burwinkel asked about transportation to the parks, pre and post-surveys of participants, and about hiring of Green Team members. Mr. Burwinkel asked that the presentation document be shared with the Board. After a thorough discussion, the Board determined the report to be reasonable and acceptable. The Board then ordered the report filed for the record.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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

Following the Executive Session, a motion was made by Burwinkel and seconded by Abrams to reconvene the Regular Meeting at 3:22 p.m. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Abrams – Aye, Mr. Burwinkel – Aye, Ms. Lavery – Aye.

**ACTION**

11. LAND ITEM: Upon motion duly made by Abrams, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried, the Board authorized the CEO and his designees to negotiate a land acquisition proposal and execute the necessary documents for a 6-acre parcel in the west region of Hamilton County.

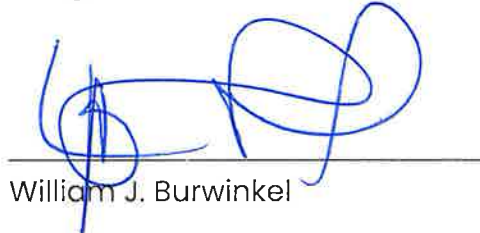
**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further matters to come before the Board, a motion was made by Wegman, seconded by Abrams, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 3:25 p.m.

Board of Park Commissioners  
Great Parks of Hamilton County

  
Caren Lavery, President

  
Douglas Abrams

  
William J. Burwinkel

  
Marcus Thompson

  
Melissa Wegman

ATTEST:

  
Todd Palmeter, Chief Executive Officer