

REGULAR MEETING**December 18, 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, Keating, Lavery, Schuster, Thompson
 Staff: Palmeto, Henninger, Collins, Carleton, Broughton Murray, Doellman, Messerschmitt, Rahe, Snow, Steele, Busam, Stephenson, Worth, Featherstone, Curliss, Nestheide, Westerhof, Mentzer, Anklan, Herbert, Ference
 Guests: Laura Abrams

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 Experiences Rachel Messerschmitt introduced newly promoted employee Sean Busam, Golf Maintenance Technician, Winton Woods.
- Chief of Marketing & Brand Strategy Rachel Doellman introduced newly promoted employee Olivia Stephenson, Special Events Coordinator.
- Chief of Marketing & Brand Strategy Rachel Doellman introduced new employee Asa Featherstone IV, Digital Content Creator
- Chief of Conservation & Parks Jason Rahe introduced newly promoted employee Dan Worth, Conservation & Parks Technician, Winton Woods.
- Director of Site & Facility Development Laila Ammar and Director of Conservation & Parks West Region Mike Brech completed the Cincinnati Regional Chamber's C-Change program in November.
- Sustainability Coordinator Stephanie Bacher passed the proficiency examination and course requirements to obtain the 201 Basics of Organizational Green House Gas (GHG) Accounting Certificate of Proficiency.
- Great Parks received three Blacksmith Awards from the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Cincinnati Chapter.
 - Sharon Lake Crisis Communications
 - Parks Passport, Integrated Communications
 - Best in Show, Campaigns category, Parks Passport

- In 2025, Great Parks donated to 228 charities, schools, and community organizations. The donation package is valued at \$54.00 and includes:
 - 1 – Motor Vehicle Permit
 - 2 – Daily Highfield Discovery Garden admissions
 - 2 – Greens fees for Meadow Links & Golf Academy
- In 2025, Great Parks issued 205 Motor Vehicle Permits (MVPs) to Armed Services Veterans & Active Military. Guests currently serving on active duty or in the reserves, as well as honorably or medically discharged veterans, may apply for a free Motor Vehicle Permit.
- In 2025, Great Parks issued 979 Motor Vehicle Permits (MVPs) to Ohio EBT Card Holders. Hamilton County residents with a valid food assistance card can receive a free Motor Vehicle Permit.
- In 2025, Great Parks issued 639 free admissions to Highfield Discovery Garden to Ohio EBT, Ohio WIC Nutrition, and Ohio P-EBT cardholders.

Mr. Thompson presented at the Urban Land Institute meeting and was complimentary of the staff, noting momentum for the parks. He also thanked Ms. Wegman for her service and leadership as President of the Board of Commissioners.

Ms. Lavery thanked the staff for a fantastic event at Holidays on the Farm and noted that it was a wonderful family event. She also thanked Ms. Wegman for her service as President.

Ms. Keating thanked Ms. Wegman for making her feel welcome. Ms. Keating attended the Holiday Gathering and noted how much fun we have as a staff and how well leaders build into their staff. Ms. Keating said she has now visited 10 parks.

Ms. Wegman noted the large number of light features at Holidays on the Farm and stated that she enjoyed the Holiday Gathering.

Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter thanked Mr. Thompson for attending and presenting at the Urban Land Institute meeting and thanked Ms. Wegman for her service as Board President.

3. NEXT BOARD MEETING DATES:

Thursday	January 22, 2026	1:00 p.m.	Winton Centre
Thursday	February 19, 2026	1:00 p.m.	Winton Centre

ACTION

4. RESOLUTION #3859 – BILLS & PAYROLL RESOLUTION: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the Bills & Payroll Resolution to the Board. The Board submitted one payment request for Unlimited Core Solution for the Vineyard Golf Course Pump Station Construction. The vendor did not receive the original check, which was voided, and a new check was issued. Ms. Lavery asked about the improvements to Sharon Lake. Mr. Schuster said he was pleased with the progress at Shaker Trace Nursery. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the Bills & Payroll report. Upon motion duly made by Lavery, seconded by Keating, the Board approved the Bills & Payroll Resolution. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Ms. Keating – Aye, Ms. Lavery – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye.
5. RESOLUTION #3860 – BUDGET ADJUSTMENT: Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins presented the Budget Adjustment Resolution to the Board. Upon motion duly made by Schuster, seconded by Thompson, 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. Thompson – Aye, Ms. Keating – Aye.
6. RESOLUTION #3861 – 2026 FINAL BUDGET: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins presented the 2026 Final Budget to the Board. Mr. Schuster noted that benefit costs are rising in the market. Ms. Keating pointed out salary increases and asked about the compensation analysis and salary growth. Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter thanked the staff for their hard work on the budget. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the 2026 final budget, including staff wages, salary compensation analysis, and revenue growth. Upon motion duly made by Lavery, seconded by Keating, the Board approved the 2026 Final Budget as presented. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye, Ms. Keating – Aye, Ms. Lavery – Aye.
7. RESOLUTION #3862– REQUESTING THE COUNTY AUDITOR TO MAKE ADVANCE PAYMENTS OF TAXES: Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins presented the Resolution to the Board. Upon motion duly made by Thompson, seconded by Schuster, the Board approved the Resolution Requesting the County Auditor to Make Advance Payments of Taxes. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye, Ms. Keating – Aye, Ms. Lavery – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye.

8. **RESOLUTION #3863 – OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION 2026-2027 BIENNIUM ALLOCATION & REDISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS:** Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the Bills & Payroll Resolution to the Board. Mr. Thompson asked about paved road mileage in the parks. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the resolution. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Keating, the Board approved the resolution authorizing Great Parks of Hamilton County to pay any costs greater than the total available funding balance of \$413,215.85 for the 2026-2027 Biennium Allocation and Redistribution of Funds, in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Transportation. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Mr. Thompson – Aye, Ms. Keating – Aye, Ms. Laverty – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Schuster – Aye.
9. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Upon motion duly made by Thompson, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Final Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of November 20, 2025.
10. **PURCHASING CARD POLICY UPDATE:** Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins presented the Purchasing Card Policy Update to the Board. Ms. Laverty asked about the number of cards issued. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the report. Upon motion duly made by Schuster, seconded by Wegman, the Board approved the updated Purchasing Card Policy as presented and appointed Troy Westerhof, Communications Manager, as the Compliance Officer for 2026.
11. **APPOINTMENT OF BOARD PRESIDENT:** Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter noted that the nominee, Mr. Schuster, is only eligible for one year due to his current term as Commissioner ending in 2026. Upon motion duly made by Keating, seconded by Laverty, and unanimously carried, the Board appointed Scott Schuster to serve as the next Board President for a one-year term from January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2026.

MONITORING REPORTS

12. **FINANCIAL PLANNING/BUDGETING:** Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins presented the Financial Planning/Budgeting report to the Board. He noted one change to the report: the Board Governance fund's current balance is now \$0. 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. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUCCESSION:** Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the Monitoring Report for Executive Limitation Policy – Emergency Chief Executive Officer Succession to the Board. The Board determined the report to be reasonable and acceptable and ordered the report filed for the record.

14. GLOBAL EXECUTIVE CONSTRAINT: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the Monitoring Report for Executive Limitation Policy – Global Executive Constraint to the Board. The Board determined the report to be reasonable and acceptable and ordered the report filed for the record.

GENERAL REPORTS

15. EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLAN SUMMARY: Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins presented the Employee Benefit Plan Summary to the Board. Mr. Thompson asked about the contract term for the benefits stop-loss provider. 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 Laverty and seconded by Thompson to go into Executive Session at 2:00 p.m. to consider the employment and compensation of public employees, and to review pending or imminent court action. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Ms. Keating – Aye, Ms. Laverty – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye.

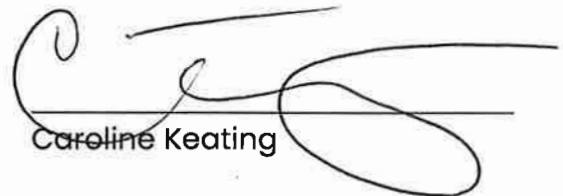
Following the Executive Session, a motion was made by Schuster and seconded by Thompson to reconvene the Regular Meeting at 2:59 p.m. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Ms. Laverty – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye, Ms. Keating – Aye.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further matters to come before the Board, a motion was made by Lavery, seconded by Keating, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Board of Park Commissioners
Great Parks of Hamilton County


Melissa Wegman, President


Caroline Keating


Caren Lavery


Scott Schuster

Absent

Marcus Thompson

ATTEST:



Todd Palmeto, Chief Executive Officer