

**REGULAR MEETING****August 21, 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, Laverty, Schuster, Thompson  
 Staff: Palmeter, Collins, Carleton, deJesus, Doellman, Messerschmitt, Rahe, Snow, Greifenkamp, Normile, Schrand, Feeney, Voorhies, Short, Dickensheets, McConnell, Anklan, Herbert, Eismeier, Helmes, Reddy, Roselle, Ference  
 Guests: Susan Luken, David Brandeburg, Sharon Metsch, Rob Metsch

**GENERAL**

## 1. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Brandeburg addressed the Board about benefits for veterans and extending the same benefits to people with disabilities.

Mrs. Metsch addressed the Board about the America 250 celebration and Great Parks possibly hosting an event at Miami Whitewater Forest in 2026.

## 2. AWARDS &amp; RECOGNITIONS:

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

- Chief of Conservation & Parks Jason Rahe introduced newly promoted employee James Normile, Conservation & Parks Technician, Miami Whitewater Forest.
- Chief of Conservation & Parks Jason Rahe introduced new employee Karl Greifenkamp, Conservation & Parks Technician, Sharon Woods.
- Chief of Guest Experiences Rachel Messerschmitt introduced newly promoted employee Rebecca Feeney, Riding Instructor, Winton Woods Farm & Equestrian Center.
- Chief of Guest Experiences Rachel Messerschmitt introduced newly promoted employee Taylor Schrand, Animal Welfare Manager, Winton Woods Farm & Equestrian Center.
- The new Great Parks website was launched on August 19, 2025.

Ms. Wegman said she visited the new website and found it easy to navigate and noted it is a huge improvement. Ms. Laverty also enjoyed the new website and inquired about the phasing out of the Find Your Wild site. Mr. Schuster was impressed with the functionality of the new website, especially the golf page. Ms. Wegman said she was looking forward to National Night Out and thanked the staff for hosting the

Winton Woods Campground open house. Ms. Wegman thanked the Volunteer Engagement team for their LinkedIn posts and gave kudos to the group.

3. NEXT BOARD MEETING DATES:

Thursday	September 18, 2025	1:00 p.m.	Winton Centre
Wednesday	October 15, 2025	3:00 p.m.	Winton Centre*

\* Board tour will precede the October 15 Regular Meeting, tentatively scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Please plan to arrive at 8:00 a.m.

Mr. Thompson stated that he would miss the September Regular Board Meeting.

**ACTION**

4. RESOLUTION #3849 – BILLS & PAYROLL RESOLUTION: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmetter presented the Bills & Payroll Resolution to the Board. The Board submitted two payment items for review: Environmental Design Group, LLC, for the Sharon Lake Improvements, and Emersion Design, LLC, for design services for the Shaker Trace Nursery and the Sharon Harbor Revitalization. Ms. Laverty inquired about the project's status, specifically regarding Sharon Woods and Shaker Trace Nursery, and the timing of the payments. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the scope of the payment items. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Schuster, the Board approved the Bills & Payroll Resolution. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Ms. Laverty – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye.
5. RESOLUTION #3850 – RESOLUTION OF AUTHORIZATION TO APPLY AND EXECUTE AN APPLICATION UNDER ODNR LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND PROGRAM: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmetter presented the Resolution to the Board. Mr. Thompson inquired about the division of project work and whether we would avoid closing the entire trail. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the project scope and preliminary project plans. Upon motion duly made by Thompson, seconded by Wegman, the Board approved Resolution #3850, authorizing the CEO and his designees to apply for and execute an application with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources under the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye, Ms. Laverty – Aye.

6. RESOLUTION #3851 – SALE OF SURPLUS REAL PROPERTY – OAK GLEN SURPLUS PARCELS: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the Resolution to the Board. Ms. Wegman asked when the transfer would occur. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the steps necessary to dispose of surplus property. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Schuster, the Board approved Resolution #3851 for determining the highest and best bidder for two tracts of land (5.970 Acres and 0.801 Acres) and authorizing legal counsel to file a petition pursuant to R.C. 1545.12(C) for authorization of the Hamilton County Probate Court to sell said property. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye, Ms. Laverty – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye.
7. DONATIONS: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the donations to the Board. Upon motion duly made by Schuster, seconded by Thompson, and unanimously carried, the Board approved accepting the donations received during July 2025. The letter from the Judge of Probate Court approving acceptance of the terms of the gifts will be attached to the Final Minutes.
8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Final Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of July 17, 2025.
9. RESCIND APPROVAL OF BID – SHARON WOODS DRIVE BRIDGE, STREAM, AND SANITARY SEWER MODIFICATIONS PROJECT: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the rescindment to the Board. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the rescindment. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Thompson, and unanimously carried, the Board rescinded the award to Ashcraft Contracting LLC and rejected the bid from Ashcraft Contracting LLC for the Sharon Woods Drive Bridge, Stream, and Sanitary Sewer Modifications Project as presented on July 17, 2025.
10. BID TAB – SHARON WOODS DRIVE BRIDGE, STREAM, AND SANITARY SEWER MODIFICATIONS PROJECT: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the bid to the Board. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the scope and timeline of the project and the details of the bid. Upon motion duly made by Thompson, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried, the Board awarded a contract for the Base Bid in the amount of \$640,115.00 to Benchmark Land Management LLC for the Sharon Woods Drive Bridge, Stream, and Sanitary Sewer Modifications Project.

11. **CONSTRUCTION MANAGER AT RISK SERVICES CONTRACT – WERK ROAD PARK IMPROVEMENTS:** Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the services contract to the Board. Ms. Laverty commented that it was exciting to see the project getting started. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried, the Board awarded a contract in the amount of \$29,348.80 for the preconstruction phase of Construction Manager at Risk Services to Conger Construction Group for the Werk Road Park Improvements Project. A Guaranteed Maximum Price contract amendment will be presented to the Board for approval ahead of the construction phase services commencing.
12. **PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT – FIRE AND SECURITY ALARM SERVICES:** Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the professional services contract to the Board. Ms. Wegman stated that she appreciated the merging of services under one contract. Upon motion duly made by Schuster, seconded by Thompson, and unanimously carried, the Board awarded a professional services contract in the amount of \$238,300 to Silco Fire & Security for Fire and Security Alarm Services.
13. **COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE PROPOSAL:** Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Chief of Human Resources Molly deJesus presented the proposal to the Board. Mr. Schuster inquired about cyber liability coverage. Ms. Laverty asked about the terrorism and electronic data processing coverages. Mr. Thompson asked about the impact to the premium costs if the aggregate limits were increased. Mr. Schuster inquired about the option for renewal and if the rates will be renegotiated. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on overall coverage limits and the renewal process. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Schuster, and unanimously carried, the Board awarded a three-year contract with Ohio Plan Risk Management, Inc., and the broker Stolly Insurance Group.
14. **PURCHASING CARD POLICY UPDATE:** Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins presented the purchasing card policy update to the Board. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Thompson, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the updated Purchasing Card Policy as presented.

### **GENERAL REPORTS**

15. **PARK VISITATION & TRAIL USAGE REPORT:** Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Chief of Guest Experiences Rachel Messerschmitt presented the report to the Board. Ms. Wegman asked how many trails are currently under construction, which could impact trail usage numbers. Ms. Wegman also noted the upcoming election and how the new website, along with other changes happening at Great Parks, will affect visitation numbers. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the installation of new trail cameras and the 2024 trail usage and park visitation 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.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A motion was made by Lavery and seconded by Thompson to go into Executive Session at 2:07 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: Mr. Thompson – Aye, Ms. Lavery – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Schuster – Aye.

Following the Executive Session, a motion was made by Schuster and seconded by Lavery to reconvene the Regular Meeting at 3:34 p.m. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Ms. Lavery – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye.

16. **COMPENSATION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES:** Upon motion duly made by Thompson, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Great Parks of Hamilton County and Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Association Collective Bargaining Agreement on behalf of the Ranger Sergeants for the period of January 2025 through December 2026 and authorized the CEO and his designees to execute the necessary documents.
17. **LAND ITEM:** Upon motion duly made by Lavery, 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 approximately 5.5 acres in the west region of Hamilton County.

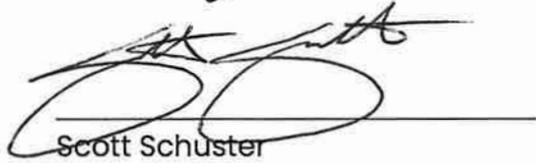
**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further matters to come before the Board, a motion was made by Lavery, seconded by Thompson, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 3:35 p.m.

Board of Park Commissioners  
Great Parks of Hamilton County

  
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Melissa Wegman, President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Caren Lavery

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott Schuster

**Absent**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Marcus Thompson

ATTEST:

  
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Todd Palmeter, Chief Executive Officer