

**REGULAR MEETING****February 19, 2026**

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 Scott Schuster opened the meeting and led the Board, staff, and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Present were Commissioners Schuster, Keating, Lavery, Wegman, Thompson  
 Staff: Palmeter, Henninger, Collins, Carleton, deJesus, Doellman, Broughton Murray,  
 Messerschmitt, Rahe, Snow, Sten, Settlemyre, Kerry, Mehall, Bilyeu, Hodge, Featherstone,  
 Ammar, Anklan, Bacher, Halke, Spencer, Herbert, Volk, Flynn, Ference  
 Guests: Tracie Sergent

**GENERAL**

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

2. AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS:

Board President Scott Schuster presented a Resolution of Appreciation to Tracie Sergent. Tracie retired as a Guest Services Senior Manager on December 17, 2025, after fifteen years of service.

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

- Chief of Guest Experiences Rachel Messerschmitt introduced newly promoted employee Jay Sten, Golf Maintenance Technician, Woodland Mound.
- Chief of Guest Experiences Rachel Messerschmitt introduced new employee Sam Settlemyre, Shaker Trace Nursery Manager.
- Chief of Planning Janet Broughton Murray introduced new employee Brad Kerry, Outreach & Land Acquisition Manager.
- Chief of Planning Janet Broughton Murray introduced new employee Lauren Mehall, Landscape Architect.
- Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins introduced new employee Suzie Bilyeu, Accounting Clerk.
- Great Parks received the Ohio Auditor of State Award with Distinction for our 2024 audit. Great Parks has been awarded this for the last three consecutive years (2022, 2023, 2024).

Ms. Keating expressed her gratitude to the staff for keeping the parks open and available during the difficult winter weather. Ms. Keating informed the Board that February was American Heart Month, and heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. She complimented Great Parks for 50 AEDs available in the parks and in Ranger cruisers, and 99 employees and volunteers who were CPR-trained.

3. NEXT BOARD MEETING DATES:

Wednesday	March 18, 2026	1:00 p.m.	Winton Center
Thursday	April 16, 2026	1:00 p.m.	Winton Center

**ACTION**

4. RESOLUTION #3868 – BILLS & PAYROLL RESOLUTION: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the Bills & Payroll Resolution to the Board. Ms. Laverty asked about the frequency of updates to the report. Mr. Schuster noted that he asked for the report to be included monthly, but it would only be updated quarterly. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Thompson, the Board approved the Bills & Payroll Resolution. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Ms. Keating – Aye, Ms. Laverty – Aye, Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye.
5. RESOLUTION #3869 – THEN & NOW RESOLUTION: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the Then & Now Resolution to the Board. Ms. Wegman asked about the purchase order date. Upon motion duly made by Keating, seconded by Schuster, the Board approved the Bills & Payroll Resolution. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Ms. Laverty – Aye, Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Ms. Keating – Aye.
6. RESOLUTION #3870 – RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION – SUE HOEPF: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the Resolution of Appreciation to the Board. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Wegman, the Board approved the Resolution of Appreciation for Sue Hoepf, Campground Manager, who has retired with 15 years of service with Great Parks of Hamilton County. The Roll Call vote was as follows: Mr. Schuster – Aye, Mr. Thompson – Aye, Ms. Wegman – Aye, Ms. Keating – Aye, Ms. Laverty – Aye.
7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Upon motion duly made by Keating, seconded by Laverty, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Final Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of January 22, 2026.

8. BID TAB – BALED HAY SUPPLIER: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the bid to the Board. Mr. Thompson asked about hay storage and the frequency of purchase. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the bid, hay delivery, and bid approval. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the bid from Summe Farms for Option 1 and Option 2 at the price of \$10.00 per square bale.
9. BID TAB – GOLF COURSE CHEMICALS: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Chief of Guest Experiences Rachel Messerschmitt presented the bid to the Board. Ms. Keating asked how the results came in for some products but not others. Ms. Laverty asked about the necessity of herbicides. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the bid, rebates on chemicals, and the committee review of chemical usage. Upon motion duly made by Thompson, seconded by Keating, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the bids in the amount of \$59,817.48 to Site One Landscape Supply, LLC, for golf course turf fungicides and herbicides, and \$16,452.00 to Helena Agri-Enterprises for greens fertilizers and insecticides.
10. BID TAB – CONTAINERIZED WASTE AND RECYCLING DISPOSAL SERVICES: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Sustainability Coordinator Stephanie Bacher presented the bid to the Board. Ms. Wegman asked about biochar and commercial compost vendors. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the bid, the biochar process, and other sustainability efforts. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the bid in the amount of \$100,834.86 to Rumpke of Ohio Inc. for the containerized waste and recycling disposal services.
11. BID TAB – MITCHELL MEMORIAL FOREST CULVERT REPAIR: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the bid to the Board. Ms. Laverty noted the wide range of bids. Mr. Thompson asked about the clarity of the scope of the project. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the bid. Upon motion duly made by Keating, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried, the Board rejected all the bids.
12. BID TAB – WINTON WOODS GOLFVIEW DRIVE CULVERT REPAIR: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the bid to the Board. Ms. Laverty asked about the strategy for combining culvert projects. Upon motion duly made by Wegman, seconded by Keating, and unanimously carried, the Board rejected all the bids.
13. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES – PRINTING SERVICES: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the professional services contract to the Board. Upon motion duly made by Wegman, seconded by Laverty, and unanimously carried, the Board awarded a professional services contract to PIP Printing for printing services.

14. PROFESSIONAL DESIGN SERVICES CONTRACT – WAYFINDING SIGNAGE PHASE 2: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Director of Site & Facility Development Laila Ammar presented the professional design services contract to the Board. Ms. Wegman asked about the difference between wayfinding signs and signs installed by other public entities. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the design services contract, sign types, and sign ownership. Upon motion duly made by Wegman, seconded by Thompson, and unanimously carried, the Board awarded a professional design services contract in the amount of \$96,850 to fd2s for the Wayfinding Signage Phase 2 project.
15. BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONER MEETING RULES UPDATE: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the meeting rules update to the Board. Upon motion duly made by Laverty, seconded by Wegman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the updated Board of Park Commissioners Meeting Rules.

### **MONITORING REPORTS**

16. ENDS PRIORITY 3: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Director of Programming Amy Roell presented the Ends Priority 3 report to the Board. Mr. Schuster noted that, by comparison, the KPIs are phenomenal compared to those of the museum industry. Ms. Keating asked if we had considered questions about experiences versus educational value. Ms. Wegman was complimentary about the educational value she found in the programs she has participated in. Ms. Laverty asked about the Cornell Backyard Birds program and asked if staff participate. Ms. Wegman asked about the City Nature Challenge and noted how successful the Winter Hikes are as a tradition for all ages. Mr. Thompson offered kudos for the performance data. He also asked about the Cincinnati Pops, the Cincinnati Ballet, and the Children's theatres as potential event partners. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on the variety of programs offered in 2025, their goals and purpose, and attendees' evaluations of the programs. After a thorough discussion, the Board determined the report to be reasonable and acceptable. The Board thanked the staff for the presentation and then ordered the report filed for the record.

17. ENDS PRIORITY 4: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter and Chief of Marketing & Brand Strategy Rachel Doellman presented the Ends Priority 4 report to the Board. Ms. Laverty noted that some of the numbers were the highest ever recorded, and the organization should be very proud. Ms. Wegman stated that people recognize the acorn brand mark and media campaigns, which reinforce awareness of the brand. Ms. Keating noted that the increase in value is commendable, given the current economic conditions. Mr. Schuster noted that state leaders should hear about awareness and performance metrics that communicate how much value the park district delivers for tax dollars. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information about the survey data. After a thorough discussion, the Board determined the report to be reasonable and acceptable. The Board thanked the staff for the presentation and then ordered the report filed for the record.
18. COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT TO THE BOARD: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the Communication and Support report to the Board. The Board ordered the report filed for the record.

#### **GENERAL REPORTS**

19. 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 about locating a counter on the Avoca mountain bike trail. The CEO noted that he will share some of this data with the State Capitol delegation. Ms. Keating noted that sharing this is not bragging; it is telling the story. Mr. Schuster noted that he can share some information with the legislative delegation. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on trail counters and 2025 trail usage and park visitation. After a thorough discussion, the Board determined the report to be reasonable and acceptable. The Board complimented the staff on the presentation and then ordered the report to be filed for the record.
20. 2026 CAPITAL PROJECTS LIST: Chief Executive Officer Todd Palmeter presented the 2026 Capital Projects report to the Board. Ms. Laverty asked about the additions to critical infrastructure and the master plan. Ms. Keating asked about educating the public about how long it takes to complete a project. Ms. Laverty inquired about using the website for project updates. Ms. Wegman asked about data on the use of the new website, particularly in peak visitation months. CEO Todd Palmeter noted how the organization shares information with staff to help them provide information to the public. The staff led a thorough discussion, providing clarifying information on 2026 Capital Projects, project timelines, and project costs. After a thorough discussion, the Board determined the report to be reasonable and acceptable. The Board complimented the staff on the report format and then ordered the report to be filed for the record.

**ADJOURNMENT**


There being no further matters to come before the Board, a motion was made by Wegman, seconded by Thompson, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

Board of Park Commissioners  
Great Parks of Hamilton County

  
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Scott Schuster, President

  
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Caroline Keating

  
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Caren Lavery

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

  
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Melissa Wegman

ATTEST:

  
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Todd Palmeter, Chief Executive Officer