MINUTES OF THE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

OF

MEDINA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT

December 13, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Chairwoman Davis called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. at Oenslager Nature Center, 6100 Ridge Road, Sharon Township, Ohio.

B. Roll Call

1. Roll call showed Chairwoman Davis, Commissioner Neate, and Commissioner Venner present. Also in attendance were Medina County Probate Judge Dunn, Director Eppink, Park Planner Kleshinski, Development Coordinator Peacock, Business Manager Chaney, and Legal Counsel Holland. Guests included Jansen Wehrley of Guilford Township; Greg O'Connell of Gloria Glens; Lisa Krosse, Leslie Burns, John Sandora, Barbara McGrath, Al Horning, Debbie Horning, Dan Wolpaw, and Terry Wolpaw of Chippewa Lake; and Realtor Alan Hallock.

II. OATH OF OFFICE

A. Medina County Probate Judge Dunn administered the Oath of Office to Chairwoman Davis, renewing her term for another three years, January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2026.

1. Judge Dunn left the meeting at this time.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 15, 2023

1. Commissioner Davis offered a motion approving the minutes of the November 15, 2023 meeting as presented. Commissioner Neate seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A. Jansen Wehrley of Guilford Township stated that he is in favor of the park district/Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District land swap as proposed on Hubbard Valley Road. He thanked Director Eppink and the board for hearing the voices of the Blake Road residents and Guilford Township Zoning Department. Mr. Wehrley supports all actions that need to take place to make this land swap happen.

B. Barbara McGrath of Chippewa Lake said she applauds the park district/legal counsel responsiveness to her recent public records request and the district's proposed user (lake) education in addition to increased law-enforcement patrol on Chippewa Lake. She is in support of the proposed stakeholders collaboration and is grateful that the district recognizes that there is no need to act quickly in changing lake rules when we all want the same thing–safety on the lake. Regarding the stakeholder collaborative efforts, Ms. McGrath believes that an ongoing comprehensive safety group in addition to improved communications would be of benefit to all.

1. Park Police Officers Urban and Davis arrived at this time.

C. Ms. McGrath commented that she learned a lot about the park district and its continued issues such as the docking program. She said that the community offers its support.
D. Dan Wolpaw of Chippewa Lake commented that all are interested in keeping the lake safe for everyone; however, he does not feel the proposed new rules will meet that goal. He feels the rules will punish those who are dedicated to the lake. Mr. Wolpaw feels that making changes to the rules without clear goals would be a mistake.
E. John Sandora thanked the board for holding the open-house sessions on December 5 and for assembling the stakeholders advisory committee to make the lake a safer place for all users.
F. Director Eppink thanked the residents for attending. He explained that the advisory committee will consist of members of the Chippewa Ski Team and Chippewa Yacht Club in addition to the request for both Chippewa Lake and Gloria Glens mayors to select individuals from their communities to review and discuss proposed changes and rules to Chippewa Lake. Director Eppink will not serve on the committee; however, one park police officer and one board commissioner will participate. All of the committee's recommendations will be forwarded to Director Eppink for presentation to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).
G. Leslie Burns of Chippewa Lake asked Director Eppink if all language related to the change of "no-wake times" was removed from what needed to be filed with ODNR by January 4. He replied that all language relating to "no-wake times" was removed. The determination of no-wake times/zones will not be filed until after the advisory committee performs its job and offers proposed recommendations. Ms. Burns mentioned that, perhaps, the park district would seek committee representation from the Euclid Avenue area such as Brock Lemmon. Director Eppink will reach out to Mr. Lemmon.
H. Commissioner Venner commented on the number of area resident responses he received that mentioned generational and historic knowledge of the lake. He commended the individuals who sent messages to share the importance of the lake.
I. Director Eppink said that the park district wants to continue all activities on the lake including skiing, fishing, kayaking, and sailing–it is our intent to find the right balance for all rather than to overwhelm the lake.
J. Barbara McGrath of Chippewa Lake said that she understands the need to balance the lake for all user groups.
K. Lisa Krosse of Chippewa Lake said that she has kayaked the lake probably 600 times in the last seven years and has never felt unsafe.
L. Director Eppink asked, and it was decided, that Commissioner Neate will serve as park board representation on the stakeholders committee.

V. FINANCIAL REPORTS

A. Cash Balance Statement
   1. The November cash balance statement was presented for the board's perusal.
      a. Cash balances are healthy, and Director Eppink reported that the park district has secured in excess of 11 million dollars in grant monies over the last five years.

B. Cash Flow Statement
   1. The November cash flow statement was presented for the board's review.
C. Approval of Vouchers
   1. Resolution #23-021, November 2023 Vouchers
      a. Chairwoman Davis offered a motion approving Resolution #23-021, payment of the November 2023 vouchers, as presented. Commissioner Venner seconded; the motion unanimously carried.
D. Appropriation Transfer
   1. December 1, 2023
      a. Chairwoman Davis offered a motion ratifying the December 1, 2023 transfer of $1,000 from the general fund contract services line to the general fund gasoline/travel line as presented. Commissioner Neate seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

VI. DIRECTOR/STAFF REPORTS

A. Director's Updates
   1. Director Eppink reminded the board members and legal counsel of the staff holiday party scheduled for Wednesday, December 20 at 11:30 a.m. at Buffalo Creek Retreat.
   2. Director Eppink thanked the board for attending the Chippewa Lake rules open house on December 5 at Buffalo Creek.
   3. Director Eppink reported that 24 applications have been received for the deputy director position. He would like a board member's perspective and asked that one of the board members consider participating in the review process.
   4. Director Eppink reported that, in addition to winning the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association's (OPRA) *Management Innovation Award* for 2023, the Brown-Trump Homestead submission has been selected as one of three finalists for consideration of the prestigious *Governor's Award.*
B. Monthly Report
   1. The November monthly report was provided for the board's review.
   2. Development Coordinator Peacock reported that she and Marketing Coordinator Teubl have been working with Proximity Marketing to design the Friends of the Parks' website. It is anticipated that the new website will launch in the first quarter of the new year.
C. Departmental Activities
   1. Director Eppink provided the November departmental activity report for the board's perusal.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. 2024 Budget
   1. Chairwoman Davis offered a motion approving the 2024 Budget as submitted and authorizing the director to make any adjustments necessary after the final cash carryover figures are available–including adjustments to expenditures in the funds to be made dormant next year–and to file the final budget with the county auditor. Commissioner Venner seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

B. 2024 Capital Projects List
   1. Chairwoman Davis offered a motion approving the 2024 Capital Projects list as submitted and authorizing the director to proceed with any project that costs $20,000 or less without further board action. Commissioner Venner seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. RFQ/RFP #2023-004 Allardale Park Playscape Design-Builder Selection
   1. Guest Dan Wolpaw left the meeting at this time and returned during the Wolf Creek Greenway discussion.
   2. Chairwoman Davis offered a motion authorizing the director to enter into a design-build contract with the top-ranked design-build team, Davey Resource Group, Inc., for design and construction of the Allardale Park Playscape Design and Development project in an amount not to exceed $500,000 and subject to review and approval by legal counsel as to form. Commissioner Neate seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

B. Wolf Creek Greenway: Statement of Qualifications for Design-Build Services
   1. Chairwoman Davis offered a motion authorizing the solicitation of Statements of Qualifications (SOQs) from possible design-build teams for the Wolf Creek Greenway project, with the top-rated proposal to be brought to the board for contract authorization at a future meeting. Commissioner Neate seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

C. Land Swap with Chippewa Subdistrict, Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District
   1. Guests Leslie Burns, Lisa Krosse, John Sandora, Dan Wolpaw, Terry Wolpaw, and Greg O'Connell left the meeting at this time.
   2. Chairwoman Davis offered a motion authorizing the director to begin the process to swap 4.83 acres of land on Hubbard Valley Road in Guilford Township with Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District in exchange for ~12 acres of land off Wadsworth Road in Guilford Township and a maintenance access easement to better reach the rear of MCPD-owned land off Bear Swamp Road and to enter into the necessary agreements and easements following legal counsel review, contingent upon Medina County Probate Court approval, and the recording of the easements with the Medina County Recorder's office. Commissioner Neate seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

D. Part-time Naturalist Job Description
   1. Chairwoman Davis offered a motion approving the job description for a part-time naturalist as presented. Commissioner Venner seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

E. Grant of Conservation Easement, Lorain County Metro Parks
   1. Following discussion, no motion was offered for this item of business.

F. Koontz Creek Environmental Covenant
   1. Chairwoman Davis offered a motion authorizing the director to execute the Koontz Creek Environmental Covenant as submitted. Commissioner Venner seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Chairwoman Davis offered a motion that the board move into executive session for the discussion of land acquisition and personnel hiring/compensation. Commissioner Venner seconded; the motion unanimously carried.
   1. Park Planner Kleshinski, Development Coordinator Peacock, Park Police Officers Urban and Davis, and guests Jansen Wehrley, Alan Hallock, Al Horning, Debbie Horning, and Barbara McGrath left the meeting.
   2. Director Eppink, and Business Manager Chaney left the meeting for the personnel compensation discussion.

B. Commissioner Neate offered a motion that the board move into regular session. Chairwoman Davis seconded; the motion unanimously carried.
   1. Director Eppink, Business Manager Chaney, Park Planner Kleshinski, Development Coordinator Peacock, and Guest Barbara McGrath returned to the meeting.

C. Commissioner Neate offered a motion to amend the authorization given in July regarding the purchase of approximately ten acres in Westfield Township for $50,000 from fund 3403-7800-50790, now, hereby, authorizing the director to amend the draft agreement to limit the expenses of the seller to the prorated amount of real estate taxes due at closing, one-half of the auditor's conveyance fee, and the cost of clearing title and recording fees for any document required to clear title, with the park district paying the balance of the closing costs. Chairwoman Davis seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

D. Chairwoman Davis offered a motion thanking Director Eppink for his dedication over the past year and authorizing an increase in his annual compensation by 3.4 percent on his salary. Commissioner Venner seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

X. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

A. Commissioner Venner commented that he was impressed with the turnout for the Chippewa Lake open house for the collection of public comments on the proposed lake rules. The board would like to submit the comments and stakeholder committee's input to ODNR as soon as possible.

B. Director Eppink will collaborate with Deb Green of ODNR and share the group's comments prior to the stakeholders' meeting.

C. Commissioner Neate commented that it is exciting to have the Brown-Trump Homestead project submitted in the group of finalists for consideration of the *Governor's Award*, but, more importantly, it is a story of the collaboration and strategic planning among the various participants.

D. Commissioner Neate asked the director to provide him with email addresses for the members of the Chippewa Lake stakeholders group as soon as they are available.

E. Commissioner Venner volunteered to participate in the review of the deputy director applications and the hiring process.

F. Director Eppink thanked legal counsel and board members for their time in responding to emails and attending the Chippewa Lake open house. He said that many great things are happening in Medina County with many great people making these things happen.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

A. There being no further business for discussion, Chairwoman Davis declared the meeting adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

We, the undersigned, as Board of Commissioners of Medina County Park District, Medina, Ohio, do certify the above minutes are true and correct as recorded in the board of commissioners' journal, Volume 52.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEDINA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT

NATHAN D. EPPINK
DIRECTOR

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