MINUTES OF THE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

OF

MEDINA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT

November 20, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Chairman Neate called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. at Oenslager Nature Center, 6100 Ridge Road, Sharon Township, Ohio.

B. Roll Call

1. Roll call showed Chairman Neate, Commissioner Davis, and Commissioner Venner present. Also in attendance were Director Eppink, Planning Manager Smith, Business Manager Chaney, Legal Counsel Holland, and *The Gazette* Reporter Patrick Rhonemus.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 16, 2024

1. Commissioner Davis offered a motion approving the minutes of the October 16, 2024 meeting as presented. Commissioner Venner seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A. No members of the public were present; however, Director Eppink had received a question via email from Barbara McGrath of Chippewa Lake prior to the meeting.

1. Ms. McGrath asked the reason why the park board didn't grant a term longer than ten years in the shoreline lease with the village of Chippewa Lake.
   a. Commissioner Davis commented that the board preferred to match the terms in both the lease with Gloria Glens for management of the watercraft program and the shoreline lease with the village of Chippewa Lake.
   b. Chairman Neate agreed with that reasoning as both are similar organizations with similar leases.
   c. Director Eppink added that the Chippewa Yacht Club's lease term is longer as the group provides a programming service to the park district and invests in the property. He acknowledged that, while investing in the shoreline for its members, the village does not offer services to residents outside of village boundaries.
2. Chairman Neate referenced a separate email he had received from Ms. Grath questioning the process and timing of the execution and approval of the shoreline lease agreement with the village of Chippewa Lake.
   a. Director Eppink noted that the order of the execution is, somewhat, immaterial to the email; however, the village counsel issued a reading in session before it had received a copy of the proposed document. An application for probate court approval of the shoreline lease could not happen before a fully-executed lease copy was received.

   b. An executed lease was not in place at the beginning of the boating season in April, so both the village and park district operated on good faith over the summer. Mistakes may have occurred during the drafting, execution, and approval of the lease; however, to what end would they have been intentionally made?
   c. Director Eppink stated that there was no hidden agenda in the process. The park district simply wants to make things better for everyone involved. He noted that he had offered to have a conversation with Ms. McGrath to better understand what she is looking for with various records requests and review of board journals, but she declined the offer.
3. Legal Counsel Holland feels, perhaps, that Ms. McGrath made an honest mistake in reviewing both the Gloria Glens watercraft docking sticker lease and the village of Chippewa Lake shoreline lease. Attorney Holland has reviewed both documents and the process involved in the execution of each and feels no one has attempted to mislead the board or the public.
   a. Attorney Holland noted that the shoreline lease was approved by the park board in July but will not be effective until approved by the probate court. His office's projects are ordered by priority, and he has yet to file for probate court approval as the boating season is over for the year. He apologized and said that his office will file the lease agreement for probate court approval yet this month.
4. Commissioner Davis appreciated the overview of the process and feels that the actual time line for approval of the shoreline lease with the village of Chippewa Lake should be recorded in the minutes.
   a. At the January 2024 board meeting, the director reported that the shoreline lease with the village of Chippewa Lake had expired. Discussion was held with the village law director who asked if the board would consider a lease period longer than ten years. Chairman Neate suggested that it made sense to match the village of Chippewa Lake shoreline lease term with that of the ten-year Gloria Glens lease and to consider expanding the term periods of both leases at a later time.
   b. Director Epink noted that by its February meeting, village council had conducted two readings before receiving a draft lease from Legal Counsel Holland that included blank lines for both the term length and improvements needing to be addressed. In July, the park board approved the shoreline lease with a ten-year term. The lease was executed by the park district and provided to the village law director.
   c. Ms. McGrath made public records requests for the fully-executed document (which the park district hadn't received) and was provided with copies of emails sent to the village's attorney from Director Eppink requesting the executed document. The park district received the executed signature page of the lease in October, and the document was emailed to Ms. McGrath.

5. Chairman Neate asked Legal Counsel Holland for definition of the "petition" to the probate court for approval of a lease. Legal Counsel Holland responded that the "petition" is the formal request to the probate court for approval of a document. It is legal counsel's opinion that probate court approval of leases and similar documents is not required but, rather, is a prudent action to take.
6. Legal Counsel Holland stated that it is clear that Ms. McGrath is a friend of the park district, attends many meetings, and asks questions. It is good to have the public scrutinizing the park district's actions. He feels that Ms. McGrath may have made a mistake in review of the lease process/documents. He does not feel that the park district erred in this instance.
7. Commissioner Venner appreciates that both Director Eppink and Legal Counsel Holland reviewed the park district's actions regarding the process and execution of the shoreline lease with the village of Chippewa Lake. He feels it is good to have these types of discussions in open session to benefit all. It is also good that the residents care about the park district and want assurance that the organization is functioning above board.
8. Director Eppink shared that the park district had provided monthly statistics to the village of Chippewa Lake regarding warnings and citations. He will share summer season statistics and information with the board at the December meeting.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORTS

A. Cash Balance Statement
   1. The October cash balance statement was presented for the board's perusal.

B. Cash Flow Statement
   1. The October cash flow statement was presented for the board's review.

C. Approval of Vouchers
   1. Resolution #24-017, October 2024 Vouchers
      a. Chairman Neate offered a motion approving Resolution #24-017, payment of the October 2024 vouchers, as presented. Commissioner Venner seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

D. Cash Transfers
   1. Resolution #24-018
      a. Commissioner Davis offered a motion approving Resolution #24-018, the second half budgeted cash transfers, as presented. Chairman Neate seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

E. Appropriation Transfers
   1. Ratification of October 10 and November 4, 2024 Appropriation Transfers
      a. Commissioner Davis offered a motion ratifying the $1,000 October 10 and $32,000 November 4, 2024 appropriation transfers within fund 3402. Commissioner Venner seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

V. DIRECTOR/STAFF REPORTS

A. Director's Updates

1. In addition to what was submitted, Director Eppink and the board welcomed Planning Manager Smith back to the park district.
2. As a follow up to the fatal accident that recently occurred at the Chippewa Inlet Trail crossing at State Route 162 and the story that had appeared in *The Gazette*, the director reported that Planning Coordinator Nekich arranged for four new, larger stop signs to be placed (two on each side of the State Route 162 crossings) at both the Chippewa Inlet Trail and Chippewa Rail Trail. In addition, he spoke with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), which will repaint the crosswalks and all painted stop bars at the trails when conditions permit.
    a. Commissioner Davis asked about installation of flashing lights such as those on Sleepy Hollow Road at the Plum Creek Greenway trail. Director Eppink reported that ODOT didn't say no to the installation of lights; however, it wants to start with the stop signs and painting improvements. He noted that the speed limit on Sleepy Hollow is slower, and there are some sight restrictions along the roadway.
    b. Chairman Neate suggested that we see if there is any additional clearing work that could be done at State Route 162 to open the lines of sight along both trails. He stated that, as the park district continues to grow, if there is anything we can do, within reason, to exceed normal expectations, we should do so.
    c. Director Eppink recognized Officer Kellar's efforts as a first responder on scene and those of Administrative Secretary Schrader who was second on scene.
3. Director Eppink reported that six proposals were received from design firms regarding redesign of the park district's website. Marketing Coordinator Teubl is leading the process, and she, Director Eppink, and Development Coordinator Peacock will review proposals and make a selection yet this month. A memo for the board's consideration will be presented at the December meeting.
4. Director Eppink reported that Resource Management Specialist Klepach drafted a request for proposals for water-quality testing at Chippewa Lake to outsource water sampling, lab work, and application of algaecide to free up staff time and gain support from lake/pond experts. He and the natural resources staff members plan to present a memo for the board's consideration at the December meeting with a selection being made by February.
5. Director Eppink announced that the park district won the first-place Award of Excellence from the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA) in the *Capital Projects* (under $500,000) category for the Allardale Playscape project. The awards ceremony will be held Tuesday, February 4, 2025 at Kalahari as part of the OPRA annual conference. He asked the commissioners to let him know if they want to attend.
6. Director Eppink asked the board if it would consider paying the $1,000 appraisal fee that was not included in the closing documents for the park district's purchase of the Mugrage House earlier this year.

a. Chairman Neate offered a motion authorizing payment of the $1,000 appraisal invoice from Country Manor Management & Consultants that was not included in the closing documents for the purchase of the Mugrage house. Commissioner Davis seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

B. Staff Updates
1. Business Manager Chaney reported that the exit conference for the state audit of park district records for the 2022-23 period should be held within the first two weeks of December. Board members will be invited to attend once a date has been selected by the state auditors.
2. Planning Manager Smith reported that three responses were received to the request for qualifications for the Liverpool Wetlands project. The planning department is scheduling meetings with the three firms, Davey, McB, and Schirmer.

C. Monthly Report
1. The October 2024 Monthly Report was presented for the board's review.

D. Departmental Activities
1. The October 2024 Departmental Activity Report was presented for the board's perusal.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. MFC Drilling Letter Agreement
1. Chairman Neate offered a motion authorizing the director to pay the $40,688.10 invoice as received from MFC Drilling for rerouting a portion of the gas line along the Chippewa Inlet Trail, adding shutoff values at each end of the trail, and dropping the existing line three feet below grade as it passes under the new linear wetland/channel in two locations. The payment will be submitted for reimbursement to the H2Ohio program. Commissioner Venner seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2025 Budget
1. A draft of the 2025 Budget was provided to the board for review with no request for action to be taken at this meeting. Business Manager Chaney will add actual 2023 and 2024 year-to-date expenditures and submit the revised draft to the board for further review.
2. Discussion was held regarding proposed staff expansion.

B. Equipment Inventory Minimum
1. Commissioner Davis offered a motion authorizing the director to raise the park district's equipment item inventory minimum cost to $1,000 effective immediately. Commissioner Venner seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

C. Docking at Chippewa Lake
1. Director Eppink and Chairman Neate updated the board on the progress made to date by the Chippewa Lake stakeholders group in its efforts to develop a more easily understood, consistent, and simplified set of rules for docking on Chippewa Lake. The director intends to submit recommendations to the board by the January meeting for approval and implementation by April of 2025.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Chairman Neate offered a motion that the board move into executive session for the discussion of land acquisition to consider the purchase of property for public purposes and the discussion of personnel for the purpose of considering the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official. Commissioner Venner seconded; the motion unanimously carried.
   1. Planning Manager Smith and Business Manager Chaney left the meeting during the discussion of personnel and returned for the discussion of land acquisition.
   2. Chairman Neate left the meeting at 11:09 a.m. during the land acquisition discussion.

B. Vice Chairwoman Davis offered a motion that the board move into regular session. Commissioner Venner seconded; the motion unanimously carried.
   1. Vice Chairwoman Davis offered a motion authorizing the director to accept a gift of 6.61 acres in Liverpool Township, contingent upon probate court approval, and for the park district to pay for closing costs from fund 3403-7800-50790. Commissioner Venner seconded; the motion unanimously carried.

IX. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

A. Vice Chairwoman Davis extended an invitation from the Friends of the Parks Trustees for board members and spouses/guests to attend the group's Christmas party on Wednesday, December 11 at Buffalo Creek Retreat. The event will be catered by Buehler's. A brief business meeting will take place at 5:15 p.m. with dinner and the party to follow around 6 p.m.

B. Director Eppink invited the board and legal counsel to attend the staff holiday party at 11:30 a.m. on December 19 at Buffalo Creek Retreat.

C. Legal Counsel Holland invited the park district staff and board to stop by Holland & Muirden for his company's holiday open house from 4 - 7 p.m. on Thursday, December 5.

X. ADJOURNMENT

A. There being no further business to conduct, Commissioner Venner declared the meeting adjourned at 11:29 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 53.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEDINA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT

NATHAN D. EPPINK
DIRECTOR

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