

Regular Board Meeting – April 22, 2020

Resolution Summary

Resolution	Description	Byers	Dalton	Doneghy	Luetke	Savage	
Resolution No. 20-20	Ratification of Schedule of Payables – February, 2020			Motioned	2 nd		Approved
Resolution No. 21-20	Ratification of Schedule of Payables – March, 2020	2 nd			Motioned		Approved
Resolution No. 22-20	Approval Supplement and Amendment of the 2020 Certificate of Estimated Resources and Appropriations Measure	Motioned		2 nd			Approved
Resolution No. 23-20	Authorization to Request Funding Through the U.S. Department of Transportation			Motioned	2 nd		Approved
Resolution No. 24-20	Authorization to Request Funding Through the U.S. Department of the Interior	2 nd			Motioned		Approved
Resolution No. 25-20	Authorization to Request Support Through the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Motioned		2 nd			Approved
Resolution No. 26-20	Authorization to Purchase a Marsh Master Vehicle for Natural Resources Department from Coast Machinery LLC			Motioned	2 nd		Approved
Resolution No. 27-20	Contract Award, Glass City Metropark Design and Engineering	2 nd			Motioned		Approved
Resolution No. 28-20	Approval of Development Agreement with the City of Toledo for Phase 2 of Glass City Metropark	Motioned		2 nd			Approved

The mission of Metroparks of the Toledo Area is to conserve the region's natural resources by creating, developing, improving, protecting, and promoting clean, safe, and natural parks and open spaces for the benefit, enjoyment, education, and general welfare of the public.



Board Minutes

METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT OF THE TOLEDO AREA
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2020, 8:30 A.M.
VIDEO CONFERENCE – LIVE STREAM

Commissioners Present:

Scott Savage, President
Fritz Byers, Vice President
Lera Doneghy, Vice President
Molly Luetke, Officer
Kevin Dalton, Officer

Dave Zenk, Executive Director

Dave Smigelski, Legal Counsel

Staff Present: Matt Cleland, Jill Molnar, Allen Gallant, Ally Effler, Carrie Alexander, Emily Ziegler, Joe Fausnaugh, Matt Killam, Scott Carpenter, Tim Schetter, Shannon Hughes, and Bethany Sattler.

1. NON-RESOLUTION BOARD ITEMS

President Scott Savage called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Mr. Savage led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Savage expressed his gratitude to Metroparks' staff for continuing to operate the parks in the high-quality manner that is expected of the agency.

2. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Fritz Byers made a motion to approve the consent agenda and for the disposition of the minutes for the regular Board meeting held on February 19, 2020. This motion was seconded by Mrs. Lera Doneghy and approved.

3. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS FROM DIRECTOR AND EMPLOYEES OF THE DISTRICT FOR REVIEW

A. Agency-Wide Update – Senior Team

Mr. Dave Zenk gave an overview of the changes made within Metroparks Toledo in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Metroparks has adjusted its operations foremost to support a safe environment for staff and visitors, but also to continue efforts to keep its parks open and largely operational. Many of Metroparks' decisions were on the leading edge of the pandemic response, often were made before government

mandates, and helped to shape best practices for parks during this time.

Mr. Zenk reported that Metroparks Toledo's overall park visitation is up by about thirty-eight percent (38%) from this time last year, showing the importance of Metroparks to the area's residents. He recognized the efforts of Metroparks Toledo's staff, which have allowed operations to continue, and thanked park users who have followed guidelines to allow the parks to remain open safely.

Mr. Matt Cleland provided an update on the finance and employee services departments' operations. The finance department has made significant adjustments in accounts payable and payroll processes to support continued smooth operations. The employee services department has provided Metroparks Toledo's staff with the information and support needed to adjust to new ways of working.

Ms. Carrie Alexander provided an overview of the coronavirus protocols put in place for employees. Metroparks distributed and explained a comprehensive guideline to employees regarding how they should respond if they experience symptoms of illness, need to take time off for childcare, and other related needs. As of this meeting, Metroparks has not laid off any employees due to the pandemic situation. Mr. Zenk explained that the nature of Metroparks Toledo's work generally allows for safe working conditions to comply with social distancing mandates.

Ms. Alexander next discussed the staff performance evaluations which Metroparks completed at the beginning of March 2020, and the Predictive Index Survey results which are in the process of being analyzed and reported out to the agency. She noted that strategic planning for earned income is also continuing with key partnerships.

Mr. Allen Gallant provided an update on the current grants process. Various funding agencies have been flexible in their deadlines for applications and funding reports. Metroparks Toledo submitted applications for grants totaling almost \$2.6 million in March 2020 alone. Mr. Gallant has also been in touch with community services partners to ensure Metroparks is available to assist those partners however it is able.

Ms. Shannon Hughes gave an update on Metroparks Toledo's programming during this time. The programming staff has adapted to provide virtual programs that can be completed at home and in compliance with social distancing guidelines. Each week programming provides videos, at-home activities, and other camp-focused activities to keep children engaged in the absence of traditional in-park options. Prior to the stay-at-home order taking effect, Metroparks Toledo's programming staff prepared over 90 activities and videos for use during the period in which staff could not be together.

Ms. Hughes reported that Metroparks Explorer Bags is a significant program which has resulted from this time period. This program provides children with instructions and supplies to complete nature-themed activities at home. Metroparks is distributing these bags through programs like Connecting Kids to Meals to allow children to receive these activities with their weekly free meals. As of this meeting, the programming department has another 75 days of activities in the queue. Additionally, naturalists and programming staff have offered ways for park users to interact with them virtually, by phone, email, or video conference, to stay connected to Metroparks.

Mr. Matt Killam provided an overview of special events. The events staff has utilized on-hand supplies to promote using less-visited parks in an effort to avoid overcrowding and keep visitors safe and connected to nature. Metroparks has worked with community partners to encourage interactions, such as an Earth Day Bake Off competition with The Blade. The Outdoor Expo, previously scheduled for late April, was cancelled in an effort to keep park users safe, with the goal of providing similar connection opportunities at events scheduled for the fall, if appropriate and safe.

Social media engagement statistics show an increase in people interacting with Metroparks and utilizing the content provided. The reach of Metroparks social media content has increased over two hundred percent (200%) with over 1,000 new followers. The programming and events staff have worked to communicate social distancing requirements and encourage park users to heed those recommendations so the parks can stay open safely.

Mr. Tim Schetter provided an update on the natural resources work completed recently. The removal phase of the pine management work at Oak Openings is complete and restoration work is ready to commence. Over 3,000 trees were planted at Fallen Timbers Battlefield. A partnership with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources is helping to install nesting platforms for shorebirds at Howard Marsh. The Blue Creek Seed Nursery currently has about 70,000 plants in production, many of which will be utilized at Glass City Metropark. The deer management program has concluded, with over 10,000 pounds of venison donated to area foodbanks; this program is seeing success at improving the vegetation browse in key areas. The research and monitoring programs for endangered and threatened species has continued, providing key data for research. In the coming months, Metroparks will acquire 132 acres of new parkland utilizing \$1.2 million in grant funds. The Secor expansion planning and restoration work has started, with anticipated completion in 2022. Farming will be utilized as a way to recondition the prior golf course property to prime the land for native plants to return at a later time. The second phase of the Howard Marsh expansion will begin this summer as well.

Mr. Joe Fausnaugh provided an update on Metroparks Toledo's operations. The field staff has been very flexible and innovative in working through new requirements and ways of operating. The rangers are key leaders in how to address community policing during this time to support park visitor safety and health. Rolling start times and distancing requirements are in place to keep staff safe when working on-site. Some volunteer assistance has been integrated to help with key services, such as Volunteer Trail Patrol and Garden Keepers.

Construction on the Accessible Garden at Toledo Botanical Garden has started, with expected completion in June. The Bancroft Street side of Toledo Botanical Garden is being utilized as a coronavirus testing site, with Metroparks Toledo's staff quickly responding to prepare the area to make that possible. Additionally, Metroparks' rangers have been asked to provide security at the Seagate Center in the event that site is needed as an emergency medical facility. Mr. Fausnaugh emphasized that he has received feedback that Metroparks Toledo is a leader in all aspects of the coronavirus response.

Ms. Ally Effler provided an overview of the philanthropy department's changes during this time. Metroparks has increased communications with donors and members, both in email and on a personal level. Park users have expressed how important the parks are during this time, and the philanthropy department is working to ensure supporters understand how important they are in keeping the parks open and operational at the high-quality level expected. New virtual experiences are keeping members and donors engaged with park activities, including email newsletters, a member book club, virtual Coffee with the Birds program, and virtual updates.

Ms. Emily Ziegler gave an update on planning and construction projects. Improvements have started at Fort Miamis, including a new observation deck and shoreline improvements at the river level. Manhattan Marsh construction has continued, with the parking lot, observation decks, trails, and boardwalk all started and expected to conclude in next few months.

Significant activity is in progress at Glass City Metropark. The outline for the event lawn is taking shape with the event pavilion to begin construction soon. The kayak cove and boardwalk also are outlined. The new path for Riverside Drive has been graded to move vehicle traffic further from the river.

The Cannaley Treehouse Village construction is in its final stages, with unique features added to the interiors and exteriors. The themes for each treehouse are appearing as the finishing details are installed. The grand opening events are delayed due to social distancing and gathering restrictions, but Metroparks hopes they will occur later in the summer.

Mr. Zenk gave a brief update on the communications issued recently, including many media interviews and news articles about Metroparks Toledo. He emphasized that the work receiving media coverage is just a sampling of the Metroparks' everyday work and efforts during this time.

Mr. Kevin Dalton expressed his appreciation for the work of Metroparks Toledo's staff and the importance of their efforts during this time.

Mr. Byers expressed gratitude for the continued work that Metroparks Toledo's staff has accomplished. He explained that during this crisis, Metroparks Toledo is shining in the community and demonstrating its best

qualities. The agency's core competencies are elevated to a new level, and the staff has ensured that the high esteem Metroparks Toledo holds in the community has not only been maintained, but highlighted and enhanced.

Mr. Savage emphasized the amount of trust placed in all who work for Metroparks Toledo, and said that the staff has provided inspiration in continuing its hard work.

B. Matt Cleland, Deputy Director & Treasurer – Treasurer's Report

Mr. Cleland provided an overview of Metroparks Toledo's financials. The capital outlay exceeded the budgeted funds, but were encumbered in 2019 and therefore do not affect the current budget. All other items are on track with nothing out of the ordinary. Metroparks does not expect to see a radical change in revenues due to the pandemic, but Mr. Cleland noted that earned revenue will decrease due to the cancellation of rentals and programs, which Metroparks will monitor in the coming months. Some increased expenses have arisen due to a shift in employee expenses, which may be offset later in the year with fewer seasonal hires. The budget will be closely monitored for the remainder of the year to determine if any adjustments need to occur in response to increased expenses or decreased revenue.

Mr. Savage inquired about contingency planning to-date and if the board could receive a report at the next board meeting. Mr. Cleland responded that the timing of cash flows may be affected, but not the overall amount. Finance will provide a report at the next meeting about any known deviations and the plan to accommodate them.

Mr. Zenk commented that Metroparks has asked all budget holders to identify expenses in their departments that can be delayed if necessary.

4. BOARD APPROVAL OF CONTRACTS, DEEDS, AGREEMENTS, ETC.

A. Mrs. Doneghy offered and moved for adoption of the following resolution, with a second by Ms. Luetke:

Resolution No. 20-20– Ratification of Schedule of Payables - February

After discussion and upon unanimous vote the resolution was declared duly adopted and recorded in the appendix to these minutes.

B. Ms. Luetke offered and moved for adoption of the following resolution, with a second by Mr. Byers:

Resolution No. 21-20 – Ratification of Schedule of Payables - March

After discussion and upon unanimous vote the resolution was declared duly adopted and recorded in the appendix to these minutes.

C. Mr. Byers offered and moved for adoption of the following resolution, with a second by Mrs. Doneghy:

Resolution No. 22-20 – Approval Supplement and Amendment of the 2020 Certificate of Estimated Resources and Appropriations Measure

Mr. Cleland explained that certain grant and donated funds for planning, natural resources, and summer camps will be available to ensure specific projects move along in a timely manner.

After discussion and upon unanimous vote the resolution was declared duly adopted and recorded in the appendix to these minutes.

- D. Mrs. Doneghy offered and moved for adoption of the following resolution, with a second by Ms. Luetke:

Resolution No. 23-20 – Authorization to Request Funding Through the U.S. Department of Transportation

Mr. Gallant explained that this grant would provide funds to support Glass City Metropark and Riverwalk with the building of multi-motile access points. Metroparks is partnering with TMACOG for this grant for TMACOG's transportation expertise, with Metroparks providing the grant writing and budgeting work. Metroparks will provide the match required for this grant. Metroparks has applied for this grant previously, and uses knowledge gained from prior attempts to provide the best possible application this time.

After discussion and upon unanimous vote the resolution was declared duly adopted and recorded in the appendix to these minutes.

- E. Ms. Luetke offered and moved for adoption of the following resolution, with a second by Mr. Byers:

Resolution No. 24-20 – Authorization to Request Funding Through the U.S. Department of the Interior

Mr. Gallant explained this grant would provide funding for Glass City Metropark for urban camping and improving outdoor recreation access in underserved areas. This process is two-fold: first ODNR reviews the application; second, if ODNR accepts the application, the National Park Service reviews it. Metroparks anticipates receiving a decision about the funding by year-end.

After discussion and upon unanimous vote the resolution was declared duly adopted and recorded in the appendix to these minutes.

- F. Mr. Byers offered and moved for adoption of the following resolution, with a second by Mrs. Doneghy:

Resolution No. 25-20 – Authorization to Request Support Through the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Mr. Gallant explained this grant would support shoreline restoration at Glass City Metropark. Funds are available to assist in restoring the shoreline as a result of prior damage settlements paid to OEPA from hazardous substance releases in the western Lake Erie basin, so Metroparks anticipates that this particular funding source likely will not be available again. Metroparks Toledo will apply for the entire amount available through this fund; no match is required if this grant is awarded.

After discussion and upon unanimous vote the resolution was declared duly adopted and recorded in the appendix to these minutes.

- G. Mrs. Doneghy offered and moved for adoption of the following resolution, with a second by Ms. Luetke:

Resolution No. 26-20 – Authorization to Purchase a Marsh Master Vehicle for Natural Resources Department from Coast Machinery LLC

Mr. Fausnaugh explained this piece of equipment would be utilized for natural resource management at Howard Marsh. Metroparks is pursuing a refurbished unit to reduce costs and to determine the overall needs for this type of equipment in preparation for whenever another new unit become necessary.

After discussion and upon unanimous vote the resolution was declared duly adopted and recorded in the appendix to these minutes.

- H. Ms. Luetke offered and moved for adoption of the following resolution, with a second by Mr. Byers:

Resolution No. 27-20 – Contract Award, Glass City Metropark Design and Engineering

Ms. Ziegler explained that Metroparks Toledo desires to contract with SmithGroup JJR for additional design and engineering at Glass City Metropark. This is in response to grant funding which will be available starting in June 2020, which allows for the addition of new features to the master plan, and necessitates additional consultation with SmithGroup.

After discussion and upon unanimous vote the resolution was declared duly adopted and recorded in the appendix to these minutes.

- I. Mr. Byers offered and moved for adoption of the following resolution, with a second by Mrs. Doneghy:

Resolution No. 28-20 – Approval of Development Agreement with the City of Toledo for Phase 2 of Glass City Metropark

Ms. Ziegler explained that due to a large number of necessary coordinating items between Metroparks Toledo and the City of Toledo, a development agreement is needed accommodate planning. This agreement will allow conversations to occur to work collectively with the City to redesign site layout and transportation access, among other features. This agreement also provides the option for the City to sell International Park to Metroparks in the amount of \$1.00, which would allow Metroparks to drive the planning of that site in the overall scheme of the Riverwalk masterplan. Toledo City Council passed this agreement the previous day.

Mr. Zenk thanked the City of Toledo, Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz, and Mr. Brandon Sehlhorst, Commissioner of Economic and Business Development at City of Toledo, for their partnership in making this possible.

Mr. Byers emphasized that this agreement is the culmination of years of planning for the revitalization and renaissance of the downtown riverfront. He acknowledged the many public and private entities that are working in partnership with Metroparks to bolster the region. This resolution moves Metroparks Toledo forward significantly to make its vision a reality. This project and Metroparks itself display future thinking and hope particularly during these uncertain times.

After discussion and upon unanimous vote the resolution was declared duly adopted and recorded in the appendix to these minutes.

5. BOARD INITIATED TOPICS AND DISCUSSIONS

Mr. Savage reiterated his thanks for Metroparks Toledo’s staff. He also expressed that anyone who is observing this meeting virtually who has questions should reach out to Mr. Scott Carpenter.

With no further business or action to be taken, Mrs. Doneghy made a motion to adjourn the Board meeting at 10:26 a.m., which was seconded by Ms. Luetke and approved.



Scott Savage, President

Attest: 

Dave Zenk, Executive Director

DDZ/bas
4/22/20