

Minutes of the 773<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District held on Tuesday, November 29, 2011 at 8:00 a.m. at the Metro Parks Headquarters.

**Present**

Commissioners: Ms. Beasley, Mr. McNealey, Mr. Lashutka

Staff: Mr. O'Meara, Mr. Peck, Mr. Ruff, Ms. Telfer, Ms. Hanley, Ms. Sangale, Mr. Studenmund, Ms. Turpening

Legal Counsel: Mr. Franzmann

Guests: None

Mr. Lashutka asked if all of the notice requirements of Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code and the rules of this Board regarding open meetings have been complied with for this meeting. The Executive Director responded that yes, all of those requirements and rules have been met.

**Budget Discussion**

The Director presented the proposed goals and budget for 2012. The budget proposal was discussed in detail. The budget reflects the significant reduction in income due primarily to changes in State law. The Director noted that Local Government Funds, which are received from the State, are being phased out. Tangible Personal Property Taxes are also being eliminated, further reducing future revenue.

Property tax revenues are projected to be \$20,821,000, which is a reduction from 2011. Mr. McNealey suggested that property tax revenues are likely to decline further due to reassessments with declining property values.

The Director reviewed the financial projections. He explained that the Estimated Ending Cash Balance of \$7.5 million for 2011 includes dedicated funds that can only be spent for land acquisition in accordance with the Rocky Fork agreement, and other restricted funds.

The Director noted that the budget for the Blacklick Woods Golf Course is substantially different than in previous years. The golf courses have been losing money in recent years and several actions are being implemented with the hope of returning the golf courses to profitability. The golf learning center will be open in the spring. The concession service that operated food services and managed the reservable 'activities room' at the course is being terminated. Metro Parks will self operate this responsibility beginning in January. It is expected to take a while to attract golfers and room reservations back to the golf courses following the improvements, and this is likely to delay return to profitability. It is anticipated that we will earn substantially more revenue in 2012 than in 2011.

A list of the more expensive pieces of equipment was presented and the major proposed equipment purchases were reviewed. The most expensive purchase would be a new tram to replace the existing tram, which has many maintenance issues.

The Director recommended adding a few new positions to accomplish Metro Parks' goals. The Director also outlined the proposed major construction projects and initiatives for 2012, which include several trail construction projects, new facilities at Walnut Woods Metro Park, park improvements at Scioto Audubon Metro Park, habitat restoration efforts, and a first phase of construction at Rocky Fork Metro Park.

The Director noted that of the \$7.5 million proposed for land acquisition; \$4 million will be dedicated to Rocky Fork Metro Park in keeping with commitments and funding from partners. Other allocations are targeted to fulfilling commitments that were made with passage of the Metro Parks levy in 2009.

**Public Comment**

No Public Comment

**Resolutions**

The Board considered the following resolutions:

#5260 RELATIVE TO THE ADOPTION OF THE 2012 BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR 2012

The Board approved Resolution #5260 Relative to the Adoption of the 2012 Budget and Appropriation of Funds for 2012.

**Executive Session**

Mr. McNealey moved to enter into executive session at 9:19 a.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel and land acquisition. Ms. Beasley seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Ms. Beasley Yes  
Mr. McNealey Yes  
Mr. Lashutka Yes

The Board returned from executive session at 10:15 a.m.

Ms. Telfer presented information on health care benefits for 2012. Franklin County has not yet established costs for Metro Parks or for the employee premiums for the new plan year beginning in April 2012. The Board expressed concern over potential health care premium costs that may exceed the raises that are being recommended for 2012 in the following resolution. They complimented the great work that Metro Parks' employees perform and expressed disappointment that the budget and economic conditions limited the size of the increases that are available. The Board indicated they will revisit this issue and the impact on employees after information on the health care plan becomes available in January.

#5261 ESTABLISHING JOB CLASSIFICATIONS, THE GENERAL PAY PLAN AND RELATED POLICIES

The Board adopted resolution #5261 effective the first full pay period of March 2012.

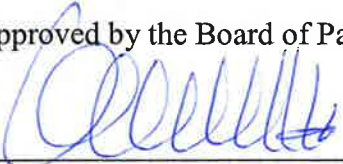
The Board discussed the Director's request for an extended leave of absence in 2012. The Director will be out of the country from approximately March 23, 2012 through June 1, 2012. He will not have enough accrued leave to be on a paid leave of absence for the entire time. Following discussion, Mr. McNealey made a motion to approve Director O'Meara's request for a leave of absence from approximately March 23 through June 1, 2012, including unpaid leave for a two week period during May. Ms. Beasley seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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John R. O'Meara, Executive Director

Approved by the Board of Park Commissioners:

  
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Gregory Lashutka, Chair