

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS OF MILL CREEK
METROPARKS

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of Mill Creek MetroParks was held on Monday, September 15, 2025.

The meeting opened at 5:00 p.m., with a recitation of The Pledge of Allegiance.

Germaine Bennett, Board President welcomed staff and guests.

Roll Call was as follows:

Germaine Bennett;	Present
Lee Frey;	Absent
Tom Frost,	Present
Jeff Harvey;	Absent
Paul Olivier;	Present

The Board was presented with the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 11, 2025. Germaine accepted the minutes into the record as written.

Nick Morschak, Finance Director/Treasurer presented the Department Report for Finance and requested that disbursements #96025 – #96379 for a total of \$1,828,597.63, be approved. Germaine Bennett moved, at the request of the Finance Director, that the funds having been certified as on hand and duly appropriated, that disbursements #96025 – #96379 for a total of \$1,828,597.63 be approved as presented. The motion was seconded by Tom Frost and after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye:	Bennett, Frost, Olivier
Voting Nay:	None

Nick Morschak, Finance Director/Treasurer presented and requested approval of Resolution R-25-10 Requesting accepting the amounts and rates as determined by the Budget Commission and authorizing the necessary tax levies and certifying them to the County Auditor. Germaine Bennett moved, at the request of the Finance Director, that Resolution R-25-10 Requesting accepting the amounts and rates as determined by the Budget Commission and authorizing the necessary tax levies and certifying them to the County Auditor, be approved as presented. The motion was seconded by Paul Olivier and after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye:	Bennett, Frost, Olivier
Voting Nay:	None

R-25-10

**RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE AMOUNTS AND RATES AS DETERMINED BY
THE BUDGET COMMISSION AND AUTHORIZING THE NECESSARY TAX LEVIES
AND CERTIFYING THEM TO THE COUNTY AUDITOR**

Revised Code Sections 5705.34-5705.35

The Board of Park Commissioners of Mill Creek Metropolitan Park District, Mahoning County, Ohio, met in _____ Session on the _____ day of _____, 2025, at the office of _____ with the following members present:

Mr./Ms. _____ moved the adoption of the following Resolution:

RESOLVED, By the Board of Park Commissioners of Mill Creek Metropolitan Park District, Mahoning County, Ohio, in accordance with the provisions of law has previously adopted a Tax Budget or has been granted the authority by the Mahoning County Budget Commission to waive this requirement for the next succeeding fiscal year commencing January 1, 2026; and

WHEREAS, The Budget Commission of Mahoning County, Ohio, has certified its action thereon to this Board together with an estimate by the County Auditor of the rate of each tax necessary to be levied by this Board, and what part thereof is without, and what part within, the ten mill limitation; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the Board of Park Commissioners of Mill Creek Metropolitan Park District, Mahoning County, Ohio, that the amounts and rates as determined by the Budget Commission in its certification, be and the same are hereby accepted; and be it further

RESOLVED, That there be and is hereby levied on the tax duplicate of said Township the rate of each tax necessary to be levied within and without the ten mill limitation as follows:

SCHEDULE A

**SUMMARY OF AMOUNTS REQUIRED FROM GENERAL PROPERTY TAX
APPROVED BY BUDGET COMMISSION AND COUNTY AUDITOR'S ESTIMATED
TAX RATES**

Fund	Amount Approved by Budget Commission Inside 10 Mill Limitation	Amount To Be Derived from Levies Outside 10 Mill Limitation	County Auditor's Estimate of Tax to be Levied Inside 10 Mill Limit	County Auditor's Estimate of Tax to be Levied Outside 10 Mill Limit
General Fund		8,516,684		2.00
Total		\$ 8,516,684		2.00

SCHEDULE B
CURRENT PROPERTY VALUES AND
LEVIES OUTSIDE 10 MILL LIMITATION, EXCLUSIVE OF DEBT LEVIES
(see attached)

And be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of this Board be and is hereby directed to certify a copy of this Resolution to the County Auditor of said County.

Mr./Ms. _____ seconded the Resolution and the roll being called upon its adoption the vote resulted as follows:

Mr./Ms. _____

Mr./Ms. _____

Mr./Ms. _____

Adopted the _____ day of _____, 2025.

Finance Director of the Board of Park Commissioners of
Mill Creek Metropolitan Park District
Mahoning County, Ohio

**CERTIFICATE OF COPY
ORIGINAL ON FILE**

The State of Ohio, Mahoning County, ss.

I, _____, Secretary of the Board of Park Commissioners of Mill Creek Metropolitan Park District in said County, and in whose custody the Files and Records of said Board are required by the laws of the State of Ohio to be kept, do hereby certify that the foregoing is taken and copied from the original _____

now on file with said Board, that the foregoing has been compared by me with said original document, and that the same is a true and correct copy thereof.

WITNESS my signature this _____ day of _____, 2025.

Finance Director of the Board of Park Commissioners of
Mill Creek Metropolitan Park District
Mahoning County, Ohio

A copy of this resolution must be certified to the Mahoning County Auditor within the time prescribed by section 5705.34 of the Ohio Revised Code, or at such a later date as may be approved by the Board of tax appeals.

Filed _____, 2025

Ralph T. Meacham, CPA, County Auditor

By _____

Deputy Auditor

Page 4

Aaron Young, Executive Director, shared that the Ford Nature Center has received an honor award from the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Ohio Design Awards for Additions, Renovations and Restorations.

Justin Rogers, Director of Planning & Operations presented Resolution R-25-11 Authorizing the MetroParks Executive Director to apply for Clean Ohio Conservation Program Funds, for approval. The grant will be used for capital improvements to Egypt Swamp Preserve in the form of an entrance drive, parking lot, signage and invasive species removal. Egypt Swamp Preserve was previously acquired using the same Clean Ohio grant Program. The grant will cover 75% of the total costs which are expected to be \$150,000. Germaine Bennett moved at the request of the Director of Planning & Operations that Resolution R-25-11 Authorizing the MetroParks Executive Director to apply for Clean Ohio Conservation Program Funds, be approved. The motion was seconded by Tom Frost, after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye: Bennett, Frost, Olivier
Voting Nay: None

R-25-11

**Resolution Authorizing MetroParks Executive Director to Apply for
Clean Ohio Conservation Program Funds**

WHEREAS, the Board of Park Commissioners of the Mill Creek Metropolitan Park District, operating under Chapter 1545 of the Ohio Revised Code, intends to apply to the Ohio Public Works Commission for Clean Ohio Conservation Program Funds.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the MetroParks Executive Director is hereby authorized to apply, on behalf of the Board of Park Commissioners, to the Ohio Public Works Commission for Clean Ohio Conservation Program funds, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MetroParks Executive Director is further authorized to enter into any agreements as may be necessary and appropriate for obtaining this financial assistance.

This Resolution passed this 15th day of September, 2025.



Germaine Bennett, President



Paul Olivier, Vice-President



Tom Frost, Commissioner

Jeff Harvey, Commissioner

Lee Frey, Commissioner

Justin Rogers, Director of Planning & Operations presented Resolution R-25-12 Authorizing the MetroParks Executive Director to apply for Transportation Alternative Program Funds, for approval. Germaine Bennett moved at the request of the Director of Planning & Operations that Resolution R-25-12 Authorizing the MetroParks Executive Director to apply for Transportation Alternative Program Funds, be approved. The motion was seconded by Paul Olivier, after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye: Bennett, Frost, Olivier
Voting Nay: None

R-25-12

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING METROPARKS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO APPLY FOR
FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP) GRANT FUNDS**

A RESOLUTION ALLOWING THE MILL CREEK METROPARKS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS OF THE MILL CREEK METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT, TO APPLY FOR FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP) GRANT FUNDS PROGRAMMED BY THE EASTGATE REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (Eastgate).

WHEREAS, eligible TAP projects must demonstrate a direct relationship to the surface transportation and integrate transportation facilities into their surrounding communities and the natural environment; and

WHEREAS, eligible TAP projects are defined as:

- (1) Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic calming techniques, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure, and transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990;
- (2) Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs; and

WHEREAS, projects undertaken by Mill Creek MetroParks will be consistent in scope, description, purpose and need, logical termini, and cost within the parameters of the TAP program and mission of Mill Creek MetroParks with focus and goals of preservation and improvement of important and historic transportation facilities, connection of transportation infrastructure, aesthetic character, function, accessibility, and safety considerations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Park Commissioners of the Mill Creek Metropolitan Park District, Mahoning County, State of Ohio:

SECTION 1. That the Executive Director of Mill Creek MetroParks, on behalf of the Board of Park Commissioners, is hereby authorized to apply for Federal Transportation Alternative (TAP) Funds programmed by the Eastgate Regional Council of Governments.

SECTION 2. That Mill Creek MetroParks acknowledges and understands the Eastgate "Funding Policy Guidelines" and confirms to the best of its knowledge that the information contained in the project application is accurate, that it intends to diligently pursue that project, and that a local share is required to match federal funds.

SECTION 3. That it is hereby found and determined that all formal actions of the Board of Park Commissioners concerning and relating to the passage of this Resolution were taken in an open

meeting of this Board and that all deliberations of this Board and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal action were meeting open to the public and in compliance with the law.

SECTION 4. This Resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety convenience and welfare of the patrons, personnel and visitors of Mill Creek Park, for the reason that it is to apply for this funding within the next thirty (30) days, and provided that it receives the approval of a majority of the members of the Board, shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval; otherwise to be in full force and effect from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

This Resolution passed this 15th day of September 2025.



Germaine Bennett, President



Paul Olivier, Vice President



Tom Frost, Commissioner

Jeff Harvey, Commissioner

Lee Frey, Commissioner

Chris Litton, Development Director presented the MetroParks Foundation donation report for the period of August 1-31, 2025, at a total of \$23,066.69 for approval. Germaine Bennett moved at the request of the Director of Development to accept the donation report for the period of August 1-31, 2025, at a total of \$23,066.69. The motion was seconded by Tom Frost, after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye: Bennett, Frost, Olivier
Voting Nay: None

Public Comments to the Board: (see sign-in sheet)

- Germaine Bennett commented that due to previous interruptions and outbursts during public comment sessions, MetroParks consulted with attorney Elizabeth Farbman of Roth, Blair, Roberts, Strasfeld & Lodge and will read the following statement to begin public comment:

As we begin the public comment period, we remind everyone that we appreciate your attendance and welcome your comments but to review some parameters,

1. This meeting is for the Board to conduct Park business. It is open to the public per The Ohio Open Meetings Act, under Ohio Revised Code Chapter 121, but the public comment period is at the Board's discretion.
2. The Public Comment section of the meeting is not interactive, it is an opportunity for comments to be expressed to the Board.

- 3. If you have questions about specific topics, we encourage you to directly contact the appropriate member of the management team.
- 4. Each speaker is limited to 3 minutes so that others have a chance to speak.
- 5. Comments must be related to Park business.
- 6. We remind the attendees that per the Ohio Open Meetings Act, we cannot accept any disruptive behavior, nor will we accept any derogatory comments aimed at the Park, the Board, or its staff.
- 7. The Ohio Open Meetings Act establishes the right of the citizens to hear, but not to be heard or disrupt.
- 8. We, as the members of the MetroPark Board are proud to operate in a transparent manner. We ask that all attendees refrain from disrupting the Board's meeting. Failure to do so will result in that disruptive person being removed from the meeting and barred from future meetings. Courts in the State of Ohio have upheld such removals and explained that such removal neither violates the First nor the Fourteenth Amendments.
- 9. We do thank you for your comments and active interest in the Board's activities and look forward to making the Mill Creek MetroParks an even stronger institution and more beautiful park system for all of the citizens of the county.

- Dennis Sanchez complimented the MetroParks police on their professionalism. Dennis stated that God is the commander of life and that a child will show them the way. Dennis claimed that the FBI will investigate false claims involving his family. He also has a folder addressed to the President of the United States with information pertaining to how he has been treated by the MetroParks. He stated that individuals should use Mr. & Mrs. prior to addressing individuals.
- Lana Van Auker stated that she is with the Save the Deer Group. Lana read from a prepared statement from the humane society related to the control of deer populations and the benefits of wildlife. She quoted author David Attenborough related to providing a home for all life on earth.
- Jerry Serbel stated that he is 85 years old and lives across from Mill Creek Park. He is in disagreement with the deer management program for the past 3 years. He questioned the deer per square mile figure quoted by the media as well as the MetroParks. He is ashamed of the Park for killing so many deer.
- Robert Dixon signed in but declined to speak.
- Joyce Lovrame signed in but declined to speak.
- Ray Thomas thanked the MetroParks for responding and putting out a comment on the use of electric bikes. He believes the MetroParks should try another way other than killing the deer, recommending sterilization.
- Andrea Yeaton stated that she lives in Youngstown. She questioned how to contact the staff to have a debate.
- Kathy Maine questioned the reason for killing more deer when the current count is only 14.9 per square mile. She asked if she has a right to ask a question. She stated that the program is terrible. She stated that she sees squirrels but not deer in the Park.

Commissioner Comments:

- Paul Olivier asked Aaron a few questions regarding the use of sterilization of deer and thanked the MetroParks Police for their assistance of Boardman Township over the weekend.
- Tom Frost congratulated administration on the awards received for the Ford Nature Center.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 14, 2025, at 5:00 p.m., in McMahon Hall located at the MetroParks Farm.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:15 p.m. There was a motion to adjourn

Presiding Officer

Secretary