

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
FINANCIAL HEALTH DISCUSSION
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS**

March 8, 2024

A meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners (BOPC) was held at Five Rivers MetroParks Main Office, 409 E. Monument Avenue, Dayton, Ohio, on March 8, 2024, and convened at 9:22 a.m. on a roll call vote by the Board of Park Commissioners.

Present:

Five Rivers MetroParks Commission President Karen L. Davis, Commissioner Jessica Salem, Commissioner Bear Monita, Chief Executive Officer Karen Hesser, Chief of Philanthropy Alexis Larsen, Chief of Planning and Projects Carrie Scarff, Chief of Administration Bill Tschirhart, and Executive Assistant Christianna Romer.

Visitors Present: None

Financial Health Discussion:

- Chief Executive Officer Karen Hesser presented the BOPC with information gathered in response to their request for staff to explore cuts and look inward for solutions to address the agency's budgetary deficit to address repair and replacement needs.
 - The leadership team has reviewed additional ways that MetroParks can tighten our financial belt with operational cuts while still maintaining public engagement. Cutting budgets is not new for MetroParks. We have been evaluating and cutting budgets for more than a decade. Discretionary operational budgets have remained essentially frozen since 2012, with fluctuations due only to legal and contractual obligations to increase it or budgetary items such as utilities.
 - Capital budgets have averaged \$2.2 million per year, with Capital spending for new amenities since 2019 totaling only \$172,007, representing less than 2% of the overall total capital spend. The agency's Comprehensive Master Plan adopted in 2016, recommends new capital spending at \$660,000 - \$1,000,000 per year.
 - The team has identified \$700,000 from the 2024 budget that will be reallocated to deferred maintenance. This will affect the Operating Budget and Personnel, requiring freezing certain positions, which will impact all areas of the agency. Positions will be continually evaluated for unintended consequences. These reductions would stay in place until a replacement levy is secured.
 - Potential public impacts include the reduction of public programs, the elimination of major events and pausing the implementation of The Suns.

- The BOPC was presented with a summary of options for a Replacement Levy in either 2024, 2025, or 2026. Each would cost the average taxpayer \$43/year or \$3.58/month.

Visitor Comments: None

Next Board Meeting:

- The BOPC agreed to hold the next regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, April 17 at 1:00 p.m. at Five Rivers MetroParks main office. The BOPC directed the Secretary of the Board to give notice of this meeting and all subsequent meetings pursuant to the rule adopted by the BOPC.

Adjournment: On a motion by Commissioner Salem, the BOPC adjourned the meeting at 10:26 a.m.

Approved:

President Karen L. Davis

Attest: _____