

**Minutes**  
**Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority**  
**Board of Commissioners Meeting**  
**Thursday, October 8, 2015**

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The regular meeting of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority's Board of Commissioners was held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, October 8, 2015 at Wolcott Mill Metropark at Camp Rotary.

Commissioners Present:	John C. Hertel Robert W. Marans Anthony V. Marrocco John E. La Belle Bernard Parker (arrived at 10:37 a.m.) Jaye Quadrozzi
Staff Officers:	
Director	George Phifer
Controller	Rebecca Franchock
Absent:	
Commissioner	Timothy J. McCarthy
Other Attendees:	
Steve Mann with Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, PLC	

Chairman Hertel called the Oct. 8, 2015 meeting to order at 10:32 a.m.

**1. Chairman's Statement**

Chairman Hertel said he is always pleased to come to Wolcott and that Camp Rotary looks good, both the inside and outside of the building.

**2. Public Comments**

David Carrow, Wolcott Mill Trail Association, addressed the Board and asked if there was a plan for the horse trails along the Clinton River. He also asked if anything could be done regarding the trucks that come into the area and tear up the trails. He also said first responders should have a service road and become familiar with the trails, in case there is a rider that has an accident. He commented on the park signage and said the updates are good improvements.

Commissioner Hertel asked for his contact information and said a member of the Metroparks staff would contact him regarding the issues he reported to the Board.

**3. Minutes – Sept. 10, 2015 Regular Meeting**

Motion by Commissioner Marans, supported by Commissioner Marrocco that the Board of Commissioners' approve the Sept. 10, 2105 regular meeting minutes as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

**4. Approval – Oct. 8, 2015 Agenda**

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, supported by Commissioner Marrocco that the Board of Commissioners' approve the Oct. 8, 2015 agenda as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

**5. Approval – Oct. 8, 2015 Consent Agenda**

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, supported by Commissioner Marrocco that the Board of Commissioners' approve the consent agenda as presented:

- a. Financial Statements and Payment Register (Vouchers) – September 2015
- b. Purchases
  2. Police Radios, multiple parks
  3. Rake O Vac, Stony Creek Metropark
- c. Update – Purchases over \$10,000

- d. Approval – 2016 Employee Recognition Dinner Subsidy
- e. Approval – 2016 Proposed Board Schedule
- f. Update – 2016 Fireworks Dates
- g. Bids – Invasive Shrub Control, multiple parks
- h. Bids – Phragmites Control, multiple parks
- i. Update – Lake St. Clair Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA), Lake St. Clair
- j. Update – 2015 Roadway Overbanding and Hike-Bike Trail Crack filling, multiple parks

Commissioner Marrocco requested items (a) Financial Statements and Payment Register (Vouchers); (f) Update – 2016 Fireworks Dates; and (h) Bids – Phragmites Control be moved to the regular agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, supported by Commissioner Marrocco that the Board of Commissioners' amend the consent agenda, removing items **a**, **f** and **h** and add them to the regular agenda.

Motion as amended carried unanimously.

### **Regular Agenda**

#### **5-a: Financial Statements and Payment Register (Vouchers) – September 2015**

Motion by Commissioner Marrocco, supported by Commissioner La Belle that the Board of Commissioners approve the Financial Statements and Payment Register (Vouchers) for September 2015 as submitted.

*Discussion:* Commissioner Marrocco asked why the Metroparks paid Kosch Catering \$7,900. Director Phifer said the payment was part of the liquor sales; and that while we (the Metroparks) has its own liquor license, the Michigan Liquor Commission does not allow for more than one liquor license for a location. Commissioner Marrocco inquired if Kosch Catering could get a daily liquor license for events they cater. Director Phifer said staff would follow up with Kosch on a daily liquor license.

Commissioner Marrocco asked why payroll was higher at Lower Huron than Stony Creek, especially since there are more people at Stony Creek. Controller Franchock replied the Lower Huron payroll consists of three locations – Lower Huron, Willow and Oakwoods.

Commissioner Marrocco also asked about the \$4,635 payment to Mike's Gun Sales and Service. Director Phifer said it was for the purchase of rifles for the deer management program. Commissioner Marrocco asked if there was a need to purchase firearms yearly. Director Phifer said yes because of the wear and tear on the rifles over time.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### **5-f: Update – Fireworks Dates**

Motion by Commissioner Marrocco, supported by Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' table the Fireworks item until the Nov. 12, 2016 meeting.

*Discussion:* Commissioner Marrocco requested the fireworks for Lake St. Clair be moved to July 1 and the fireworks for Lake Erie be changed to June 28.

Commissioner Quadrozzi inquired if any of our fireworks dates interfered with the Detroit fireworks. Eastern District Park Superintendent Mike Lyons said the Detroit fireworks were scheduled for June 27, 2016 and did not conflict with the Metroparks schedule. Mr. Lyons also said it's better to have the Lake St. Clair Metroparks fireworks display during the week because of crowds.

Commissioner Hertel asked that staff speak with Harrison Township regarding the date selected for the Lake St. Clair fireworks and see if it will be an issue.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### **5-h: Bids – Phragmites Control**

Motion by Commissioner Marans, supported by Commissioner Marrocco that the Board of Commissioners approve the Bids on Phragmites Control as submitted.

Discussion: Commissioner Marrocco asked why the Phragmites control was not being done in-house. Natural Resources and Environmental Compliance Manager Paul Muelle said staff is targeting larger areas and it's more efficient to have a vendor do the work since they have large machines that can cover bigger areas. Commissioner Marrocco also suggested staff look into grant money from MDEQ to assist with invasive species control.

Commissioner Hertel asked if staff sprays to control the Phragmites, how often do they come back. Mr. Muelle said typically that they return every year. Commissioner Hertel also asked if they return every year, why does park staff keep doing invasive species control. Mr. Muelle said staff continues work on invasive species control so Phragmites and such do not become out of control and too overgrown.

Commissioner Hertel also inquired if spraying for invasive species had any effect on the algae bloom in Lake Erie. Mr. Muelle said no.

Commissioner Hertel asked if staff could provide photos to the Board to see if any progress was being made to control the invasive species.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **6. 2016 Preliminary Budget**

Motion by Commissioner Marans, supported by Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' (1) provide staff direction on the proposed 2016 Budget; and (2) receive and file the Preliminary 2016 Budget estimates as recommended by Controller Franchock and staff.

Discussion: Controller Franchock updated the Board on the 2016 Budget projections including the process in which the budget numbers will be reviewed by staff, park personnel. The Director and Controller would then hold individual meetings with each commissioner. The official 2016 Budget would be brought to the Board at the Nov. 12 meeting for review and approval.

For 2016, Ms. Franchock said in comparison to the Five-Year-Plan, last updated in 2014, the Authority will receive \$1 million more in grant revenue, park revenue is up more than \$800,000, capital improvement expenses and equipment are higher and that park operations have a deficit compared to the 2014 Five-Year-Plan. Ms. Franchock said the Fund Balance is higher than anticipated; revenue is greater than expenses looking at trends from 2006 to the present; and she said staff would continue to look for more revenue opportunities as property taxes recover from pre-2008 levels. In addition, Ms. Franchock said golf revenue is rebounding. Commissioner Marrocco asked if golf carts were changing from battery operated to gas carts. Ms. Franchock said yes. Commissioner Marrocco said he supported this recommendation.

Ms. Franchock said expenditure trends have been steady; however, major maintenance and capital project expenses are significantly higher in 2016, which includes significant projects at several parks including Stony Creek (boat launch) and the Administrative Office (addition to building). In addition, Part-time wages are also increasing and over-time wages are a large part of expenditures.

Ms. Franchock also said no funds are set aside in the 2016 Budget for land acquisition; however, funds are designated for land acquisition in the Fund Balance.

Commissioner Marans asked about outside services expenditures. Ms. Franchock said those expenditures were for such things as hiring contractors (to paint buildings) and non-tangible items. She also said Administrative Office expenses are significantly higher with the additions of a safety coordinator, grant writer, new Point-of-Sale (POS) system and leadership training.

Commissioner Marrocco asked why there was such a large increase in the Police department numbers. Director Phifer said it was for the purchase of 14 new police vehicles. He said currently, there are 28 police vehicles and that vehicle purchases have been deferred during the past several years. Vehicles now have high mileage and need to be replaced.

Commissioner Marrocco asked why tolling charges were increasing by \$53,000. Controller Franchock said it's due to part-time wages increasing for tollbooth workers.

Commissioner Marrocco also inquired why the daily permit fee was not increased and said he believes it should be increased. Ms. Franchock said the Board did not direct staff to increase the daily permit fee in the current Five-Year-Plan.

Commissioner Marans asked if staff takes into account competing agency fee structures when changes are brought to the Board.

Commissioner Hertel asked staff to bring fees for the state to the individual commissioner meetings.

Commissioner Parker asked if grant revenue was actual or projected. Ms. Franchock said projected.

Commissioner Hertel said that the Metroparks purchased property with a lake (Schmidt Lake) and that it has not been developed. He said he sees a lot of optimism in the budget projections; however, the Board needs to look at selling land that has no value to the parks.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **7. Legislative Report**

Motion by Commissioner Parker, supported by Commissioner La Belle that the Board of Commissioners' receive and file the Legislative Report as submitted by Consultant George Carr.

*Discussion:* Legislative Consultant George Carr reported that there was no legislation pending that would affect the park system and that both the House and the Senate are focused on transportation funding and the 2016 elections. He also let the Board know that the Director and staff would be giving a presentation to the House Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee on Oct. 14.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **8. Reports**

### **A. Lake St. Clair Metropark**

#### **1. Bids – Sand for Beach**

Motion by Commissioner Parker, supported by Commissioner Marans that the Board of Commissioners' (1) approve a Purchase Order to Sand Sales for a total amount up to \$150,000 and allow staff the ability to scale back the project based on field evaluations of sand placement for Project 702-15-275; (2) and to fund the project using the \$150,000 in the current Capital budget allocated for contractual services for the Lake St. Clair Exit Road Reconstruction Project as recommended by Manager of Assets and Development Mike Brahm-Henkel and staff.

*Discussion:* Manager of Assets and Development Mike Brahm-Henkel said some erosion was occurring at the beach area and staff wanted to bring sand in to avoid the deterring beach conditions. He said there would be some maintenance involved in order to keep the beach sand where it needs to be. He explained the different types of sand available and offered commissioners a chance to see sand samples. Mr. Brahm-Henkel said staff would begin with six inches of sand (\$80,000) and that park staff would spread the sand.

Commissioner Marrocco asked if sand had ever been brought in. Mr. Brahm-Henkel said he did not think so. Commission Marrocco also asked if the sand would be checked for chemicals. Mr. Brahm-Henkel said yes.

Commissioner Parker asked if bringing in the sand would stop the erosion. Mr. Brahm-Henkel said yes, but a long-term solution was needed.

Commissioner Hertel said sand was taken out into the lake to create a sandbar, which also traps the E. coli, which in turn results in beach closures. He said the Metroparks wanted to remove the sandbar, but the DNR said no because it is a highly inhabitable area for perch.

Commissioner Marrocco suggested having Legislative Consultant Carr meet with legislators regarding have the sandbar removed. He also said riprap should be added to the project.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **8. Reports**

### **B. Wolcott Mill Metropark**

#### **1. Approval – Camp Rotary Renovations**

Motion by Commissioner Marrocco, supported by Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' authorize a fund transfer from the Hudson Mills Unallocated Capital account in the amount of \$44,000 and \$14,850 from the Lake St. Clair Unallocated Major Maintenance account to Work Order 713-15-036 to cover the cost of the work to provide renovations at the Camp Rotary Activities building.

Discussion: Mr. Brahm-Henkel reviewed the upgrades that were done to the building, which included painting, new light fixtures, a new floor and patio leveling. Items that need to be completed include replacing ceiling tiles, replacing the kitchen counter tops, waxing the tile floor and replacing doors.

Commissioner Marrocco said the entrance to the public restrooms were paved and suggested having the rest of the lot paved.

Motion by Commissioner Marrocco, supported by Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' amend the original motion to include adding paving the parking lot to the renovations project at Camp Rotary.

Commissioner Parker asked about costs. Mr. Brahm-Henkel said that overall costs were high right now because it is almost the end of construction season.

Commissioner Marans asked what company was doing the paving work. Mr. Brahm-Henkel said Cadillac.

Motion as amended carried unanimously.

### **C. Stony Creek Metropark**

#### **1. Bids – Golf Cart Path**

Motion by Commissioner Marans, supported by Commissioner Parker that the Board of Commissioners' (1) award Contract No. 709-15-013 to the low responsive, responsible bidder, Pavex Corporation, in the amount of \$455,528.80; and (2) approve the \$320,000 transfer from the Kensington Unallocated Major Maintenance Account; \$144,000 from the Willow Unallocated Major Maintenance Account; and \$1,530 from the Stony Creek Unallocated Major Maintenance Account for the cost of the project as recommended by Manager of Assets and Development Mike Brahm-Henkel and staff.

Discussion: Manager of Assets and Development Mike Brahm-Henkel reviewed the project with the Board on the project and said areas of the golf cart paths were severely deteriorated and needed to be replaced.

Motion carried unanimously.

### **D. Administrative Office**

#### **1. Approval – Part-Time and Seasonal Wage Increases**

Motion by Commissioner Marans, supported by Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' accept and approve the proposal to increase the part-time and seasonal wage scales to keep in line with the required minimum wage increases over the next three years and create position equity throughout the wage scale.

Discussion: Human Resources Manager Randy Rossman updated the Board regarding the proposed wage increase, which is mandated by federal law. He said Metroparks wages are

non-competitive with other agencies that makes it difficult to recruit and retain qualified candidates.

Commissioner Parker said other businesses recognize the need for higher wages, why can't the parks go beyond the minimum wage.

Commissioner Marrocco asked if the parks were above the minimum wage. Mr. Rossman said provisional (part-time) employees are at \$8.50 per hour and seasonal employees are at \$9.00 per hour. If seasonal employees work the entire season, they receive an additional \$.40 more per hour.

Commissioner Marrocco said the parks should pay more than minimum wage. Mr. Rossman said if seasonal employees work the entire season and return the following year, they receive a wage increase.

Commissioner Quadrozzi asked if the parks were finding it difficult to retain seasonal employees. Mr. Rossman said yes.

Director Phifer recommended increasing the part-time wages an additional \$.20 per hour.

Commissioner Marrocco amended the motion.

Motion by Commissioner Marrocco, supported by Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' increase the end of season wage bonus by \$.20 per hour to \$.60 per hour, which is an increase from the current \$.40 per hour and with no cap.

Motion as amended carried unanimously.

## **8. Reports**

### **D. Administrative Office**

#### **2. Approval – MDOT Pathfinder Sign Replacement**

Motion by Commissioner Parker, supported by Commissioner Marans that the Board of Commissioners' (1) approve a Purchase Order to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) in the amount of \$28,994.14; and (2) approve the fund transfer from the Unallocated Capital account for Hudson Mills to Work Order 10-5-100-990-88-9420 to cover the cost of the project as recommended by Manager of Assets and Development Mike Brahm-Henkel and staff.

*Discussion:* Mr. Brahm-Henkel updated the Board on sign replacement and said it was only for MDOT signs, not for county signs. He said staff is working with the counties to replace those signs as well.

Commissioner Marrocco asked about the changes. Mr. Brahm-Henkel said on the current signs "Metro Park" is two words, the new signs would be one word – "Metropark."

Motion carried unanimously.

## **9. Other Business**

### **1. Discussion on Lifeguards**

Director Phifer updated the Board on the history of lifeguards. Director Phifer said there he met with park staff and swimming buoys were moved closer to shore bringing swimmers closer to shore and near shallower waters.

Commissioner Marans asked the reasoning behind eliminating lifeguards from the budget. Commissioner Marrocco said it was to save money.

Commissioner Hertel suggested the Board study the information and place the item on the November regular meeting agenda.

Commissioner Parker asked staff to provide costs for adding lifeguards to the budget as well.

Commissioner Quadrozzi asked staff to find out what the staff mandate is regarding lifeguards and to find out what other agencies policies are for lifeguards.

**10. Staff Officer Update**

Director Phifer introduced the new Volunteer Services Supervisor Katie Kowalski and said she comes to the Metroparks from Habitat for Humanity. Ms. Kowalski introduced herself and briefly updated the Board on her plans for building a sustainable volunteer corps.

Director Phifer introduced the new Lake St. Clair Operations Manager Joe Hall, replacing Erik Koppin who has transferred to the Western District. Mr. Hall introduced himself and said he worked for the state parks for 21 years and hopes to bring the knowledge he learned while working for the state to the Metroparks.

Director Phifer updated the Board on funeral arrangements for the spouse of Western District Park Superintendent Kim Jarvis.

**11. Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Hertel said he liked the new microphone system.

Agriculture Coordinating Supervisor Susan Schmidt explained the gifts for the commissioners and said the Night Riders 4-H group that runs the "Beyond the Seed" greenhouse and raised bed garden program at the Wolcott Farm Center gathered a variety of tomatoes, peppers and herbs from the farm garden. A group of 4-H youth and volunteers processed and jarred the salsa at a local incubator kitchen in order to provide a delicious example of the continuing partnership between "Beyond the Seed" and the Wolcott Metropark Farm Center.

Commissioner La Belle said he has seen many budgeting issues and that he is worried about the \$54 million amount. He said the Board should come to the next meeting with reductions for the 2016 budget.

Commissioner Marans thanked Ms. Schmidt for the salsa.

Commissioner Quadrozzi thanked staff for attending a meeting with the Oakland County Board of Commissioners in her absence.

**12. Motion to Adjourn**

Motion by Commissioner Parker supported by Commissioner Marans that the Board of Commissioners' adjourn the regular meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn M. Athayde  
Recording Secretary