

**Minutes**  
**Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority**  
**Board of Commissioners**  
**Thursday, February 9, 2017**

---

A regular meeting of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority's Board of Commissioners was held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, February 9, 2017 at the Administrative Office.

Commissioners Present:	John C. Hertel Anthony V. Marrocco (arrived at 10:40 a.m.) Timothy J. McCarthy Robert W. Marans Steven E. Williams Jaye Quadrozzi Bernard Parker
------------------------	--

Staff Officers:	
Director	George Phifer
Deputy Director	Dave Kirbach
Chief Financial Officer	Michelle Cole

Other Attendees:	
Steve Mann	Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, PLC
Ken Sachs	Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, PLC

Chairman Hertel called the February 9, 2017 meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

**1. Chairman's Statement**

Commissioner Hertel said it was wonderful to see so many people at the meeting. He also said he is happy that it has been a real winter for people to enjoy outdoor sports.

**2. Public Comments**

Jason Kulongowski, President HCMA Employees Association (HCMAEA), Mr. Kulongowski said one item on the agenda was contract negotiations and members from each employee group wanted to be at the meeting today. He thanked the Board, Director Phifer, CFO Michelle Cole and Randy Rossman. He said that over the last month the group has had a positive working relationship with Director Phifer and extends to the Board as well. The extension alone will be a huge benefit for the employees and will help them plan. Approving the changes is also a testament to what the Board and Director Phifer has said about investing in one of the biggest resources at the parks, the employees. Mr. Kulongowski introduced representatives of the various employee groups: Garnett Potter – HCMAEA Vice President, Aaron Jeffery – HCMAEA Supervisory Bargaining Unit Rep., Steve Sebert – HCMAEA Supervisory Bargaining Unit President, Bruna Salerno – HCMAEA Non-supervisory Bargaining Unit Rep. and Charlie Shelton – Eastern District Community Outreach Interpreter.

Garnett Potter, Vice President HCMAEA, thanked the Board Director Phifer, CFO Cole and Randy Rossman. He said they have made it pretty easy from the start to now to be able always go and talk to anyone of them and he appreciates that personally.

Aaron Jeffrey, HCMAEA, thanked the Board for extending the contract and said it showed a lot of faith, cooperation and security for all the employees.

Commissioner Hertel said the Board normally does not interact with speakers, however he said the Board appreciates the comments from the employees.

Charlie Shelton, Eastern District Community Outreach Interpreter, gave a personal statement about three emotions he has experienced during his time at the Metroparks. First, he said he felt disappointment because he thought he was a qualified person who could be hired full-time. Dave Kirbach spoke to him and said you have to earn your way in. He began his career at the Metroparks as a seasonal employee, which is the lowest position you can have; advanced to a provisional employee and then said at one point, there was the opportunity to apply for a full-time position. However, he was not able to get an interview for the job and that's where the feeling of disappointment came in. He said he really struggled with this place in the Metroparks. Mr. Shelton said his next move was to call HR and they said one thing he can and should do was call Mr. Phifer, who was the Deputy Director at the time. Mr. Shelton said he called and made an appointment and anticipated just a 15-minute meeting. Instead, what he got was an hour and 15 minute meeting. During the meeting, he said they talked about his three-part plan for his life and experience at the Metroparks. He said Director Phifer gave him encouragement for the work he was doing, which brought on the next emotion he felt – hope. Mr. Shelton said Director Phifer encouraged him to keep moving toward his goals. An opportunity did open up and as the result, Director Phifer called in other staff members to discuss what Mr. Shelton had to offer. He said everyone knows that to get more than an hour of Director Phifer's time is significant and said that during the meeting the phones were ringing off the hook, people were coming in to have documents signed and Director Phifer said everyone would have to wait until they were finished. Mr. Shelton said he appreciated that since he was only a provisional employee at the time. He said in 2014, a full-time position opened up at Lake St. Clair and he was hired into that position and then the next emotion he felt was gratitude. He said he felt gratitude because he was able to tell his wife that he was getting a better paycheck and she could stop worrying and working so hard. The gratitude he wanted to express was to the Board for offering such opportunities; he thanked Director Phifer for giving him the opportunity to meet with him. He said he could focus on his job now that the contract will be approved and employees do not need to worry about finances and contract negotiations.

Chris Barnett, Orion Township Supervisor, said he wanted to address the Board regarding a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) that has been established in Orion Township on Brown Road. He said the Orion Township border is blighted and infrastructure improvements are needed. Mr. Barnett said a partnership with Orion Township and Oakland County on this CIA will help increase our revenue immediately within the first year. He said Orion Township would like to come back and make a formal presentation to the Board at a later date.

Michael Gingell, Chairman of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, said he is a resident of Orion Township and urged the Board to look into and investigate this Corridor Improvement Authority project. He said if the project moves forward, the tax base would increase revenue. He said this project was the only project that was approved unanimously across all committees at Oakland County.

Commissioner Hertel said Mr. Gingell had a very distinguished public record and the information would be discussed internally.

Toni Spears, Dexter, thanked the Natural Resources and Interpretive Department for the recent program during the public meeting held at Hudson Mills Metropark. She said she was pleased that Commissioners Williams, Commissioner Marans and Director Phifer attended the meeting.

**3. Approval – January 12, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Commissioner Marans, support by Commissioner Parker that the Board of Commissioners' approve the January 12, 2017 regular meeting minutes as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

**4. Approval – February 9, 2017 Amended Agenda**

Motion by Commissioner Williams, support by Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners' approve the amended February 9, 2017 amended agenda as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

**5. Approval – February 9, 2017 Consent Agenda**

Motion by Commissioner Marans, support by Commissioner Marrocco that the Board of Commissioners' approve the consent agenda consisting of the following:

1. Approval – December 2016 / January 2017 Financial Statements and Payment Registers
2. Approval – December 2016 / January 2017 Appropriation Adjustments
3. Report – Purchases over \$10,000
4. Approval – Thomas Welsh Activity Center Audio/Visual System, Lake St. Clair Metropark
5. Bids – Golf Course Starter Building Demolition, Wolcott Mill Metropark

Motion carried unanimously.

**Regular Agenda**

**6. Reports**

**A. Administrative Office**

**1. Approval – Collective Bargaining Agreement Extension**

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy, support by Commissioner Marans that the Board of Commissioners' approve extending the current collective bargaining agreements for the Police Officers Association of Michigan (POAM) and the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority Employees Associations (HCMAEA) through from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2023, which is an additional four years as recommended by Director Phifer and staff.

*Discussion:* Director Phifer said he, Randy Rossman and Michelle Cole met with the Board over the last month to discuss extending the current employee agreements to 2023. He said that employees would receive an 11 percent increase over the four-year extension of the contract, which shows a commitment to the employees.

Commissioner Parker said he commended the employee associations and staff on the ability to come together and work together to approve the agreement.

Commissioner Marans said the first line in the last paragraph is important – *“This recommendation encourages a climate of cooperation and unity,”* which is extremely important in this organization.

Commissioner Hertel said that when this organization was formed in early 1940s, the foresight of the people that began this organization was tremendous given the circumstances of the time period. He said the two most important areas we are responsible for is the natural resources along the Clinton and Huron watersheds and at the same time, the other item that makes this organization work is the staff. There have been rough times and he said it's a significant historical moment for the organization.

Motion carried unanimously.

**6. Reports**

## **A. Administrative Office**

### **2. Approval – Dissolution of Committed Legal Fund**

Motion by Commissioner Marrocco, support by Commissioner Williams that the Board of Commissioners' (1) approve the dissolution of the Fund Balance – Committed Legal with a balance of \$507,000; and (2) authorize the transfer of funds into the Fund Balance.

*Discussion:* Chief Financial Officer Michelle Cole updated the Board on the request to dissolve the fund. She said the Metroparks has had a stop loss agreement in place with the Municipal Risk Management Authority (MMRMA) since January 2013. The agreement with MMRMA serves the same coverage under the Committed Legal Fund, which is no longer needed,

Commissioner McCarthy said the lawsuits have stopped and it's good to dissolve this fund.

Motion carried unanimously.

### **3. Approval – Pre-65 Retiree Medical/Prescription Reimbursement Removal**

Motion by Commissioner Marans, support by Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' approve removing the following language from all Collective Bargaining Agreements i.e. Group Benefits for Retirees, HCMA-EA Article 19 – Section 2.A.2 and POAM Article 37 – Section 37.3A.2: *“To be eligible for benefits, retirees prior to age 65 shall, on a quarterly basis, reimburse the Authority the amount equivalent to the cost of Medicare Part B”* as recommended by Human Resources Manager Randy Rossman and staff.

*Discussion:* Human Resources Manager Randy Rossman thanked the Board for meeting with him, Director Phifer and CFO Cole prior to the Board meeting. Mr. Rossman explained that in 1991 both the post-65 Medicare Supplemental insurance and the pre-65 retiree medical insurance had the same benefit level and deductible. A post-65 retiree was required to pay the additional Medicare Part B premium, which gave a pre-65 retiree a better benefit than the post-65 retiree.

Since pre-65 retirees are now enrolled in a high deductible health plan until they reach age 65 and become Medicare eligible, this Collective Bargaining Agreement clause adds additional financial burden to this group of pre-65 retirees. In order to align the group benefits for retirees across the Collective Bargaining Agreements, staff is recommending that this clause be removed from all of the Collective Bargaining Agreements.

Motion carried unanimously.

### **4. Approval – Collective Bargaining Unit Modifications and Retiree Health Care Benefits**

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, support by Commissioner Parker that the Board of Commissioners' (1) approve amending Article 19 of the Collective Bargaining Agreements for the Employee (HCMA-EA) and Article 37 of the Police Officers Association of Michigan (POAM) to attain like benefits for qualified members; (2) approve a transfer from the Fund Balance in the amount of \$733,000 to fund the benefit improvement; and (3) approve amending the Retiree Health Care Trust document to reflect the benefit change.

*Discussion:* Director Phifer updated the Board and said the request to modify the Collective Bargaining Agreements was brought to the Pension Committee and Retiree

Health Care Trust Board of Trustees prior to the regular Board meeting. The change would include 28 employees that are currently not included in the current agreement.

Commissioner McCarthy said this change would increase the unfunded liability by \$733,000 and that the Metroparks would need to spend this amount now. He said the change is the right thing to do to correct the error with the employees.

Ms. Cole said the legal fund would be dissolved and \$507,000 would be transferred back to the Fund Balance. Staff would use the \$507,000 along with an additional \$216,000 from the Fund Balance to cover the cost of this liability.

Commissioner McCarthy said the cash balance would also be affected.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **5. Approval – Long-Term Disability Benefit Adjustment**

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, support by Commissioner Marans that the Board of Commissioners' (1) approve the recommendation to increase the benefit cap on long-term disability from \$5,000 to \$8,000 per month; and (2) approve a \$3,640 transfer from Fund Balance to cover the cost as recommended by Human Resources Manager Randy Rossman and staff.

*Discussion:* Mr. Rossman said the long-term disability benefit is intended to provide an income source to an employee with a serious illness or injury who has been out of work for more than six months. As the Metroparks have increased our wage scales to remain competitive in the marketplace, the \$5,000 per month cap has resulted in a less than 66 2/3 percent benefit for some employees (down as low as a 43 percent benefit level). Currently, 14 employees earn more than \$90,000 and are underinsured with the current \$5,000 per month cap. By increasing the cap to \$8,000 per month all employees with a base salary up to \$143,928 would be covered at 66 2/3 percent.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **6. Reports**

### **A. Administrative Office**

#### **6. Approval – Promotional Event Sponsor, Greenwood Farms LLC**

Motion by Commissioner Marrocco, support by Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' approve a three year contract from 2017 – 2019 with Greenwood Farms LLC for Metroparks marketing purposes in the amount of \$50,000 per year (\$150,000 for the term of the three-year contract) as recommended by Director Phifer and staff.

*Discussion:* Director Phifer updated the Board on the Greenwood Farms and said the addition of the Clydesdale horses at parades and special events was well received by the public in 2016. He said the Clydesdales are scheduled for 21 events in 2017 including three weekends in December for Heritage Holidays at Wolcott Mill Metropark. Director Phifer said the contract would be for three years and cost \$50,000 per year.

Commissioner Hertel asked if the price would be the same for all three years. Director Phifer replied yes.

Commissioner Marans asked if Greenwood Farms would be locked into 21 events for 2018 and 2019. Director Phifer said yes.

Commissioner Parker said he would like to see some opportunities added for the Detroit area. Director Phifer said staff was looking into opportunities for different events.

Motion carried unanimously.

## 6. Reports

### A. Administrative Office

#### 7. Approval – Proposed Land Sale to Green Oak Charter Township

Motion by Commissioner Williams, support by Commissioner Marans that the Board of Commissioners' authorize staff to pursue negotiations for the sale of 6.02 acres of underutilized property at Huron Meadows Metropark with Green Oak Charter Township as recommended by Director George Phifer and staff.

*Discussion:* Director Phifer introduced Mark St. Charles, supervisor for Green Oaks Township who was going to make a presentation to the Board.

Mark St. Charles updated the Board on the project and the reason for needing additional land. He showed examples of the current location of the fire station and said they wanted to add a new fire and police station complex (off Silver Lake Rd). Mr. St. Charles presented the proposed design plan for an extended fire and police station and said the plan preserves the mature trees in the area. Currently, 16 police officers are housed in a very small-outdated building. He said the township is ready to begin building as soon as the weather breaks and that the goal is to get enough land from the Metroparks to build.

Hertel said the Metroparks has a good neighbor policy and this will make the neighborhood safer, which makes the entire area safer and he supports the request.

Commissioner Marans said this will change the footprint for the area and any discussions on signage should include the Metroparks, as the new building will make it more of a civic center complex. Mr. St. Charles said this intersection at Silver Lake Road is a disaster and they are working with the Livingston County Road Commission on options for the intersection. He said Green Oaks would work with the Metroparks on signage.

Commissioner Parker asked if the Metroparks had a land policy. Director Phifer said the Metroparks would notify neighbors, have appraisals done on the property and then bring a recommendation back to Board.

Commissioner Parker said it's a good use of the land and that we may want to sell the land for less than the appraised value.

Director Phifer said original request was for 6.02 acres. If Green Oaks wanted to purchase the full 13.02 acres, there are no encumbrance issues with this piece of property.

Commissioner Williams wanted to know if the parking lot could be moved to an area closer to the river to make it more accessible for kayak launching. Mr. St. Charles said the options are limited due to topography (steep on north side and to river).

Commissioner Marrocco said there should be a deed restriction on the land if the Metroparks decides to sell. If Green Oak decides in the future to sell the property, the Metroparks would be able to buy it back. Director Phifer stated that staff will have this restriction added to the sale agreement.

Motion carried unanimously.

## 6. Reports

### A. Administrative Office

#### 8. Approval – Defined Benefit Pension Plan, IRS Submission

Motion by Commissioner Marrocco, supported by Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' approve the submission of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority Employees Retirement Plan and Trust Agreement to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in order to request a Favorable Determination Letter (FDL) as requested by CFO Michelle Cole and staff.

*Discussion:* Ms. Cole said the last Favorable Determination Letter received by the Metroparks was dated Nov. 22, 1995 and since that time, the Plan has been restated twice, once in 1997 and again in 2014. She also said the fee to apply would be \$2,500.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### 9. Approval – Miller Canfield Retainer Fee

Motion by Commissioner Marans, supported by Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners' (1) approve having Miller Canfield provide legal counsel for the Metroparks Foundation; (2) approve a new retainer fee in the amount of \$88,500; and (3) authorize staff to transfer \$2,700 from the Fund Balance to cover the additional cost associated with this change as recommended by Director Phifer and staff.

*Discussion:* Director Phifer updated the Board on the agreement with Miller Canfield and said work for the Metroparks Foundation was not currently included in the agreement. He said the retainer fee was currently \$85,000 and would increase by \$6,000 to \$88,500 per year and that a \$2,700 transfer from the Fund Balance was required to cover the cost.

Commissioner Hertel said this is a minor adjustment to the agreement and that the Metroparks are receiving a good deal with the agreement with Miller Canfield.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### 10. Approval – Design Services, Lower Huron Park Office

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, supported by Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners' approve staff to work with the University of Michigan for the conceptual design of a new park office for Lower Huron Metropark in an amount not to exceed \$12,000 as recommended by Director Phifer and staff.

*Discussion:* Director Phifer updated the Board and said Professor Borum and his students recently worked on a design for the AO and that Commissioner Marans recommended reaching out to Prof. Borum to design a park office building at Lower Huron Metropark. Director Phifer said he contacted Professor Borum and that he's interested in taking on the project.

Commissioner Marans said this building would replace the current Lower Huron Park office and police facility that is old. He said it's a good opportunity to get good work for a reasonable price.

Motion carried unanimously.

### B. Planning Department

#### 1. Approval – Kensington Master Plan

Motion by Commissioner Marans, support by Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' approve the Kensington Master Plan as recommended by Manager of Planning Nina Kelly and staff.

Discussion: Manager of Planning Nina Kelly updated the Board on the Kensington Master Plan and the overall planning process. She said she received a couple of emails during the review process and that minor edits were needed in the cultural section from the Interpretive Department.

Commissioner Marans said it was a wonderful job of dealing with both the built aspects of the future of Kensington and the natural environment. It's a nice blend of the two.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **6. Reports**

### **C. Information Technology and Engineering Department**

#### **1. Approval – AT&T Agreement for IT Infrastructure Connectivity and Construction**

Motion by Commissioner Marans, support by Commissioner Marrocco that the Board of Commissioners' That the Board of Commissioners' (1) approve the proposed AT&T contract for a period of three years to upgrade the external fiber optic installation throughout the entire Metroparks system in the amount of \$590,027; and (2) authorize staff to seek bids for internal fiber optic installation to the various Metroparks facilities as recommended by IT Manager Robert Rudolph, Jr. and Manager of Engineering Mike Brahm-Henkel and staff.

Discussion: Director Phifer updated board on the Metroparks technology, infrastructure and issues the park system overall currently has. He said the IT manager received bids, spoke with AT&T representatives and that the cost for this project is \$590,000. Director Phifer said the second part of project would be to connect the fiber optics internally within the parks.

Commissioner Parker wanted part added to aspect about bandwidth.

Commissioner Marans asked staff to let the Board know what the timeline project was when it is brought back to the Board for approval.

Motion carried unanimously.

### **D. Engineering Department**

#### **1. Bids – Boat Launch Ramp/Pier Replacement Office**

Motion by Commissioner Williams, support by Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' (1) approve Contract 509-16-535 to the low responsive, responsible bidder, Anglin Civil, in the amount of \$272,751.81; and (2) approve the transfer of \$276,751.81 from Fund Balance to cover the project cost as recommended by Manager of Engineering Mike Brahm-Henkel and staff.

Discussion: Mr. Brahm-Henkel updated the Board on both projects at Stony Creek and Kensington and the changes that will be made at each location.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### **2. Bids – East Boat Launch Ramp/Pier Replacement**

Motion by Commissioner Williams, support by Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' (1) approve Contract 509-16-535 to the low responsive, responsible bidder, Anglin Civil, in the amount of \$197,474,65 as recommended by Manager of Engineering Mike Brahm-Henkel and staff.

Motion carried unanimously.



**7. Other Business**

None.

**8. Staff Officer Update**

Director Phifer updated the Board on the Go Ape Adventure Course at Stony Creek and said the VIP event date is April 14, 2017 with April 21, 2017 as the rain date and that the Board would receive an invitation for the event. Director Phifer said staff is in constant contact with Go Ape and that people are already signing up to use the course. A link to sign up for Go Ape will be added to the website soon where people can receive more information.

**9. Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Quadrozzi said this meeting was may have not been one of the more entertaining meetings, but it was a production meeting. She also asked to save her a spot for the Go Ape course.

Commissioner McCarthy said he yielded his Go Ape time to Commissioner Quadrozzi.

Commissioner Williams thanked the Board and staff for working with Green Oak Township regarding the land and approving the request quickly.

Commissioner Hertel thanked the employee groups and said the Board appreciated working together.

**10. Motion to Adjourn**

Motion by Commissioner Williams, supported by Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners' adjourn the regular meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn M. Athayde  
Recording Secretary