

Minutes
Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority
Board of Commissioners
Thursday, August 13, 2015

The regular meeting of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority's Board of Commissioners was held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, August 13, 2015 at Lake St. Clair Metropark at the Thomas Welsh Activity Center.

Commissioners Present:	John C. Hertel Robert W. Marans Jaye Quadrozzi Timothy J. McCarthy John E. La Belle Bernard Parker
Staff Officers:	
Director	George Phifer
Controller	Rebecca Franchock
Absent:	
Commissioner	Anthony V. Marrocco
Other Attendees:	
Steve Mann with Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, PLC	
Carlito H. Young, Johnson, Rosati, Schultz, Joppich, PC	

Chairman Hertel called the Aug. 13, 2015 meeting to order at 10:32 a.m.

1. Chairman's Statement

Chairman Hertel said that we were blessed with excellent weather in July and that attendance was up at the parks last month.

2. Public Comments

Toni Spears, Dexter, said several years ago, the Metroparks started an important stewardship program managing the deer herds within the parks. She said most people don't think of deer as predators, and while they are beautiful, they are plant predators. She said she hopes the Board continues to support the program.

Barb Jensen, Milford, said that everyone should visit the various facilities at the Metroparks and speak with the dedicated employees at the Metroparks. She said there was a recent incident at Kensington Metropark involving one of the Osprey chicks that fell out of its nest and into the water wearing a transmitter for tracking. Ms. Jensen said she called Kensington staff and said they were extremely helpful getting the chick out of the water and back into the nest. Ms. Jensen said two days later, the chick named "Kensi" successfully flew out of the nest and can now be tracked on her migration to South America.

Lou Waldock, Howell, addressed the Board regarding the albino deer killed in a February deer cull. Mr. Waldock asked why the deer cull was held in such poor weather conditions when, deer could not be clearly identified.

3. Minutes – July 9, 2015 Regular Meeting

Motion by Commissioner Marans, supported by Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners' approve the July 9, 2105 regular meeting minutes as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval – Aug. 13, 2015 Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, supported by Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners' approve the Aug. 13, 2015 agenda as submitted.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. Approval – Aug. 13, 2015 Consent Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, supported by Commissioner Parker that the Board of Commissioners' approve the consent agenda consisting of the following:

- a. Financial Statements and Payment Register (Vouchers) – July 2015
- b. Purchases
 1. Staff Vehicles, Administrative Office, Kensington and Lower Huron Metroparks
 2. Road Salt, various locations
- c. Update – Purchases over \$10,000
- d. Bids – Farm Center Parking Lot Redevelopment, Wolcott Mill Metropark
- e. Bids – Historic Center Restoration and Painting, Wolcott Mill Metropark
- f. Approval – Professional Services Agreement, Boat Launch Ramp Replacement, Kensington and Stony Creek Metroparks
- g. Bids – Environmental Center Exterior Staining, Indian Springs Metropark

Discussion: Commissioner Parker asked how revenue has been since the last meeting. Controller Franchock said July had excellent weather and almost all of the revenue was recouped from a budget perspective.

Motion carried unanimously.

Regular Agenda

6. Legislative Report

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

Discussion: Legislative Consultant George Carr said the Legislature is on summer break and due to return in September and will focus on road funding, no-fault insurance, Detroit schools and medical marijuana. He also said a house package of bills seeks to increase protections and remedies against unfunded mandates. House Bills 4753-55 have been referred to the House Financial Liability Reform Committee for initial consideration. The package specifically includes "authorities" under the definition of "local governments" extending the potential benefit to the Metroparks. Carr said he would work with Director Phifer on the potential impact to the Authority.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. Reports

A. Administrative Office

1. Approval – 2016 Fees and Charges

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, supported by Commissioner Marans that the Board of Commissioners' approve the 2016 Fees and Charges and authorize the Director to adjust pricing if necessary as recommended by Director Phifer and staff.

Discussion: Director Phifer said he has provided the proposed 2016 Fees and Charges for approval and estimates an approximate \$800,000 to \$850,000 increase in revenue with the \$5 annual permit increase, which was approved by the Board in August 2014 in the Five-Year-Plan.

Commissioner Hertel asked what the annual percentage increase would be. Controller Franchock said the increases were modest and approximately under the 10 percent range.

Commissioner Quadrozzi asked what was staff seeing for shelter rentals and if the higher rates were impacting rentals. Controller Franchock said there tends to be a slight drop in annual permit purchases and a rise in daily permit purchases and that generally permit sales would level off. She said staff is working with the Planning Department on usage and trends as some facility use is decreasing and that there may be a slight decrease in rentals with the increase in permit fees. Commissioner Hertel said he would like staff to keep an eye on facility usage.

Commissioner Parker asked if there is any historical information regarding adjusting fees when a facility in a park is closed such as with the beach closure at the park (Lake St. Clair). Director Phifer said traditionally the parks have stayed with the same fee structure and could make adjustments with Board approval.

Commissioner Parker said he wants to authorize the Director to have the authority to adjust pricing if necessary. He wants to make sure people are able to afford visiting the parks.

Commissioner La Belle asked if the wedding rental pricing at Indian Springs was a fair price. Director Phifer said staff requested the price changes and that it includes areas of the facility that were not historically used before. Commissioner Marans said the venue pricing at Indian Springs was a bargain and that pricing was very low compared to other locations.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. Reports

A. Administrative Office

2. Approval – 457 Deferred Compensation Plan Provider Recommendation

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy, supported by Commissioner La Belle that the Board of Commissioners' (1) accept the ICMA Retirement Corporation improved rate proposal and mapping of existing investments; (2) allow current employees to remain with the AXA Equitable program; and (3) cease further enrollment with AXA Equitable after Dec. 31, 2015.

Discussion: Controller Franchock updated the Board on the 457 Compensation Plan and the amended recommendation approved by the Pension Committee and Retiree Health Care Trust Board of Trustees (RHCT) prior to the regular Board meeting. Ms. Franchock said the Pension Committee and RHCT Board felt it was important to give employees the option to choose which company to work with. Commissioner Parker asked if current employees were still able to make direct deposits into AXA. Ms. Franchock said yes, for current employees. Commissioner La Belle thanked Jim VanLeuven on his work and contribution to the Metroparks Pension and RHCT committees.

Motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval – Retiree Health Care Trust Valuation/Contribution and Pension Contribution

Motion by Commissioner La Belle, supported by Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' (1) receive and file the Retiree Health Care Trust Valuation

as of Dec. 31, 2014; and (2) approve the 2015 remaining budgeted contribution split at the following amounts: Retiree Health Care Trust Contribution - \$1.2 million and Pension - \$1.5 million as recommended by Controller Franchock and staff.

Discussion: Controller Franchock updated the Board on the recommendation made by the Pension Committee and RHCT Board prior to the regular Board meeting. She said in total, \$2.7 million in contributions was budgeted in 2015 and recommends that \$1.2 million be contributed into the RHCT and \$1.5 million into the Pension Plan. She also said with this contribution the RHCT would be funded at 80.5 percent and the Pension Plan would be funded at 76.7 percent.

Commissioner McCarthy said this is good news and that funding for the RHCT is above normal compared to other public agencies since most public entities use a pay-as-you-go approach. He said both plans are in great shape.

Commissioner La Belle said this would help with budgeting moving forward.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. Reports

A. Administrative Office

4. Approval – Benefit Enrollment Portal and Insurance Broker Changes

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, supported by Commissioner Marans that the Board of Commissioners' (1) accept the Accordware proposal to implement, BenXpress a benefit enrollment portal; (2) return the agent of record for employee Life/Disability Insurance and Vision carriers to the Marsh & McLennan Agency (MMA) from Ballard Benefit Works; and (3) authorize staff to enter into an agreement with MMA upon final review of HCMA legal counsel as recommended by Human Resources Manager Randy Rossman and staff.

Discussion: Human Resources Manager Randy Rossman updated the Board on the benefit enrollment portal that the HR Benefits Administrator would only need to input new employee information into the system once instead of several times for each insurance agency. He also said the reporting system would eliminate approximately \$10,000 in costs for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) compliance. Employees would be able to view their benefits in one place online and that AFLAC would now be available to employees if they choose to purchase the insurance. Mr. Rossman also said that MMA would also cover the cost of the BenXpress system in return for listing MMA as the agent of record for life/disability and vision insurance.

Commissioner McCarthy said he would abstain in voting as he has a conflict of interest with Marsh & McLennan.

Motion carried 5 – 0, with Commissioner McCarthy abstaining from the vote.

Commissioner Hertel said at the pleasure of the Board, he would like to move *Item 8 – Closed Session* to the end of the meeting.

9. Other Business

1. Approval – 2015 Deer Management Report and Plan Update

Motion by Commissioner Parker, supported by Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners' approve and accept the 2015 Deer Management Report and Plan Update as recommended by Natural Resources and Environmental Compliance Manager Paul Muelle and staff.

Discussion: Paul Muelle updated the Board on the Deer Management Plan, which included policy and procedure changes since the plan's inception in 2001.

Commissioner Hertel asked what a "specially trained" hunter meant. Mr. Muelle replied specially trained sharpshooters are used when doing a deer cull and that staff is also upset that the albino deer was accidentally shot during the cull at Kensington.

Commissioner Hertel also asked why the Board was not alerted to the incident until last month. Director Phifer said due to recent leadership changes, the incident was not communicated to Board members. Director Phifer also said that there have been extensive discussions over the past several months and that he would ensure better communications with Board members regarding these types of issues and concerns. Commissioner Hertel also pointed out Mr. Phifer was not the director at the time of the incident.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if the person responsible for shooting the albino deer was still on the sharpshooting team. Director Phifer said no.

Commissioner Parker asked if the policy has been changed to reflect these unusual animals. Mr. Muelle said yes, the policy has been changed and updated to reflect unique wildlife in the parks. He also said the primary goal is to take antlerless deer during culls.

Commissioner Quadrozzi said that the commissioners care extensively about what happens in the parks, but there are only seven members with limited time. Employees, the public and volunteers should call/email members to let them know about things that are happening in the parks.

Commissioner Marans said it was a good report and that many of the healthy deer are moving into urbanized areas such as Ann Arbor. Marans also said he has spoken with Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County officials and encourages staff to be proactive and send neighboring agencies the Metroparks Deer Management Plan.

9. Other Business

2. Board Discussion – Partnership Opportunities

Commissioner Parker said he would like to explore partnership opportunities with the city of Detroit to bring people to the parks. He said he recently met with Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan about possible partnering opportunities.

Commissioner Marans said the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy and similar agencies should be included as well.

Commissioner Quadrozzi said Molly Bell is reaching out to agencies and staff should include her in the process. She also said the Detroit Chamber has resources and that member companies may be willing to help with transportation.

Commissioner McCarthy said area Foundations may be more willing to donate money if we are including the city of Detroit.

Commissioner Hertel said the Metroparks has reached out to the city of Detroit in the past regarding Belle Isle and Fort Wayne.

Motion by Commissioner Parker, supported by Commissioner La Belle that the Board of Commissioners' (1) direct staff to work with the city of Detroit and investigate expanding Metropark services to Detroit; and (2) present a report to the Board on staff findings.

Commissioner La Belle called for a roll call vote.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Voting yes: Quadrozzi, Marans, Parker, La Belle, McCarthy, Hertel

Voting no: None

Absent: Marrocco

Motion carried unanimously.

9. Other Business

3. Board Discussion – Committee for Land Acquisition/Divestiture

Commissioner Hertel said he raised this issue several months ago and since there are no plans to raise the millage, the Board and staff need to look at the possibility of selling land for present park needs and that fit with the Five-Year-Plan.

Commissioner Marans asked what specific action Commissioner Hertel was looking for the committee to accomplish. He also said he would be more interested in land in Washtenaw and Livingston counties compared to Macomb County since he was more familiar with those areas.

Commissioner Hertel said the parks are holding onto parcels in Macomb County that will probably never be used and we should look at selling them. There are also other parcels that we probably wouldn't sell. He also said there is no timetable on these plans.

Commissioner Quadrozzi said she would be interested in the prospect of selling parcels and that there may be land in Oakland County that the parks don't need. For clarification, she also said the Board is looking at divesting land that has no recreational value in an effort to help the Metroparks offer more to the public, not less.

Commissioner Parker said, as policy makers, the Board should let staff decide what parcels should be divested.

Commissioner Hertel said the Authority has purchased land continuously since he has been on the Board and if we want to do things in other areas, there needs to be resources available to do so.

Commissioner McCarthy said there should be a public hearing involved and a decision by the whole Board. He said a special meeting may be needed to discuss the issue of land divestitures.

Commissioner Marans said land that has potential recreation value as well as land that has ecological value should be an important part of the overall plan.

Commissioner Hertel suggested the Board think over the land policies and have more discussion at the next Board meeting.

Commissioner La Belle asked if an outside consultant should be brought in to assist with the land divestiture, as it's a complicated matter.

9. Other Business

4. Board Discussion – Volunteer Services Supervisor Position

Commissioner Hertel said the Board has been discussing hiring a Volunteer supervisor for more than a year. Once the position was posted, six people were interviewed for the position. Commissioner Hertel stated there is a prospective candidate for the position and wanted the Board to review the resume to decide on a salary range.

Commissioner La Belle said he participated on the interview panel and likes the candidate.

Commissioner McCarthy asked what the goal was for today.

Commissioner Hertel said to decide on salary, review the candidate's resume and bring a recommendation to the Board at the next meeting.

Commissioner McCarthy said the budgeted salary and the salary survey doesn't support what was budgeted and asked if the position was budgeted too high, and if the candidate would be at a salary range between the \$82,000 - \$90,000 budgeted amount. He also asked what the salary survey listed for this position. Director Phifer said the salary survey had a low range of \$30,000 and a high range of \$72,000 with the average approximately \$63,881. Director Phifer also said staff looked at various types of agencies including non-profits, hospitals and for-profit organizations.

Commissioner Marans said he would like to see the job description and look at what other parks and recreation agencies have for a salary range. He also asked if the person would be supervising, recruiting and running the program. Commissioner Hertel said yes.

Commissioner McCarthy said that Molly Bell has people and organizations that want to volunteer, but need a program in place. Commissioner McCarthy also recommended a salary range of \$53,000 - \$65,000 for the position.

Commissioner Parker said he believes this a great position and that he is comfortable with the salary range. He said he is not comfortable with the way the position candidacy was handled. The Board should not be involved in the selection process and that staff should conduct the interviews and bring a recommendation to the Board. He also said a candidate outside of the area would have a longer learning curve since they do not know the area and that staff should look for a local candidate.

Commissioner Hertel said the Board has a long-standing tradition of sitting in on staff interviews.

Commissioner La Belle said the Board approved the salary when they approved the budget.

Commissioner McCarthy said he was also surprised about the interview process, and while some of the positions report directly to the Board according to the Bylaws such as the controller. He also said he was involved in hiring the previous controller and received specific instructions from legal counsel.

Commissioner Quadrozzi said she would like to see the policy on what is expected of the Board regarding their role in the organization and that the Board should not be involved in the interviewing or selection process.

Commissioner Marans said if this position is going to be recruiting, then the Board needs to see metrics on how well the program is doing. Director Phifer said he contacted Commissioner Hertel because of his experience with the State Fair.

Motion by Commissioner Parker, supported by Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners' (1) approve a salary range for the Volunteer Services Supervisor at a range of \$55,000 - \$65,000; and (2) have staff select a candidate and bring a recommendation to the Board at the next meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

8. Closed Session

At the regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners' held on Aug. 13, 2015 there was a motion by Commissioner La Belle supported by Commissioner Marans that the Board of Commissioners adjourn to a closed session consider a legal opinion from outside counsel within the attorney-client privilege. [Section 8 \(h\) of the Michigan Open Meetings Act. M.C.L. 15.268 \(h\)](#)

ROLL CALL VOTE

Voting yes: Quadrozzi, Marans, Parker, La Belle, McCarthy, Hertel

Voting no: None

Absent: Marrocco

The regular meeting adjourned at 12:27 p.m.

Chairman Hertel reconvened the regular meeting at 12:44 p.m.

Motion by Commissioner La Belle, support by Commissioner Marans that the Board of Commissioners' accept the recommendation by legal counsel.

Motion carried unanimously.

10. Staff Officer Updates

Director Phifer thanked park staff for the hard work done in June and July. Director Phifer also introduced Ursula Watson as the new Public Relations Specialist. Ms. Watson said she previously spent 12 years at the Detroit News and that she is pleased to be able to take what she has learned while at the Detroit News and apply it to her work at the parks.

Director Phifer said he was deferring two presentations until the September meeting in the interest of time.

Commissioner Parker asked about the status of the Deputy Director and Chief of Police positions. Director Phifer said staff is still screening applicants for the Chief of Police position and that the Deputy Director position has not been posted.

Commissioner Marans said that the Deputy Director position was handed out several months ago for Board input and inquired why the position has not been posted.

Commissioner Hertel said the Deputy Director job description would be added to the September meeting for discussion.

Commissioner Parker asked if there has ever been a job description for the Deputy Director and if there were other positions without job descriptions.

Commissioner Hertel said that there was no job description for the Deputy Director. Director Phifer said the job description for the Deputy Director was recently updated.

Commissioner Quadrozzi said she would like to see these positions filled, she is comfortable with the job description, and that the position reports directly to the Director. Commissioner Quadrozzi said the Board authorized the Director to hire his own Deputy Director.

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, support by Commissioner Marans that the Board of Commissioners' (1) authorize staff to post the position for the Deputy Director with the recommended changes to the job description; and (2) that the Director select and recommend a candidate to the Board for approval.

Commissioner Marans said he asked staff how quickly the position could be posted on the MRPA and NRPA websites and advised the Board that the job posting could be done

immediately and that staff could potentially meet candidates at the NRPA conference in mid-September.

Motion carried unanimously.

11. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner McCarthy said the Foundation sent out invitations for two events on Sept. 24 and hopes that everyone can come and support the Foundations efforts.

Commissioner Parker thanked the Board for supporting possible opportunities with Detroit. He also asked about possible a work session or retreat to discuss the role of the Board. He asked staff to poll the Board and check their availability for a possible meeting.

Commissioner Quadrozzi said the Board needs to think about the possibility hiring a grant writer and that it may be a good time to add the position to next year's budget.

Commissioner Hertel polled Board members on the possibility of moving next month's meeting from Sept. 10 to Sept. 17. Commissioner Marans said the NRPA conference was the week of Sept. 14 – 18 and that several Board members and staff would be attending.

The Board decided the meeting would remain on Sept. 10.

12. Motion to Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn M. Athayde
Recording Secretary