

Minutes
Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority
Board of Commissioners
Thursday, December 10, 2020

At a regular meeting of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority's Board of Commissioners was held on Thursday, Dec. 10, 2020 immediately following the Public Hearing for the 2021 budget. The meeting was via remote attendance by commissioners and members of the public due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Commissioners Present: Robert W. Marans (*Remote – Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, MI*)
 Jaye Quadrozzi (*Remote – Farmington Hills, Oakland County, MI*)
 Kurt Heise (*Remote – Plymouth, Wayne County, MI*)
 Steve Williams (*Remote – Marine City, St. Clair County, MI*)
 John Paul Rea (*Remote – Mt. Clemens, Macomb County, MI*)
 Timothy J. McCarthy (*Remote – Grosse Pointe, Wayne County, MI*)

Staff Officers Present:
 Director Amy McMillan
 Interim Deputy Director Michael Lyons
 Chief of Finance Rebecca Franchock

Absent: Commissioner Parker

Others:
 Miller, Canfield, Paddock & Stone Steve Mann

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Marans called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

2. Chairman's Statement

None.

3. Public Participation

None.

4. Approval – November 12, 2020 Regular Meeting and Closed Meeting Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, support from Commissioner Rea that the Board of Commissioners approve the November 12, 2020 regular meeting and closed session minutes as submitted.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. Approval – December 10, 2020 Full Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, support from Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners approve the December 10, 2020 agenda as presented.

Commissioner Quadrozzi requested that the Shelden Trails item be moved to the regular agenda.

Commissioner Quadrozzi amended her motion to remove the Shelden Trails item from the consent agenda and to move it to the regular agenda.

Motion carried unanimously.

6. Approval – December 10, 2020 Consent Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, support from Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners approve the December 10, 2020 consent agenda as presented:

- a. Approval – November Financial Statements
- b. Approval – November Appropriation Adjustments
- c. Report – Monthly Planning and Development Update
- d. Report – Natural Resources Update
- e. Approval – Electrical Design Services Proposal, Lake St. Clair Metropark
- f. Approval – Nature Center Lighting Upgrades, Oakwoods Metropark
- g. Approval/Resolution – Exemption of Taxes Subject to Capture, Detroit Region Aerotropolis

- ~~h. Report – Sheldon Trails Development and Construction, Stony Creek Metropark~~ *moved to regular agenda*
- i. Approval – 2021 Worker’s Compensation Insurance Renewal
- j. Approval – 2021 Fiduciary Liability Insurance Renewal
- k. Approval – 2021 Property and Liability Insurance Renewal
- l. Report – Purchases over \$10,000
- m. Purchases
 - 1. Garbage Truck, Stony Creek

Motion carried unanimously.

7. Approval – 2021 Budget and Resolution

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy, support from Commissioner Rea that the Board of Commissioners (1) provide staff direction on 2021 preliminary budget; and (2) receive and file the Preliminary 2021 Budget estimates as recommended by Chief of Finance Rebecca Franchock and staff.

Motion carried unanimously.

8. Reports

A. Finance Department

1. Report – November General Fund Financial Review

Motion by Commissioner Rea, support from Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners receive and file the November General Fund Financial Statement update as recommended by Chief of Finance Rebecca Franchock and staff.

Discussion: Chief of Finance Rebecca Franchock updated the Board on finances to date and said that golf revenue was up 1000 percent; tolling and golf were both higher in November; expenses year-to-date were down.

Motion carried unanimously.

2. Report – November Capital Project Fund

Motion by Commissioner Heise, support from Commissioner Rea that the Board of Commissioners receive and file the monthly Capital Project Fund report as submitted by Rebecca Franchock and staff.

Discussion: Chief of Finance Rebecca Franchock updated the Board on capital projects to date and said several projects are close to completion.

Motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval – Designation of Fund Balance

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy, support from Commissioner Williams that the Board of Commissioners approve the Fund Balance Commitments and Assignments for 2020 in accordance with Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statement No. 54 as recommended by Chief of Finance Rebecca Franchock and staff.

Discussion: Chief of Finance Rebecca Franchock updated the Board and said the \$6 million for the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy partnership was moved to the assigned fund balance.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval – 2019 Tax Levy Adjustments

Motion by Commissioner Heise, support from Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners That the Board of Commissioners (1) approve the 2019 Tax Levy Adjustments to decrease the current year receivable balance; and (2) write-off 2014 Delinquent Personal Property tax receivable balances as requested by Chief of Finance Rebecca Franchock and staff.

Discussion: Chief of Finance Rebecca Franchock updated the Board and said prior to year end, it is necessary to reconcile the differences between the Metroparks and county accounting records. During the past several months, staff has been working with various representatives of the five

county treasurer's offices to obtain information on the many 2019 tax levy adjustments from local tax abatement programs, Board of Reviews, Tax Tribunals, etc. In total, the actual tax levy adjustments reported by county treasurer's offices are \$1,002,642.04 compared to Metroparks estimated adjustments of \$750,000.

Motion carried unanimously.

8. Reports

A. Finance Department

5. Approval – Pension Plan Restatement

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy, support from Commissioner Williams that the Board of Commissioners approve the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority Employees' Retirement Plan and Trust Agreement (the Plan) as amended and restated effective Jan. 1, 2021 as recommended by Chief of Finance Rebecca Franchock and staff.

Discussion: Chief of Finance Rebecca Franchock updated the Board and said occasionally, the Pension Plan needed to be restated and that changes include any applicable guidance from the IRS provided in their listing of required modifications as well as any needed clean-up or improvement in language deemed necessary.

Motion carried unanimously.

6. Approval – 2020 Pension Plan Additional Contribution

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy, support from Commissioner Williams that the Board of Commissioners approve making an additional 2020 Pension contribution in the amount of \$993,726 as recommended by Chief of Finance Rebecca Franchock and staff.

Discussion: Chief of Finance Rebecca Franchock updated the Board and said the 2020 General Fund budget included \$3.1 million for funding of the defined contribution for the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority Employees' Retirement Plan. In July, a \$2,645,500 contribution was made, which resulted in savings of \$454,500. In addition, the Retiree Health Care Trust contribution was budgeted at \$1.1 million. In July, a \$1,060,774 contribution was made, which resulted in savings of \$39,226. The proposed contribution to the Pension Plan would include these funds in addition to \$500,000, which is available within the existing operating accounts due to unspent funds related primarily to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Franchock said in July 2020, the minimum payment was made to both the pension plan and the retiree health care trust due to the financial uncertainties related to the pandemic. At this time, staff finds that the actual revenues and expenditures are expected to result in a surplus in the general funds current year operations in excess of \$4 million.

The Pension Plan is currently funded at 75.8 percent and the Retiree Health Care Trust is currently funded at 83.4 percent. It now seems prudent to contribute the unspent funds remaining after the July contribution to the Pension Plan as the percentage funded is lower in that plan. It also seems to be judicious to use some of the surplus general fund monies to mitigate future liabilities associated with the Pension Plan putting funds to use within the more robust investment strategy available to the plan and to improve the percentage funding of the plan.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Administrative Department

1. Approval – 2021 Board Meeting Schedule

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy, support from Commissioner Rea that the Board of Commissioners approve the 2021 proposed meeting scheduled with a 9:00 a.m. start time until further notice as recommended by Director Amy McMillan and staff.

Discussion: Commissioner Marans said the locations for meetings in 2021 were confirmed; however, the Board needed to decide on meeting start times.

Commissioner McCarthy said he doesn't see a reason to change the meeting time.

Commissioner Heise said he prefers a 10am start time as afternoon meetings create traffic delays, which are burdensome.

Commissioner Quadrozzi said she can do either morning or afternoon meetings and suggested a 9:00 a.m. start time during pandemic restrictions.

Commissioners Quadrozzi and Heise said they prefer 9:00 a.m. start times.

Motion carried unanimously.

8. Reports

B. Administrative Department

2. Report – Marketing Report

Motion by Commissioner Rea, support from Commissioner Williams that the Board of Commissioners receive and file the monthly Marketing Report as recommended by Chief of Marketing and Communications Danielle Mauter and staff.

Discussion: Chief of Marketing and Communications Danielle Mauter updated the Board and the Metroparks continues to receive media attention for the Detroit Riverfront partnership. She said holiday programming has also received good press; 17,586 annual permits were sold to date and that 2,886 annual permits for 2021 were sold during the first week of sales.

Motion carried unanimously.

3. Report – DEI Report

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, support from Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners receive and file the monthly DEI Report as recommended by Chief of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Artina Sadler and staff.

Discussion: Chief of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Artina Sadler reviewed DEI initiatives and said efforts are working, staff attending an anti-ableism workshop, training is back on track and that staff is creating “pods” in each district to ensure everyone can social distance and participate.

Commissioner Marans suggested reaching out to other organizations such as the University of Michigan, Oakland County etc. as it will give the Metroparks more leverage.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Planning Department

1. Report – Shelden Trails Development and Construction, Stony Creek Metropark (moved from consent agenda)

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, support from Commissioner Rea that the Board of Commissioners receive and file the Shelden Trails Development and Construction update as presented by Chief of Planning and Development Nina Kelly and staff.

Discussion: Chief of Planning and Development Nina Kelly updated the Board and said Flowtrack has submitted a cost proposal to expand the scope of work in their existing contract to include the completion of Loop “D” and the construction of Loops “C” and “E,” in addition to the finalization of the existing contract scope items, by the end of 2021. If approved as part of the 2021 budget, a contract extension will be executed by staff. This would complete the redevelopment of the Shelden Trails. She said funding had been allocated in the Capital Project Fund and through the Metroparks Foundation to complete Phase 1 (Loops A, B, and the Northern Connector) of this project in March 2020. Additional funding that was originally budgeted in the Capital Project Fund for backup internet fiber installation projects in multiple parks was reallocated in August 2020 to cover the cost of additional work on Loop D and the Northern Connector bridge. To complete the project in 2021, \$442,035 was included in the proposed 2021 budget for approval.

Motion carried unanimously.

8. Reports

B. Planning Department

2. Report – 2020-2023 Rouge Park Partnership Update

Motion by Commissioner Rea, support from Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners receive and file the report on the 2020-2023 Rouge Park Partnership as recommended by Chief of Planning and Development Nina Kelly and staff.

Discussion: Chief of Planning and Development Nina Kelly and Chief of Natural Resources and Environmental Compliance Tyler Mitchell updated the Board on the status of the project. Ms. Kelly said in collaboration with the city of Detroit Parks and Recreation department and the Friends of Rouge Park, the Metroparks received a \$10,500 grant from Recreation Equipment, Incorporated Co-op (REI) in May 2020 for support of the Prairie Restoration project at Rouge Park.

Mr. Tyler reviewed Natural Resources Department efforts and said in October staff did a site visit to determine the state of the prairie restoration, where work should focus, and what methodology to best employ. He said staff efforts should focus on the area west of the "southern prairie trail head" as work has occurred here in the past, and it has a high diversity of native plants, thus our efforts would have the most positive ecological impact. Staff concurred that foliar spray as a method for invasive shrub control was inappropriate at this time given the state of foliage senescence and instead opted for a shrub cutting and stump herbicide treatment. Mr. Tyler also reviewed the work plan for 2021.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if there are homes adjacent to Rouge Park. Mr. Tyler said yes and that the Friends of Rouge Park were happy.

Commissioner Marans if staff was wearing Metroparks branded items. Mr. Tyler said yes.

Commissioner Williams said he was glad to see the work done on invasive species.

Commissioner Marans said this is important work being done in Detroit as this is one of the largest parks in the city.

Motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval/Grant Resolution – Accessible Launch Development, Lake St. Clair

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy, support from Commissioner Rea that the Board of Commissioners (1) approve the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)'s Michigan Coastal Management Program (MCMP) grant resolution; and (2) approve \$194,863 as a match to develop an accessible kayak launch in Lake St. Clair Metropark, as recommended by Chief of Planning and Development Nina Kelly and staff.

Discussion: Chief of Planning and Development Nina Kelly updated the Board on the proposed launch location, reviewed the proposed design concept and the matching funds requirements.

Motion carried unanimously.

9. Other Business

a. Approval – Library Partnership Agreement

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy, support from Commissioner Rea that the Board of Commissioners (1) approve the Library Partners Agreement to provide equitable access to hotspot service for students in need residing in the Metroparks five-county service region upon review and approval from legal counsel; and (2) authorize the director to sign the agreement as recommended by Chief of Interpretive Services Jennifer Jaworski and staff.

Discussion: Director McMillan said Chief of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Artina Sadler, Chief of Interpretive Services Jennifer Jaworski and Chief of Information Technology Robert Rudolph has been working on this project. Ms. Jaworski said the idea came from the Ferndale library and one of the programs they do. She said the program is equitable and gives access to students that may not have an internet connection in order to do schoolwork. During the pandemic, hot spots and remote learning has been a real issue for many students and that the library has more requests for hot spots than equipment. Ms. Jaworski said the hot spots would be checked out through the library network.

Ms. Jaworski said working with The Library Network and the Suburban Library Cooperative, the Metroparks can increase the number of hot spots available in underserved communities in our service region, which in turn will help to provide more equitable access to data. The Metroparks will provide one-year service plans for 100 hot spots with filters that will be checked out through the Library Partners for use in underserved areas in our five-county service region. In addition to supporting the data needs of our service region, providing Hotspots will increase equitable access to virtual programming by the Interpretative Services Department. Cross promoting with the Library Partners will increase viability of Metroparks programming among library patrons and provide additional information about Library Partners' programs to our patrons.

Motion carried unanimously.

9. Other Business

b. Approval – T-Mobile Contract for Library Hotspots

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy, support from Commissioner Williams that the Board of Commissioners (1) approve a contract with T-Mobile to provide equitable access to hotspot service for underserved students residing in the Metroparks five-county service region upon review and approval from legal counsel; and (2) approve staff to transfer funds from Administrative Office Services account to the Administrative Office Joint Government Services account to fund the project as recommended by Chief of Interpretive Services Jennifer Jaworski and staff.

Discussion: Chief of Interpretive Services Jennifer Jaworski updated the Board and said the monthly service fee is \$28.70 plus service fees for unlimited LTE data per hotspot. The annual impact is \$36,000. The Metroparks will provide a one-year service plan for 100 hot spots with filters that will be checked out through The Library Network and Suburban Library Cooperative for use in underserved areas in the Metroparks five-county service region. With a 12-month service commitment, T-Mobile will provide the hotspot devices at no cost. Ms. Jaworski said working with The Library Network and the Suburban Library Cooperative, the Metroparks can increase the number of hot spots available in underserved communities in our service region, which in turn will help to provide more equitable access to data.

Commissioner Marans asked if the contract needed to be approved annually. Ms. Jaworski said 2021 was a trial period and would be reevaluated later in the year.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if the hotspot gets checked out. Ms. Jaworski said yes, the hotspots would provide data usage if there no internet is available.

Commissioner McCarthy said this is a great program and should be promoted.

Motion carried unanimously.

c. Approval – One-Time Only Payment

Director McMillan said 2020 was an extraordinarily tough year all-around and thanked staff for all their hard work. She said she is requesting approval from the Board to give a one-time only payment of \$1,000 to all full-time employees not including Ms. McMillan.

Commissioner Marans asked if the \$190,000 was coming from the general fund. Ms. McMillan said yes.

Motion by Commissioner Rea, support from Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners approve a one-time bonus for all full-time employees, not including Ms. McMillan in the amount of \$1,000 as recommended by Director McMillan and staff.

Commissioner Heise voted no.

Motion carried.

10. Staff Leadership Update

Ms. McMillan said she was grateful for every single employee at the Metroparks and she thanked Board members for their hard work and guidance. Ms. McMillan said she also wanted to recognize the 2020 Employees of the Year – Chris Sist, park support specialist at Hudson Mills Metropark in the Western District and Lisa Parsons, Western District community outreach interpreter.

Ms. McMillan said Lisa was one of her students when she was at Eastern Michigan University. Ms. McMillan shared remarks made by Ms. Parson's coworkers.

Ms. McMillan said she appreciates Ms. Sist's insight and said she (Ms. Sist) always follows up with emails thanking Amy for moving the parks forward. Ms. McMillan also shared remarks made by Ms. Sist's coworkers.

Ms. Parson's thanked Ms. McMillan and staff and said she is humbled by the award.

11. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner McCarthy said the technology was much improved this month.

Commissioner Rea thanked staff for the continued hard work on the Sheldon Trails project at Stony Creek Metropark.

Commissioner Heise wished everyone a happy holiday season; that this year has been an incredible year and he hopes for a better 2021.

Commissioner Williams thanked staff for receiving the presentations ahead of time and wished everyone happy holidays.

Commissioner Marans wished everyone happy holidays.

12. Motion to Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Rea, support from Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners adjourn the regular meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn M. Athayde
Recording Secretary