

November 17, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes  
Preservation Parks of Delaware County  
1:00 PM Deer Haven Park

**Roll Call:** The meeting was called to order with Board members Bruce Ruhl, Chair; Glenn Marzluf, Vice Chair; and John Bader, Secretary, present. Staff present included Tyler Swartzlander, Deputy Director; Rich Niccum; Matt Simpson; Casey Smith; Chris Roshon; Beth McCollam; Kyle Pace; Bonnie Houk; Tony Benishek; Carol Zimmerman; Chief Welch; Sgt. Watkins; Sgt. Elkins; and Officer Rhodes.

**Public Present:** Lisa Welch, Heather Ashbrook, Nathan Rhodes.

**Consent Agenda:**

1. Approval of October 25, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes
2. Approval of October 25, 2025 Special Board Meeting Minutes
3. Human Resources Changes in Personnel Report
4. Resolution 2025-624 Transfer General Fund to Capital Projects Fund

**Items Removed from the Consent Agenda:** None

**Approval of Consent Agenda:** J. Bader moved to approve the consent agenda, G. Marzluf seconded, all members voted aye. The motion passed.

**Financial Report and Ratification of Vouchers:** G. Marzluf moved to approve the Financial Report and Ratification of Vouchers, J. Bader seconded, all members voted aye. The motion passed.

**Park Updates:**

1. T. Swartzlander shared that park levies in Ohio were very successful in the recent election, with 90% of those on the ballot passing.
2. T. Swartzlander shared that the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association recently announced that Preservation Parks received two awards this year: 1<sup>st</sup> Place in the Capital Improvement Projects – Up to \$500,000 category for the Braille Trail at Hogback Ridge Park and 3<sup>rd</sup> Place in the Environmental & Interpretive Programs & Events category for the Honeysuckle Hackfest at Deer Haven Park.

**Department Reports:**

*Development:* C. Zimmerman reported that a team is exploring four options for Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software, with a goal of implementing a system by late first quarter. She is also working on the Year-End Appeal, naming opportunities, and gift agreements.

*Human Resources:* T. Benishek shared that the Total Compensation Survey is nearly complete and results will be presented to the Board at the December meeting. He also introduced Mariah Rhodes as the new part-time Park Officer.

*Law Enforcement:* Sgt. Watkins reported that officers assisted the City of Delaware with a suicide call and participated in the search for a missing juvenile who was found safely.

*Marketing & Communications:* B. McCollam highlighted website changes including the addition of the Program Guide in a digital flipbook format, making it more use friendly.

*Natural Resources:* C. Roshon reported that tree plantings around the new wetlands at Perfect Creek Park, constructed by Natural Resources staff, have been completed. He also shared that a \$5,000 grant from Cabela's supported the purchase of native trees for planting in the parks, and that 200 willow trees were received from the Columbus Zoo as part of the Zoo Browse Agreement for planting at Emily Traphagen Park.

*Outdoor Connections:* C. Smith highlighted several programs, including the turtle painting program with 15 participants, the Trick-or-Treat Trail which attracted over 200 participants despite inclement weather, and the Gallant Farm book club's Halloween celebration featuring *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*. She also noted that she accepted a Community Service Award on behalf of the Park District for the Hogback Ridge Park Braille Trail from the American Council of the Blind of Ohio at the Ohio-Indiana joint convention.

*Park Operations:* K. Pace provided updates on the completion of flooring and acoustic panel improvements at the Shale Hollow Park Lodge, upgrades to the men's restroom at Gallant Woods Park, and playground improvements at Gallant Woods, Emily Traphagen, and Blues Creek Parks. He also shared photos of the completed Bicentennial Barn Area trails.

*Planning & Construction:* M. Simpson reported on progress at the Bicentennial Barn construction, and noted that paving of the McCammon Creek East parking lot and connector trail is complete. He shared that a public open house for the Winter Road 60-acre property was held on November 5 at the Delaware Campus of Columbus State Community College, with more than 80 attendees and very positive feedback on both the master plans and potential park names. He also provided updates on the Perfect Schoolhouse renovation project and the filing of abandoned water wells at several new park sites.

**Public Comment:** None

**Other Business:**

1. *Swearing in of Park Officer:* B. Ruhl conducted the swearing in of new Park Officer Mariah Rhodes as a new part-time Park Officer.
2. *Resolution 2025-625 Recognizing Chief Welch's Dedication and Service:* G. Marzluf moved to approve Resolution 2025-625 recognizing Chief Welch's dedication and service to Preservation Parks, J. Bader seconded, all members voted aye. The motion passed.
3. *Resolution 2025-626 Authorization to Purchase Land to expand Orchard Oaks Preserve:* G. Marzluf moved to approve Resolution 2025-626 to purchase land to expand Orchard Oaks Preserve, B. Ruhl seconded, all members voted aye. The motion passed.
4. *Park and Trail Improvement Grant Awards:*  
G. Marzluf made a motion to add *Approval for the Park and Trail Improvement Grant Awards* to the agenda, B. Ruhl seconded, all members voted aye. The motion passed.

M. Simpson reported that the District received five applications that were evaluated by a team of park district staff and a volunteer. He presented an overview of three projects recommended for funding including:

- Alum Creek Flow Trail - Central Ohio Mountain Biking Organization (\$50,000)
- Miller Park Trail - Village of Galena (\$39,962)
- Unity Park Splash Pad and Restroom - City of Delaware- (\$10,038)

G. Marzluf moved to approve the Park and Trail Improvement Grant Awards as presented, B. Ruhl seconded, all members voted aye. The motion passed.

5. *Year Ahead Presentation:* Staff provided the Board with a review of the Year Ahead projects planned.
6. *Draft Budget:* T. Swartzlander and B. Houk presented the 2026 draft budget for discussion.

**Executive Session:** G. Marzluf moved to go into executive session at 1:44 PM for the purpose of discussing land acquisition and compensation of employees. J. Bader seconded. Roll call was taken, and all members were present. All members voted aye. The motion passed.

The Board returned to regular session at 2:41 PM and took the following action:

1. G. Marzluf moved to authorize the Executive Director to execute an agreement with Stream + Wetland Foundation for a future donation of land in Oxford Township, B. Ruhl seconded; all members voted aye. The motion passed.
2. G. Marzluf moved to adopt the following employee benefits:
  - Renewal of the Park District's Anthem health insurance plan as presented
  - Renewal of the Principal dental insurance plan as presented
  - Change in vision insurance carriers from Superior to VSP
  - Approval of the Park District's HSA contributions as recommended: \$1,380 for single coverage; \$3,000 for employee and spouse coverage; \$2,280 for employee and child(ren) coverage; and \$4,200 for family coverageB. Ruhl seconded. All members voted aye, and the motion passed.
3. G. Marzluf moved to approve a one-time payout of compensatory and holiday time, B. Ruhl seconded; all members voted aye. The motion passed.
4. G. Marzluf moved to approve a one-time bonus of 12.5% for Chief Dennis Welch, B. Ruhl seconded; all members voted aye. The motion passed.

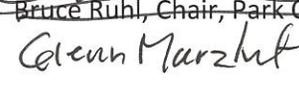
**Next Board Meeting Date:** A regular meeting will be held at 1:00 PM on December 9, 2025 at Deer Haven Park.

**Adjournment:** G. Marzluf moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:44 PM, B. Ruhl seconded, all members voted aye. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Van Haften, Executive Director

Bruce Ruhl, Chair, Park Commissioner

Gleen Marzluf