

July 23, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes  
Preservation Parks of Delaware County  
1:30 PM Deer Haven Park

**Roll Call:** The meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM.

Park Commissioners included Glenn Marzluf, Chair; Bruce Ruhl, Vice-Chair; and John Bader, Secretary.

Staff included Mary Van Haaften, Executive Director; Tyler Swartzlander, Deputy Director; Jim Palmer; Kyle Pace; Bonnie Houk; Tony Benishek; Carol Zimmerman; Chief Watkins; Matt Simpson; Chris Roshon; and Casey Smith.

Public included Amy Tovar.

**Consent Agenda:**

1. Approval of June 11, 2026 Board Minutes
2. Human Resources Changes in Personnel Report
3. Resolution 2026-647 Declaration of Surplus Property

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

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

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

**Park Updates:** M. Van Haaften provided a preliminary Save the Date of February 11, 2027 for a Volunteer, Foundation, and Park District State of the Parks event and celebration at the Bicentennial Barn.

**Department Reports:**

*Development:* C. Zimmerman reported that the Foundation's Gala, which grossed approximately \$115,000 and welcomed approximately 300 attendees. She also shared that a ribbon-cutting press event for the Bicentennial Barn is scheduled for August 21, followed by a public celebration on August 22. She plans to launch a monthly giving campaign in October to encourage recurring donor support.

*Education:* C. Smith reported that Wild Turtle Week attracted more than 600 visitors, while Bird Fest welcomed approximately 300 attendees. She also highlighted strong participation in several other programs, including Hands on History, which drew approximately 500 visitors; the Gallant Farm Tractor Show, which welcomed 175 attendees; and Try-It Electric Bikes, which attracted 62 participants.

In addition, she highlighted the recent release of 300 Tippecanoe Darters by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources at Sycamore Run. The Tippecanoe Darter is listed as a threatened species in Ohio. She also shared that the department received a letter of appreciation recognizing the accessibility and positive impact of the Braille Trail.

*Human Resources:* T. Benishek reported that interviews are currently underway for the Park Officer position. He also provided an update on revisions to the employee performance evaluation process and reported that a training for supervisors is planned for September.

*Law Enforcement:* Chief Watkins reported that officers issued several citations recently, including violations for dogs off leash and marijuana use in the parks. He also shared that officers participated in the Westerville Cops and Kids event and attended the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association Law Enforcement Section meeting, which brought together representatives from 10 park law enforcement agencies across the state. In addition, he shared a photo recognizing Officer Kuhn's 16 years of dedicated service to Preservation Parks as he concluded his final day with the organization.

*Marketing & Communications:* T. Swartzlander shared summer photos taken by seasonal Marketing photographer Payton Andisman.

*Natural Resources:* C. Roshon reported that 15 volunteers assisted with tree plantings at Perfect Creek Park. He also shared updates on the removal of newly discovered drainage tile at McCammon Creek Park East.

*Park Operations:* K. Pace reported that staff repaired the natural play area tunnel at Emily Traphagen Park. He also highlighted the addition of a new mini skid steer and noted recent asphalt repairs along the Ohio to Erie Trail.

*Planning & Construction:* Matt Simpson reported that the Bicentennial Barn project is in its final stages, with final inspections, punch list items, and grading work underway. He also highlighted progress on the shelter and restroom project at Hickory Woods Park, as well as the driveway and parking lot construction at Eagle Ridge Park.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Other Business:**

1. *Resolution 2026-648 Supplemental Appropriation from the Certified Unappropriated balance to the General Fund's Planning Department Cash Transfer:* B. Houk explained that a supplemental appropriation is necessary for land acquisition. B Ruhl moved to approve Resolution 2026-648 as presented. J. Bader seconded. All members voted aye. The motion passed.
2. *Resolution 2026-649 Supplemental Appropriation to the Capital Project Fund:* B. Houk explained that a supplemental appropriation is necessary for land acquisition. B Ruhl moved to approve Resolution 2026-649 as presented. J. Bader seconded. All members voted aye. The motion passed.
3. *Resolution 2026-650 Transfer of Funds to the Capital Budget:* B. Houk explained the need to transfer funds for land acquisition and capital projects. B. Ruhl moved to approve Resolution 2026-650 as presented. J. Bader seconded. All members voted aye. The motion passed.
4. *Resolution 2026-651 Authorizing the Executive Director to sign a purchase agreement and closing documents to expand Gallant Woods Park.* J. Bader moved to approve Resolution 2026-651 as presented. B Ruhl second. All members voted aye. The motion passed.
5. *Resolution 2026-652: Authorizing the Executive Director to sign a purchase agreement and closing documents to expand Char-Mar Ridge Park.* J. Bader moved to approve Resolution 2026-652 as presented. B Ruhl second. All members voted aye. The motion passed.
6. *Resolution 2026-653: Authorizing a right-of-way easement to Delco for water service.* M. Simpson explained that an easement is necessary to provide water service for the restroom and shelter at Hickory Woods Park. J. Bader made the motion to approve Resolution 2026-653. B Ruhl seconded. G. Marzluf abstained. J. Bader and B. Ruhl voted aye. The motion passed.
7. *Ohio to Erie Trail pedestrian bridge over Rt 37:* M. Van Haaften presented information regarding the future donation of a pedestrian bridge over State Route 37 in Sunbury by the City of Sunbury. Staff are working with the City to finalize the details of the agreement, which will be brought before the Board for consideration at a future meeting.
8. *Request by the Preservation Parks Foundation to serve alcohol at the Bicentennial Barn:* G. Marzluf moved to allow the Preservation Parks Foundation to serve beer and wine at their

August 18 Donor Preview night at McCammon Creek Park's Bicentennial Barn. B. Ruhl seconded. All members voted aye. The motion passed.

9. *Strategic Plan Update:* R. Niccum provided an update on the status of the Strategic Plan and highlighted progress to date. Fourteen action items have been completed.

**Executive Session:** B. Ruhl moved to go into executive session at 1:59 PM for the purpose of discussing land acquisition and compensation of employees. J. Bader seconded. Roll call was taken; all members were present. All members voted aye. The motion passed.

The Board returned to regular session at 2:36 PM and took the following action:

1. B. Ruhl moved to approve the new position, Fiscal Specialist, within the pay grade as recommended. J. Bader seconded, all members voted aye. The motion passed.

**Next Board Meeting Date:** The next regular board meeting will be held at 11:30 PM on August 13, 2026 at Deer Haven Park.

**Adjournment:** B. Ruhl moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:37 PM, J. Bader seconded, all members voted aye. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Mary Van Haaften, Executive Director

  
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Glenn Marzluf, Chair, Park Commissioner