

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING  
FINANCIAL HEALTH DISCUSSION  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS**

April 17, 2024

A meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners (BOPC) was held at Five Rivers MetroParks Main Office, 409 E. Monument Avenue, Dayton, Ohio, on April 17, 2024, and convened at 1:24 p.m. on a roll call vote by the Board of Park Commissioners.

**Present:**

Five Rivers MetroParks Commission President Karen L. Davis, Commissioner Bear Monita, Chief Executive Officer Karen Hesser, Chief of Philanthropy Alexis Larsen, Chief of Planning and Projects Carrie Scarff, Chief of Administration Bill Tschirhart, Director of Marketing and Public Engagement Shelli DiFranco, Executive Assistant Christianna Romer, and Legal Counsel Bob Curry.

**Visitors Present:** Paul Lamberger, Cory Frolik

**Financial Health Discussion:**

- Chief Executive Officer Karen Hesser presented the BOPC with a brief recap of Five Rivers MetroParks' current financial health.
  - The \$58 million backlog of repair and replacement needs facing the agency continues to compound and needs to be addressed.
  - In order for the agency to operate, it is necessary to maintain a fund balance sufficient to appropriate a budget with full employment and all operating contingencies.
  - Even with current cost saving measures in place, beginning in 2026, the fund balance will fall below the required amount to pass the budget unless significant cuts are made. These cuts would impact every part of the organization.
  - Levy Funding
    - In 2018, MetroParks leadership considered a second levy knowing that even with passing the 2-mill levy, it would not be sufficient to address the then current funding needs and backlog. MetroParks decided to pursue a 2.0 mill levy instead of placing two separate levies on the November 2018 ballot.
    - A second levy was also discussed in early 2020, but it was not pursued due to the pandemic.
    - In 2022, the former CEO announced her decision to retire, so a levy was again not able to be pursued.
    - MetroParks is again considering replacing its existing 2.0 mill levy in either 2024 or 2025 to address the repair and replacement backlog and funding needs. The current effective rate of the existing 2.0 mill levy is 1.3 mill. This reduction in mills is due to the increase in property values during the last triennial update.

- The Ohio Revised Code changed rules for replacement levies in 2023 and the park district is not able to request a replacement levy sooner than 14-months prior to the current levy expiration. MetroParks is considering putting an additional levy of either .6 mill or 1.0 mill on the ballot in either 2024 or 2025 to address the repair and replacement backlog and funding needs.
- Options reviewed for an additional 10-year levy include the following:
  - 0.6 mill levy in 2024: backlog would be managed in 2034 but would never be retired.
  - 0.6 mill levy in 2025: backlog would be managed in 2046 but would never be retired.
  - 1.0 mill levy in 2024: backlog would be managed in 2028 and would retire in 2038.
  - 1.0 mill levy in 2025: backlog would be managed in 2031 and would retire in 2041.
  - The cost of a 0.6 mill levy for a \$100,000 home is \$21 per year or \$1.75 per month.
  - The cost of a 1.0 mill levy for a \$100,000 home is \$35 per year or \$3 per month.
- The Five Rivers MetroParks Levy Committee, a Political Action Committee (PAC), recently contracted with a consultant to conduct a public survey to gauge how they feel about a second levy.
  - The BOPC will consider the survey results to help inform their decision on a possible second levy.

**Visitor Comments:** None

**Next Board Meeting:**

- The BOPC agreed to hold the next regularly scheduled meeting on Friday, May 10 at 7:30 a.m. at Five Rivers MetroParks main office. The BOPC directed the Secretary of the Board to give notice of this meeting and all subsequent meetings pursuant to the rule adopted by the BOPC.

**Adjournment:** On a motion by Commissioner Monita, the BOPC adjourned the meeting at 1:51 p.m.

**Approved:**

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President Karen L. Davis

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_