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» Title [15] XV CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Chapter 1545: PARK DISTRICTS

1545.01 Park districts created.

Park districts may be created which include all or a part of the territory within a county, and the boundary lines of such district shall be so drawn as not to divide any existing township or municipal corporation within such county.

Effective Date: 10-01-1953

1545.02 Application to probate judge.

Application for the creation of a park district shall be made to the probate judge of the county within which the district is to be located. Such application shall either be signed by a majority of the electors residing within the proposed district as determined by the number of electors voting at the most recent general election within such territory, or, in lieu thereof, shall be authorized by resolution adopted by the board of county commissioners, any board of township trustees, or legislative authority of any municipal corporation within such proposed district. Such application shall state the name of the proposed district, shall contain an accurate description of the territory to be included, and shall be accompanied with an accurate map or plat thereof.

Effective Date: 08-22-1995

1545.03 Notice and hearing.

Upon the filing of the application provided for in section 1545.02 of the Revised Code, the probate judge shall fix a time for the hearing of such application which shall not be less than twenty nor more than forty days subsequent to the date of the filing of the application. Such judge shall publish notice of the filing of such application and the date of hearing thereof in two newspapers of general circulation within such district, or if there is but one newspaper of general circulation within such district, in such newspaper. If there is no newspaper of general circulation within such proposed district, then such judge shall post such notice in five of the most public places within such proposed district. Such notice shall be published or posted for a period of not less than fifteen days prior to the date fixed for the hearing. The hearing may be adjourned from time to time upon good cause shown.

Effective Date: 10-01-1953

1545.04 Evidence - argument - judgment.

At a hearing on an application for the creation of a park district, evidence may be taken as in other civil cases in the probate court, and the probate judge shall hear all arguments for and against the creation of such district. If he finds that such application is signed or authorized as provided in section 1545.02 of the Revised Code, and that the creation of such district will be conducive to the general welfare, he shall enter an order creating the district under the name specified in the application.

The judge may amend or change the limits of the territory described in the application at the time of the hearing, provided that in no case shall he increase the limits or size of said district. In case any of the original territory is eliminated from the district as finally established, the boundary lines of the district as finally ordered by the court shall not divide any existing township or municipal corporation.

Effective Date: 10-01-1953

1545.041 Conversion of township park district - resolution.

(A) Any township park district created pursuant to section 511.18 of the Revised Code that includes park land located outside the township in which the park district was established may be converted under the procedures provided in this section into a park district to be operated and maintained as provided for in this chapter, provided that there is no existing park district created under section 1545.04 of the Revised Code in the county in which the township park district is located. The proposed park district shall include within its boundary all townships and municipal corporations in which lands owned by the township park district seeking conversion are located, and may include any other townships and municipal corporations in the county in which the township park district is located.

(B) Conversion of a township park district into a park district operated and maintained under this chapter shall be initiated by a resolution adopted by the board of park commissioners of the park district. Any resolution initiating a conversion shall include the following:

- (1) The name of the township park district seeking conversion;
- (2) The name of the proposed park district;
- (3) An accurate description of the territory to be included in the proposed district;
- (4) An accurate map or plat of the proposed park district. The resolution may also include a proposed tax levy for the operation and maintenance of the proposed park district. If such a tax levy is proposed, the resolution shall specify the annual rate of the tax, expressed in dollars and cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation and in mills for each dollar of valuation, and shall specify the number of consecutive years the levy will be in effect. The annual rate of such a tax may not be higher than the total combined millage of all levies then in effect for the benefit of the township park district named in the resolution.

(C) Upon adoption of the resolution provided for in division (B) of this section, the board of park commissioners of the township park district seeking conversion under this section shall certify the resolution to the board of elections of the county in which the park district is located no later than four p.m. of the seventy-fifth day before the day of the election at which the question will be voted upon. Upon certification of the resolution to the board, the board of elections shall make the necessary arrangements to submit the question of conversion of the township park into a park district operated and maintained under Chapter 1545. of the Revised Code, to the electors qualified to vote at the next primary or general election who reside in the territory of the proposed park district. The question shall provide for a tax levy if such a levy is specified in the resolution.

(D) The ballot submitted to the electors as provided in division (C) of this section shall contain the following language:

"Shall the . . . . . (name of the township park district seeking conversion) be converted into a park district to be operated and maintained under Chapter 1545. of the Revised Code under the name of . . . . . . . . (name of proposed park district), which park district shall include the following townships and municipal corporations:

(name townships and municipal corporations)

Approval of the proposed conversion will result in the termination of all existing tax levies voted for the benefit of . . . . . (name of the township park district sought to be converted) and in the levy of a new tax for the operation and maintenance of . . . . . (name of proposed park district) at a rate not exceeding . . . . . (number of mills) mills for each one dollar of valuation, which is . . . . . (rate expressed in dollars and cents) for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for . . . (number of years the millage is to be imposed) years, commencing on the . . . (year) tax duplicate.

FOR THE PROPOSED CONVERSION

AGAINST THE PROPOSED CONVERSION

(E) If the proposed conversion is approved by at least a majority of the electors voting on the proposal, the township park district that seeks conversion shall become a park district subject to Chapter 1545. of the Revised Code effective the first day of January following approval by the voters. The park district shall have the name specified in the resolution, and effective the first day of January following approval by the voters, the following shall occur:

- (1) The indebtedness of the former township park district shall be assumed by the new park district;
- (2) All rights, assets, properties, and other interests of the former township park district shall become vested in the new park district, including the rights to any tax revenues previously vested in the former township park district; provided, that all tax levies in excess of the ten mill limitation approved for the benefit of the former township park district shall be removed from the tax lists after the February settlement next succeeding the conversion. Any tax levy approved in connection with the conversion shall be certified as provided in section 5705.25 of the Revised Code.
- (3) The members of the board of park commissioners of the former township park district shall be the members of the members of the board of park commissioners of the new park district, with all the same powers and duties as if appointed under section 1545.05 of the Revised Code. The term of each such commissioner shall expire on the first day of January of the year following the year in which his term would have expired under section 511.19 of the Revised Code. Thereafter, commissioners shall be appointed pursuant to section 1545.05 of the Revised Code.

Effective Date: 10-05-1987

1545.05 Park commissioners.

(A) Upon the creation of a park district, the probate judge shall appoint three commissioners who shall take office immediately and whose terms shall expire one, two, and three years, respectively, from the first day of January next after the date of their appointment. Thereafter, their successors shall be appointed by the probate judge for terms of three years. Before entering upon the performance of the duties of the office, each commissioner shall take an oath to perform faithfully the duties of the office and shall give bond for that faithful performance in the sum of five thousand dollars. The bond shall be approved by and filed with the county auditor. The commissioners shall serve without compensation, but shall be allowed their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

(B) Any board of park commissioners of a park district may elect to expand the membership of the board from three members to five members upon a majority vote of the board. Upon such a vote, the board shall certify to the probate judge a resolution requesting the judge to appoint two additional members to the board. The probate judge shall appoint those additional members, and they shall take office immediately upon their appointment. One member shall be appointed to a term that expires on the first day of January of the year following the year of that member's appointment, and one member shall be appointed to a term that expires on the first day of January of the second year following the year of that member's

appointment. Thereafter, their successors shall be appointed by the probate judge for terms of three years.

Effective Date: 10-01-1953; 04-11-2005

#### 1545.06 Removal of park commissioners - vacancy.

Any park commissioner may be removed at the discretion of the probate judge, either upon complaint filed with such judge or upon his own motion. No such removal shall be made without giving such commissioner not less than ten days' notice and a full opportunity to be heard in his own behalf in a public hearing. The order removing such commissioner shall state the reasons therefor and shall be entered upon the records of the probate court. In case of such removal, or in case of other vacancy in the office of commissioner, the vacancy shall be filled by the judge by appointment for the unexpired term.

Effective Date: 10-01-1953

#### 1545.07 Board of park commissioners - employees.

The commissioners appointed in accordance with section 1545.05 or pursuant to section 1545.041 of the Revised Code shall constitute the board of park commissioners of the park district. Such board shall be a body politic and corporate, and may sue and be sued as provided in sections 1545.01 to 1545.28 of the Revised Code. Such board may employ a secretary and such other employees as are necessary in the performance of the powers conferred in such sections. The board may appoint a treasurer to act as custodian of the board's funds and as fiscal officer for the park district. For the purposes of acquiring, planning, developing, protecting, maintaining, or improving lands and facilities thereon under section 1545.11 of the Revised Code, and for other types of assistance which it finds necessary in carrying out its duties under Chapter 1545. of the Revised Code, the board may hire and contract for professional, technical, consulting, and other special services, including, in accordance with division (D) of section 309.09 of the Revised Code, the legal services of the prosecuting attorney of the county in which the park district is located, and may purchase goods. In procuring any goods with a cost in excess of fifty thousand dollars, the board shall contract as a contracting authority under sections 307.86 to 307.91 of the Revised Code, to the same extent and with the same limitations as a board of county commissioners. In procuring services, the board shall contract in the manner and under procedures established by the bylaws of the board as required in section 1545.09 of the Revised Code.

Amended by 129th General Assembly File No. 141, HB 509, §1, eff. 9/28/2012.

Effective Date: 05-08-1996

#### 1545.071 Group insurance.

The board of park commissioners of any park district may procure and pay all or any part of the cost of group insurance policies that may provide benefits for hospitalization, surgical care, major medical care, disability, dental care, eye care, medical care, hearing aids, or prescription drugs, or sickness and accident insurance or a combination of any of the foregoing types of insurance or coverage for park district officers and employees and their immediate dependents issued by an insurance company duly authorized to do business in this state.

The board may procure and pay all or any part of the cost of group life insurance to insure the lives of park district employees.

The board also may contract for group health care services with health insuring corporations holding a certificate of authority under Chapter 1751. of the Revised Code provided that each officer or employee is permitted to:

(A) Choose between a plan offered by an insurance company and a plan offered by a health insuring corporation and provided further that the officer or employee pays any amount by which the cost of the plan chosen by the officer or employee exceeds the cost of the plan offered by the board under this section;

(B) Change the choice made under division (A) of this section at a time each year as determined in advance by the board.

Any appointed member of the board of park commissioners and the spouse and dependent children of the member may be covered, at the option and expense of the member, as a noncompensated employee of the park district under any benefit plan described in division (A) of this section. The member shall pay to the park district the amount certified to it by the benefit provider as the provider's charge for the coverage the member has chosen under division (A) of this section. Payments for coverage shall be made, in advance, in a manner prescribed by the board. The member's exercise of an option to be covered under this section shall be in writing, announced at a regular public meeting of the board, and recorded as a public record in the minutes of the board.

The board may provide the benefits authorized in this section by contributing to a health and welfare trust fund administered through or in conjunction with a collective bargaining representative of the park district employees.

The board may provide the benefits described in this section through an individual self-insurance program or a joint self-insurance program as provided in section 9.833 of the Revised Code.

Amended by 130th General Assembly File No. 25, HB 59, §101.01, eff. 9/29/2013.

Amended by 129th General Assembly File No. 28, HB 153, §101.01, eff. 6/30/2011.

Effective Date: 06-04-1997

1545.072 Board may authorize use of park district credit card.

(A) The board of park commissioners may authorize an officer, employee, or appointee of the board to use a credit card held by the park district to pay for expenses related to park district business. The debt incurred as a result of the use of a credit card under this section shall be paid from park district funds.

(B) Misuse of a credit card held by the board by an officer, employee, or appointee of a board of park commissioners is a violation of section 2913.21 of the Revised Code.

(C) An officer, employee, or appointee, in a civil action, may be found personally liable to the park district for the officer's, employee's, or appointee's unauthorized use of the park district credit card.

(D) Any officer, employee, or appointee who is authorized to use a credit card held by the board of park commissioners and who suspects the loss, theft, or possibility of another person's unauthorized use of the credit card shall notify the board of park commissioners of the suspected, loss, theft, or possible unauthorized use immediately in writing. The officer, employee, or appointee may be held personally liable for unauthorized debt resulting from such loss, theft, or unauthorized use, in the amount of fifty dollars or the amount charged to the credit card as a result of the loss, theft, or unauthorized use, whichever is less.

Effective Date: 07-01-1996

1545.08 Reports of board of park commissioners.

The board of park commissioners shall compile and publish reports and information relating to the park district and to the proceedings and functions of the board. The board shall keep an accurate and permanent public record of all its proceedings.

Effective Date: 11-25-1971

1545.09 Bylaws and rules.

(A) The board of park commissioners shall adopt such bylaws and rules as the board considers advisable for the preservation of good order within and adjacent to parks and reservations of land, and for the protection and preservation of the parks, parkways, and other reservations of land under its jurisdiction and control and of property and natural life therein. The board shall also adopt bylaws or rules establishing a procedure for contracting for professional, technical, consulting, and other special services. Any competitive bidding procedures of the board do not apply to the purchase of benefits for park district officers or employees when such benefits are provided through a health and welfare trust fund administered through or in conjunction with a collective bargaining representative of the park district employees, as authorized in section 1545.071 of the Revised Code. Summaries of the bylaws and rules shall be published as provided in the case of ordinances of municipal corporations under section 731.21 of the Revised Code before taking effect.

(B)

(1) As used in division (B)(2) of this section, "similar violation under state law" means a violation of any section of the Revised Code, other than division (C) of this section, that is similar to a violation of a bylaw or rule adopted under division (A) of this section.

(2) The board of park commissioners may adopt by bylaw a penalty for a violation of any bylaw or rule adopted under division (A) of this section, and any penalty so adopted shall not exceed in severity whichever of the following is applicable:

(a) The penalty designated under the Revised Code for a violation of the state law that is similar to the bylaw or rule for which the board adopted the penalty;

(b) For a violation of a bylaw or rule adopted under division (A) of this section for which the similar violation under state law does not bear a penalty or for which there is no similar violation under state law, a fine of not more than one hundred fifty dollars for a first offense and not more than one thousand dollars for each subsequent offense.

(3) A summary of any bylaw adopted under division (B)(2) of this section shall be published as provided in the case of ordinances of municipal corporations under section 731.21 of the Revised Code before taking effect.

(C) No person shall violate any bylaws or rules adopted under division (A) of this section. All fines collected for any violation of this section shall be paid into the treasury of such park board.

Amended by 129th General Assembly File No. 28, HB 153, §101.01, eff. 9/29/2011.

Effective Date: 08-08-1980; 2008 SB220 09-30-2008

1545.10 Contract with corporation or association maintaining museum of natural history.

The board of park commissioners may contract for a term not exceeding three years, upon such terms as the board deems expedient, with any private corporation or association not for profit maintaining a

museum of natural history in any county within which the park district is located in whole or in part, or which has for its object the promotion of interest in or the conservation and preservation of the flora or fauna in any portion or all of the territory comprising the district for the purpose of obtaining for such district such services and assistance as can be rendered by such corporation or association.

Effective Date: 10-01-1953

1545.11 Board of park commissioners - power to acquire lands.

The board of park commissioners may acquire lands either within or without the park district for conversion into forest reserves and for the conservation of the natural resources of the state, including streams, lakes, submerged lands, and swamplands, and to those ends may create parks, parkways, forest reservations, and other reservations and afforest, develop, improve, protect, and promote the use of the same in such manner as the board deems conducive to the general welfare. Such lands may be acquired by such board, on behalf of said district, (1) by gift or devise, (2) by purchase for cash, by purchase by installment payments with or without a mortgage, by entering into lease-purchase agreements, by lease with or without option to purchase, or, (3) by appropriation. In furtherance of the use and enjoyment of the lands controlled by it, the board may accept donations of money or other property, or may act as trustees of land, money, or other property, and use and administer the same as stipulated by the donor, or as provided in the trust agreement. The terms of each such donation or trust shall first be approved by the probate court before acceptance by the board.

In case of appropriation, the proceedings shall be instituted in the name of the board, and shall be conducted in the manner provided in sections 163.01 to 163.22 , inclusive, of the Revised Code.

This section applies to districts created prior to April 16, 1920.

Effective Date: 10-20-1972

1545.12 Sale or lease of lands - notice - approval by probate court.

(A) Except as provided in division (B) of this section, if the board of park commissioners finds that any lands that it has acquired are not necessary for the purposes for which they were acquired by the board, it may sell and dispose of the lands upon terms the board considers advisable. The board also may lease or permit the use of any lands for purposes not inconsistent with the purposes for which the lands were acquired, and upon terms the board considers advisable. No lands shall be sold pursuant to this division without first giving notice of the board's intention to sell the lands by publication once a week for four consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the district or as provided in section 7.16 of the Revised Code. The notice shall contain an accurate description of the lands and shall state the time and place at which sealed bids will be received for the purchase of the lands, and the lands shall not thereafter be sold at private sale for less than the best and highest bid received without giving further notice as specified in this division.

(B)

(1) After compliance with division (B)(2) of this section, the board of park commissioners may sell land upon terms the board considers advisable to any park district established under section 511.18 or Chapter 1545. of the Revised Code, any political subdivision of the state, the state or any department or agency of the state, or any department or agency of the federal government for conservation uses or for park or recreation purposes without the necessity of having to comply with division (A) of this section.

(2) Before the board of park commissioners may sell land under division (B)(1) of this section, the board shall offer the land for sale to each of the following public agencies that is authorized to acquire, develop, and maintain land for conservation uses or for park or recreation purposes: each park district established

under section 511.18 or Chapter 1545. of the Revised Code or political subdivision in which the land is located, each park district that is so established and that adjoins or each political subdivision that adjoins a park district so established or political subdivision in which the land is located, and each agency or department of the state or of the federal government that operates parks or conservation or recreation areas near the land. The board shall make the offer by giving a written notice that the land is available for sale, by first class mail, to these public agencies. A failure of delivery of the written notice to any of these public agencies does not invalidate any proceedings for the sale of land under this division. Any public agency that is so notified and that wishes to purchase the land shall make an offer to the board in writing not later than sixty days after receiving the written notice.

If there is only one offer to purchase the land made in that sixty-day period, the board need not hold a public hearing on the offer. The board shall accept the offer only if it determines that acceptance of the offer will result in the best public use of the land.

If there is more than one offer to purchase the land made in that sixty-day period, the board shall not accept any offer until the board holds a public hearing on the offers. If, after the hearing, the board decides to accept an offer, it shall accept the offer that it determines will result in the best public use of the land.

(C) No lands shall be sold under this section at either public or private sale without the approval of the probate court of the county in which the lands are situated.

Amended by 129th General Assembly File No.28, HB 153, §101.01, eff. 9/29/2011.

Effective Date: 10-26-1999

1545.13 Park commission employees designated as law enforcement officers.

(A) As used in this section, "felony" has the same meaning as in section 109.511 of the Revised Code.

(B) The employees that the board of park commissioners designates for that purpose may exercise all the powers of police officers within and adjacent to the lands under the jurisdiction and control of the board or when acting as authorized by section 1545.131 or 1545.132 of the Revised Code. Before exercising the powers of police officers, the designated employees shall comply with the certification requirement established in section 109.77 of the Revised Code, take an oath, and give a bond to the state in the sum that the board prescribes, for the proper performance of their duties in that respect. This division is subject to division (C) of this section.

(C)

(1) The board of park commissioners shall not designate an employee as provided in division (B) of this section on a permanent basis, on a temporary basis, for a probationary term, or on other than a permanent basis if the employee previously has been convicted of or has pleaded guilty to a felony.

(2)

(a) The board of park commissioners shall terminate the employment of an employee designated as provided in division (B) of this section if the employee does either of the following:

(i) Pleads guilty to a felony;

(ii) Pleads guilty to a misdemeanor pursuant to a negotiated plea agreement as provided in division (D) of section 2929.43 of the Revised Code in which the employee agrees to surrender the certificate awarded to the employee under section 109.77 of the Revised Code.



(b) The board shall suspend from employment an employee designated as provided in division (B) of this section if the employee is convicted, after trial, of a felony. If the employee files an appeal from that conviction and the conviction is upheld by the highest court to which the appeal is taken or if the employee does not file a timely appeal, the board shall terminate the employment of that employee. If the employee files an appeal that results in the employee's acquittal of the felony or conviction of a misdemeanor, or in the dismissal of the felony charge against the employee, the board shall reinstate that employee. An employee who is reinstated under division (C)(2)(b) of this section shall not receive any back pay unless that employee's conviction of the felony was reversed on appeal, or the felony charge was dismissed, because the court found insufficient evidence to convict the employee of the felony.

(3) Division (C) of this section does not apply regarding an offense that was committed prior to January 1, 1995.

(4) The suspension from employment, or the termination of the employment, of an employee under division (C)(2) of this section shall be in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code.

Effective Date: 01-01-2004

1545.131 Mutual aid contracts.

The board of park commissioners of a park district may enter into contracts with one or more townships, township police districts, joint police districts, municipal corporations, or county sheriffs of this state, with one or more township park districts created pursuant to section 511.18 of the Revised Code or other park districts, with one or more state universities or colleges, as defined in section 3345.12 of the Revised Code, or with a contiguous political subdivision of an adjoining state, and a township, township police district, joint police district, municipal corporation, county sheriff, township park district, other park district, or state university or college may enter into a contract with a park district upon any terms that are agreed to by them, to allow the use of the park district police or law enforcement officers designated under section 1545.13 of the Revised Code to perform any police function, exercise any police power, or render any police service on behalf of the contracting entity that the entity may perform, exercise, or render.

Chapter 2744: of the Revised Code, insofar as it applies to the operation of police departments, applies to the contracting entities and to the members of the police force or law enforcement department when they are rendering service outside their own subdivisions pursuant to that contract.

Members of the police force or law enforcement department acting outside the political subdivision in which they are employed, pursuant to that contract, shall be entitled to participate in any indemnity fund established by their employer to the same extent as while acting within the employing subdivision. Those members shall be entitled to all the rights and benefits of Chapter 4123. of the Revised Code, to the same extent as while performing service within the subdivision.

The contracts entered into pursuant to this section may provide for the following:

(A) A fixed annual charge to be paid at the times agreed upon and stipulated in the contract;

(B) Compensation based upon the following:

(1) A stipulated price for each call or emergency;

(2) The number of members or pieces of equipment employed;

(3) The elapsed time of service required in each call or emergency.

(C) Compensation for loss or damage to equipment while engaged in rendering police services outside the limits of the subdivision that owns and furnishes the equipment;

(D) Reimbursement of the subdivision in which the police force or law enforcement department members are employed for any indemnity award or premium contribution assessed against the employing subdivision for workers' compensation benefits for injuries or death of its police force or law enforcement department members occurring while engaged in rendering police services pursuant to the contract.

Amended by 129th General Assembly File No.28, HB 153, §101.01, eff. 9/29/2011.

Effective Date: 05-08-1996

1545.132 Providing police service without contract.

The police force or law enforcement department of any park district may provide police protection to any county, municipal corporation, township, township police district, or joint police district of this state, to any other park district or any township park district created pursuant to section 511.18 of the Revised Code, or to a governmental entity of an adjoining state without a contract to provide police protection, upon the approval, by resolution, of the board of park commissioners of the park district in which the police force or law enforcement department is located and upon authorization by an officer or employee of the police force or department providing the police protection who is designated by title of office or position, pursuant to the resolution of the board of park commissioners, to give the authorization.

Chapter 2744: of the Revised Code, insofar as it applies to the operation of police departments, shall apply to any park district and to members of its police force or law enforcement department when those members are rendering police services pursuant to this section outside the park district by which they are employed.

Police force or law enforcement department members acting, as provided in this section, outside the park district by which they are employed shall be entitled to participate in any pension or indemnity fund established by their employer to the same extent as while acting within the park district by which they are employed. Those members shall be entitled to all rights and benefits of Chapter 4123. of the Revised Code to the same extent as while performing services within the park district by which they are employed.

Amended by 129th General Assembly File No.28, HB 153, §101.01, eff. 9/29/2011.

Effective Date: 07-31-1992

1545.14 Agreement with other public authorities to assume control of parks.

A board of park commissioners may by agreement with the legislative or other public authority in control of parks or park lands either within or without the park district, assume control of all or a portion of any existing parks or park lands or otherwise contract or cooperate with such public authority in connection with the use, development, improvement, and protection of parks or park lands. In such event, such parks or park lands may be developed, improved, and protected as in case of lands otherwise acquired by said board. This section does not authorize said board to acquire or control any park, park lands, parkways, playgrounds, other lands, or boulevards owned or controlled by any other public authority except by agreement as provided in this section.

Effective Date: 08-04-1961

1545.15 Annexation procedure.

When conducive to the general welfare, any territory adjacent and contiguous to an existing park district, whether located within or without the county in which such district was created, may be annexed to such district. When a petition is filed with the board of park commissioners requesting such annexation, containing an accurate description of the territory proposed to be annexed, accompanied by an accurate map or plat of such territory, and signed either by a majority of the electors residing within such territory or by not less than fifty such electors, the board shall determine whether it is advisable that such annexation should be made. If the board determines in favor of such annexation, it shall make application to the probate court of the county in which such territory is located, setting forth the fact of the filing of such petition and the reasons why it is advisable that such territory should be annexed to such district. Any such board may of its motion file such petition in such court. Upon the filing of such petition, like proceedings shall be had as are provided in sections 1545.03 and 1545.04 of the Revised Code upon application for the creation of a park district, except that the territory so annexed may include a part only of an existing township or municipal corporation.

Effective Date: 10-01-1953

1545.16 Powers of budget commissioners, auditors, and treasurers in relation to park districts.

In the event of the annexation to a park district of territory located in a county other than the county in which such district was created, the budget commissioners of the county in which such annexed territory is located shall exercise, with reference to such annexed territory, the powers conferred upon budget commissioners by section 1545.20 of the Revised Code, and the county auditor and county treasurer of the county in which such annexed territory is located shall exercise, with reference to taxes levied and collected by the board of park commissioners upon such annexed territory, the powers conferred upon auditors and treasurers by section 1545.22 of the Revised Code.

Effective Date: 10-01-1953

1545.17 Improvement of public highway.

When a public highway extends into or through a park area, or when a public highway forms all or part of a suitable connection between two or more park areas, and it is deemed advisable to make alterations in the route or width of such highway, or to grade, drain, pave, or otherwise improve such highway, boards of park commissioners may enter into agreements with the public authorities in charge or control of so much of said highway as lies within such park area or which forms the whole or part of a connecting link between two or more park areas, providing for the doing of any of such things, under the procedure authorized by law in case of such public authorities, and for the payment by such boards of so much of the cost thereof as is agreed upon. This section does not affect the legal status of such highway.

Effective Date: 10-01-1953

1545.18 Assessment of cost of improvement - collection.

In the development and improvement of the lands acquired by a board of park commissioners, such board may assess such portion of the cost of such development or improvement as it deems equitable, not to exceed fifty per cent of such total cost, upon abutting, contiguous, adjacent, or otherwise specifically benefited lands, in an amount not in excess of and in proportion to the special benefits conferred upon such lands by such development or improvement. Such assessment shall be payable in not to exceed ten equal annual installments, and said board may borrow money in anticipation of the collection of such special assessments. The proceedings had in the levying and collection of such special assessments, including the issue of bonds of the park district in anticipation of the collection of deferred assessments, shall be as provided in case of the levy and assessment of special assessments for street improvements in municipal corporations, insofar as such proceedings are applicable. If any such assessment is twenty-five dollars or less, or whenever the unpaid balance of any such assessment is

twenty-five dollars or less, such assessment shall be paid in full, and not in installments, at the time when the first or next installment would otherwise become due and payable.

Effective Date: 10-30-1969

1545.19 Assessment may be increased with consent of property owners.

In case of any development or improvement, the assessments authorized by section 1545.18 of the Revised Code shall not in the aggregate exceed the cost of a development or improvement sufficient only to serve that need of the property to be assessed, unless the development or improvement has been petitioned for by the owners of not less than sixty per cent, both in foot frontage and in tax valuation, of the property to be assessed, consenting to a larger assessment than provided for in this section and section 1545.18 of the Revised Code, in which event such larger assessment may be levied to the extent specified in such petition.

Any owner of property to be assessed in accordance with section 1545.18 of the Revised Code may appeal to the probate court in the county in which such property is located from the action of the board of park commissioners in the matter of the determination of the aggregate amount to be assessed for any given development or improvement or in the matter of the determination of the assessment against any specific property, or both, in the manner provided in sections 6117.01 to 6117.40 , inclusive, of the Revised Code, and the court may review and modify the action of the board with respect to such assessments.

Effective Date: 10-01-1953

1545.20 Tax levy.

A board of park commissioners may levy taxes upon all the taxable property within the park district in an amount not in excess of one-half of one mill upon each dollar of the district tax valuation in any one year, subject to the combined maximum levy for all purposes otherwise provided by law. After the budget commission of the county in which the district is located certifies such levy, or such modification thereof as it considers advisable, to the county auditor, he shall place it upon the tax duplicate. The board may then borrow money in anticipation of the collection of such tax, and issue the negotiable notes of such board therefor in an amount not in excess of fifty per cent of the proceeds of such tax, based upon the amount of the current tax valuation. Such notes shall not be issued for a period longer than one year, and shall be payable out of the proceeds of such levy. To the extent of such notes and the interest which accrues thereon such levy shall be exclusively appropriated to the payment of such notes. Any portion of such notes remaining unpaid through any deficiency in such levy shall be payable out of the next ensuing levy which shall be made by said board in the next ensuing year in an amount at least sufficient to provide for the payment of said notes, but not in excess of one half of one mill in accordance with section 133.17 of the Revised Code.

Effective Date: 10-30-1989

1545.21 Tax levy for use of district - submission to electors - bonds.

The board of park commissioners, by resolution, may submit to the electors of the park district the question of levying taxes for the use of the district. The resolution shall declare the necessity of levying such taxes, shall specify the purpose for which such taxes shall be used, the annual rate proposed, and the number of consecutive years the rate shall be levied. Such resolution shall be forthwith certified to the board of elections in each county in which any part of such district is located, not later than the ninetieth day before the day of the election, and the question of the levy of taxes as provided in such resolution shall be submitted to the electors of the district at a special election to be held on whichever of the following occurs first:

(A) The day of the next general election;

(B) The first Tuesday after the first Monday in May in any calendar year, except that if a presidential primary election is held in that calendar year, then the day of that election. The ballot shall set forth the purpose for which the taxes shall be levied, the annual rate of levy, and the number of years of such levy. If the tax is to be placed on the current tax list, the form of the ballot shall state that the tax will be levied in the current tax year and shall indicate the first calendar year the tax will be due. If the resolution of the board of park commissioners provides that an existing levy will be canceled upon the passage of the new levy, the ballot may include a statement that: "an existing levy of ... mills (stating the original levy millage), having ... years remaining, will be canceled and replaced upon the passage of this levy." In such case, the ballot may refer to the new levy as a "replacement levy" if the new millage does not exceed the original millage of the levy being canceled or as a "replacement and additional levy" if the new millage exceeds the original millage of the levy being canceled. If a majority of the electors voting upon the question of such levy vote in favor thereof, such taxes shall be levied and shall be in addition to the taxes authorized by section 1545.20 of the Revised Code, and all other taxes authorized by law. The rate submitted to the electors at any one time shall not exceed two mills annually upon each dollar of valuation unless the purpose of the levy includes providing operating revenues for one of Ohio's major metropolitan zoos, as defined in section 4503.74 of the Revised Code, in which case the rate shall not exceed three mills annually upon each dollar of valuation. When a tax levy has been authorized as provided in this section or in section 1545.041 of the Revised Code, the board of park commissioners may issue bonds pursuant to section 133.24 of the Revised Code in anticipation of the collection of such levy, provided that such bonds shall be issued only for the purpose of acquiring and improving lands. Such levy, when collected, shall be applied in payment of the bonds so issued and the interest thereon. The amount of bonds so issued and outstanding at any time shall not exceed one per cent of the total tax valuation in such district. Such bonds shall bear interest at a rate not to exceed the rate determined as provided in section 9.95 of the Revised Code.

Amended by 129th General Assembly File No. 117, HB 508, §1, eff. 9/6/2012.

Amended by 129th General Assembly File No. 105, SB 295, §1, eff. 8/15/2012.

Amended by 129th General Assembly File No. 40, HB 194, §1 Made subject to referendum in the Nov. 6, 2012 election. The version of this section thus amended was repealed by 129th General Assembly File No. 105, SB 295, §1, eff. 8/15/2012

Amended by 128th General Assembly File No. 29, HB 48, §1, eff. 7/2/2010.

Effective Date: 08-16-1999

1545.211 Anticipation notes.

In addition to the authority conferred by section 1545.21 of the Revised Code, in anticipation of the collection of current revenues in and for any fiscal year, the board of park commissioners may borrow money and issue notes therefor in anticipation of the receipt of taxes for debt charges or current expenses to the extent necessary to meet such charges or expenses, but not in excess of the estimated receipts for the current tax year, less all advances. The sums so anticipated shall be deemed appropriated for the payment of such notes at maturity. The notes shall not run more than one year, nor bear interest at a rate exceeding the rate provided in section 9.95 of the Revised Code, and the proceeds therefrom shall be used only for the purposes for which the anticipated taxes were levied. No board shall borrow money or issue notes in anticipation of such taxes before the first day of January of the year of such tax receipts.

Effective Date: 05-13-1981

1545.22 Depositories for funds - duties of county treasurer and county auditor.

(A) If a treasurer is appointed by a board of park commissioners pursuant to section 1545.07 of the Revised Code, the accounts of the board shall be kept by that treasurer. The treasurer shall be an ex officio officer of the board. No contract of the board shall become effective until the treasurer certifies that there are funds of the board sufficient to provide for that contract.

(B) If no treasurer is appointed by the board pursuant to section 1545.07 of the Revised Code:

(1) All funds under the control of a board of park commissioners shall be kept in depositories selected in the manner provided for the deposit of county funds, insofar as such proceedings are applicable, and such deposits shall be secured as provided in the case of county funds. The county treasurer of the county in which the park district is located shall be the custodian of the funds of the board and shall be an ex officio officer of the board. He shall pay the funds out upon the warrant of the county auditor of the county in which the district is located. Interest earned on all funds under the control of the board of park commissioners shall be credited to such funds.

(2) The county auditor shall be an ex officio officer of the board, and no contract of the board involving the expenditure of money shall become effective until the auditor certifies that there are funds of the board in the custody of the county treasurer and otherwise unappropriated sufficient to provide therefor. The auditor shall draw warrants on the treasurer to disburse the funds of the board upon order of the board, evidenced by the certificate of its secretary.

(3) Any such board of park commissioners may select a depository for the funds of the district, in the manner provided in sections 135.01 to 135.21 of the Revised Code, upon the adoption of a resolution declaring such intent. The resolution shall be certified to the board of county commissioners and to the treasurer in the counties in which the district is located. The board of park commissioners shall thereupon become the governing board for such district with respect to the deposit of funds of such district.

(C) If no deposits to or expenditures from the funds of a park district have been made for a period of five years, the county auditor or the treasurer appointed by the board shall send written notice to the probate court of the county.

Effective Date: 10-05-1987

1545.23 Disposition of proceeds from sale or lease of park mineral rights.

If a park district enters into an agreement for the sale or lease of mineral rights regarding a park within the district, any royalties or other moneys resulting from the sale or lease shall be deposited into a special fund that the board of park commissioners shall create. The fund shall be used exclusively for maintenance of parks within the district and for the acquisition of new park lands.

Added by 130th General Assembly File No. 25, HB 59, §101.01, eff. 9/29/2013.

1545.24 Issuance of bonds.

The board of park commissioners of any park district may issue bonds pursuant to Chapter 133. of the Revised Code for the purpose of acquiring and improving lands as authorized by section 1545.11 of the Revised Code. The board may secure the payment of such bonds by pledge or deed of trust of any of its revenues and receipts resulting from rentals, concessions, licenses, and permits. The board shall not pledge the credit or taxing power of the district for the payment of any such bonds, nor shall any of the bonds issued under this section be deemed to be an indebtedness of the district.

Effective Date: 10-30-1989

1545.25, 1545.26 [Repealed].

Effective Date: 10-30-1989

1545.27 Bonds are lawful investments.

Park district revenue bonds are lawful investments of banks, trust companies, trustees, the boards of trustees of the sinking funds of municipal corporations, school districts, and counties, the administrator of workers' compensation, the state teachers retirement system, the public employees retirement system, and the school employees retirement system, and also are acceptable as security for the deposit of public moneys.

Effective Date: 09-01-1995

1545.28 Replacement fund.

The board of park commissioners may establish and maintain a replacement fund, and for that purpose may set aside annually out of its revenue such sum as it may determine necessary. In case of total or partial destruction of or injury to any of the property of the park district from any cause, or in case it becomes necessary to demolish part or to repair or replace the same, in whole or in part, because of the unfitness of such property, such replacement fund may be used to rebuild on the original site or elsewhere, or to restore, repair, or improve such property.

Such replacement fund may be invested by such district in bonds of the United States, the state, or of a county, municipal corporation, school district, or township of this state, and when necessary for the purposes of such funds such securities may be disposed of by such district.

Effective Date: 10-01-1953

1545.29, 1545.30 [Repealed].

Effective Date: 07-01-1989

1545.35 Dissolution of active park district.

An active park district created under this chapter and to which no territory has been annexed under section 1545.15 of the Revised Code may be dissolved under section 1545.36 or 1545.37 of the Revised Code. An active park district to which territory has been annexed under section 1545.15 of the Revised Code may be dissolved only under the applicable provisions of section 1545.37 of the Revised Code. A park district that has been inactive for five years may be dissolved under section 1545.38 of the Revised Code.

Effective Date: 10-05-1987

1545.36 Petition for dissolution of district.

(A) When the board of elections of the county in which a park district is located has had filed with it a petition calling for the dissolution of the district, and determines that the petition meets the requirements of this section and section 3501.38 of the Revised Code, the board shall place the issue of the dissolution on the ballot at the next special election to be held on the day of a general or primary election. Written notice of the filing of the petition shall be sent immediately to the board of park commissioners and the probate court that created the district.

(B) The petition shall:

(1) Be filed with the board no less than ninety days before the next election;

(2) Be supported by the signatures of at least twenty-five per cent of the number of voters in the district who voted in the preceding gubernatorial election.

(C) If the petition as filed does not have the required number of signatures and the time for filing has elapsed, the board shall declare it invalid. No further petition for dissolution shall be received until after the next election is completed. On determination of these findings, the board shall send written notice of them to the principal circulator.

(D)

(1) If a majority of the votes cast support the dissolution, the board shall immediately send written notice of the vote, citing the number of votes for and against the issue, to the probate court, to the board of park commissioners, and to the principal circulator. No park district shall be applied for within the dissolved district for a period of four years following the election in which the issue was supported.

(2) If the issue fails to obtain a majority of the votes cast, the board shall receive no further petition for dissolution until the fourth year following that in which the election failed, and shall send written notice of these results to the principal circulator and the board of park commissioners.

Amended by 128th General Assembly File No.29, HB 48, §1, eff. 7/2/2010.

Effective Date: 03-23-1981

1545.37 Application for hearing on dissolution.

(A) An application for a hearing on dissolution may be filed with the probate court of the county that created the district at any time not prohibited by this section and shall meet the requirements of this section.

(B) The application shall:

(1) Bear the signatures of at least twenty-five per cent of the number of voters in the district who voted in the preceding gubernatorial election;

(2) Bear the name, address, and telephone number of at least one voter registered in the district to be designated the applicant of record. Each applicant of record and the board of park commissioners shall be named parties to the proceedings.

(3) Be accompanied by a complete statement of the issues to be heard, signed by applicant of record. Failure to list completely the issues to be heard may, in the discretion of the court, be grounds for dismissal of the application.

(C) Each page of the application:

(1) Being circulated for signatures shall clearly state the purpose for which it is being circulated and at least one reason supporting that purpose. Each page lacking either statement shall be declared invalid.



(2) Shall be circulated by and signed in the presence of a voter registered in the district and bear a certification signed by him that this requirement has been met. Failure to certify or a false certification shall invalidate the page.

(D) Each signatory shall sign his name as recorded by the board of elections together with his current address and the date. Failure to comply with this division shall invalidate the signature.

(E) The original of the application and statement of issues shall be filed with the court and, concurrently, a copy of each shall be served on the board of park commissioners. Failure to timely serve these documents on the board are [is] grounds for denial of the application.

(F) Upon receipt of the application, the court shall determine its validity in terms of the requirements of divisions (B) to (E) of this section, and may on its own assess the application for validity of the signatures or forward it to the county board of elections for that assessment. Immediately upon determining the state of the application's validity, the court shall send written notice of its findings to each party. If the application is valid, the court shall forthwith set a date for hearing, not less than twenty days nor more than forty days from the date of its findings, and include the date in its notice to each party. Notice of the hearing shall be published in at least one daily newspaper of general circulation within the district for not less than five consecutive days, the period to end no less than ten days before the hearing. Failure to meet the requirement of notice to any party shall not invalidate the proceedings but shall postpone the time of hearing. A corrected notice shall be sent to each party with a new date of hearing set not less than twenty days nor more than forty days from the date of corrected notice, unless each party and the court agree to an earlier date. If the application is found to be invalid, the court shall send written notice to each party that the application is denied and has been impounded by the court. The court shall not receive any further application for hearing on dissolution for two years from the date of original filing.

On motion, any applicant may be named as a party at the discretion of the court. Any party may be heard on his own or through counsel. On motion by any party made at least five days before the hearing, evidence based on the statement of issues filed with the application shall be heard in accordance with the Rules of Civil Procedure. At the hearing, evidence may be heard at the discretion of the court. Argument for and against the dissolution shall be heard by the court, and may be limited at its discretion. A verbatim record of the hearing shall be taken. Upon completion of the hearing, the court shall issue its findings together with its reasons therefor to all parties. No more than thirty days shall pass between the adjournment of the hearing and the issuing of the findings. If the court finds that dissolution is conducive to the public welfare, no other park district shall be created within the same jurisdiction or part of it pursuant to sections 1545.01 to 1545.04 or 1545.15 of the Revised Code for four years from the date of finding. If the court finds that dissolution is not conducive to the public welfare, it shall find against it. Upon a finding against dissolution, the court shall impound the application, and advise each party that no further application for hearing on dissolution shall be received for four years from the date of finding.

(G) A park district that includes territory annexed under section 1545.15 of the Revised Code shall only be dissolved by order of the probate court that created the district on compliance with this division and divisions (A) to (F) of this section. Pages of the application bearing signatures of registered voters of each annexed territory shall be filed for assessment of their validity with the probate court of the county in which the territory is located. The number of signatures needed to establish validity shall be a majority of the number of voters residing within the annexed territory who voted in the preceding gubernatorial election. Upon determination of its assessment, and in no case more than fifteen days after filing, the probate court of the county in which the annexed territory is located shall forward the pages of the application together with its findings to the probate court that created the district. The probate court that created the district shall incorporate these findings with its assessment of the application filed with it in accordance with division (F) of this section in reaching its determination of the entire application's validity and proceed in accordance with applicable provisions of division (F) of this section.

Effective Date: 09-06-1979

#### 1545.38 Proceedings for dissolution of inactive district.

On receipt of written notice from the county auditor that no deposits to or expenditures from the funds of a park district have been made for a period of five years, the probate court shall immediately serve written notice on the board of park commissioners and the auditor of a date for hearing on the dissolution of the district. The notice shall also order the board to forward to the court a complete, current financial statement of the assets and liabilities of the district, an inventory of its real and personal property, available deeds to, maps or plats for, and other records of real property of the park district, and copies of any available plans of the district for park acquisition and development, or capital improvements. A copy of the notice shall be served on each party. The court shall publish notice of the hearing for five consecutive days in a daily newspaper of general circulation within the district, ending no less than fifteen days before the hearing. The issue of dissolution shall be heard and determined by the court in accordance with the applicable provisions of division (F) of section 1545.37 of the Revised Code. If the court finds for dissolution, it shall as applicable proceed in accordance with section 1545.40 of the Revised Code.

Effective Date: 09-06-1979

#### 1545.39 Ceasing activity pending determination on petition.

On receipt of notice of the filing of a petition with the county board of elections or an application for hearing or a notice of hearing from the probate court, the board of park commissioners shall cease all acquisition of land and the development of existing land unless valid options or contracts for which funds have been committed have been previously signed. No activity shall be resumed until the board of elections or the court determines, respectively, that the petition or application is invalid and the issue will not be voted on or heard, or the issue fails election, or the court finds against dissolution, whichever is earlier.

Effective Date: 09-06-1979

#### 1545.40 Dissolution.

On dissolution of a park district, the board of park commissioners is dissolved and all of its duties and responsibilities shall be exercised by the probate court until all of the board's business is completed and all of its property disposed of. The court may retain special counsel and another person who in the court's discretion are qualified to assist it in the closing out of business and disposal of property and any employee of the district the court determines is necessary to closing out the business or to maintaining the property of the district in good order until it is disposed of. Any employee not retained by the court shall be terminated within ten working days of the board's dissolution and paid one month's base salary or for one hundred seventy-three hours, whichever is applicable, in addition to all other pay and allowances due him. The same shall be paid to any employee retained by the court upon his termination.

The court shall send the director of natural resources notice of the dissolution together with an inventory of the district's real property, any personal property of the district that he considers to be functionally related to the use or management of the real property, and a full and accurate statement of any indebtedness that is secured by the real property. The director shall, within sixty days of receipt of such notice, notify the court of his acceptance or rejection of any such real property and its related personal property and indebtedness. If the director accepts, the court shall convey the real property to the state, subject to any deed or other restrictions placed upon use of the real property as a condition of receiving federal or state assistance for its acquisition or development, and transfer the related personal property to the department of natural resources. If the director rejects, the court shall convey any real property of the district and transfer any related personal property to any other agency of the state or any political subdivision or instrumentality of the state located within the former park district or within a county in which

territory that was annexed to the district is located, that is interested in acquiring the real property for parks and recreation, conservation, or other public purposes, in that order of priority, and that is willing to assume any related indebtedness and fulfill any deed restrictions and any other restrictions placed upon use of the real property as a condition of receiving federal or state assistance for its acquisition or development.

If no state agency, political subdivision, or instrumentality of the state is willing to accept the real property and related personal property and indebtedness, the court shall convey such property to the board of county commissioners of the county in which the property is located. The board of county commissioners may sell, lease, or transfer such property in accordance with sections 307.09 to 307.12 of the Revised Code. If there is any outstanding indebtedness on such property sold or leased, the proceeds from the sale or lease shall be paid into the fund from which payments are made to extinguish the indebtedness on such property and the proceeds shall be used for that purpose; otherwise the proceeds shall be paid into the general fund of the county. The budget commission shall continue to levy and collect taxes necessary for the payment of any outstanding indebtedness of the district for which tax revenues of the district were pledged and that is not otherwise assumed.

Except as otherwise provided in this section, upon dissolution of a park district, the probate court shall order the budget commission of each county affected to terminate the tax levies of the park district, levied under section 1545.20 or 1545.21 of the Revised Code, and the assessments levied under section 1545.18 of the Revised Code and divide the net indebtedness of the district among the state, political subdivisions, and instrumentalities that acquire the district's real property on the basis of the market value of the real property that each acquires. Upon disposal of the district's real property, the court shall notify the budget commission, which shall transfer the remaining funds of the district to the proper authorities.

Effective Date: 09-06-1979

1545.99 Penalty.

Whoever violates division (C) of section 1545.09 of the Revised Code shall be punished as follows:

(A) Except as otherwise provided in division (B) of this section, the offender shall be fined not more than one hundred fifty dollars for a first offense and not more than one thousand dollars for each subsequent offense .

(B) If the board of park commissioners that adopted the bylaw or rule that the offender violated and that was the basis of the offender's violation of division (C) of section 1545.09 of the Revised Code has adopted a penalty for the violation under division (B) of that section, the offender shall be penalized in accordance with the penalty so adopted for the violation.

Effective Date: 10-01-1953; 2008 SB220 09-30-2008

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