ERIE COUNTY BUDGET COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

DATE: September 24, 2026

	Present:	Alternate Name:
Richard Jeffrey, Erie County Auditor	X	
Kevin Baxter, Erie County Prosecutor		Jason Hinners
Caleb Stidham, Erie County Treasurer	X	
Janice Baum, Fiscal Officer	X	

Others: Brenda Hurst, Chief Fiscal Officer, E.C. Auditor's Office, Lindsey Lavey, Treasurer's Office, Carrie Beier, Rachel Malone, Diane Corso and Felicia Zendejas with the Board of Developmental Disabilities, James Tolbert and Sharon MacNichol with the Milan-Berlin Library, Melissa Price, Beth Ferback, Sue Daniel, Kurt Kresser, Margaret Murray and Jim Peters with Erie MetroParks, Mindy Kayl - Commissioner Candidate, Easton Retzke - HD 89 Candidate, Chris Gasteier and MaryAnn Groot, citizens

Mr. Jeffrey called the meeting to order at 2:25 PM .

On motion of Mr. Stidham and seconded by Mr. Hinners, the Board moves to approve the minutes of the August 3rd, August 4th, August 18th, August 21st and August 26th meetings.

	AYE	NAY
Richard Jeffrey	X	
Jason Hinners	X	
Caleb Stidham	X	

Approval/Address Certificates

Original 2027 Year

For: Erie County (reduction of 2.3 mils of General Fund) and Village of Milan (reduction of 1.9 mils of General Fund)

On motion of Mr. Stidham and seconded by Mr. Hinners, the Board moves to approve the 2027 original certificates.

	AYE	NAY
Richard Jeffrey	X	
Jason Hinners	X	
Caleb Stidham	X	

Amended 2026 Year

For: Perkins LSD, Kelleys Island Village, Berlin Township, Castalia Village, City of Sandusky, Erie County and Florence Township

On motion of Mr. Stidham and seconded by Mr. Jeffrey, the Board moves to approve the 2026 amended certificates.

	AYE	NAY
Richard Jeffrey	X	
Jason Hinners	X	
Caleb Stidham	X	

Resolutions

On motion of Mr. Stidham and seconded by Mr. Hinners, the Board moves to approve the Erie County Commissioner's request to not collect the County's General Fund Levy for the 2026 tax year/2027 collection year.

	AYE	NAY
Richard Jeffrey	X	
Jason Hinners	X	
Caleb Stidham	X	

On motion of Mr. Stidham and seconded by Mr. Hinners, the Board moves to approve the Kelleys Island Local School's request to reduce 7.0 mills of their tax levies for the 2026 tax year/2027 collection year.

	AYE	NAY
Richard Jeffrey	X	
Jason Hinners	X	
Caleb Stidham	X	

On motion of Mr. Stidham and seconded by Mr. Hinners, the Board moves to formally approve, by resolution, the suspension of the collection of millage for the 2026 tax year/2027 collection year previously voted on: Berlin Heights Village (1.0 mil), Milan Village (1.9 mil), Milan-Berlin Library (1.0 mil), Huron Township (0.2 mil Cemetery, 0.4 mil General Fund), Milan Township (1.3 mil) and Perkins Township (0.4 mil).

	AYE	NAY
Richard Jeffrey	X	
Jason Hinners	X	
Caleb Stidham	X	

Discussion/Approval of the 2027 Erie MetroParks Original Certificate

Ms. Price began with requesting the Budget Commission leave the Erie MetroParks funding unchanged for 2027. She explained that they are a unique entity, have thousands of acres of land throughout the entire County, have different capital assets than others and have different unforeseen circumstances than others. At the present moment, there are several land deals in place that could cost $2 million, but are not yet public. She said they have been very conservative with how much they have they have set aside in their Land Acquisition Fund. Mr. Jeffrey asked if those land purchases were in the 2027 tax budget, with Ms. Price replying no, because it is still executive session discussion. Ms. Price also mentioned that the Park Board is working on a draft resolution for their next meeting to address the percentage of carryover that the Board is comfortable with. She is requesting a pass for the Board this year while the carryover policy is finalized and put in place. Mr. Jeffrey asked if the

land deals are imminent, with Mr. Peters replying that one is in contract (for $750,000) and one is in negotiation and cannot predict if or when it will go through (approx. $1.7 million).

Mr. Stidham said the same conversation was had last year and stressed that it is important to have a carryover plan in place. He reviewed the last 5 years of the MetroParks revenues and expenditures and stated that any entity would love to be in the position that they are. Mr. Stidham appreciated the capital projects list that was presented to the Budget Commission members and was appreciative of their agreement to the $600k reduction last year. He stressed that there should be a need for tax dollars that are collected.

Ms. Price said she felt the need to respond. She became the director in 2024. The last levy that was passed was approved by over 70% of voters in every precinct for the first time ever. She mentioned that people feel it is a good value for the relatively low cost. People responded to their community survey and appreciate investment in parks. There is $2.3 million in land purchase opportunities, but the acquisition can take up to 18 months to finalize with securing State and Federal grants.

Mr. Stidham said the MetroParks perspective should change and the Budget Commission has the obligation, under the law, to review. He mentioned that the MetroParks did nothing wrong and weren't penalized, but also shouldn't have excessive funds that are not committed and there is still a disconnect. There is a need to work on defining what the MetroParks wants - X for acquisition, X for capital, etc. Ms. Price responded that was being drafted right now and regrets not setting more aside for the land acquisition. She understands that the Budget Commission looks at the aggregate and serve the same constituents the MetroParks does, but believes it feels subjective. Mr. Stidham agreed it is subjective, and the Budget Commission is the guardian watchdog for the citizens. Ms. Price mentioned the confusion of terminology and how the carryover was calculated by each party.

Mr. Hinners commented that it is confusing for entities and how the entities receive feedback, as there are three members on the Budget Commission that all have different perspectives. He suggested there should be more guidance. Mr. Stidham said that the Auditor's Office was working on that - starting with the meetings in the summer. Mr. Hinners mentioned that since it is a moving target, it makes it difficult. He asked the MetroParks what the balance is as of today and what the expected end of year balance will be. Ms. Ferback responded that she did not have those figures with her. Mr. Jeffrey said they carryover was just over 55%, with Mr. Stidham replying it was over 100%. Mr. Hinners said that a portion of that includes the acquisition costs and the MetroParks is different than any other entity. Their purpose is to acquire property and, in general, people enjoy the parks.

Ms. Price said they still have things earmarked according to their Board and their audit committee. She stressed they are trying to line up everyone's terminology and satisfy all parties.

Mr. Stidham said that projections are almost never right in his experience. The MetroParks Board and the Budget Commission have to get on the same page.

Mr. Jeffrey said he has listened to both sides and the predicament is that there is no definitive carryover percentage. A 40-60% carryover may not work for the MetroParks, but they need to decide that. He also said that he doesn't want the Park Board to have an excessive carryover amount in the future, as this has happened previously with another entity.

Mr. Stidham clarified that the transfer out amount cannot be considered and Mr. Jeffrey agreeing that it cannot be considered as surplus. Mr. Stidham said that they transfer out money, then they will never have carryover. Mr. Jeffrey clarified that money transferred out to another fund has to be for a specific purpose, not just because they have extra money. Mr. Hinners said that this reflects the difficulty of the process. Mr. Stidham is looking at the Land Acquisition Fund, the Capital Fund and money that is not allocated to any specific purpose. He views the money not allocated to any specific purpose as the carryover

number. He calculates the carryover number as the money not allocated to any specific purpose compared to the total expenses.

On motion of Mr. Hinners and seconded by Mr. Stidham, the Board moves to keep the Erie MetroParks levy at the full voted millage and approve the 2027 original certificate.

	AYE	NAY
Richard Jeffrey	**X**	
Jason Hinners	**X**	
Caleb Stidham	**X**	

On motion of Mr. Stidham and seconded by Mr. Jeffrey, the meeting was adjourned at 3:11 PM .