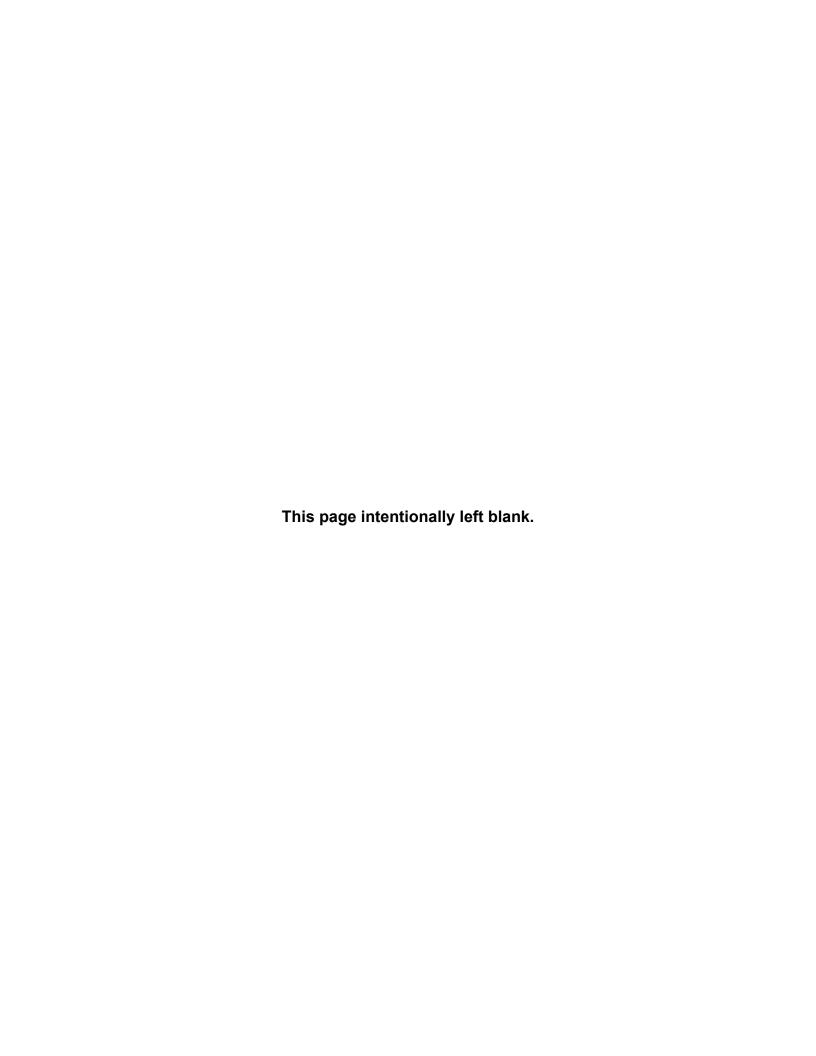




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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Stark County Park District Stark County 5300 Tyner Avenue NW Canton, Ohio 44708

To the Board of Park Commissioners:

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Unmodified and Adverse Opinions

We have audited the financial statements of the Stark County Park District, Stark County, Ohio (the District), which comprises the cash balances, receipts and disbursements for each governmental fund type as of and for the year ended December 31, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Unmodified Opinion on Regulatory Basis of Accounting

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the cash balances, receipts and disbursements for each governmental fund type as of and for the year ended December 31, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, in accordance with the financial reporting provisions which Ohio Revised Code Section 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 117-2-03(C) permit, described in Note 2.

Adverse Opinion on U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles

In our opinion, because of the significance of the matter discussed in the *Basis for Adverse Opinion on U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles* section of our report, the accompanying financial statements do not present fairly, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, the financial position of the District, as of December 31, 2023, or the changes in financial position thereof for the year then ended.

Basis for Opinions

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS) and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are required to be independent of the District, and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

Efficient • Effective • Transparent

Stark County Park District Stark County Independent Auditor's Report Page 2

Basis for Adverse Opinion on U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles

As described in Note 2 of the financial statements, the financial statements are prepared by the District on the basis of the financial reporting provisions of Ohio Revised Code Section 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 117-2-03(C), which is an accounting basis other than accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP), to satisfy these requirements. The effects on the financial statements of the variances between the regulatory basis of accounting described in Note 2 and accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, although not reasonably determinable, are presumed to be material and pervasive.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with the financial reporting provisions Ohio Revised Code Section 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 117-2-03(C) permit. Management is also responsible for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the District's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS and the financial audit standards in the Comptroller General of the United States' *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS and Government Auditing Standards, we

- exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to
 fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures
 include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial
 statements.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures
 that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the
 effectiveness of the District's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.

Stark County Park District Stark County Independent Auditor's Report Page 3

• conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the District's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated October 3, 2024, on our consideration of the District's internal control over financial reporting and our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the District's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards in considering the District's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Keith Faber Auditor of State Columbus, Ohio

October 3, 2024

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COMBINED STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS, DISBURSEMENTS AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES (REGULATORY CASH BASIS) ALL GOVERNMENTAL FUND TYPES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

	General	Special Revenue	Capital Projects	Totals (Memorandum Only)
Cash Receipts	Conordi	Ttovolido	1 10,000	<u> </u>
Property Taxes	\$6,653,848	\$0	\$0	\$6,653,848
Charges for Services	254,334	0	0	254,334
Fines, Licenses and Permits	2,005	0	0	2,005
Intergovernmental	1,893,980	49,736	0	1,943,716
Earnings on Investments	127,681	0	4,601	132,282
Miscellaneous	234,204	0	0_	234,204
Total Cash Receipts	9,166,052	49,736	4,601	9,220,389
Cash Disbursements				
Current:				
Conservation/Recreation:				
Personal Services - Salaries and Wages	3,913,390	0	0	3,913,390
Personal Services - Employee Benefits	1,560,351	0	0	1,560,351
Supplies and Materials	652,304	0	0	652,304
Purchased Services	820,315	258	0	820,573
Capital Outlay Debt Service:	814,550	40,375	28,000	882,925
Principal Retirement	0	0	500,000	500,000
Interest and Fiscal Charges	0 0	0 0	24,400	24,400
Other Allocations	118,763	0	24,400	118,763
Other Anocations	110,703		<u> </u>	110,703
Total Cash Disbursements	7,879,673	40,633	552,400	8,472,706
Excess of Receipts Over (Under) Disbursements	1,286,379	9,103	(547,799)	747,683
Other Financing Receipts (Disbursements)				
Transfers In	0	0	552,032	552,032
Transfers Out	(552,032)	0	0	(552,032)
Total Other Financing Receipts (Disbursements)	(552,032)	0	552,032	0
Net Change in Fund Cash Balances	734,347	9,103	4,233	747,683
Fund Cash Balances, January 1	2,100,940	139,689	155,393	2,396,022
Fund Cash Balances, December 31	\$2,835,287	\$148,792	\$159,626	\$3,143,705

See accompanying notes to the financial statements

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

NOTE 1 – REPORTING ENTITY

A. Description of the Entity

The Stark County Park District (the District) Stark County, is a body politic and corporate established to exercise the rights and privileges conveyed to it by the constitution and laws of the State of Ohio. The probate judge of Stark County appoints a five-member Board of Commissioners to govern the District. The Commissioners are authorized to acquire, develop, protect, maintain, and improve park lands and facilities. The Commissioners may convert acquired land into forest reserves. The Commissioners are also responsible for activities related to conserving natural resources, including streams, lakes, submerged lands, and swamp lands. The Board may also create parks, parkways, and other reservations and may afforest, develop, improve and protect and promote the use of these assets conducive to the general welfare.

The District's management believes these financial statements present all activities for which the District is financially accountable.

NOTE 2 - SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

A. Basis of Presentation

The District's financial statements consist of a combined statement of receipts, disbursements and changes in fund balances (regulatory cash basis) for all governmental fund types which are organized on a fund type basis.

B. Basis of Accounting

These financial statements follow the accounting basis permitted by the financial reporting provisions of Ohio Revised Code Section 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 117-2-03(C). This basis is similar to the cash receipts and disbursements accounting basis. The District recognizes receipts when received in cash rather than when earned, and recognizes disbursements when paid rather than when a liability is incurred. Budgetary presentations report budgetary expenditures when a commitment is made (i.e., when an encumbrance is approved).

These statements include adequate disclosure of material matters, as the financial reporting provisions of Ohio Revised Code Section 117.38 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 117-2-03(C) permit.

C. Deposit and Investments

As the Ohio Revised Code permits, the Stark County Treasurer holds the District's deposits as the District's custodian. The County holds the District's assets in its investment pool, valued at the Treasurer's reported carrying amount.

D. Fund Accounting

The District uses funds to maintain its financial records during the year. A fund is defined as a fiscal and accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts. The funds of the District are presented below:

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

NOTE 2 – SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

D. Fund Accounting (continued)

1. General Fund

The General Fund accounts for and reports all financial resources not accounted for and reported in another fund. The general fund balance is available to the District for any purpose provided it is expended or transferred according to the general laws of Ohio.

2. Special Revenue Funds

These funds account for and report the proceeds of specific revenue sources that are restricted or committed to expenditure for specified purposes other than debt service or capital projects. The District had the following significant Special Revenue Funds:

<u>Federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program</u> – This fund is used for acquisition of properties in the flood plain that have repeatedly flooded, demolished and associated structures, and return the properties to their natural habitat.

<u>Law Enforcement Trust Fund</u>— This fund is used for law enforcement activity from the participation in asset forfeitures obtained from contraband, mandatory fines for alcohol and drug offenses and bail forfeitures.

3. Capital Project Funds

These funds account for and report financial resources that are restricted, committed, or assigned to expenditure for capital outlays, including the acquisition or construction of capital facilities and other capital assets. The District had the following significant Capital Project Fund:

<u>Permanent Improvement Fund</u> – This fund received state and federal grants, donations, and note proceeds. The District used the proceeds for the construction of the Wildlife Conservation Center, and to pay the note issuances related to the Wildlife Conservation Center.

E. Budgetary Process

The Ohio Revised Code requires that each fund be budgeted annually.

1. Appropriations

Budgetary expenditures (that is, disbursements and encumbrances) may not exceed appropriations at the fund, function or object level of control, and appropriations may not exceed estimated resources. The District Board must annually approve appropriation measures and subsequent amendments. Unencumbered appropriations lapse at year end.

2. Estimated Resources

Estimated resources include estimates of cash to be received (budgeted receipts) plus unencumbered cash as of January 1. The County Budget Commission must approve estimated resources.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

NOTE 2 - SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

3. Encumbrances

The Ohio Revised Code requires the District to reserve (encumber) appropriations when individual commitments are made. Encumbrances outstanding at year end are carried over, and need not be re-appropriated.

A summary of 2023 budgetary activity appears in Note 3.

F. Fund Balance

Fund balance is divided into five classifications based primarily on the extent to which the District must observe constraints imposed upon the use of its governmental-fund resources. The classifications are as follows:

1. Nonspendable

The District classifies assets as *nonspendable* when legally or contractually required to maintain the amounts intact.

2. Restricted

Fund balance is *restricted* when constraints placed on the use of resources are either externally imposed by creditors (such as through debt covenants), grantors, contributors, or laws or regulations of other governments; or is imposed by law through constitutional provisions.

3. Committed

Commissioners can *commit* amounts via formal action (resolution). The District must adhere to these commitments unless the Commissioners amend the resolution. Committed fund balance also incorporates contractual obligations to the extent that existing resources in the fund have been specifically committed to satisfy contractual requirements.

4. Assigned

Assigned fund balances are intended for specific purposes but do not meet the criteria to be classified as *restricted* or *committed*. For regulatory purposes, assigned fund balance in the general fund is limited encumbrances outstanding at year end.

5. Unassigned

Unassigned fund balance is the residual classification for the general fund and includes amounts not included in the other classifications. In other governmental funds, the unassigned classification is used only to report a deficit balance.

The District applies restricted resources first when expenditures are incurred for purposes for which either restricted or unrestricted (committed, assigned, and unassigned) amounts are available. Similarly, within unrestricted fund balance, committed amounts are reduced first followed by assigned, and then unassigned amounts when expenditures are incurred for purposes for which amounts in any of the unrestricted fund balance classifications could be used.

For regulatory purposes, limited disclosure related to fund balance is included in Note 10.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

NOTE 2 - SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

G. Capital Assets

The District records disbursements for acquisitions of property, plant, and equipment when paid. The accompanying financial statements do not report these items as assets.

H. Accumulated Leave

In certain circumstances, such as upon leaving employment, employees are entitled to cash payments for unused leave. The financial statements do not include a liability for unpaid leave.

NOTE 3 – BUDGETARY ACTIVITY

Budgetary activity for the year ending December 31, 2023 as follows:

Fund Type	Budgeted Receipts	Actual Receipts	Variance	
General	\$8,860,692	\$9,166,052	\$305,360	
Special Revenue	82,550	49,736	(32,814)	
Capital Projects	565,333	556,632	(8,701)	
Total	\$9,508,575	\$9,772,420	\$263,845	

2023 Budgeted vs. Actual Budgetary Basis Expenditures

<u> </u>			
Appropriation	Budgetary		
Authority	Expenditures	Variance	
\$10,854,000	\$9,153,547	\$1,700,453	
221,708	40,633	181,075	
720,453	572,330	148,123	
\$11,796,161	\$9,766,510	\$2,029,651	
	Authority \$10,854,000 221,708 720,453	Authority Expenditures \$10,854,000 \$9,153,547 221,708 40,633 720,453 572,330	

NOTE 4 – PROPERTY TAX

Real property taxes become a lien on January 1 preceding the October 1 date for which the Board adopted tax rates. The State Board of Tax Equalization adjusts these rates for inflation. Property taxes are also reduced for applicable non-business, owner occupancy, homestead exemption credits and/or homestead and rollback deductions. The financial statements include these credits and/or homestead and rollback deductions. The financial statements include these credit and/or deduction amounts the State pays as Intergovernmental Receipts. Payments are due to the County by December 31. If the property owner elects to pay semiannually, the first half is due December 31. The second half payment is due the following June 20.

Public utilities are also taxed on personal and real property located within the District. The County is responsible for assessing property, and for billing, collecting, and distributing all property taxes on behalf of the District.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

NOTE 5 - DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLANS

Ohio Public Employees Retirement System

The District's employees belong to the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS). OPERS is a cost-sharing, multiple-employer plan. The Ohio Revised Code prescribes this plan's benefits, which include postretirement healthcare and survivor and disability benefits.

The Ohio Revised Code also prescribes contribution rates. OPERS members contributed 10% of their gross salaries, and the District contributed an amount equaling 14% of participants' gross salaries, except for those in full-time law enforcement positions. Members in aforementioned law enforcement contributed 13% of their gross salaries. For members in law enforcement, the District contributed 18.10% of participants' gross salaries. The District has paid all contributions required through December 31, 2023.

NOTE 6 - POSTEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

OPERS offer cost-sharing, multiple-employer defined benefit postemployment plans. OPERS offers a health reimbursement arrangement (HRA) allowance to benefit recipients meeting certain age and service credit requirements. The HRA is an account funded by OPERS that provides tax-free reimbursement for qualified medical expenses such as monthly post-tax insurance premiums, deductibles, co-insurance, and co-pays incurred by eligible benefit recipients and their dependents. For calendar year 2023, the portion of OPERS employer contributions allocated to health care was 0 percent for members in the traditional pension plan and 2 percent for members in the combined plan. For 2023, the portion of employer contributions OPERS allocated to health care for members in the member-directed plan was 4.0 percent; however, a portion of the health care rate was funded with reserves.

NOTE 7 – RISK MANAGEMENT

Workers' Compensation

Workers' Compensation coverage is provided by the State of Ohio. The District pays the State Workers' Compensation System a premium based on a rate per \$100 of salaries. The rate is calculated based on accident history and administrative costs.

Risk Pool Membership

The District is a member of the Public Entities Pool of Ohio (The Pool). The Pool assumes the risk of loss up to the limits of the Stark County Park District policy. The Pool covers the following risks:

- General liability and casualty
- Public official's liability
- Employment practices liability
- Cyber
- Law enforcement liability
- Automobile liability
- Vehicles
- Property
- Equipment breakdown

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

NOTE 7 – RISK MANAGEMENT (continued)

The Pool reported the following summary of assets and actuarially-measured liabilities available to pay those liabilities as of December 31:

2023

Cash and Investments \$43,996,442

Actuarial Liabilities \$19,743,401

NOTE 8 – CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

Amounts grantor agencies pay to the District are subject to audit and adjustment by the grantor, principally the federal government. The grantor may require refunding any disallowed costs. Management cannot presently determine amounts grantors may disallow. However, based on prior experience, management believes any refunds would be immaterial.

NOTE 9 – RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

Friends of Stark Parks (the Organization) is a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to promoting the development and use of Stark County Park District parks, trails, facilities, educational programs and events. The Organization is a separate entity formed as a 501(c)3 organization. The Organization's Board membership and financial activity are solely the responsibility of the Organization.

Quail Hollow Volunteer Association (the Organization) is a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to promoting the development and use of Quail Hollow Park, trails, facilities, educational programs and events. The Organization is a separate entity formed as a 501(c)3 organization. The Organization's Board membership and financial activity are solely the responsibility of the Organization.

Quail Hollow Herb Society (the Organization) is a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to promoting the development and use of Quail Hollow Park Herb Gardens, educational programs and events. The Organization is a separate entity formed as a 501(c)3 organization. The Organization's Board membership and financial activity are solely the responsibility of the Organization.

NOTE 10 - FUND BALANCES

Encumbrances are commitments related to unperformed contracts for goods or services. Encumbrance accounting is utilized to the extent necessary to assure effective budgetary control and accountability and to facilitate effective cash planning and control. At year end the balances of these amounts were as follows:

		Special	Capital	
Fund Balances	General	Revenue	Projects	Total
Outstanding Encumbrances	\$ 721,842	\$ 0	\$ 19,930	\$ 741,772

The fund balance of special revenue funds is either restricted or committed. The fund balance of capital projects funds is restricted, committed, or assigned. These restricted, committed, and assigned amounts in the special revenue and capital projects funds would include the outstanding encumbrances. In the general fund, outstanding encumbrances are considered assigned.



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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING AND ON COMPLIANCE AND OTHER MATTERS REQUIRED BY GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS

Stark County Park District Stark County 5300 Tyner Avenue NW Canton, Ohio 44708

To the Board of Park Commissioners:

We have audited, in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States (*Government Auditing Standards*), the financial statements of the cash balances, receipts, and disbursements for each governmental fund type as of and for the year ended December 31, 2023 and the related notes to the financial statements of the Stark County Park District, Stark County, (the District) and have issued our report thereon dated October 3, 2024, wherein we noted the District followed financial reporting provisions Ohio Rev. Code § 117.38 and Ohio Admin. Code 117-2-03(C) permit.

Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered the District's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the District's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the District's internal control.

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct misstatements on a timely basis. A material weakness is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the District's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. A significant deficiency is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses. However, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified.

Stark County Park District
Stark County
Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control over
Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters
Required by Government Auditing Standards
Page 2

Report on Compliance and Other Matters

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the District's financial statements are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

Purpose of This Report

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the District's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the District's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.

Keith Faber Auditor of State Columbus, Ohio

October 3, 2024



STARK COUNTY PARK DISTRICT

STARK COUNTY

AUDITOR OF STATE OF OHIO CERTIFICATION

This is a true and correct copy of the report, which is required to be filed pursuant to Section 117.26, Revised Code, and which is filed in the Office of the Ohio Auditor of State in Columbus, Ohio.



Certified for Release 10/22/2024

65 East State Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215 Phone: 614-466-4514 or 800-282-0370