



**Board Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2025**

The Hamilton County Conservation District Board of Supervisors met on January 28, 2025, at the District Training Center at 2710 E Kemper Road, Sharonville, OH 45241.

On January 28, 2025, at 3:30 PM Jane Wittke was sworn in as a Board Supervisor for the Hamilton County Conservation District. Hamilton County Auditor, Jessica Miranda administered the oath of office at the Hamilton County Conservation District Training Center, 2710 E Kemper Road, Sharonville, Ohio 45241.

Jane Wittke called the meeting to order and invited everyone to say the Pledge of Allegiance at 4:03 pm.

Jane Wittke requested a roll call.

Chairperson	Jane Wittke
Vice-Chairperson	Laura Boyd
Treasurer	Lisa Soper
Secretary	Steven R. Korte
Program Chairperson	Kenneth Petren

The following were in attendance: Executive Director, Sara Fehring; Business Service Officer, Melinda Hartley; Gwen Roth, Education & AmeriCorps Program Manager; Chris Hall, Steams Specialist; Kymisha Montgomery, Associate Board Member; Dr. Michael Miller, Associate Board Member; and Alison Manning, Ohio Department of Agriculture Area IV Program Specialist.

Sara Fehring reported the following changes to the agenda:

- The request to approve the payment of \$9,953.73 from the PNC account to Hunt Builders Corporation for the final invoice for relocation construction.
- The depository agreement is not yet available for signatures.

Approval: Lisa Soper moved that the board approve the agenda. Kenneth Petren seconded the motion. A roll call vote approved the motion: Jane Wittke, yes; Laura Boyd, yes; Lisa Soper, yes; Steven R. Korte, yes; and Kenneth Petren, yes.

Audience to Visitors: All Hamilton County Conservation District Board meetings are open to the public. The district policy is that anyone wishing to speak during an open board meeting must sign up ten (10) minutes before the start of the meeting. The Board may limit visitor comments to five (5) minutes per speaker and/or topic to ensure adequate time to conduct all business on the agenda.

Request for Leave: The following leave balances were presented to the board and are available for review by any interested party.

Pay Periods 25, 26						11/21/2024 -12/18/2024					
Name	Begin	Earned	Used	Paid Out	End	Name	Begin	Earned	Used	Paid Out	End
Aaron Habig						Jim Gleason					
Vacation	397.96	12.40	0.00	0.00	410.36	Vacation	353.08	9.20	0.00	0.00	362.28
Sick Time	660.39	9.20	0.00	0.00	669.59	Sick Time	164.85	9.20	27.00	0.00	147.05
Comp Time	3.50	0.00	0.00	3.50	0.00	Comp Time	12.75	0.00	3.00	9.75	0.00
Chey Alberto						Melinda Hartley					
Vacation	598.84	15.40	16.00	0.00	598.25	Vacation	96.41	6.20	4.00	0.00	98.62
Sick Time	747.99	9.20	0.00	0.00	757.19	Sick Time	83.91	9.20	0.00	0.00	93.11
Comp Time	16.75	0.00	9.00	7.75	0.00	Comp Time	31.63	0.00	24.00	7.63	0.00
Christopher Hall						Rachel Cranmer					
Vacation	37.01	15.40	24.00	0.00	28.42	Vacation	13.21	6.20	6.00	0.00	13.42
Sick Time	87.40	9.20	0.00	0.00	96.60	Sick Time	24.07	9.20	7.50	0.00	25.77
Comp Time	3.75	0.00	0.00	3.75	0.00	Comp Time	9.38	0.00	1.25	8.13	0.00
Nicole Gunderman						Sara Fehring					
Vacation	32.20	9.20	0.00	0.00	41.40	Vacation	395.54	12.40	16.00	0.00	391.94
Sick Time	19.56	9.20	0.00	0.00	28.76	Sick Time	371.01	9.20	3.50	0.00	376.71
Comp Time	14.00	0.00	8.00	6.00	0.00	Comp Time	8.13	0.00	8.00	0.13	0.00
Gwen Roth						Sarah Meadows					
Vacation	355.97	15.40	64.25	0.00	307.12	Vacation	120.37	6.20	8.00	0.00	118.57
Sick Time	982.05	9.20	0.00	0.00	991.25	Sick Time	97.55	9.20	10.00	0.00	96.75
Comp Time	12.75	0.00	11.75	1.00	0.00	Comp Time	2.50	0.00	2.00	0.50	0.00
Haley Golsch						Teresa Slonaker					
Vacation	38.39	6.20	8.00	0.00	36.59	Vacation	12.73	6.20	0.00	0.00	18.93
Sick Time	173.84	9.20	8.00	0.00	175.04	Sick Time	66.69	9.20	12.00	0.00	63.89
Comp Time	0.87	0.00	0.00	0.87	0.00	Comp Time	1.88	0.00	0.00	1.88	0.00

Review and approve the Consent Agenda, including the December 2024 Board Minutes and Request for Leave Report. Laura Boyd moved that the board approve the Consent Agenda. Kenneth Petren seconded the motion. A roll call vote approved the motion: Jane Wittke, yes; Laura Boyd, yes; Lisa Soper, yes; Steven R. Korte, yes; and Kenneth Petren, yes.

Report from the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA)

Alison Manning reported the following:

- Beehive
 - Martin Joyce retired at the end of December 31, 2024.
 - Lindsey Douglas has taken over the day-to-day responsibilities of Beehive.
- Drought Funding
- ODA has been working on program details and preparing for the state drought assistance program rollout. Twenty-eight counties in southern and eastern Ohio effected by the 2024 drought will be eligible for funding. ADT/TDP
 - The Administrative Development Program (ADP) & Technical Development Program (TDP) will move to a new registration platform in early 2025.
 - The training sessions are still free, but registration will be required.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Staff

Sara Fehring reported the following:

- John Williams
 - John Williams has been assigned to Lansing, Michigan, for 2-4 months, beginning in early January 2025.
 - Jordan McMahon and Michaela Werling will fill in for John while he is on assignment.

Activity Reports

Agriculture:

Sara Fehring gave a brief comment.

Education:

Gwen Roth reported the following:

- Sarah Meadows
 - Sarah Meadows will return from maternity leave on February 20, 2025.
 - She will start with 2 days a week, then 3, then full-time.
- AmeriCorps
 - The continuation grant is due March 31, 2025.
 - We are hoping to expand the program with the next cohort and already have several organizations looking to host a member.
 - Gwen Roth will present at the NACD conference on Tuesday, February 11, at 10:30 am. Topic: How to Utilize AmeriCorps Members to Expand Conservation Efforts in Your Region.
- Caring For Our Watersheds
 - The top 10 teams have been announced from the following schools: Loveland HS, Wyoming HS, Mount Notre Dame Academy, Indian Hill HS, Bio-Med Science

Academy (Portage County), and John Marshal School of Civic and Business Leadership (Cleveland).

- Environmental Awareness Playing Cards (Loveland, 2024) chosen as the 2024 Global Project to replicate in all.
- Rain Barrel Sale
 - The rain barrels have been delivered to Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency (HCEMA) Warehouse. We will begin the sale after completing all the classes (April 2025).
- Master Rain Gardener
 - The spring class for Master Rain Gardener will be held February 27 - April 10, 2025, at the Campbell County (KY) Extension Office.
- Hamilton County Practice Envirothon
 - Teresa Burnett has been working with Bahr Farm and interested schools to host a practice Envirothon event on April 8, 2025.
 - This will help prepare Hamilton County students for the Area IV Envirothon on April 29, 2025.

Administration:

Sara Fehring reported the following:

- Storm Water District Funds
 - Sara Fehring and Melinda Hartley met with the Hamilton County Budget Department and Todd Long to discuss getting a state match on Storm Water District Funds. Sara reached out to Alison Manning for verbiage from Commission Policy.
- DiSC Assessment
 - DiSC (DiSC is an acronym for Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness).
 - A DiSC Assessment has been scheduled for February 27, 2025, for all staff and AmeriCorps members.
- Risk Management
 - Risk management will conduct a job hazards analysis for the Earthwork Department, Stream Specialist, and Public Involvement Coordinator starting March 2025.
- ALICE Training
 - On January 27, 2025, staff and AmeriCorps members participated in an ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate) and an Emergency Operations training.
- Earthwork Fees
 - Sara Fehring is working with Jeff Aluotto, James Noyes, and the Earthwork Department to draft a resolution for Earthwork fee adjustments related to 'In Lieu of Fee' mitigation projects.

1. 2025 Board of Supervisors Acknowledgement of Ethics and Administrative Policies.
2. Fiscal Agent/Treasurer and Chairman Exemption

Board Reports

Urban Networking Committee:

Laura Boyd reported the following:

- 2024 MS4 Service Survey
- Molly Conley (Warren County) and Jennifer Fish (Franklin County) presented a flyer with results from the 2024 MS4 Service Survey during the director's meeting at the Partnership Meeting.
- Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA)
 - The OEPA will send monthly Notice of Intent (NOI) or Notice of Termination (NOT) to each district.
 - OEPA now requests that presentation requests be made via a form on their website.

Legislative Committee:

- Nothing to Report

Other Reports:

Laura Boyd reported the following:

- Western Wildlife Corridor
 - Laura Boyd spoke with Matt Troken about the Western Wildlife Corridor.
 - Matt was unhappy with the water quality of western tributaries (surface water, stream-related).
 - He is seeking partners to collaborate to help troubleshoot issues. Laura Boyd suggested he contact the district.
- Board Members (Steve and Ken) are both interested in meeting with them.

Treasurer's Reports

Lisa Soper reported on the Treasurer's Reports as follows:

Treasurer's Report	Cash Balance
HCCD PNC Checking Account	\$ 69,663.93
HCCD PNC Money Market	\$ 20,297.77
Soil and Water 920017	\$ 348,316.28
Storm Water 920027	\$ 239,517.94
Save Local Waters 920042	\$ 69,333.00
Caring For Our Watersheds 920058	\$ 26,256.95
OEEF Electrolinefisher 922203	\$ 4.58
ORBCorps - AmeriCorps 922413	\$ 52,896.98
CWA Section 319 Grant 922415	\$ -
OWDA-USI 10506 922417	\$ -
Cooper Creek Detention Basin Retrofit (2) 922205	\$ (7,705.00)
Office Improvement Project (Relocation 2024) 922401	\$ 163,580.74
Financial Obligation = Vacation/Sick/Comp	\$ 125,253.19
Balanced as of 12/31/2024	

Bills for Payment

Lisa Soper reported that the Bills for Payments are as follows:

Bills for Payment	
HCCD PNC Checking Account	
Total of 3 vouchers processed	\$ 4,306.57
HCCD PNC Money Market Account	
Total of 0 vouchers processed	\$ -
Soil and Water 920017	
Total of 22 vouchers processed	\$ 37,679.06
Storm Water 920027	
Total of 20 vouchers processed	\$ 38,023.43
Save Local Waters 920042	
Total of 1 vouchers processed	\$ 10,825.59
Caring For Our Watersheds 920058	
Total of 1 vouchers processed	\$ 33.35
OEEF Electrolinefisher 922203	
Total of 0 vouchers processed	\$ -
ORBCorps - AmeriCorps 922413	
Total of 6 vouchers processed	\$ 565.76
CWA Section 319 Grant 922415	
Total of 0 vouchers processed	\$ -
OWDA-USI 10506 922417	
Total of 0 vouchers processed	\$ -
Cooper Creek Detention Basin Retrofit (2) 922205	
Total of 2 vouchers processed	\$ 4,900.00
Office Improvement Project (Relocation 2024) 922401	
Total of 2 vouchers processed	\$ 42,856.94

Steven R. Korte moved that the board approve the December 2024 Treasurer's Reports for the District's PNC, the Special Accounts, and the December 2024 Bills for Payment. Kenneth Petren seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; and Kenneth Petren, aye.

1. *Signature Cards for PNC*

The board was given the 2025 PNC paperwork for authorized signers on the PNC account.

New Business

1. *2025 Slate of Board Officers*

The board put forth the following Slate of Board Officers for 2025:

Board

Chairperson	Laura Boyd
Vice-Chairperson	Steven R. Korte
Treasurer	Lisa Soper
Secretary	Kenneth Petren
Program Chairperson	Jane Wittke
Associate Board Supervisors	Kymisha Montgomery Dr. Michael Miller

Committees

Annual Meeting	Steven R. Korte Jane Wittke
Nominating Committee	Kenneth Petren Jane Wittke
Legislative Committee	<i>(TBD)</i>
Urban Committee	Laura Boyd
Budget Committee	Kenneth Petren Lisa Soper
Record Retention	Hamilton County Records Commission
Long-Range Plan Committee	Laura Boyd Steven R. Korte Kymisha Montgomery

Agency Representatives for the District

OKI -RCC	Jane Wittke
Mill Creek Alliance	Dr. Michael Miller

Steven R. Korte moved that the board approve the slate of Board Officers for 2025. Laura Boyd seconded the motion. A roll call vote approved the motion: Laura Boyd, yes; Steven R. Korte, yes; Lisa Soper, yes; Kenneth Petren, yes; and Jane Wittke, yes.

2. Approve the 2025 Annual Plan of Work

Laura Boyd moved that the board approve the Annual Plan of Work for 2025. Steven R. Korte seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

3. Approve bank accounts with PNC and First Financial

Lisa Soper moved that the board approve the PNC and First Financial Bank accounts. Laura Boyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

4. *Approve credit card usage for First Financial Bank with the following limits and permissions – Fehring (\$20,000), Roth (\$5,000), Gleason (\$2,000), Cranmer (\$2,000), Hall (\$2,000), Gunderman (\$2,000), and Burnett (\$2,000). Hartley will act as administrator for the First Financial Bank credit card account*

Lisa Soper moved that the board approve the credit card usage for First Financial Bank with the following limits and permissions- Fehring (\$20,000), Roth (\$5,000), Cranmer (\$2,000), Hall (\$2,000), Gunderman (\$2,000), and Burnett (\$2,000). Hartley will act as administrator for the First Financial Bank credit card account. Steven R. Korte seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

5. *Approve credit card usage for Voyager with the following limits and permissions – All staff except Hartley (\$500). Hartley will act as administrator for the Voyager account.*

Steven R. Korte moved that the board approve credit card usage for Voyager with the following limits and permissions- All staff except Hartley (\$500). Hartley will act as administrator for the Voyager account. Laura Boyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

6. *Approve the Price List for 2025*
- **Copies/Prints** – The first 20 black and white copies/prints are free. Additional black and white copies/prints and color copies/prints will be charged based on the current rate established by the existing copier contract.
 - **Rain Barrel Art Project Rain Barrels** – Auction – Starting price \$100.00
 - **Master Rain Gardener Program** - \$50 per attendee and \$25 per student with a letter from the professor
 - **SLW Rain Barrel Workshop** – \$55 per attendee with barrel
 - **Rain Barrel Sale** - \$85 per barrel to the public and \$81 per barrel to partner organizations
 - **Cover Crop Seed Sale** - \$6 per 1-pound bag

Laura Boyd moved that the board approve the Price List for 2025 as presented. Steven R. Korte seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

7. *Approve the Executive Director to spend up to \$2,000 on board meeting supplies annually.*

Kenneth Petren moved that the board approve the Executive Director to spend up to \$2,000 on board meeting supplies annually. Lisa Soper seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

8. Approve the Executive Director's spending limit of up to \$3,000.

Laura Boyd moved that the board approve the Executive Director's spending limit of \$3,000. Jane Wittke seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

9. Grant timesheet (beehive) approval permissions to Fehring, Alberto, Roth, and Hartley

Kenneth Petren moved that the board grant timesheet (beehive) approval permissions to Fehring, Alberto, Roth, and Hartley. Steven R. Korte seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

10. Approve the Vacation Leave Payout Policy, Harassment Policy, Nepotism Policy, and Motor Vehicle Record Policy contingent on Prosecutor Approval.

Laura Boyd moved that the board approve the Vacation Leave Payout Policy, Harassment Policy, Nepotism Policy, and Motor Vehicle Record Policy as amended, contingent on Prosecutor Approval. Steven R. Korte seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

11. Approve the sponsorship letter for the 2025 Stormwater Field Day.

Steven R. Korte moved that the board approve the 2025 Stormwater Field Day sponsorship letter. Kenneth Petren seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

12. Approve the payment of \$15 in Ohio Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Employees dues for each staff member who chooses to participate in the organization—PNC.

Laura Boyd moved that the board approve the payment of \$15 in Ohio Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Employees dues for each staff member who chooses to participate in the organization—PNC. Kenneth Petren seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

13. Approve the PO and payment of up to \$7,927.97 to SSA Group for the CFW Final Event—OCA 920058.

Lisa Soper moved that the board approve the PO and payment of up to \$7,927.97 to SSA Group for CFW Final Event – OCA 920058. Kenneth Petren seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

14. Approve the PO and payment of \$7,098.94 to Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District for the Doug McKenzie Mohr workshop reimbursement OCA 920042.

Kenneth Petren moved that the board approve the PO and payment of \$7,098.94 to Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District for the Doug McKenzie Mohr workshop reimbursement OCA 920042. Lisa Soper seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

15. Approve the transfer of \$4,867.24 from OCA 922413 to the PNC account for AmeriCorps 2023-2024 program year reimbursement.

Kenneth Petren moved that the board approve the transfer of \$4,867.24 from OCA 922413 to the PNC account for AmeriCorps 2023-2024 program year reimbursement. Steven R. Korte seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

16. Notification of the transfer of Earthwork Fees from the PNC account to Hamilton County General Fund – December 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025, \$472.50.

17. Approve the payment of \$9,953.53 from the PNC account to Hunt Builders Corporation for the final invoice for relocation construction.

Laura Boyd moved that the board approve the payment of \$9,953.73 from the PNC account to Hunt Builders Corporation for the final invoice for relocation construction. Lisa Soper seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

Executive Session- Employee Evaluation and Compensation Discussion

Steven R. Korte moved that the board members enter an Executive Session to discuss Employee Evaluation and Compensation. Lisa Soper seconded the motion. A roll call vote approved the motion: Jane Wittke, yes; Laura Boyd, yes; Lisa Soper, yes; Steven R. Korte, yes; and Kenneth Petren, yes.

Sara Fehring and Alison Manning were invited to attend the meeting.

The executive session started at 6:15 pm.

Sara Fehring exited the executive session at 6:45 pm.

Sara Fehring returned to the executive session at 6:55 pm.

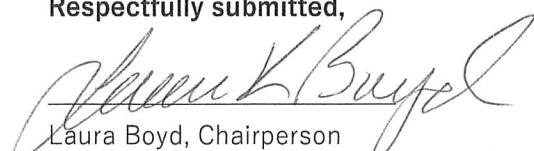
The board members returned to the regular session at 7:01 pm.

Lisa Soper moved that the board approve the employee compensation as presented, which includes a 3% cost of living increase, effective January 16, 2025. Laura Boyd seconded the motion. A roll call vote approved the motion: Jane Wittke, yes; Laura Boyd, yes; Lisa Soper, yes; Steven R. Korte, yes; and Kenneth Petren, yes.

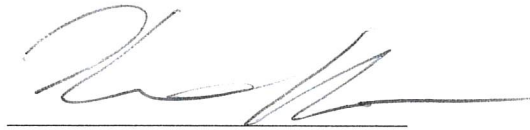
Name	Current Rate	New Rate
Aaron Habig	\$ 26.92	\$ 28.00
Chey Alberto	\$ 35.00	\$ 36.75
Chris Hall	\$ 32.00	\$ 34.32
Gwen Roth	\$ 35.06	\$ 36.81
Haley Weisbrodt	\$ 26.66	\$ 27.73
James Gleason	\$ 26.79	\$ 27.86
Melinda Hartley	\$ 26.68	\$ 27.75
Nicole Gunderman	\$ 32.00	\$ 32.96
Rachel Cranmer	\$ 26.78	\$ 27.58
Sara Fehring	\$ 46.65	\$ 48.28
Sarah Meadows	\$ 27.81	\$ 28.64
Teresa Burnett	\$ 26.68	\$ 27.85

Adjournment: Laura Boyd moved that the board members adjourn the board meeting at 7:02 pm. Steven R. Korte seconded the motion. A roll call vote approved the motion: Jane Wittke, yes; Laura Boyd, yes; Lisa Soper, yes; Steven R. Korte, yes; and Kenneth Petren, yes.

Respectfully submitted,



Laura Boyd, Chairperson



Kenneth Petren, Secretary



Melinda Hartley, Business Service Officer