



Board Meeting Minutes July 16, 2024

The Hamilton County Conservation District Board of Supervisors met on July 16, 2024, at the District office located at 1325 E. Kemper Rd., Ste. 115, Cincinnati, OH 45246.

Jane Wittke called the meeting to order and invited everyone to say the Pledge of Allegiance at 3:33 pm.

Jane Wittke requested a roll call.

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

The following were in attendance: Sara Fehring, Executive Director; Melinda Hartley, Business Service Officer; Chey Alberto, Urban Conservationist; Rachel Cranmer, Marketing Coordinator; Chris Hall, Stream Specialist; Kara Schirmer, Associate Board Member and Dr. Michael Miller, Associate Board Member.

Agenda Changes/Approval: Lisa Soper moved that the board approve the amended agenda. Steven R. Korte seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a roll call vote: Jane Wittke, yes; Laura Boyd, (absent); 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. It is the policy of the District that anyone wishing to speak during the open board meeting must sign up ten minutes before the start of the meeting. The Board may limit visitor comments to five 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 12, 13						5/23/2024-6/19/2024					
Name	Begin	Earned	Used	Paid Out	End	Name	Begin	Earned	Used	Paid Out	End
Aaron Habig						Jim Gleason					
Vacation	325.64	10.80	8.00	0.00	328.76	Vacation	335.78	9.20	8.00	0.00	336.98
Sick Time	609.26	9.23	0.00	0.00	618.49	Sick Time	199.30	9.20	54.25	0.00	154.25
Comp Time	45.13	0.75	0.00	0.00	45.88	Comp Time	19.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	19.25
Chey Alberto						Melinda Hartley					
Vacation	559.70	15.40	6.50	0.00	568.61	Vacation	115.07	6.20	13.00	0.00	108.27
Sick Time	709.83	9.49	8.00	0.00	711.32	Sick Time	117.66	9.20	8.00	0.00	118.86
Comp Time	13.50	7.50	0.00	0.00	21.00	Comp Time	78.25	0.00	11.50	0.00	66.75
Christopher Hall						Rachel Cranmer					
Vacation	42.37	15.40	24.00	0.00	33.78	Vacation	11.25	4.21	8.00	0.00	7.46
Sick Time	25.82	9.75	0.00	0.00	35.56	Sick Time	22.27	6.24	5.50	0.00	23.01
Comp Time	13.50	14.25	3.00	0.00	24.75	Comp Time	2.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.50
Emily Hoskins						Sara Fehring					
Vacation	12.01	4.13	7.50	0.00	8.64	Vacation	328.09	12.40	0.00	0.00	340.44
Sick Time	24.15	6.13	0.00	0.00	30.27	Sick Time	345.40	9.43	5.00	0.00	349.83
Comp Time	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	Comp Time	39.13	6.00	8.00	0.00	37.13
Gwen Roth						Sarah Meadows					
Vacation	327.83	15.40	0.00	0.00	343.24	Vacation	80.05	6.20	0.00	0.00	86.26
Sick Time	923.99	9.69	0.00	0.00	933.68	Sick Time	108.75	9.52	15.50	0.00	102.77
Comp Time	71.38	12.75	0.00	0.00	84.13	Comp Time	16.75	8.25	2.50	0.00	22.50
Haley Golsch						Teresa Slonaker					
Vacation	54.06	6.20	0.00	0.00	60.25	Vacation	17.56	6.20	8.00	0.00	15.76
Sick Time	161.33	9.20	1.00	0.00	169.53	Sick Time	41.33	9.49	4.00	0.00	46.82
Comp Time	8.63	0.00	8.00	0.00	0.62	Comp Time	1.75	7.50	0.00	0.00	9.25

Review and approve the Consent Agenda, including the June Minutes and Request for Leave Report. Lisa Soper moved that the board approve the Consent Agenda. Kenneth Petren seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a roll call vote: Jane Wittke, yes; Laura Boyd, (absent); Lisa Soper, yes; Steven R. Korte, abstained; and Kenneth Petren, yes.

Report from the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA)

No Report

Report from the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS)

No Report

Activity Reports

Earthwork

Chey Alberto reported the following:

- Earthwork Appeals Board
 - The Earthwork Appeals Board held the yearly reorganization meeting on 07/11/2024.
 - Craig Abercrombie's term has expired. Chey Alberto was working with Craig to have his reappointment to the earthwork's appeals board by the Board of County Commissioners
 - All other terms are current. Adam Berner made his first meeting as Steve Korte's replacement.
- Earthwork Fees Collected
 - The Earthwork Fees collected as of the end of June 2024 are \$139,708.68.
 - The target for the year is \$200k, so at halfway through the year we are roughly \$39K ahead.
- Basin Maintenance Bond
 - The Basin Maintenance Bond Rate will be raised from \$62.50/cubic yard to \$73.5/cubic yard. This rate was based on input from Siteworx and Coppage.
- Consulting Services Inc (CSI)
 - CSI has been acquired by a company called UES.
 - Chey Alberto and Sara Fehring talked to Joe Burkhardt and discussed the current contract and services agreement until 2025.
 - Per Joe Burkhardt, everything is as usual. CSI will be a company under UES.
- 6481 E. Miami River Road
 - Sara Fehring and Chey Alberto spoke to Mike Friedman, Hamilton County Prosecutor, about the unapproved fill at 6481 E. Miami River Road.
 - Randy Wayne has not responded, and Mike Friedman will ask for a Default Judgement.
 - Randy Wayne will go to court in early August and expects word from the court in late August.
- 254 Pedretti Avenue
 - Chey Alberto emailed Nee Fong Chin, Hamilton County Prosecutor, regarding 254 Pedretti Avenue's unapproved fill.
 - Nee Fong Chin is still working with Chad Levin, the attorney, on 254 Pedretti to resolve this matter.

- Lot 6 of Forestview Gardens
 - Leesman Engineering provided a letter on behalf of the owners of Lot 6 of Forestview Gardens regarding the fill assessment.
 - The letter was sent to Joe Burkhardt and Terracon for review. Terracon provided comments seeking testing information.
 - Terracon's comments were forwarded to Leesman Engineering, and Leesman Engineering responded unfavorably.
 - Hamilton County Prosecutor KC Fischer directed the Hamilton County Conservation District not to respond until she can review the case.
- Vista View
 - Chey Alberto emailed Jim Sayre, Hamilton County Prosecutor, for an update on Vista View but has not heard from him yet.

Marketing

Rachel Cranmer reported the following:

- Fostering Sustainable Behavior Seminar
 - Registration numbers were lower than expected.
 - The seminar survey showed 69% overall excellent responses.
 - A meeting is scheduled with Hamilton County Conservation District staff who attended the workshop to discuss what went well and what can be improved.
- Soil Your Undies Challenge
 - At this point, about 100 pairs of undies have been given out.
 - One barrier discovered is that people are not digging up their underwear.
 - This year will be a pilot year to go full steam for next year.
 - The campaign is still being promoted, but there is not a lot of movement right now.
- Mascot
 - Introducing "MERF" (Material, Recovery, Facility) – Eastern Box Turtle. He is being given to us by the Boonshoft Museum of Discovery.
 - MERF will be used as the face of the District on social media pages.
 - The District will hold off on a costume until we see how MERF will be involved within the community.
- EDI Policy
 - The staff committee has drafted a policy that is currently under review from Sara Fehring.

- Tree Sale
 - The 2024 Native Plant Sale went live on 07/15/2024.
 - As of 4:00 pm on 07/16/2024, there have been over \$3,000 in sales.

Laura Boyd arrived at 3:41 pm.

Administrative Report

Sara Fehring reported the following:

- Earthwork Fee Increase
 - James Noyes will request a 3.8% increase in earthwork fees from the Board of County Commissioners.
 - The increase would take effect 1/1/2025.
 - The plan is to increase yearly based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- OKI RCC Summer Tour Registration
 - If you want to attend the OKI RCC Summer Tour, please let Melinda Hartley know by July 26, 2024.
 - The tour is on 09/13/2024.
- Mid-Year Reviews
 - All but two mid-year reviews have been completed.
 - The two remaining reviews will be completed by the end of July.
- 2023-2024 Hamilton County Ohio AmeriCorps Fiscal Monitoring
 - The fiscal audit has been completed, and there were no findings.
- Stormwater Float
 - If you would like to attend, let Melinda Hartley know by the end of day on August 1, 2024.
 - The Stormwater Float is on 09/19/2024.
- Summer Supervisors School
 - Sara Fehring and Melinda Hartley will be attending Summer Supervisors School this upcoming weekend.
 - Gwen Roth and Chey Alberto will oversee the office in Sara Fehring's absences.

Board Reports

Urban Networking Committee

Laura Boyd reported the following:

- There will be a round table at the SSS
- Still looking for volunteers for some of the initiatives

Legislative Committee

Laura Boyd reported the following:

- Nothing to report

Annual Meeting Committee

Lisa Soper reported the following:

- Nothing to report

Relocation Committee

Steven R. Korte reported the following:

- There are two issues with construction
 - 2702: Outdated Romex wiring in the ceiling. The cost for replacement is \$7,498.00.
 - 2710: Mold and Mildew in the break room under the Luxury Vinyl Tile (LVT). The cost to replace LVT is \$9,873.60.
- Tristan Lana and Rose Goering are working on negotiations with the landlord.

Nomination Committee

Kenneth Petren reported the following:

- Kenneth Petren and Steven R. Korte have been talking to interested parties.
- Kenneth Petren will speak with individual district staff for recommendations.
- Kenneth Petren will call a meeting with Steven R. Korte and Scott P. Huber to touch base in the next few days.

Other Reports

- Nothing to Report

Treasurer's Reports and Bills for Payment:

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

Treasurer's Report	Balanced Reports as of 06/30/2024	Cash Balance
HCCD PNC Checking Account		\$ 141,553.31
HCCD PNC Money Market		\$ 229.89
Soil and Water 920017		\$ 532,255.17
Storm Water 920027		\$ (1,826.58)
Save Local Waters 920042		\$ 82,790.15
Caring For Our Watersheds 920058		\$ 11,110.75
DEEF Electrolinefisher 922203		\$ 4.58
ORBCorps - AmeriCorps 922413		\$ 9,713.31
CWA Section 319 Grant 922415		\$ -
DWDA-USI 10506 922417		\$ -
Cooper Creek Detention Basin Retrofit (2) 922205		\$ (1,872.50)
Office Improvement Project (Relocation 2024) 922401		\$ 216,717.00
Financial Obligation = Vacation/Sick/Comp		\$ 128,985.98
		as of 06/30/2024

Bills for Payment:

Lisa Soper reported on the Bills for Payments as follows:

Bills for Payment	
HCCD PNC Checking Account	
Total of 9 vouchers processed	\$65,749.16
HCCD PNC Money Market Account	
Total of 1 vouchers processed	\$71,000.00
Soil and Water 920017	
Total of 21 vouchers processed	\$13,524.83
Storm Water 920027	
Total of 15 vouchers processed	\$11,849.71
Save Local Waters 920042	
Total of 3 vouchers processed	\$366.50
Caring For Our Watersheds 920058	
Total of 45 vouchers processed	\$11,747.45
DEEF Electrolinefisher 922203	
Total of 0 vouchers processed	\$0.00
ORBCorps - AmeriCorps 922413	
Total of 4 vouchers processed	\$2,147.54
CWA Section 319 Grant 922415	
Total of 0 vouchers processed	\$0.00
DWDA-USI 10506 922417	
Total of 0 vouchers processed	\$0.00
Cooper Creek Detention Basin Retrofit (2) 922205	
Total of 2 vouchers processed	\$1,872.50
Office Improvement Project (Relocation 2024) 922401	
Total of 0 vouchers processed	\$0.00

Kenneth Petren moved that the board approve the June 2024 Treasurer's Reports for the District's PNC, the Special Accounts, and the June 2024 Bills for Payment as amended by Melinda Hartley. Steven R. Korte seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a roll call vote: Jane Wittke, yes; Laura Boyd, yes; Lisa Soper, yes; Steven R. Korte, yes; and Kenneth Petren, yes.

New Business

- 1. Approve the hiring of Nicole Gunderman as the full-time Agriculture Specialist at the pay rate of \$32.00 per hour with the following benefits: OPERS, holidays, vacation time, and sick time. The starting date has been set for 08/15/2024 with a work schedule of Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm.*

Steven R. Korte moved that the board approve the hiring of Nicole Gunderman as the full-time Agriculture Specialist at the pay rate of \$32.00 per hour with the following benefits: OPERS, holidays, vacation time, and sick time. The starting date has been set for 08/15/2024 with a work schedule of Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm. Kenneth Petren seconded the motion. The motion was approved by: Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; and Kenneth Petren, aye.

- 2. Approval for Nicole Gunderman to serve on the Hamilton County Farm Bureau Board of Trustees.*

Jane Wittke moved that the board approve Nicole Gunderman to serve on the Hamilton County Farm Bureau Board of Trustees. Kenneth Petren seconded the motion. The motion was approved by: Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; and Kenneth Petren, aye.

- 3. Approve the 2023-2024 Ohio River Basin Corps (ORBCorps) AmeriCorps contract extension.*

Lisa Soper moved that the board approve the 2023-2024 Ohio River Basin Corps (ORBCorps) AmeriCorps contract extension. Kenneth Petren seconded the motion. The motion was approved by: Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; and Kenneth Petren, aye.

4. *Approve MOUs with Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District and Mill Creek Alliance for 2024-2025 Ohio River Basin Corps (ORBCorps) AmeriCorps member placement.*

Laura Boyd moved that the board approve MOUs with Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District and Mill Creek Alliance for 2024-2025 Ohio River Basin Corps (ORBCorps) AmeriCorps member placement. Lisa Soper seconded the motion. The motion was approved by: Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; and Kenneth Petren, aye.

5. *Approve the PO and payment of \$8,940.00 to DeBra-Kuempel for key card access at 2702 E. Kemper Road - 922401.*

Laura Boyd moved that the board approve the PO and payment of up to \$8,940.00 to DeBra-Kuempel for key card access at 2702 E. Kemper Road - 922401. Lisa Soper seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a roll call vote: Jane Wittke, yes; Laura Boyd, yes; Lisa Soper, yes; Steven R. Korte, yes; and Kenneth Petren, no.

6. *Approve the transfer of \$27,982.50 in permit application fees to Hamilton County – PNC Bank.*

Laura Boyd moved that the board approve the transfer of \$27,982.50 in permit application fees to Hamilton County – PNC Bank. Steven R. Korte seconded the motion. The motion was approved by: Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; and Kenneth Petren, aye.

7. *Approve the PO and payment of up to \$4,500 to Hightech Signs for signage at 2702 E. Kemper Road – PNC.*

Lisa Soper moved that the board approve the PO and payment of up to \$4,500 to Hightech Signs for signage at 2702 E. Kemper Road – PNC. Kenneth Petren seconded the motion. The motion was approved by: Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; and Kenneth Petren, aye.

8. Approve the payout of \$160.88 in annual leave time to Emily Hoskins 920027.

Lisa Soper moved that the board approve the payout of \$160.88 in annual leave time to Emily Hoskins 920027. Laura Boyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a roll call vote: Jane Wittke, yes; Laura Boyd, yes; Lisa Soper, yes; Steven R. Korte, yes; and Kenneth Petren, yes.

Executive Session – Personnel - Staffing

Laura Boyd moved that the board members enter Executive Session to discuss Personnel—Staffing. 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.

Sara Fehring was invited to attend.

The executive session started at 5:15 pm.

Sara Fehring left the executive session at 6:30 pm.

The board members returned to the regular session at 6:45 pm.

Lisa Soper made the motion to increase the hourly pay rate for Chey Alberto to \$35.00, effective July 18, 2024. 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.

Steven R. Korte made the motion to increase the hourly pay rate for Sara Fehring to \$46.65, effective July 18, 2024, closing her introductory period. 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.

Adjournment: Laura Boyd moved that the board members adjourn the board meeting at 6:47 pm. Lisa Soper seconded the motion. The motion was approved by: Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Steven R. Korte, aye; and Kenneth Petren, aye.

Respectfully submitted,



Jane Wittke, Chairperson



Steven R. Korte, Secretary



Melinda Hartley, Business Service Officer

