



Board Meeting Minutes May 21, 2024

The Hamilton County Conservation District Board of Supervisors met on June 18, 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
Treasurer	Lisa Soper
Secretary	Steven R. Korte
Program Chairperson	Kenneth Petren (absent)

The following were in attendance: Sara Fehring, Executive Director; Melinda Hartley, Business Service Officer; Gwen Roth, Education & AmeriCorps Program Manager; Chey Alberto, Urban Conservationist; Kara Schirmer, Associate Board Member; John Williams, NRCS District Conservationist; and Je'lahn Thomas, NRCS District Intern.

Sara Fehring reported the following changes to the agenda:

- *The approval to transfer \$7,850.20 in Rain Barrel Workshop Revenue from the PNC account to 920042 has been removed from the agenda.*

Agenda Changes/Approval: Kenneth Petren moved that the board approve the amended agenda. 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, (absent); 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 9, 10, & 11						4/11/2024 - 5/22/2024					
Name	Begin	Earned	Used	Paid Out	End	Name	Begin	Earned	Used	Paid Out	End
<i>Aaron Habig</i>						<i>Jim Gleason</i>					
Vacation	311.84	13.80	0.00	0.00	325.64	Vacation	335.93	13.80	14.00	0.00	335.78
Sick Time	593.98	15.28	0.00	0.00	609.26	Sick Time	202.72	14.58	18.00	0.00	199.30
Comp Time	12.00	38.63	5.50	0.00	45.13	Comp Time	0.00	20.25	1.00	0.00	19.25
<i>Chey Alberto</i>						<i>Melinda Hartley</i>					
Vacation	590.34	23.10	53.75	0.00	559.70	Vacation	105.75	9.30	0.00	0.00	115.07
Sick Time	732.28	13.80	36.25	0.00	709.83	Sick Time	119.72	15.44	17.50	0.00	117.66
Comp Time	13.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	13.50	Comp Time	35.50	42.75	0.00	0.00	78.25
<i>Christopher Hall</i>						<i>Rachel Cranmer</i>					
Vacation	19.26	23.10	0.00	0.00	42.37	Vacation	10.25	8.99	8.00	0.00	11.25
Sick Time	11.62	14.20	0.00	0.00	25.82	Sick Time	20.75	13.51	12.00	0.00	22.27
Comp Time	3.00	10.50	0.00	0.00	13.50	Comp Time	3.00	4.50	5.00	0.00	2.50
<i>Emily Hoskins</i>						<i>Sara Fehring</i>					
Vacation	5.26	6.74	0.00	0.00	12.01	Vacation	318.74	15.35	6.00	0.00	328.09
Sick Time	43.64	10.01	29.50	0.00	24.15	Sick Time	330.13	15.27	0.00	0.00	345.40
Comp Time	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	Comp Time	8.88	38.25	8.00	0.00	39.13
<i>Gwen Roth</i>						<i>Sarah Meadows</i>					
Vacation	304.72	23.10	0.00	0.00	327.83	Vacation	70.74	9.30	0.00	0.00	80.05
Sick Time	908.25	15.74	0.00	0.00	923.99	Sick Time	119.55	14.20	25.00	0.00	108.75
Comp Time	41.00	50.63	20.25	0.00	71.38	Comp Time	6.25	10.50	0.00	0.00	16.75
<i>Haley Golsch</i>						<i>Teresa Slonaker</i>					
Vacation	60.01	9.30	15.25	0.00	54.06	Vacation	8.26	9.30	0.00	0.00	17.56
Sick Time	156.70	14.13	9.50	0.00	161.33	Sick Time	30.50	13.83	3.00	0.00	41.33
Comp Time	0.00	8.63	0.00	0.00	8.63	Comp Time	2.00	0.75	1.00	0.00	1.75

Review and approve the Consent Agenda, including the April Minutes and Request for Leave Report. Lisa Soper moved that the board approve the Consent Agenda. 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, (absent); and Kenneth Petren, yes.

Report from the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA)

No Report

Report from the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS)

John Williams reported the following:

- John Williams introduced his intern Je'lahn Thomas.
- White Water Community Garden was looking for funds for gardening tools. John provided the presentation that was approved by his board, and items were purchased. He provided this as an opportunity for which the district may find a need.

Activity Reports

Education

Gwen Roth reported the following:

- AmeriCorps
 - Hamilton County Conservation District (HCCD) has received funding for the 2024/2025 grant cycle.
 - HCCD is currently advertising 2024/2025 program cycle positions.
 - The cohort is slated to start September 3, 2024, and run through July 30, 2025. The current cohort will finish on October 2, 2024, so some overlap will occur.
 - HCCD is still looking for a final host site since Butler SWCD chose not to continue with the program.
- Plant Sale
 - The first-ever plant kit sale went well, with 20 kits sold.
 - There is a plan to do it again in 2025 with additional marketing.
- Greater Cincinnati Master Rain Gardener (GCMRG) Updates
 - All the original 'handshake agreements' made between partners at the program start in 2021 have been completed.

- Currently, Sarah Meadows coordinates all moving parts of each program in any location.
- Beginning in 2025, the Partners are responsible for coordinating their own programs. HCCD will still manage shared resources (program supplies, regional website, class materials, registrations & GCMRG program budget).
- There will be an MOU signed with partners who agree to changes later this summer/fall.
- 2024 Electrofishing Season
 - Sarah Meadows will complete grant requirements this year (5 sampling sites and 2 public works demonstration workshops).
 - Sarah Meadows will also sample three additional sites for regional partners.

Administrative Report

Sara Fehring reported the following:

- Earthwork Fee Increase
 - In February 2019, the County Commissioners clarified that the Hamilton County Earthwork Program Fee Schedule is subject to an annual inflationary rate consistent with the CPI (consumer price increase).
 - Since the resolution passed in December 2018, the Earthwork Program Fee Schedule has not increased
 - The District has the option to increase yearly based on CPI.

The board would like to increase fees based on CPI. Sara Fehring will do more research to get an increase for the 2025 fee.

- Relocation
 - The agreement with Hunt has been reviewed by Steven Gay. We are currently waiting for the revised contract from Hunt
 - Relocation is still on track. See the attached master schedule.
 - Demolition starts the week of June 17, 2024.
- Agriculture Specialist Position
 - Second round interviews were held on June 12, 2024, and June 13, 2024.
 - After board approval, the position will be offered.
- City of Norwood American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds Update
 - The County Commissioners have approved the \$1.3 million Elm Avenue project.

- The Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) has approved the project.
- The City of Norwood is working on finalizing the plans.
- Summer Supervisors School
 - Melinda Hartley and Sara Fehring are attending Summer Supervisors School in Toledo from July 22, 2024 – July 24, 2024.

Board Reports

Urban Networking Committee

Laura Boyd reported the following:

- The Urban Networking Committee (UNC) now has a Newsletter through Constant Contact.
- Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District has a UNC page on its website.
- A survey was sent out to the district employees to volunteer. Opportunities to lead different initiatives are available
- There will be a UNC round table meeting at the 2024 Summer Supervisors School.
- There is a UNC Zoom meeting scheduled for September 2024.

Legislative Committee

Laura Boyd reported the following:

- House Bill Number 426, Designate Stormwater Awareness Week 1st hearing occurred on June 11, 2024. The House Bill is to designate the first week in October “Ohio Stormwater Awareness Week.”
- July 1, 2024, the Hamilton County Conservation District Legislative Tour invites will go out.
- Sara Fehring, Chey Alberto, and Gwen Roth met with Senator Wilson.
- Sara Fehring is working to set up a meeting with Senator Blessings.

Annual Meeting Committee

Lisa Soper reported the following:

- No Updates

Relocation Committee

Sara Fehring reported the following:

- Tristan Lana, with Cushman & Wakefield, has been a huge asset during this process
- Hunt Contractors was selected as the contractor and will begin this week.
- Staff moving date is August 22, 2024.

Nomination Committee

Kenneth Petren reported the following:

- o Nothing to report

Kenneth requested communication from the staff on their ideas for election candidates.

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 05/31/2024	Cash Balance
HCSWCD District PNC Checking Account		\$ 97,703.91
HCSWCD District PNC Money Market		\$ 71,229.83
Soil and Water 920017		\$ 568,739.50
Storm Water 920027		\$ 45,746.38
Save Local Waters 920042		\$ 72,091.45
Caring For Our Watersheds 920058		\$ 22,858.20
OEEF Electrolinerfisher 922203		\$ 4.58
ORBCorps - AmeriCorps 922413		\$ 17,484.01
CWA Section 319 Grant 922415		\$ -
OWDA-USI 10506 922417		\$ -
Cooper Creek Detention Basin Retrofit (2) 922205		\$ -
Office Improvement Project (Relocation 2024) 922401		\$ 216,717.00
Financial Obligation = Vacation/Sick/Comp		\$ 126,973.26

as of 5/31/2024

Bills for Payment:

Lisa Soper reported on the Bills for Payments as follows:

Bills for Payment

HCSWCD District Account	
Total of 6 vouchers processed	\$1,795.44
Soil and Water 920017	
Total of 15 vouchers processed	\$9,671.86
Storm Water 920027	
Total of 9 vouchers processed	\$1,125.50
Save Local Waters 920042	
Total of 2 vouchers processed	\$846.00
Caring For Our Watersheds 920058	
Total of 5 vouchers processed	\$9,409.56
OEEF Electrolinefisher 922203	
Total of 0 vouchers processed	\$0.00
ORBCorps - AmeriCorps 922413	
Total of 3 vouchers processed	\$732.77
CWA Section 319 Grant 922415	
Total of 0 vouchers processed	\$0.00
OWDA-USI 10506 922417	
Total of 0 vouchers processed	\$0.00
Cooper Creek Detention Basin Retrofit (2) 922205	
Total of 0 vouchers processed	\$0.00
Office Improvement Project (Relocation 2024) 922401	
Total of 0 vouchers processed	\$0.00

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

Old Business

1. *Timing of the Staff Evaluation Process.*

Sara Fehring reported that she polled the staff to see their interest in meeting with the board for the annual review; all staff members would like to participate.

Lisa Soper is still working on the evaluation form for Sara Fehring's review. She will send it to Melinda Hartley with a link, who will send it to staff by Friday, June 20, 2024. Staff must reply via the link by 5:00 pm on June 28, 2024.

New Business

- 1. Approve the Technical Assistance Subsidy Agreement for H2Ohio, contingent on the Prosecutor's approval.*

Kenneth Petren moved that the board approve the Technical Assistance Subsidy Agreement for H2Ohio, contingent on the Prosecutor's approval. Laura Boyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved by: Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Steven R. Korte, (absent); and Kenneth Petren, aye.

- 2. Approve the Executive Director offering employment to an Agricultural Specialist at the Board's set compensation rate.*

Kenneth Petren moved that the board approve the Executive Director offering employment to an Agricultural Specialist at the Board's set compensation rate. Laura Boyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved by: Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Steven R. Korte, (absent); and Kenneth Petren, aye.

- 3. Approve the PO and Payment of \$5,664.60 to Hammann's Catering for catering at Doug McKenzie-Mohr Seminars – 920042.*

Lisa Soper moved that the board approve the PO and Payment of up to \$5,664.60 to Hammann's Catering for catering at Doug McKenzie-Mohr Seminars – 920042. Laura Boyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved by: Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Steven R. Korte, (absent); and Kenneth Petren, aye.

- 4. Approve the pricing structure of the Native Plant Sale products for a flat rate of \$26.00 plus tax.*

vote: Jane Wittke, yes; Laura Boyd, no; Lisa Soper, yes; Steven R. Korte, (absent); and Kenneth Petren, yes.

9. *Approve the PO and Payment up to \$188,624.00 to Hunt Builders Corporation for General Contracting at 2702 and 2710 E Kemper Road – 922401.*

Lisa Soper moved that the board Approve the PO and Payment up to \$188,624.00 to Hunt Builders Corporation for General Contracting at 2702 and 2710 E Kemper Road – 922401. Laura Boyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved by Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Steven R. Korte, (absent); and Kenneth Petren, aye.

10. *Approve the disposal of AmeriCorps Cubicles.*

Kenneth Petren moved that the board approve the disposal of the AmeriCorps Cubicles. Jane Wittke seconded the motion. The motion was approved by Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Steven R. Korte, (absent); and Kenneth Petren, aye.

11. *Policy Updates and Presentation – Inventory and Job Classification Plan.*

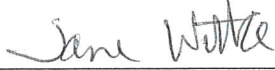
Kenneth Petren moved that the board approve the Inventory Policy contingent on the Prosecutor's approval. Jane Wittke seconded the motion. The motion was approved by Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Steven R. Korte, (absent); and Kenneth Petren, aye.

Laura Boyd moved that the board approve the Job Classification Plan policy contingent on the Prosecutor's approval. Lisa Soper seconded the motion. The motion was approved by Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Steven R. Korte, (absent); and Kenneth Petren, aye.

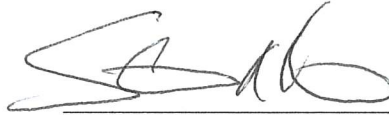
Kenneth Petren requested to add the box turtle as an option for the District mascot.

Adjournment: Laura Boyd moved that the board members adjourn the board meeting at 5:13 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