



ADVANCING SOIL AND WATER SUSTAINABILITY

Regular Board Meeting Minutes

March 17, 2026

Call the Meeting to Order

The Hamilton County Conservation District Board of Supervisors met on March 17, 2026, at the District Training Center at 2710 E. Kemper Road, Sharonville, OH 45241.

Kenneth Petren called the meeting to order and invited everyone to say the Pledge of Allegiance at 4:02 pm.

Kenneth Petren requested a roll call.

Chairperson	Kenneth Petren
Vice Chairperson	Jane Wittke
Treasurer	Laura Boyd
Secretary	Amanda Nurre
Program Chairperson	Lauren Wulker

The following individuals were in attendance

Sara Fehring, Executive Director; Nicole Gunderman, Agriculture Specialist; Marcelo (Chey) Alberto, Urban Conservationist; John Williams, NRCS Conservationist; and Alison Manning, Area IV ODA Program Specialist.

Agenda Changes /Approvals

Jane Wittke moved that the board approve the agenda. Laura Boyd seconded the motion. A roll call vote approved the motion: Kenneth Petren, yes; Jane Wittke, yes; Laura Boyd, yes; Amanda Nurre, yes; and Lauren Wulker, yes.

Audience to Visitors

Audience to Visitors

All Hamilton County Conservation District Board meetings are open to the public. It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors of the Hamilton County Conservation District that anyone wishing to speak during the open board meeting must sign up ten (10) minutes before the start of the meeting. The Board may limit visitor comments to two (2) minutes per speaker and/or ten (10) minutes per topic to ensure adequate time to conduct all business on the agenda.

Review & Approve Consent Agenda

Request for Leave

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

2026 Vacation, Sick, and Comp Time Report															
Name	Pay Periods 03, 04, 05					01/15/2026 to 02/25/26									
	Vacation Time					Sick Time					Comp Time				
	Begin	Earned	Used	Paid Out	End	Begin	Earned	Used	Paid Out	End	Begin	Earned	Used	Paid Out	End
Aaron Habig	447.96	18.60	21.75	0.00	444.81	758.88	13.80	0.00	0.00	772.68	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Chey Alberto	573.19	23.10	2.50	0.00	593.80	763.91	14.02	4.50	0.00	773.42	0.00	5.63	0.00	0.00	5.63
Christopher Hall	41.76	23.10	0.00	0.00	64.87	92.83	14.63	0.00	0.00	107.46	0.00	21.75	0.00	0.00	21.75
Gwen Roth	270.31	23.10	78.50	0.00	214.91	1113.53	14.36	0.00	0.00	1127.89	13.50	14.63	0.00	0.00	28.13
Haley Weisbrodt	32.75	9.30	8.00	0.00	34.06	183.75	13.96	1.00	0.00	196.70	0.00	4.13	0.00	0.00	4.13
James Gleason	338.08	13.80	0.00	0.00	351.88	117.98	13.80	21.00	0.00	110.78	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Keith Robinson	49.42	23.10	0.00	0.00	72.53	797.56	13.80	2.00	0.00	809.36	6.75	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.75
Melinda Hartley	102.02	9.30	12.00	0.00	99.33	11.67	14.00	8.00	0.00	17.67	0.00	5.25	0.00	0.00	5.25
Nicole Gunderman	111.40	18.60	0.00	0.00	130.00	104.30	14.89	1.50	0.00	117.69	3.75	28.50	0.00	0.00	32.25
Rachel Lwin						2.67	9.60	0.00	0.00	12.27					
Sara Fehring	407.80	18.60	3.00	0.00	423.40	410.54	14.23	13.00	0.00	411.78	0.00	11.25	0.00	0.00	11.25
Sarah Meadows	55.22	2.30	8.00	49.52	0.00	73.45	2.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Teresa Burnett	31.84	9.30	2.50	0.00	38.65	132.76	13.86	2.00	0.00	144.62	0.00	1.50	0.00	0.00	1.50

Review and approve the Consent Agenda, which includes the February 2026 Board Minutes and the Request for Leave Report. Jane Wittke moved that the board approve the Consent Agenda. Laura Boyd seconded the motion. A roll call vote approved the motion: Kenneth Petren, yes; Jane Wittke, yes; Laura Boyd, yes; Amanda Nurre, yes; and Lauren Wulker, yes.

Agency Reports

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Staff

John Williams gave the following report:

- No Report Given

Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA)

Alison Manning gave the following report:

- Applications for the SWCD Conservation Pilot Program are due by May 1, 2026.
- Producers who participated in the Statewide H2Ohio program have the chance to extend their Volunteer Nutrient Management Plan (VNMP) by one year. Enrollment ends on April 17, 2026.
- Cover Crop Training Days are scheduled for March 20, 2026, in Muskingum County and April 2, 2026, in Wilmington. Registration is free and available on the OFSWCD website.
- Election materials have been updated for the 2026 election season. Updated forms are available on the ODA website.
- A Board Works session took place on March 12, 2026, discussing District Relevancy. The recording of the session is available and has been distributed.
- Alison presented Jane Wittke and Sara Fehring with a certificate of recognition for their nominations as 2025 OASWCDE Board Member and Employee of the Year.

Activity Reports

Education

Nicole Gunerman gave the following report:

- Natalie Toms was offered the Agriculture and Marketing Assistant position and will start on May 11, 2026. She is a student at Xavier University studying environmental science. She loves soils and wants to work for NRCS.
- **Agriculture Education Programs:**
 - Nicole completed a library series of 8 programs at various branches across the county.
 - Nicole invited two state presenters from the Ohio Cattlemen's Association and a forage/grazing specialist from the ODA to the Hamilton County Farm Bureau Spring Fling. The focus was on Ohio Beef. More than 50 people attended.
 - Low-Impact Lawns: On March 19, 2026, Nicole will present a Low-Impact Lawns program for Kennedy Heights. The focus is on water quality and soil testing.
 - There is a Compost Tea Program scheduled for April 16, 2026, at HCCD Training Center. So far, there are 12 registrants.
 - Nicole is giving a presentation at an Equine Management Workshop on May 30, 2026, at Greenacres about Manure Management.
 - Nicole is currently planning several workshops: Pond Clinic (TBD), Beyond Basic Soil Testing (4/14), Farm Tours, and Field Day with regional SWCDs in September.
- **Agricultural Pollution Abatement Program (APAP):**
 - On February 24, 2026, a follow-up investigation was conducted at 10129 Mill Road. Nicole Gunderman, Aaron Habig, Alison Manning (ODA), and Hamilton County Public Health participated in the investigation. No progress on the cleanup had been made since the previous inspection. HCCD and Hamilton County Public Health both issued updated Notice of Deficiency (NOD) letters with a 30-day deadline for compliance.
 - Aaron Habig and Nicole Gunderman collected water samples on March 6, 2026, and documented the presence of ammonia.
 - The case will be transferred to ODA if compliance is not met by March 30, 2026.
 - The decision on the Motion to Suppress will be made on March 25, 2026.

- **H2Ohio:**
 - An extension for 2027 is available to currently enrolled producers. The program might open enrollment to new fields and/or new producers for 2027, but this has not been confirmed.
- **Communications:**
 - Ag Newsletter Issue #8 was sent out in March. The subscriber list now exceeds 500. If you'd like to be added, please give Nicoel your preferred email address.
- **Partnerships/Collaborations:**
 - Nicole is attending many Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) site visits with John Williams and Sarah Moore. She is connecting with lots of people during these visits.
 - The On-Farm Composting Partnership with Hamilton County ReSource will begin accepting interest forms, with reviews starting on April 10, 2026. A virtual info session was held on March 16, 2026, with 27 attendees present.
 - Nicole joined the Indian Hill Equestrian Club to connect with horse barns on the east side. She is already an active member of the Ohio Horseman's Council Hamilton County Chapter (west side).
 - Nicole was chosen as a Council Member for the Regional Food Policy Council.
 - Work continues with the City of Cincinnati Office of Environment & Sustainability, Ohio State University Extension, Central State Extension, and Ohio Farmer's Market Network on the Ag Production Collaborative.

Administration

Sara Fehring gave the following report:

- In November 2025, employees had the opportunity to complete a Leadership Evaluation. This evaluation was for the entire leadership team, including the Executive Director, Urban Conservationist, and Education and Outreach Program Manager. Seven employees completed the assessment. The leadership team then met to review the results. During the January staff meeting, they presented the evaluation outcomes and discussed the planned changes with staff.
- Sara is working on scheduling visits with Hamilton County Representatives and Senators in Columbus. Please let her know if you want to be involved in the planning process or attend the meetings in Columbus.

- As you may have seen in Gwen's email sent on March 11, 2026, Nutrien will be ending the Caring For Our Watersheds Program after the 2026 contest concludes. Contact Sara or Gwen if you want to discuss possible options or project ideas for the future.
- The 2026 Summer Supervisor School will take place from July 26 to 29, 2026, at the Cherry Valley Hotel in Newark, Ohio. An agenda has not been released yet; however, registration for last year opened in early April. Please check your schedules and notify Sara by April 3, 2026, if you're interested in attending. A final RSVP will be required in May when registration details are announced.
- Since Sarah Meadows' departure, Gwen and Sara have been overseeing Sarah's email, checking on programs, and helping other staff with some of her responsibilities. Rachel Lwin is now planning and leading public involvement programs. Chris Hall is managing the Regional Watershed Network and Regional Water Quality Collaborative meetings and submitting the Quality Assurance Project Plans and Study Plans for the three labs. Gwen and Sara are also collaborating on the Master Rain Garden Program.
- Lauren Wulker has agreed to help Sara and Gwen develop the Public Involvement Coordinator job description. They are currently arranging a meeting date to start discussions.
- Sara purchased and picked up the new vehicle, the 2026 Ford Explorer, last week.
- Sara will be out of the office from March 27 to April 9, 2026, with limited access to phone and email.

Board Reports

Urban Networking Committee

Laura Boyd gave the following report:

- The next meeting is scheduled for April 23, 2026.

Budget Committee

Laura Boyd gave the following report:

- A discussion was held regarding the budget timeline and expectations moving forward.
- The Budget Committee will meet on March 19, 2026, to review the Storm Water District Budgeting Workbook.

- Sara Fehring provided an overview of the Storm Water District Budget and the request from Todd Long.

Annual Meeting Committee

Lauren Wulker gave the following report:

- Sara Fehring and Lauren Wulker met on March 2, 2026, to discuss the 2026 Annual Meeting.
- Sara will gather ideas from staff and report back to the Annual Meeting Committee with suggestions.

Other Reports

No reports given.

Treasurer's Reports

Treasurer Reports

Laura Boyd reported on the Treasurer's Report as follows:

FEBRUARY 2026 TREASURER REPORTS	
Treasurer's Report	Cash Balance
PNC Checking Account	\$ 31,064.25
Money Market Account	\$ 10,260.54
Star Ohio Account	\$ 67,150.39
920017 Soil & Water	\$ 511,522.88
920027 Storm Water	\$ 69,784.32
920042 - Save Local Waters	\$ 85,416.04
920058 - Caring For Our Watersheds	\$ 22,711.41
922415 - Section 319 Grant	\$ (34,307.50)
922205 - Cooper Creek 2 Grant (Closed 2/27/26)	\$ -
922401 - Relocation Project (Closed 3/5/26)	\$ 208,717.00
As of 02/28/2026	

FINANCIAL OBLIGATION

Financial Obligation = Vacation/Sick/Comp	\$	96,068.51
---	----	-----------

Bills for Payments

Laura Boyd reported that the Bills for Payments are as follows:

FEBRUARY 2026 BILLS OF PAYMENTS		
Bills For Payments		
PNC Checking Account (2 Vouchers)	\$	26.58
Money Market Account (1 Vouchers)	\$	0.22
Star Ohio Account (0 Vouchers)	\$	-
920017 Soil & Water (13 Vouchers)	\$	28,253.29
920027 Storm Water (18 Vouchers)	\$	53,465.69
920042 - Save Local Waters (1 Vouchers)	\$	195.00
920058 - Caring For Our Watersheds (5 Vouchers)	\$	3,533.57
922415 - Section 319 Grant (1 Vouchers)	\$	11,093.75
922205 - Cooper Creek 2 Grant (Closed 2/27/26)	\$	-
922401 - Relocation Project (Closed 3/5/26)	\$	-

Amanda Nurre moved that the board approve the amended February 2026 Treasurer's Reports for the District's PNC, the District's STAR Ohio, the Special Accounts, and the February 2026 Bills for Payment as presented. Lauren Wulker seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Kenneth Petren, aye; Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Amanda Nurre, aye; and Lauren Wulker, aye.

1. 2025 Cash Basis
 - a. The Cash Basis has been submitted and is available in the March Board Meeting packet. Contact Sara Fehring or Melinda Hartley if you have any questions.

Old Business

1. Approve the updated Vehicle Use Policy

Laura Boyd moved that the board approve the updated Vehicle Use Policy. Amanda Nurre seconded the motion. A roll call vote approved the motion: Kenneth Petren, yes; Jane Wittke, abstained; Laura Boyd, yes; Amanda Nurre, yes; and Lauren Wulker, yes.

New Business

1. Approve Dr. Michael Miller as an Associate Board Member

Amanda Nurre moved that the board approve Dr. Michael Miller as an Associate Board Member. Jane Wittke seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Kenneth Petren, aye; Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Amanda Nurre, aye; and Lauren Wulker, aye.

2. Approve the MOU With The Ohio Department of Agriculture for the implementation of Ohio's Agriculture Pollution Abatement Program.

Jane Wittke moved that the board approve the MOU With The Ohio Department of Agriculture for the implementation of Ohio's Agriculture Pollution Abatement Program. Kenneth Petren seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Kenneth Petren, aye; Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Amanda Nurre, aye; and Lauren Wulker, aye.

3. Approve the Executive Director to authorize spending up to \$3,500 for travel and lodging expenses for Gleason, Habig, Alberto, and Weisbrodt to attend the Ohio Stormwater Conference in Sandusky, Ohio – OCA 920017/920027.

Laura Boyd moved that the board approve the Executive Director to authorize up to \$3,500 for the travel and lodging of Gleason, Habig, Alberto, and Weisbrodt to the Ohio Stormwater Conference in Sandusky, Ohio – OCA 920017/920027. Laruen Wulker seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Kenneth Petren, aye; Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Amanda Nurre, aye; and Lauren Wulker, aye.

4. Approve Stormwater Field Day fees: Regular \$50, Early Bird \$40, Student \$10 with a letter of support.

Lauren Wulker moved that the board approve Stormwater Field Day fees: Regular \$50, Early Bird \$40, Student \$10, with a letter of support. Kenneth Petren seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Kenneth Petren, aye; Jane Wittke, aye; Laura Boyd, aye; Amanda Nurre, aye; and Lauren Wulker, aye.

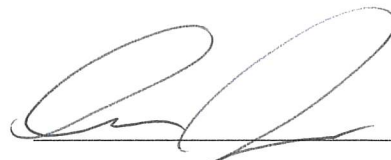
Adjournment

Adjournment: Jane Wittke moved that the board members adjourn the board meeting at 5:17 pm. Amanda Nurre seconded the motion. A roll call vote approved the motion: Kenneth Petren, yes; Jane Wittke, yes; Laura Boyd, yes; Amanda Nurre, yes; and Lauren Wulker, yes.

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth Petren, Chairperson



Amanda Nurre, Secretary



Sara Fehring, Executive Director