

Board Meeting Minutes

May 20, 2025

The Hamilton County Conservation District Board of Supervisors met on May 20, 2025, at the District Training Center at 2710 E. Kemper Road, Sharonville, OH 45241.

Laura Boyd called the meeting to order and invited everyone to say the Pledge of Allegiance at 4:00 pm.

Laura Boyd requested a roll call.

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

The following individuals were in attendance: Sara Fehring, Executive Director; Melinda Hartley, Business Service Officer; Chey Alberto, Urban Conservationist; Gwen Roth, Education & AmeriCorps Program Manager; Chris Hall, Streams Specialist; John Williams, NRCS Conservationist; Jordan McMahon, NRCS Natural Resource Specialist; and Alison Manning, Area IV ODA Program Specialist.

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

The board welcomed Todd Long, Chief Deputy Engineer with the Hamilton County Engineer’s Office.

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

2025 Vacation, Sick, and Comp Time Report															
Pay Periods 7, 8, 9											03/13/2025 to 04/23/2025				
Name	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	407.56	18.60	0.00	0.00	426.16	657.54	14.35	0.00	0.00	671.88	9.00	14.25	3.50	0.00	19.75
Chey Alberto	600.22	23.10	31.50	0.00	591.83	768.09	13.90	3.00	0.00	778.99	7.88	2.63	1.50	0.00	9.00
Christopher Hall	41.79	23.10	19.00	0.00	45.90	78.13	13.80	8.00	0.00	83.93	6.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.00
Gwen Roth	271.09	23.10	29.75	0.00	264.45	1019.24	13.89	0.00	0.00	1033.13	9.13	2.25	6.50	0.00	4.88
Haley Weisbrodt	41.22	9.30	7.00	0.00	43.53	165.64	13.92	21.25	0.00	158.30	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	3.00
James Gleason	331.38	13.80	18.75	0.00	326.43	141.15	13.80	16.50	0.00	138.45	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Keith Richardson	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Melinda Hartley	94.74	9.30	16.00	0.00	88.05	105.17	13.94	28.00	0.00	91.12	12.00	3.75	8.00	0.00	7.75
Nicole Gunderman	58.00	18.60	0.00	0.00	76.60	23.27	14.69	0.00	0.00	37.96	36.75	23.25	14.00	0.00	46.00
Sara Fehring	395.64	18.60	15.50	0.00	398.74	389.44	15.01	2.00	0.00	402.45	2.00	31.50	12.50	0.00	21.00
Sarah Meadows	73.19	9.30	25.50	0.00	57.00	119.35	14.00	6.50	0.00	126.86	0.00	5.25	0.00	0.00	5.25
Teresa Burnett	35.56	9.30	0.00	0.00	44.87	85.36	13.89	12.00	0.00	87.24	3.00	2.25	3.50	0.00	1.75

Review and approve the Consent Agenda, which includes the April 2025 Board Minutes and the Request for Leave Report. Lisa Soper moved that the board approve the Consent Agenda. Jane Wittke seconded the motion. A roll call vote approved the motion: Laura Boyd, yes; Steven R. Korte, (absent); Lisa Soper, yes; Kenneth Petren, (absent); and Jane Wittke, yes.

Kenneth Petren arrived at 4:04 pm.

Storm Water District Presentation and Discussion

Todd Long gave a brief history of the Storm Water District, a budget summary, and funding sources.

Report from the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA)

Alison Manning reported the following:

- The formatting of the ODA monthly update has been changed. Alison requested feedback on the new format.
- The Hamilton County Conservation District Form 11 has been completed. Signatures from the board treasurer and the executive director are requested today, so the document can be formally submitted.
- A meeting has been scheduled on June 16, 2025, to finalize the Internal Program Review.
- Salary data will be pulled from Beehive in June for the 2025 ODA Salary Summary.
- Board Works development opportunities have been successful so far and will continue over the year. Let Alison Manning know if you have any questions regarding these opportunities.
- The H2Ohio Maumee and the Statewide Project Areas wrapped up VNMP (Voluntary Nutrient Management Plan) development and contracting on April 18, 2025.
- The state budget is now under review by the Ohio Senate. OFSWCD is requesting that districts contact their local Senators and Representatives for support and funding
- The state budget is expected to remain unchanged; it is assumed that the state match will decrease slightly.
- Summer Supervisor School registration is now open, and the tours are expected to fill up quickly. Notify Melinda Hartley by June 13, 2025, if you plan to attend. Ensure that you include the tours you wish to join in your notification.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Staff

John Williams gave the following report:

- John Williams has returned from his four-month work assignment in East Lansing, Michigan.
 - John assisted the Michigan NRCS as the acting Assistant State Conservationist for Programs.
 - John mentioned that he had a great experience while serving in that role, but he's happy to be back in Ohio.
- Hamilton County EQUIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) for Fiscal Year 2025
 - Hamilton County has a total of 16 EQUIP applications.

- Seven applications have been pre-approved for funding.
- The seven applications include conservation practices such as seasonal high tunnels, brush management (honeysuckle removal), raised beds for vegetables, wildlife plantings, and cover crops under high tunnels.

Activity Reports

Earthwork:

Chey Alberto reported the following:

- Earthwork Fees
 - As of April 30, 2025, \$82,342.56 has been collected in Earthwork fees.
- Ohio Stormwater Conference
 - Chey Alberto, Aaron Habig, and Haley Weisbrodt participated in the 2025 Stormwater Conference in early May.
 - Aaron Habig and Haley Weisbrodt completed the CESSWI review and have taken the certification exam. Results are expected to be available in the coming weeks.
- Earthwork Appeals Board
 - The Earthwork Appeals Board convened on April 14, 2025.
 - Chris Habel's commission expires in June 2025. Chey will contact BOCC (Board of County Commissioners) staff and start the reappointment process.
- Forestview Gardens Lots 5 and 6
 - The Forestview Gardens Lots 5 and 6 fill issue has been resolved.
 - The District has received a Notice of Bankruptcy for Richard Phillips (former owner of Lot 5).
 - The attorney representing the current owners of Lot 5 had questions and requested a possible District affidavit. The prosecutor indicated she would assist the District but has since left the prosecutor's office.
- Vista View
 - The Hamilton County Assistant Prosecutor, Jonathan Daughtery, is reviewing the Vista View Landslide repair.
 - Jim Sayre left the Hamilton County prosecutor's office in December, but the District received an email notice in April.

- 4455 Mt Carmel Road
 - Evans Landscaping entered into a consent decree with the OEPA (Ohio Environmental Protection Agency) and Hamilton County Public Health to cap the landfill.
 - Per the judge's order in November 2024, the cap will need additional work.
 - Work was completed without Earthwork Approval and permits. (The permit application was submitted, but the Geotechnical documents were not returned.) Additionally, unpermitted retaining walls were built.
 - OEPA and Hamilton County Public Health are appealing the judge's order. Evans has submitted two summary letters concerning the unpermitted retaining walls. The letters are currently under review by Joe Burkhardt.
- Overland Flooding Study
 - The Overland Flooding Study by Raftelis (commissioned by BOCC) will host its first work sessions in the District Training Center on Thursday, May 22, 2025, and June 3, 2025.
 - The Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD), Hamilton County Engineer (HCE), City of Cincinnati Stormwater Management Utility (SMU), Hamilton County Planning and Development (P&D), Hamilton County Public Health, and Hamilton County Conservation District (HCCD) will attend.
- MS4(Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems) Permit
 - The MS4 Permit will expire soon.
 - The OEPA (Ohio Environmental Protection Agency) will announce when the comment period begins.
- Water Quality Workshop
 - The Post Construction Water Quality Workshop will be held on Wednesday, May 21, 2025, at the Butler Soil & Water Conservation District.
 - More than 50 registered individuals are planning to attend this event.

Administration:

Sara Fehring reported the following:

- Marketing and Outreach Coordinator
 - Keith Robinson has accepted the role of Marketing and Outreach Coordinator.
 - Keith's first day will be Tuesday, May 27, 2025.

- Rain Barrel Art Project
 - The 2025 Rain Barrel Art Project has concluded.
 - The auction generated more than \$10,702.00, while the raffle raised \$930.00.
- Job Hazard Analysis
 - The Earthwork Department, Sarah Meadows, and Chris Hall met with Lance Clayton to perform a job hazard analysis.
 - Lance Clayton with Hamilton County Risk Management will shadow staff in the field to continue the analysis.
- Administrative Guide Updates
 - Melinda Hartley has finalized the first draft of the updated administrative guide.
 - Sara Fehring and Gwen Roth are currently reviewing the administrative guide for edits.
 - The second draft of the administrative guide will be sent to the board for review and approval at the June 2025 meeting.

Lisa Soper expressed her desire for updates on the DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) Policy.

Board Reports

Urban Networking Committee:

Laura Boyd reported the following:

- The next Urban Network meeting is scheduled for May 28, 2025, at 9:00 am.

Budget Committee:

Lisa Soper reported the following:

- Lisa Soper and Sara Fehring met to discuss the 2026 Storm Water Budget.
- A follow-up meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 29, 2025.

Annual Meeting Committee

Jane Wittke reported the following:

- There is an opportunity to hold the Annual Meeting at Mad Tree Parks & Rec.
 - Nicole Gunderman successfully negotiated to have Mad Tree waive the rental fee and minimums.
 - The only requirement is that the food needs to be purchased from Mad Tree.

- o Nicole Gunderman has confirmed Thane Maynard as the guest speaker.

Long-Range Plan Committee

Sara Fehring reported the following:

- o Surveys will be sent to the board in early June for review.

Nominating Committee

Kenneth Petren reported the following:

- o No updates available.

Other Reports

- o No reports have been provided.

Treasurer's Reports

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

APRIL 2025 TREASURER'S REPORTS	
Treasurer's Report	Cash Balance
PNC Checking Account	\$ 52,629.91
Money Market Account	\$ 20,496.02
Star Ohio Account	\$ -
920017 Soil & Water	\$ 533,185.77
920027 Storm Water	\$ 102,518.64
920042 - Save Local Waters	\$ 82,345.79
920058 - Caring For Our Watersheds	\$ 13,378.77
9222413 - AmeriCorps Grant	\$ 29,600.23
922415 - Section 319 Grant	\$ -
922417 - OWDA Grant	\$ -
922205 - Cooper Creek 2 Grant	\$ -
922401 - Relocation Project	\$ 152,072.00
As of 3/31/2025	

APRIL 2025 Financial Obligation

Financial Obligation = Vacation/Sick/Comp	\$ 88,385.30
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Bills for Payment

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

APRIL 2025 Bills for Payments	
Bills For Payments	
PNC Checking Account (5 Vouchers)	\$ 13,823.95
Money Market Account (0 Vouchers)	\$ -
Star Ohio Account (0 Vouchers)	\$ -
920017 Soil & Water (18 Vouchers)	\$ 33,040.47
920027 Storm Water (16 Vouchers)	\$ 20,007.20
920042 - Save Local Waters (3 Vouchers)	\$ 7,306.70
920058 - Caring For Our Watersheds (4 Vouchers)	\$ 2,399.40
9222413 - AmeriCorps Grant (14 Vouchers)	\$ 7,104.16
922415 - Section 319 Grant (0 Vouchers)	\$ -
922417 - OWDA Grant (0 Vouchers)	\$ -
922205 - Cooper Creek 2 Grant (0 Vouchers)	\$ -
922401 - Relocation Project (0 Vouchers)	\$ -

Laura Boyd moved that the board approve the April 2025 Treasurer's Reports for the District's PNC, the Special Accounts, and the April 2025 Bills for Payment. Jane Wittke seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, (absent); Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

New Business

1. *AmeriCorps ORBCorps Grant termination and job description update for Gwen*

Kenneth Petren asked if things were more efficient after the elimination, to which Gwen Roth replied, "No, things are not more efficient."

- 2. Approve the Executive Director to spend up to \$7,500 on the Long-Range Plan – PNC/920017*

Kenneth Petren moved that the board approve the Executive Director to spend up to \$7,500 on the Long-Range Plan—PNC/920017. Lisa Soper seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, (absent); Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

- 3. Approve the Executive Director to spend up to \$7,500 on the 2025 Annual Meeting – PNC/920017*

Laura Boyd moved that the board approve the Executive Director to spend up to \$7,500 on the 2025 Annual Meeting—PNC/920017. Kenneth Petren seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, (absent); Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

- 4. Approve and enter into a contract with Nutrien for the 2025 – 2026 Caring For Our Watersheds Program*

Jane Wittke moved that the board approve and enter into a contract with Nutrien for the 2025 – 2026 Caring For Our Watersheds Program. Lisa Soper seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, (absent); Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

- 5. Approve the hiring of Keith Robinson as the full-time Marketing and Outreach Coordinator 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 05/27/2025 with a work schedule of Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm*

Kenneth Petren moved that the board approve hiring Keith Robinson as the full-time Marketing and Outreach Coordinator 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 05/27/2025 with a work schedule of Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm. Laura Boyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, (absent); Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

6. *Approve Melinda Hartley and Keith Robinson as the Election Designees for the 2025 Board of Supervisor's Election*

Lisa Soper moved that the board approve Melinda Hartley and Keith Robinson as the Election Designees for the 2025 Board of Supervisor's Election. Jane Wittke seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, aye; Steven R. Korte, (absent); Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

Adjournment: Lisa Soper moved that the board members adjourn the board meeting at 5:36 pm. Jane Wittke seconded the motion. A roll call vote approved the motion: Laura Boyd, yes; Steven R. Korte, (absent); Lisa Soper, yes; Kenneth Petren, yes; and Jane Wittke, yes.

Respectfully submitted,


Laura Boyd, Chairperson


Kenneth Petren, Secretary


Melinda Hartley, Business Service Officer