



Board Meeting Minutes November 19, 2024

The Hamilton County Conservation District Board of Supervisors met on November 19, 2024, at the District office located at 2701 E Kemper Road, Sharonville, OH 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: Gwen Roth, Education & AmeriCorps Program Manager; Melinda Hartley, Business Service Officer; Nicole Gunderman, Agriculture Specialist; Rachel Cranmer, Marketing & Outreach Coordinator; John Williams, NRCS Conservationist; Kara Schirmer, Associate Board Member; and Allison Manning, Area IV ODA Program Specialist.

The agenda has been amended to include the following items:

- o Approve the Inter-Fund Transfer (IT) of \$30,965.00 from OCA920027 to OCA920017 to reallocate payroll expenses for the remainder of the year
- o Remove the Earthwork Activity Report from the agenda

Agenda Changes/Approval: Lisa Soper moved that the board approve the amended agenda. Kenneth Petren 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.

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 20,21,22 | | | | | | 9/12/2024 - 10/24/2024 | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|-------|----------|--------|------------------------|--------|--------|-------|----------|--------|
| Name | Begin | Earned | Used | Paid Out | End | Name | Begin | Earned | Used | Paid Out | End |
| Aaron Habig | | | | | | Jim Gleason | | | | | |
| Vacation | 366.96 | 18.60 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 385.56 | Vacation | 331.58 | 13.80 | 1.50 | 0.00 | 343.88 |
| Sick Time | 646.13 | 14.56 | 9.50 | 0.00 | 651.19 | Sick Time | 161.35 | 13.80 | 19.00 | 0.00 | 156.15 |
| Comp Time | 47.63 | 19.88 | 40.00 | 0.00 | 27.50 | Comp Time | 19.25 | 0.00 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 17.25 |
| Chey Alberto | | | | | | Melinda Hartley | | | | | |
| Vacation | 597.83 | 23.10 | 27.75 | 0.00 | 593.19 | Vacation | 88.89 | 9.30 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 98.21 |
| Sick Time | 729.90 | 13.89 | 5.00 | 0.00 | 738.79 | Sick Time | 147.57 | 14.15 | 16.00 | 0.00 | 145.71 |
| Comp Time | 18.50 | 2.25 | 3.50 | 0.00 | 17.25 | Comp Time | 64.63 | 9.00 | 42.00 | 0.00 | 31.63 |
| Christopher Hall | | | | | | Rachel Cranmer | | | | | |
| Vacation | 48.50 | 23.10 | 16.00 | 0.00 | 55.61 | Vacation | 15.94 | 9.30 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 25.26 |
| Sick Time | 64.08 | 14.12 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 78.20 | Sick Time | 11.01 | 13.94 | 10.25 | 0.00 | 14.71 |
| Comp Time | 10.75 | 8.25 | 15.25 | 0.00 | 3.75 | Comp Time | 6.50 | 3.75 | 5.00 | 0.00 | 5.25 |
| Nicole Gunderman | | | | | | Sara Fehring | | | | | |
| Vacation | 9.20 | 13.80 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 23.00 | Vacation | 377.54 | 18.60 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 396.14 |
| Sick Time | 6.84 | 14.43 | 11.00 | 0.00 | 10.28 | Sick Time | 357.79 | 14.23 | 9.50 | 0.00 | 362.52 |
| Comp Time | 3.75 | 16.50 | 5.50 | 0.00 | 14.75 | Comp Time | 14.38 | 11.25 | 18.00 | 0.00 | 7.63 |
| Gwen Roth | | | | | | Sarah Meadows | | | | | |
| Vacation | 389.46 | 23.10 | 32.00 | 0.00 | 380.57 | Vacation | 104.84 | 9.30 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 114.16 |
| Sick Time | 958.20 | 14.19 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 972.39 | Sick Time | 86.06 | 14.29 | 7.50 | 0.00 | 92.85 |
| Comp Time | 80.13 | 10.13 | 82.25 | 0.00 | 8.00 | Comp Time | 48.25 | 12.75 | 4.50 | 0.00 | 56.50 |
| Haley Golsch | | | | | | Teresa Slonaker | | | | | |
| Vacation | 38.87 | 9.30 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 48.18 | Vacation | 34.40 | 9.09 | 20.00 | 0.00 | 23.52 |
| Sick Time | 167.84 | 13.80 | 17.00 | 0.00 | 164.64 | Sick Time | 44.98 | 13.51 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 57.49 |
| Comp Time | 2.87 | 0.00 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 0.87 | Comp Time | 14.88 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 0.00 | 4.88 |

Review and approve the Consent Agenda, including the October Board Minutes, October Annual Meeting Minutes, and Request for Leave Report. Steven R. Korte moved that the board approve the Consent Agenda. 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.

Report from the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA)

Allison Manning reported the following:

- Monthly ODA updates, reports, and correspondence will start coming from Allison.
- Area IV Winter Meeting is being held on December 2, 2024.

Report from the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS)

John Williams reported the following:

- NRCS is beginning the fiscal year 2025.
- NRCS is gearing up for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQUIP). The sign-up deadline is January 31, 2025.

Activity Reports

Agriculture

Nicole Gunderman reported the following:

- Agriculture Specialist Scope of Work
 - Draft documents capture this work in progress.
 - Identifying Mission, Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, Partnership Opportunities, Evaluation Criteria, and Activities within the Scope of Work to inform the 2025 Annual Plan of Work.
 - Leveraging existing relationships and building new ones with key stakeholders to identify agricultural needs/opportunities in Hamilton County.
 - Applied to join the City of Cincinnati Environmental Advisory Board (EAB). Nicole Gunderman attended the October meeting at the invitation of the vice chair.

- Professional Development
 - Field Days, Farm Science Review, Area IV Technician's Tour.
 - Online Technical Training: Agricultural Pollution Abatement Program (APAP), MyFarms H2Ohio, National Center for Agricultural Literacy (NCAL) Agricultural Literacy Pilot Program in collaboration with Ohio Farm Bureau.
- Technical Support
 - Completing H2Ohio reporting for two enrolled farmers.
 - Responding to phone, email, and site visit requests on agriculture-related topics.
- Education Programs
 - The Healthy Soil Festival was held on November 16, 2024, and welcomed over 30 people, including 18 at the Soil Test Workshop. Positive feedback during and post-event from participants and four partner exhibitors.
 - January & November 2025 – Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) Certification training for small producers with Extension Offices.
 - January and February 2025: Urban Agriculture programs at Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library on Backyard Chickens and Sprouts/Microgreens.
 - February 2025 - Agricultural Literacy Program at Hamilton County Farm Bureau (HCFB) Legislators' Luncheon at Montgomery Inn Boathouse.
 - March 2025 - Manure Management Program with Hamilton County Farm Bureau (HCFB) and Hamilton County Ohio Horseman's Council.
- Grants
 - Nicole Gunderman collaborated on submitting a \$250,000 Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) grant pre-proposal: "Growing Greater Cincinnati's Urban Farmers: Food Systems Leaders Ready for the Future." If awarded, Hamilton County Conservation District (HCCD) would receive a percentage of funding to partner in the development and facilitation of this program.
 - Research Grant Opportunities for 2025:
 - National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Outreach & Technical Assistance
 - USDA Urban Agriculture Innovation Grant
 - Appalachian Regional Food Business Center Business Builder Grant

Marketing & Outreach

Rachel Cranmer reported the following:

- Marketing Updates
 - Social Media
 - October was a big month for social media events.
 - Facebook and District website visits have increased by over 100% since 2023.
 - Soil Your Undies
 - The Soil Your Undies Campaign is complete for the year.
 - 110 undies were given away throughout the campaign.
 - Only 6-8 people planted and dug up the undies.
 - Mascot & Educational Materials
 - MERF the turtle attended the Annual Meeting.
 - Teresa Slonaker and Rachel Cranmer are working on a coloring book with MERF as the main character.

AmeriCorps Member Meggie Suffoletta has been making flyers and is a great addition.

- Regional Storm Water Collaborative
 - Rain Barrel Art Project
 - The collaborative is currently accepting submissions, with 26 submitted so far.
 - Submissions will be accepted until December 13, 2024.
 - Rachel Cranmer has contacted local schools to let them know about the project.
 - The Summer Musik We Are One Water Festival, and The Regional Storm Water Collaborative are working together and will involve painting a barrel.
 - Buffer the Banks video series will be released in December.

Administrative Report

Gwen Roth reported the following:

- H2Ohio
 - The District should receive the first H2Ohio technical assistance payment from the Ohio Department of Agriculture in November.
 - The \$7,500 check will be deposited in the PNC Account.

- Open House Updates
 - The Conservation Celebration and Open House went well with over 85 attendees.
 - Lots of positive remarks were received about the new facility.
- Annual Plan of Work (APW)
 - All staff are working on updating their job descriptions and developing the 2025 Annual Plan of Work (APW) Goals.

Board Reports

Urban Networking Committee

Laura Boyd reported the following:

- Urban Network Survey
 - Molly Conley (Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District) sent out a survey with the help of Jennifer Fish (Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District) and Laura Boyd (Hamilton County Conservation District).
 - Molly has received about 50-60% completion of the survey.
 - The results of the survey will be revealed at the Annual QFSWCD Partnership Meeting in January 2025.
- OHIO EPA
 - Valerie Sasak (Erie Soil and Water Conservation District) is taking charge of the regional meetings with Ohio EPA.
 - The goal is to meet with Ohio EPA and talk about the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4).

Legislative Committee

Laura Boyd reported the following:

- No Updates

Other Reports

- Jane Wittke reminded everyone that the Supervisor Survey from the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) concerns the training and onboarding you receive as a new board member. The survey is due November 22, 2024.

Treasurer's Reports and Bills for Payment:

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

| Treasurer's Report | Cash Balance |
|---|---------------|
| HCCD PNC Checking Account | \$ 108,707.10 |
| HCCD PNC Money Market | \$ 20,201.85 |
| Soil and Water 920017 | \$ 442,259.32 |
| Storm Water 920027 | \$ 128,922.12 |
| Save Local Waters 920042 | \$ 78,267.07 |
| Caring For Our Watersheds 920058 | \$ 26,368.40 |
| OEEF Electrolinefisher 922203 | \$ 4.58 |
| ORBCorps - AmeriCorps 922413 | \$ 48,100.13 |
| CWA Section 319 Grant 922415 | \$ - |
| OWDA-USI 10506 922417 | \$ - |
| Cooper Creek Detention Basin Retrofit (2) 922205 | \$ (2,805.00) |
| Office Improvement Project (Relocation 2024) 922401 | \$ 46,365.68 |
| Financial Obligation = Vacation/Sick/Comp | \$ 133,251.67 |
| Balanced as of 10/31/2024 | |

Bills for Payment:

Lisa Soper reported on the Bills for Payments as follows:

| Bills for Payment | |
|---|---------------|
| HCCD PNC Checking Account | |
| Total of 12 vouchers processed | \$ 60,897.58 |
| HCCD PNC Money Market Account | |
| Total of 1 vouchers processed | \$ 12.00 |
| Soil and Water 920017 | |
| Total of 29 vouchers processed | \$ 28,459.22 |
| Storm Water 920027 | |
| Total of 21 vouchers processed | \$ 24,378.82 |
| Save Local Waters 920042 | |
| Total of 2 vouchers processed | \$ 541.80 |
| Caring For Our Watersheds 920058 | |
| Total of 4 vouchers processed | \$ 432.00 |
| OEEF Electrolinefisher 922203 | |
| Total of 0 vouchers processed | \$ - |
| ORBCorps - AmeriCorps 922413 | |
| Total of 6 vouchers processed | \$ 1,566.10 |
| 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 0 vouchers processed | \$ - |
| Office Improvement Project (Relocation 2024) 922401 | |
| Total of 2 vouchers processed | \$ 161,434.00 |

Steven R. Korte moved that the board approve the October 2024 Treasurer's Reports for the District's PNC, the Special Accounts, and the October 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, aye; and Kenneth Petren, aye.

New Business

- 1. Approve Kymisha Montgomery as an associate board member.*

Laura Boyd moved that the board approve Kymisha Montgomery as an associate board member. 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. Approve the 2025 Budget and Appropriations.*

Steven R. Korte moved that the board approve the 2025 Budget and Appropriations. 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.

- 3. Approve the transfer of \$3,537.20 in Stormwater Float revenue from the PNC bank account to OCA 920042.*

Lisa Soper moved that the board approve the transfer of \$3,537.20 in Stormwater Float revenue from the PNC bank account to OCA 920042. Laura Boyd 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 the transfer of \$10,825.59 in Doug McKenzie-Mohr Workshop Sponsorships from OCA 920042 to Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District.*

Kenneth Petren moved that the board approve the transfer of \$10,825.59 in Doug McKenzie-Mohr Workshop Sponsorships from OCA 920042 to Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District. Laura Boyd 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. Approval to open STAR Ohio (State Treasury Asset Reserve of Ohio) account.

Steven R. Korte moved that the board approve the opening of the STAR Ohio (State Treasury Asset Reserve of Ohio) account. Kenneth Petren seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a roll call vote: Jane Wittke, yes; Laura Boyd, no; Lisa Soper, yes; Steven R. Korte, yes; and Kenneth Petren, yes.

6. Authorize the Executive Director to transfer funds between the District PNC Checking Account and STAR Ohio Account to maintain a balance between \$4,500 and \$5,000 in the District PNC Checking Account.

Lisa Soper moved that the board authorize the Executive Director to transfer funds between the District PNC Checking Account and STAR Ohio Account to maintain a balance between \$4,500 and \$5,000 in the District PNC Checking Account. Jane Wittke seconded the motion. The motion was not approved by a roll call vote: Jane Wittke, no; Laura Boyd, no; Lisa Soper, no; Steven R. Korte, no; and Kenneth Petren, no.

Steven R. Korte moved to amend the motion to authorize the Executive Director to transfer funds between the District PNC Checking Account and STAR Ohio Account to maintain a minimum balance of \$5,000 in the District PNC Checking Account. Jane Wittke seconded the motion. The motion was not approved by a roll call vote: Jane Wittke, no; Laura Boyd, no; Lisa Soper, no; Steven R. Korte, no; and Kenneth Petren, no.

Jane Wittke moved to amend the motion to authorize the Executive Director to transfer funds between the District PNC Checking Account and STAR Ohio Account to maintain a minimum balance of \$10,000 in the District PNC Checking Account. Steven R. Korte seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a roll call vote: Jane Wittke, yes; Laura Boyd, no; Lisa Soper, yes; Steven R. Korte, yes; and Kenneth Petren, yes.

7. *Approve the 2025 SaveLocalWaters Rain Barrel Workshop fee – \$55 per attendee.*

Kenneth Petren moved that the board approve the 2025 Save Local Waters Rain Barrel Workshop fee—\$55 per attendee. 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.

8. *Approve the PO and Payment of up to \$7,000 for flight and hotel reservations for the 2025 NACD Annual Meeting.*

During the discussion an additional board member expressed an interest in attending the conference. The overall amount was increased to cover the cost for a fifth attendee.

Steven R. Korte moved that the board approve the PO and Payment of up to \$9,000 for flight and hotel reservations for the 2025 NACD Annual Meeting. Laura Boyd 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.

9. *Approve the PO and Payment of \$7,156 for 2025 Ohio Plan Premium Renewal – OCA 920017.*

Laura Boyd moved that the board approve the PO and Payment of \$7,156 for 2025 Ohio Plan Premium Renewal – OCA 920017. 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.

10. *Approve the Inter-Fund Transfer (IT) of \$30,965.00 from OCA920027 to OCA920017 to reallocate payroll expenses for the remainder of the year.*

Lisa Soper moved that the board approve the Inter-Fund Transfer (IT) of \$30,965.00 from OCA920027 to OCA920017 to reallocate payroll expenses for the remainder of the year. 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.

Executive Session – Personnel - Staffing

Jane Wittke moved that the board members enter Executive Session to discuss Personnel—Staffing. 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.

Gwen Roth was invited to attend.

The executive session started at 5:55 pm.

Steven R. Korte left the meeting at 6:37 pm.

The board members returned to the regular session at 6:57 pm.

Adjournment: Kenneth Petren moved that the board members adjourn the board meeting at 6:58 pm. Lisa Soper seconded the motion. A roll call vote approved the motion: Jane Wittke, yes; Laura Boyd, yes; Lisa Soper, yes; Steven R. Korte, absent; and Kenneth Petren, yes.

Respectfully submitted,



Jane Wittke, Chairperson



Steven R. Korte, Secretary



Melinda Hartley, Business Service Officer