

**Board Meeting Minutes
October 21, 2025**

The Hamilton County Conservation District Board of Supervisors met on October 21, 2025, at the District Training Center at 2710 E. Kemper Road, Sharonville, OH 45241.

Steven R. Korte called the meeting to order and invited everyone to say the Pledge of Allegiance at 4:00 pm.

Steven R. Korte requested a roll call.

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

The following individuals were in attendance: Sara Fehring, Executive Director; Melinda Hartley, Business Service Officer; Gwen Roth, Education and Outreach Manager; Chris Hall, Streams Specialist; Nicole Gunderman, Agriculture Specialist; and Aaron Habig, Urban Technician.

Sara Fehring reported the following changes to the agenda:

- **Removed the approval for the \$10,000 IT transfer from 920017 to 922401 for relocation.**

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

Mr. Clarence Clemons gave an update to the board concerning the Agricultural Pollution Abatement issue involving Muddy Water Equestrian, located at 10129 W Mill Road, Cincinnati, OH 45231.

The Board welcomed Mr. Dmitriy Bikmayer from the Hamilton County Prosecutors' 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 18, 19						8/14/2025 to 9/10/2025									
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	467.76	12.40	0.00	0.00	480.16	709.65	9.83	0.00	0.00	719.48	12.88	16.50	0.00	0.00	29.38
Chey Alberto	593.46	15.40	20.00	0.00	588.86	799.58	9.20	62.00	0.00	746.78	9.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.50
Christopher Hall	55.53	15.40	16.50	0.00	54.43	100.73	9.20	4.00	0.00	105.93	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Gwen Roth	326.08	15.40	40.50	0.00	300.98	1065.88	9.47	0.00	0.00	1075.35	12.25	7.13	10.00	0.00	9.38
Haley Weisbrodt	57.36	6.20	35.25	0.00	28.31	166.37	9.20	1.00	0.00	174.57	0.63	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.63
James Gleason	300.98	9.20	1.50	0.00	308.68	137.75	9.50	0.50	0.00	146.76	0.00	8.25	0.00	0.00	8.25
Keith Robinson	25.68	15.40	3.00	0.00	38.09	769.48	9.55	2.00	0.00	777.02	0.75	9.00	0.00	0.00	9.75
Melinda Hartley	102.38	6.20	6.00	0.00	102.59	106.27	10.01	6.00	0.00	110.27	43.00	21.00	37.00	0.00	27.00
Nicole Gunderman	126.20	12.40	0.00	0.00	138.60	63.11	9.78	0.00	0.00	72.89	12.13	15.00	9.00	0.00	18.13
Sara Fehring	448.34	12.40	8.00	0.00	452.74	406.07	9.63	9.50	0.00	406.20	6.00	11.25	2.00	0.00	15.25
Sarah Meadows	80.59	6.20	24.50	0.00	62.30	87.51	9.20	8.50	0.00	88.21	2.75	0.00	1.50	0.00	1.25
Teresa Burnett	32.70	6.20	35.00	0.00	3.90	110.44	9.24	0.00	0.00	119.69	12.25	1.13	4.50	0.00	8.88

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

Agency Reports

Report from the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA)

No report given.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Staff

John Williams is furloughed due to the lapse in federal government funding which started on October 1, 2025.

Activity Reports

Education

Gwen Roth reported the following:

- Caring For Our Watersheds
 - Gwen Roth has delivered several school programs in the past two (2) months.
 - Currently on track to have four (4) new schools participate this year.
 - The Final event is planned for April 25, 2026. It will be held in the Elephant Trek meeting space at the Cincinnati Zoo.
- 2026 Intern Positions
 - All staff have reviewed the three (3) Board-approved intern position descriptions, and they are posted on the District website.
 - The Education/Public Involvement internship position has received seventeen (17) applications so far, and interviews are scheduled for the week of October 27, 2025.

- Recognition
 - Teresa Burnett has achieved certification as a Project WET facilitator.
 - Teresa Burnett has received many kudos from Envirothon teachers who are taking advantage of the District's resources in preparation for the competition. Several teachers have scheduled stream field trips and have started borrowing loaner trunks.
 - Sarah Meadows, Teresa Burnett, and Keith Robinson are all certified in CPR and First Aid.

Streams

Chris Hall reported the following:

- Grant Schedule and Budget
 - 319 DB Retrofits \$211,750 - \$6,987.50 = \$204,762.50
 - Deer Park High School has two athletic field retrofits.
 - ◆ Covenant, Survey, Final Design: \$1,087.50
 - ◆ Construction quote pending
 - Allegion Steelcraft Retrofit. A reimbursement of \$5,900 has been processed.
 - ◆ Covenant, Survey, and Design RFQ
 - ◆ Construction
 - Designer pending board approval
 - ORBFHP DB Retrofit \$ \$82,422.00 - \$82,375.30 = \$46.70
 - Ohio Wood Connection retrofit construction is now complete.
 - The Watershed Award Winner will be honored at the District's Annual Meeting.
 - ◆ Remaining grant funds: \$46.70
 - ◆ The final report deadline is January 2026.
 - OWDA USI \$42,854 Awarded
 - No funds have been spent or revenue distributed for this grant.
- Five-Year Plan
 - Chris Hall's five-year plan is currently one and a half years underway.

Administration

Sara Fehring reported the following:

- Policy and Procedures Manual

- As a reminder, please submit your comments and edits for the Policy and Procedure Manual by November 21, 2025.
- Melinda Hartley's Medical Leave
 - Melinda Hartley will be out of the office from October 27 to November 17, 2025.
 - There will not be any financials in the November Board Meeting Packet. October and November financials will be approved at the December Board Meeting.
- Area IV Winter Meeting
 - The Area IV Winter Meeting will be held on December 8, 2025, at the Der Dutchman. Please RSVP to Melinda Hartley by November 17, 2025.
- Employee Reviews
 - Employee performance reviews are underway and should be finished by the end of October.

Board Reports

Urban Networking Committee

No report given.

Budget Committee

Lisa Soper reported the following:

- Lisa Soper, Sara Fehring, and Melinda Hartley met on Friday and discussed scenarios after being informed the budget would be a flat \$320,000.
- ODA recommends that we allocate 20%, along with the included special funds, District funds, Star Ohio account, and Money Market.
- The remaining \$10,000 for the relocation will be paid back in 2026.

Annual Meeting Committee

Sara Fehring reported the following:

- Sara Fehring presented the draft agenda to the board.
- There are currently 150 registered.

Long-Range Plan Committee

Sara Fehring reported the following:

- The staff deadline to review the Long Range Plan document is October 31, 2025.
- Sara Fehring will send the document for the board to review on November 7, 2025.
- The final approval will take place at the December board meeting.

Nominating Committee

Kenneth Petren reported the following:

- Currently, 194 walk-in votes and absentee ballots have been mailed out.

Other Reports

No reports given.

Treasurer's Reports

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

SEPTEMBER 2025 TREASURER'S REPORTS

Treasurer's Report	Cash Balance
PNC Checking Account	\$ 22,389.98
Money Market Account	\$ 10,666.18
Star Ohio Account	\$ 65,554.57
920017 Soil & Water	\$ 360,063.19
920027 Storm Water	\$ 117,262.59
920042 - Save Local Waters	\$ 63,608.66
920058 - Caring For Our Watersheds	\$ 46,996.98
922413 - AmeriCorps Grant	\$ -
922415 - Section 319 Grant	\$ -
922417 - OWDA Grant	\$ -
922205 - Cooper Creek 2 Grant	\$ -
922401 - Relocation Project	\$ 186,717.00

As of 9/30/2025

SEPTEMBER 2025 FINANCIAL OBLIGATION

Financial Obligation = Vacation/Sick/Comp	\$ 138,077.37
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Bills for Payment

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

SEPTEMBER 2025 BILLS OF PAYEMENTS	
Bills For Payments	
PNC Checking Account (27 Vouchers)	\$ 71,804.53
Money Market Account (0 Vouchers)	\$ -
Star Ohio Account (0 Vouchers)	\$ -
920017 Soil & Water (16 Vouchers)	\$ 5,012.10
920027 Storm Water (11 Vouchers)	\$ 12,045.12
920042 - Save Local Waters (3 Vouchers)	\$ 12,277.75
920058 - Caring For Our Watersheds (1 Vouchers)	\$ 88.00
922413 - AmeriCorps Grant (1 Vouchers)	\$ 17,145.01
922415 - Section 319 Grant (0 Vouchers)	\$ -
922417 - OWDA Grant (0 Vouchers)	\$ -
922205 - Cooper Creek 2 Grant (0 Vouchers)	\$ -
922401 - Relocation Project (0 Vouchers)	\$ -

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

New Business

1. *Approve to cancel the Ohio Water Development Authority Grant and grant account 922417.*

Lisa Soper moved that the board approve to cancel the Ohio Water Development Authority Grant and grant account 922417. Steven R. Korte seconded the motion. A roll call vote approved the motion: Laura Boyd, (absent); Steven R. Korte, yes; Lisa Soper, yes; Kenneth Petren, yes; and Jane Wittke, abstained.

2. *Discuss quotes for 319 Steelcraft Detention Basin Retrofit Design and select a firm.*

The board held discussion to select a firm.

3. *Approve the PO and Payment of \$30,300.00 to Sustainable Streams, LLC for the Steelcraft Detention Basin Retrofit Design – 922415*

Lisa Soper moved that the board approve the PO and Payment of \$30,300.00 to Sustainable Streams, LLC for the Steelcraft Detention Basin Retrofit Design – 922415. Kenneth Petren seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, (absent); Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

4. *Approve the PO and Payment of \$13,760 to EarthMark LLC for Rain Barrels - PNC.*

Jane Wittke moved that the board approve the PO and Payment of \$13,760 to EarthMark LLC for Rain Barrels - PNC. Kenneth Petren seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, (absent); Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

5. *Approve the transfer of \$54.50 in Earthwork permit application fees from the third quarter to Hamilton County - PNC.*

Jane Wittke moved that the board approve the transfer of \$54.50 in Earthwork permit application fees from the third quarter to Hamilton County - PNC. Lisa Soper seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, (absent); Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

6. *Approve up to three slots for staff and board members to attend the 2026 NACD Annual Meeting Conference in San Antonio, Texas - 920017*

Lisa Soper moved that the board approve up to three slots for staff and board members to attend the 2026 NACD Annual Meeting Conference in San Antonio, Texas - 920017. Kenneth

Petren seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, (absent); Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

7. Approve the PO and Payment of up to \$10,000 for registration, flight, and hotel reservations for the 2026 NACD Annual Meeting – 920017

Jane Wittke moved that the board approve PO and Payment of up to \$10,000 for registration, flight, and hotel reservations for the 2026 NACD Annual Meeting - 920017. Lisa Soper seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, (absent); Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

8. Approve the transfer of \$2,165.94 in Stormwater Field Day revenue from the PNC bank account to OCA 920042.

Kenneth Petren moved that the board approve the transfer of \$2,165.94 in Stormwater Field Day revenue from the PNC bank account to OCA 920042. Lisa Soper seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, (absent); Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

9. Approve the PO and Payment of \$7,363.00 for the 2025 Ohio Plan Premium Renewal – OCA 920017/920027

Kenneth Petren moved that the board approve the PO and Payment of \$7,363.00 for the 2025 Ohio Plan Premium Renewal – OCA 920017/920027. Jane Wittke seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, (absent); Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

10. Approve the PO and Payment of up to 5,226.60 to BB Riverboats for the 2026 Stormwater Float – OCA 920042

Lisa Soper moved that the board approve PO and Payment of up to \$5,226.60 to BB Riverboats for the 2026 Stormwater Float – OCA 920042. Kenneth Petren seconded the

motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, (absent); Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

11. Approve the submission of the 2025 920017/920027/920042 Amended Budgets to the Hamilton County Auditor's Office

Jane Wittke moved that the board approve the submission of the 2025 920017/920027/920042 Amended Budgets to the Hamilton County Auditor's Office. Lisa Soper seconded the motion. The motion was approved: Laura Boyd, (absent); Steven R. Korte, aye; Lisa Soper, aye; Kenneth Petren, aye; and Jane Wittke, aye.

12. Approve the 2026 Budget and Appropriations

Jane Wittke moved that the board approve the 2026 Budget and Appropriations.

Lisa Soper stated that the budget will be revisited in early January or February once final numbers are in.

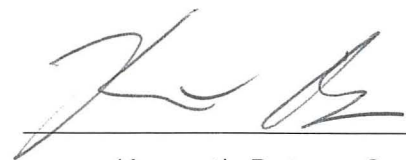
Jane Wittke amended the motion to have the board approve the 2026 Budget and Appropriations, with a review of the budget in early 2026 once the final numbers are available. Lisa Soper seconded the motion. A roll call vote approved the motion: Laura Boyd, (absent); Steven R. Korte, yes; Lisa Soper, yes; Kenneth Petren, abstained; and Jane Wittke, yes.

Adjournment: Lisa Soper moved that the board members adjourn the board meeting at 5:28 pm. Steven R. Korte seconded the motion. A roll call vote approved the motion: Laura Boyd, (absent); Steven R. Korte, yes; Lisa Soper, yes; Kenneth Petren, yes; and Jane Wittke, yes.

Respectfully submitted,



Steven R. Korte, Vice-Chairperson



Kenneth Petren, Secretary

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Melinda Hartley". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Melinda Hartley, Business Service Officer