



## Board Meeting Minutes September 17, 2024

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The Hamilton County Conservation District Board of Supervisors met on September 17, 2024, at the District office located at 2710 East Kemper Road, Sharonville, OH 45241.

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

Jane Wittke requested a roll call.

<b>Chairperson</b>	Jane Wittke
<b>Vice-Chairperson</b>	Laura Boyd
<b>Treasurer</b>	Lisa Soper
<b>Secretary</b>	Steven R. Korte
<b>Program Chairperson</b>	Kenneth Petren

**The following were in attendance:** Sara Fehring, Executive Director; Melinda Hartley, Business Service Officer; Gwen Roth, Education a& AmeriCorps Program Manager; Chris Hall, Stream Specialist; and John Williams, NRCS Conservationist.

**Sara Fehring stated the agenda has changed to include the following items:**

- Approve the transfer of \$20,000.00 from the Caring For Our Watersheds Honorarium from OCA920058 to the PNC Money Market Account

**Agenda Changes/Approval:** Steven R. Korte 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, 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 16, 17						07/18/2024 -08/14/2024					
Name	Begin	Earned	Used	Paid Out	End	Name	Begin	Earned	Used	Paid Out	End
<b>Aaron Habig</b>						<b>Jim Gleason</b>					
Vacation	341.16	12.40	0.00	0.00	353.56	Vacation	333.68	9.20	1.50	0.00	341.38
Sick Time	627.82	9.86	0.00	0.00	637.68	Sick Time	159.95	9.20	16.00	0.00	153.15
Comp Time	41.25	17.25	0.00	0.00	58.50	Comp Time	19.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	19.25
<b>Chey Alberto</b>						<b>Melinda Hartley</b>					
Vacation	584.01	15.40	8.50	0.00	590.92	Vacation	81.48	6.20	5.00	0.00	82.69
Sick Time	718.56	9.39	7.25	0.00	720.70	Sick Time	128.79	9.29	0.00	0.00	138.08
Comp Time	17.63	4.88	4.00	0.00	18.50	Comp Time	62.88	2.25	0.00	0.00	65.13
<b>Christopher Hall</b>						<b>Rachel Cranmer</b>					
Vacation	17.68	15.40	2.00	0.00	31.09	Vacation	13.67	3.06	7.00	0.00	9.74
Sick Time	44.76	9.60	0.00	0.00	54.37	Sick Time	26.29	4.54	27.50	0.00	3.33
Comp Time	12.75	10.50	2.00	0.00	21.25	Comp Time	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50
<b>Emily Hoskins</b>						<b>Sara Fehring</b>					
Vacation	6.89	0.00	0.00	6.89	0.00	Vacation	352.74	12.40	0.00	0.00	365.14
Sick Time	26.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	26.60	Sick Time	342.12	9.29	3.50	0.00	347.90
Comp Time	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	Comp Time	27.13	2.25	23.50	0.00	5.88
<b>Gwen Roth</b>						<b>Sarah Meadows</b>					
Vacation	358.64	15.40	0.00	0.00	374.05	Vacation	92.43	6.20	0.00	0.00	98.64
Sick Time	942.88	9.20	4.25	0.00	947.83	Sick Time	100.46	10.01	28.50	0.00	81.96
Comp Time	67.63	0.00	15.00	0.00	52.63	Comp Time	28.75	21.00	0.00	0.00	49.75
<b>Haley Golsch</b>						<b>Teresa Slonaker</b>					
Vacation	58.46	6.20	0.00	0.00	64.66	Vacation	21.99	6.20	0.00	0.00	28.20
Sick Time	169.93	9.40	18.50	0.00	160.84	Sick Time	53.02	9.44	8.25	0.00	54.21
Comp Time	5.87	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.87	Comp Time	0.25	6.38	0.00	0.00	6.63

**Review and approve the Consent Agenda, including the August Minutes and Request for Leave Report. Lisa Soper 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)**

Sara Fehring reported the following:

- State Match
  - At the August 6<sup>th</sup> Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission (OSWCC) meeting, the state match dollars were approved to match Hamilton County's local appropriations to 81%. This is a decrease from last year.
- Administrative Development Program (ADP)
  - The next ADP session is scheduled for October 3, 2024. It will focus on Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Financials, including cash basis reporting, Auditor of State updates, SWCD audits, financial forecasting, and Ohio Public Employees Retirement System updates.
- Areas IV Winter Meeting
  - The Area IV Winter meeting will be held on Monday, December 2, 2024, from 9:00 am - 2:30 pm at Der Dutchman - 445 South Jefferson Ave. Plain City, OH 43064.
  - The cost will be \$30 per person.
  - Please let Melinda Hartley know if you would like to attend. She will send out a reminder email in October.

### **Report from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**

John Williams reported the following:

- New NRCS Employee
  - Jordan McMahon will officially start as a Natural Resource Conservationist on Wednesday, September 18, 2024.

- NRCS Fiscal Year
  - The NRCS fiscal year will end on September 30, 2024. John Williams and his team are completing end-of-year reporting and closing projects.
- Kudos
  - John Williams praised the board for hiring Nicole Gunderman. John has met with Nicole three times now, and she is very knowledgeable. John thinks she will be an excellent addition to the district.

## **Activity Reports**

### **Education**

Gwen Roth reported the following:

- AmeriCorps
  - The new 2024-25 cohort started on September 3, 2024.
  - There are six members - four serving in the Hamilton County Conservation District (HCCD) office, one in the Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District office, and one at Mill Creek Alliance.
  - The 2023-24 program year will be finished by October 2, 2024.
  - Melinda Hartley and Gwen Roth took the required LITMOS training (AmeriCorps online training platform).
  - Starting in November, information sessions will be held for potential partners for the 2025-26 program year.
- Caring For Our Watersheds
  - The 2025 contest has kicked off with one significant change. Student proposals will now be due on December 20, 2024.
  - Students would find out if they made the top 10 in late January instead of late February, giving them more time to implement.
- Envirothon
  - Teresa Slonaker has been working hard to get more schools involved in Envirothon.

- Teresa is hosting an Envirothon information night in early November for interested teachers. She will host it at the Hamilton County Conservation District Training Center.
- Teresa has also planned a practice Envirothon for interested teams in mid-April (a few weeks before the competition).
- Household Hazardous Products (HHP) Collection Event
  - Hamilton County R3Source has asked HCCD to partner on this year's HHP collection event on Friday, October 18, 2024, and Saturday, October 19, 2024.
  - The event is free for Hamilton County residents, but they must pre-register.
  - HCCD staff will help with directing traffic.
- Master Rain Gardener update
  - The current session ends Friday, September 20, 2024; 14 students are expected to complete the course.
  - New format in 2025: Partners have agreed to a new format and adjusted responsibilities.
  - Memoriam of Understandings (MOUs) reflecting the new format will be presented at the December board meeting for approval.
- Electrofishing Program Grant Deliverables
  - Four of five volunteer sites have been sampled. The final site is scheduled for September 28, 2024.
  - Two public works programs are expected for October 2024.
  - All other grant deliverables have been met. The grant report will be submitted by the end of October 2024 so the grant can be closed by the end of the year.

## **Administrative Report**

Sara Fehring reported the following:

- Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana (OKI) Regional Conservation Council Tour
  - The OKI Tour was held on September 13, 2024.
  - A total of 51 attendees were registered, and 48 attended the event.

- The tour ran smoothly, except for the issues with the motorcoach. The motorcoach arrived 30 minutes late to pick up and was 30 minutes late picking the group up from Gorman Heritage Farm. Due to the delays, we had to cancel the stop at Wyoming High School.
- Queen City Transportation is giving us a 30% discount (\$427.50) on the OKI tour and a full refund for the upcoming local officials tour (\$1,055.00).
- Official's Tour
  - As of September 17, 2024, 33 attendees have registered.
  - A second round of invitations was emailed on August 12, 2024.
  - On September 17, 2024, a third round of individual invitations was emailed to those who had not responded.
  - Croswell VIP Motorcoach Services have been secured to provide transportation.
- Native Tree and Shrub Sale
  - The Native Tree and Shrub pick-up was held on September 7, 2024.
  - This year, we sold 1,094 plants.
- Stormwater Infrastructure Grants – Round 2
  - The District has been tasked to assist with the reviewing and scoring for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) second round of stormwater grants. Sara Fehring and Chey Alberto are working on the scoring.
  - There is \$480,000 available for the second round.
  - There are four applications.
- Rental Agreement for 2710
  - Several organizations have expressed interest in using the 2710 East Kemper Road workshop space.
  - Sara Fehring will work on a draft rental agreement.
- Phone list
  - Sara Fehring passed around an updated phone list with staff members' direct lines and cell phone numbers.
- Board Packet on Website

- Sara Fehring has been working on a test site with a protected password to post the board packet on the website.
- Sara Fehring will send the link and password after the board meeting.

Jane Wittke and Lisa Soper praised Sara Fehring and the staff for the district's work with the move and the OKI Tour.

## **Board Reports**

### **Urban Networking Committee (UNC)**

Laura Boyd reported the following:

- Meeting Updates
  - Molly Conley canceled the Leadership meeting that was scheduled on September 5, 2024.
  - Laura Boyd will attend the next UNC meeting via Teams on September 24, 2024.

### **Legislative Committee**

Laura Boyd reported the following:

- Directors Meeting
  - The director's meeting occurred on September 3, 2024.
  - The focus was on the transparency of the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (OFSWCD) financials.
  - Laura Boyd stated there may be a need to start managing the funds for each area at an area level.
  - Area dues for next year will be \$150.

### **Annual Meeting Committee**

Steven R. Korte reported the following:

- The meeting will be held in the HCCD Training Center.
- Advertisements have gone out, and the website has been updated for RSVPs.
- Staff has been requested to send ten invitations to their contacts.

### **Relocation Committee**

Steven R. Korte reported the following:

- o There are still some items on the punch list that need to be completed.

**Nomination Committee**

Kenneth Petren reported the following:

- o Rachel has created an election postcard. Each candidate will receive 25 printed and electronic postcards.
- o Absentee ballots can be requested on the website starting September 16, 2024.
- o Starting September 30, 2024, people can call the office to request an absentee ballot.
- o In-person voting at the district office will be from September 30, 2024, to October 29, 2024.

**Other Board Reports**

No 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 08/31/2024	Cash Balance
HCCD PNC Checking Account		\$ 148,017.03
HCCD PNC Money Market		\$ 218.96
Soil and Water 920017		\$ 518,282.57
Storm Water 920027		\$ 205,796.05
Save Local Waters 920042		\$ 98,756.20
Caring For Our Watersheds 920058		\$ 21,918.69
OEEF Electrolinefisher 922203		\$ 4.58
ORBCorps - AmeriCorps 922413		\$ 32,203.30
CWA Section 319 Grant 922415		\$ -
OWDA-USI 10506 922417		\$ -
Cooper Creek Detention Basin Retrofit (2) 922205		\$ (1,872.50)
Office Improvement Project (Relocation 2024) 922401		\$ 188,604.68
Financial Obligation = Vacation/Sick/Comp		\$ 130,949.00
		as of 08/31/2024

**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. In addition, the board raised several points that will be addressed at the next board meeting.**

### **Old Business**

- 1. Set date and time for 2024 Board Employee Evaluations (December 10th or December 17th)*

**After discussion, the board decided to hold 2024 Board Employee Evaluations on December 17, 2024. The board meeting will start at 9:00 a.m., and the 2024 Board Employee Evaluations will follow.**

### **New Business**

- 1. Approve the transfer of \$4,501.52 in Doug McKenzie-Mohr Workshop Revenue from the PNC account to 920042*

**Laura Boyd moved that the board approve the transfer of \$4,501.52 in Doug McKenzie-Mohr Workshop Revenue from the PNC account to 920042. 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.**

- 2. Approve the Executive Director to sign the Storm Water Services Agreement for program year 2025 contingent on Prosecutor approval*

**Kenneth Petren moved that the board approve the Executive Director's signing of the Storm Water Services Agreement for the program year 2025, contingent on Prosecutor 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.

- 3. Approve the PO and payment of up to \$4,500 for 2025 Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation District (OFSWCD) dues - 920017*

Laura Boyd moved that the board approve the PO and payment of up to \$4,500 for 2025 Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation District (OFSWCD) dues - 920017. 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.

- 4. Approve the transfer of \$20,000.00 in Caring For Our Watersheds Honorarium from OCA 920058 to the PNC Money Market Account*

Laura Boyd moved to approve the transfer of \$20,000.00 in Caring For Our Watersheds Honorarium from OCA 920058 to the PNC Money Market Account. 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.

- 5. Successful completion of Chris Hall's introductory period.*

Sara Fehring reported that Chris Hall has completed his introductory period.

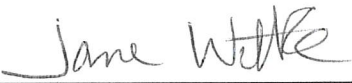
- 6. Increase Chris Hall's hourly pay rate to \$33.00, effective September 26, 2024, and close his introductory period.*

Jane Wittke moved that, in recognition of the successful completion of Chris Hall's introductory period, the board approve an increase to Chris Hall's hourly pay rate. Effective September 26, 2024, Chris Hall's new pay rate will be \$33.00. 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.

Adjournment: Lisa Soper moved that the board members adjourn the meeting at 6:58 pm. 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.

Respectfully submitted,



Jane Wittke, Chairperson



Steven R. Korte, Secretary



Melinda Hartley, Business Service Officer