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## Board Meeting

Documenter name: Wittman Sullivan

Agency: Summit County Soil and Water Conservation District

Date: Feb. 18, 2025

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**Notes to reader:** *Unless quotation marks are used, all text is paraphrased. If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at [documenters@signalakron.org](mailto:documenters@signalakron.org) with "Correction Request" in the subject line.*

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### Summary

- Multiple changes were made to the district board of supervisors' committees. This includes adding new members to the nominating committee and changing the name of the DEI committee to the Historical, Cultural, and Inclusion Committee. Board Chair Ana Burns recommended they create more of a description for the committee.
- The district is being audited by the state this year. This requires a yearly cash basis report to the state. This report found that the district fund was stable in 2024 and that the special fund saw an approximately \$100,000 increase in funding. This report was approved unanimously by the board.
- The district was awarded the [Urban Program of the Year](#) award for 2025. A Summit County staffer nominated the district for the award. They beat seven other districts.

### Follow-Up Questions

- What personnel issue was discussed within the executive session?
- Have there been explicit federal orders that would affect DEI in the district?

## Notes:

- Board chair Ana Burns started the meeting at 4 p.m. with board members Fiscal Agent Greg Zimmerman, Secretary Rob Curtis, Vice Chair Andrew Brown and Member Sarah Blakely present
- The January meeting minutes passed unanimously 5-0

## **Staff progress reports**

- A staffer said he provided a summary of stormwater education and watershed programs to the board
- The [Ohio Department of Agriculture \(ODA\)](#) staffer was on medical leave and was not able to provide a report
- A staffer said 165 Ohio soil and water conservation district board supervisors responded to an [Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts \(OFSWCD\)](#) survey. All Summit County board members completed the survey.
  - According to the survey, supervisors want to learn more about budget, financials and district programming
- Burns said the Summit County Soil and Water Conservation District (SCSWCD) is doing well with [social media](#)

## **Treasurer's Report**

- According to a staffer, these are the current financials
  - The special fund is at \$110,000, with \$100,000 of income in January 2025
    - Funding sources include community invoices and a state funding match
    - January 2025 expenses were at \$88,000
  - The district fund is at \$322,000, bringing in \$26,000 in January 2025 and expending \$1,600
  - Other expenses include \$2,400 in credit card bills for a staff event, reimbursing a staffer for gas and reimbursing a developer for inspection fees after ending a project
- A staffer said the district is being audited this year and must submit a “cash basis report” of all district accounts to the state for 2024. The 2024 cash basis report showed the following:
  - The district fund started at \$664,000 and ended at \$774,000 with \$103,000 of expenses. The fund brought in \$196,000
  - The special fund started at \$106,000 and ended at \$98,000 with \$869,000

of expenses. The fund brought in \$868,000

- The treasurer's report, payment of the bills, and cash basis report passed unanimously in the same motion

### **Vehicle report**

- A staffer said all three district vehicles will get oil changes this month

### **Committee reports**

- A staffer said the nominating committee chose Michael Rover and Dan Ross to be members
- The [DEI committee was changed to the Historical, Cultural, and Inclusion Committee](#), according to a staffer.
  - Burns said this committee will remain dedicated to “diverse people” served by the district. She said they should create more of a description for the committee to “cover [their] bases”
- The updated committees passed unanimously

### **OLD BUSINESS**

- A staffer said district staffer [Sandy Barbic](#) will retire on March 31.. She is invited to the March 18 board meeting.
  - Burns said she will not accept gifts, but they are looking into planting a tree at Tinkers’ Creek in her honor
- A staffer said the sponsor request form for [Summer Supervisor School](#) (July 27-29) is available online. Sponsor levels range from \$500 to \$5,000 and the district has already raised \$14,000. This event is for any district supervisor in Ohio.
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  - They said they want to do two passports for the event, one for breweries, and a non-alcoholic one for other businesses
- A staffer said there is a \$250 outstanding invoice from a developer in Hudson. The City of Hudson is withholding occupancy permits until the invoice is paid

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- A staffer said two updates need to be made to the 2025 operational policies
  - Burns said the committee policies should refer to committee members in general and not refer to specific committee members, requiring

- amendments every year
  - A staffer said the site fees policy needs a new pricing structure for erosion sediment control reviews that the county wants the district to do. This will cover staff costs.
    - The 2025 operational policy updates passed unanimously
- A staffer said the 2025 Summit County Stormwater Service Agreement is similar to last year. The agreement was reviewed by the Summit County Prosecutor's office and will be voted on by Summit County Council on March 3. It needs to be approved by then to meet a [state funding match](#) deadline.
  - Item passed unanimously
- Burns said a staffer will be transferring 163 hours of sick leave from a job in Logan County to Summit County per state requirement
  - Item passed unanimously
- A staffer said there will be a [Riparian Setback](#) information workshop for Summit County zoning boards and commissions on March 8. This will focus on when to grant variance (conditional use in Akron) permit and what questions they should ask developers
  - Summit Metro Parks will also discuss how zoning prevents their [Wild Backyards program](#)
  - Curtis asked if the district still reviews variance permit requests
    - A staffer said the Summit County Planning Commission only does this in towns without Riparian Setbacks (including Sagamore Hills and Richfield). The district still collects the permit fees
  - Curtis asked how many permits are accepted and denied
    - A staffer said communities do not give that information to the district and they do not know. They said the information is likely publicly available
- A staffer said contractor [Gregory Orr](#) will take over the approved habitat and wildlife permits workshop after the previous contractor retired. The workshop will cost \$4,000 and cost up to 20 attendees \$350 each. The district wants 12 attendees to cover the cost of the event.

### **Correspondents and complaints**

- A staffer said they are participating in the annual [Envirothon](#) where county kids can compete in answering questions about water, land, wildlife, forestry, and soil. This year's focus is the [tree canopy](#). Students go into the field and identify things such as trees and soil features. The top two teams go to states, and the top two state teams go to nationals.

- Another district is hosting the regional competition this year and covering the cost. A staffer asked the district to contribute \$500 for the state event
  - The \$500 contribution passed unanimously

## **OTHER**

- A Summit County staffer nominated SCSWCD for the [Urban Program of the Year](#) award. Summit County won out of seven counties. The staffer said he nominated the county to highlight the work of “everyone else.”
  - Burns said she “loved” the [district social media post](#) about the award
  - A staffer said there will be a press release when the pictures are ready
- A staffer said the county gives the district \$153,000 in 2024 (down from \$171,000 in 2025) for conservation services.
  - The decrease is due to site inspection fees being given to the district before being paid to the county to maximise the stage funding match. They no longer need it because of the stormwater contract
    - Grant acceptance passed unanimously
- The board went into executive session at 5:04 p.m. to discuss a personnel issue
  - Executive session ended at 5:07 p.m.
- The next meeting will be March 18 at 4 p.m. at 1180 S. Main St.
- The meeting ended at 5:08 p.m.