

**STEUBEN COUNTY  
SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

*Peachtree Plaza 200 – 1220 N 200 W STE L – Angola, IN 46703*

*260-665-3211, Ext. 3 - www.steubenswcd.org*

**MINUTES**

**STEUBEN COUNTY SWCD BOARD MEETING**

**Steuben County SWCD Office • 1220 N 200 West STE L, Angola, Indiana 46703**

**January 8, 2020**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

District Supervisors

Gene Diehl  
Kayleen Hart  
Craig Holman  
Chuck Howard

Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)

Kate Sanders, Resource Specialist

Associate Supervisors

Daniel Oberst, Associate Supervisor

SWCD

Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Guests

Mary Martin, Regional Director for Senator Mike Braun

ABSENT

Tara Lee, Resource Conservationist  
David Perkins, Board Supervisor

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The SWCD Board meeting was called to order by Steuben SWCD Chairman Craig Holman at 5:00 p.m. Introductions were made around the table. Mary Martin shared she is an Angola resident and has been a Regional Director for Senator Mike Braun for 2 years. Mary discussed the legislative tour the Steuben SWCD hosted last August and reported she listed the Steuben County SWCD as a point of contact for Senator Braun when he visits Steuben County. She would like to show the work being accomplished by the SWCD and our partner agencies; show how we have "skin in the game". There would only be enough time for two site visits. Mary suggested Badger Barrens and the Powers 2-stage ditch. Janel Meyer asked Mary about the Senator's schedule and whether she knew what time of year he may visit. She explained that due to the impeachment hearings, scheduling has become difficult. Mary reported she would stop in the office to introduce Representative Jim Banks' Field Representative Landon Porter to staff later in the week.

**II. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (12-11-19)**

Craig Holman asked the Board members to consider the minutes of the December 11, 2019 meeting. There being no additions or corrections, the following action was taken:

*Chuck Howard moved to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2019 board meeting. Kayleen Hart seconded. Motion carried.*

**III. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Janel Meyer provided the financial report for the December 7, 2019 to December 31, 2019 period. She also provided a report through January 6, 2020. Financial reports and bank statements were sent to the Board Supervisors for review in advance of the meeting. Supervisors also received a hard copy in their folders. *Report for period ending January 6, 2020:*

<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>			
Checking	\$ 15,913.08		
Statement Savings	<u>41,830.76</u>		
Total	\$ 57,743.84		
<i>Checking account</i>		<i>Savings account</i>	
<i>balance 12/06/19</i>	\$ 36,070.10	<i>balance 12/06/19</i>	\$ 41,818.32
<i>Receipts</i>	\$ 0	<i>Receipts</i>	\$ 12.44
<i>Disbursement</i>	<u>(\$ 20,157.02)</u>	<i>Disbursement</i>	<u>(\$ 0.00)</u>
	\$ 15,913.08		\$ 41,830.76

Additional information provided with monthly claims for Board review and verification included:

1. Deposit & Check detail report; 2. Checking & Savings account bank statements; 3. Checking & Savings account reconciliations; 4. Staff payroll approval form, time sheets, compensatory time logs and vehicle

log. Janel reported total receipts of \$12.44; SWCD savings account interest. Disbursement was \$20,157.02 which included payments for dues and membership fees (National Association of Conservation Districts), operating expenses, and the Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program (GLSNRP) grant for 552.3 acres of cover crops. She explained the SWCD will invoice the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) for payment reimbursement when our next quarterly report is due on January 14, 2020.

A FY19 profit/loss summary was also presented. This included a detailed summary of receipts and disbursement.

Janel drew the Supervisor's attention to the current checking account balance, reviewing the amount of funding currently obligated to ongoing grants. She also reviewed expected future disbursements for January and February. No request was made to move funds from the SWCD savings to the SWCD checking account. Janel reported the minimum average ledger balance for the Steuben SWCD Public Transaction Deposit Account is \$2,500. She will continue to monitor our fund balance and keep Craig Holman advised. Janel asked the Board for a motion to approve moving funds, if necessary. She reviewed why the SWCD is in this position, due to the GLC grant requirement the SWCD submit proof of cost-share payment (s) to producer(s)/operator(s) before requesting GLC reimbursement.

*Gene Diehl moved to approve the transfer of funds from the Steuben County SWCD savings account to the Steuben County SWCD checking account, if Craig Holman and Janel Meyer deem necessary to keep the checking account balance above the minimum amount required, \$2,500, per Key Bank service terms/agreement. Seconded by Kayleen Hart. Motion carried*

Craig asked if there were any questions or additional discussion regarding the financial report. Mary Martin inquired whether Senator Braun could be of assistance for the GLC grant financial situation; Janel shared nothing was required at this time. Craig called for a motion to approve the treasurer's report.

*Kayleen Hart moved to approve the treasurer's report for the period ending January 6, 2020; seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.*

#### IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

##### a. Natural Resources/Technical Assistance

**Gene Diehl, Chair**

##### i. Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (Farm Bill)/ NRCS/ FSA

1. *NRCS Talking Points* were provided in the Supervisors packets. Highlights included:
  - o The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) seeks public comment through February 18, on its interim rule for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).
  - o Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) is a statistical survey of land use and natural resource conditions and trends on U.S. non-federal lands. Indiana's NRI data collection began in early September and runs through the end of January 2020.
2. a. Janel reported Arthur was unable to be present at this evening's Board meeting because he was attending the No-Till Conference in St. Louis, MO.

b. Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) Program Technician, shared the Conservation Reserve Program general and continuous signup ends February 18, 2020 and August 2020, respectively. She reported the number of properties enrolled in CRP is significantly lower compared to previous years; current enrollment is <5% of cropland in the county. Kayleen shared this is likely due to lowered benefits (i.e., lower cost-share and higher farm rental rates). Kate Sanders also noted Allen County has seen a significantly decline in filter strip installation. Craig stated many landowners/producers have a decreased interest in conservation practices.

##### ii. Watershed Projects and Organizations/SWCD

-Southeastern Lake Michigan Basin: St. Joe River West (HUC 8) (Lake Michigan)  
Sub-watersheds:

##### 1. Pigeon Creek Watershed

a. *Contract/Project Updates:* Janel reviewed the obligated funding, approximately \$25,500, which leaves about \$1,500 available for additional projects. Practices will need to be installed this spring or early summer as the grant ends in September. Janel will be asking the GLC for a grant extension because above-average precipitation and ongoing wet weather have prohibited producers from being able to implement practices in 2018 and 2019. Additional wet weather could create additional delays.

b. GLC FY20-1 Quarterly Report: The next grant report is due January 14, 2020. Janel will be invoicing the GLC for \$38,763.05. Janel was hopeful payment would be received by the end of April.

2. Fawn River Watershed
  - a. 2020 LARE Application. Janel plans to apply for a Watershed Land Treatment Grant for the Steuben County portion of Fawn River through the Lake and River Enhancement program. She would also like to apply for Steuben County portions of Pigeon Creek.
3. Friends of the St. Joseph River (FotSJR) Association
  - a. The next FotSJR Association meeting has been scheduled January 23, 2020.

Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB): St. Joe River East (HUC 8) (Lake Erie)

Sub-watersheds:

1. Upper St. Joe River – Includes Fish Creek, Nettle, and West Branch Sub-Watersheds
  - a. December 20, 2019 WLEB Advisory Committee Meeting. Janel attended. She provided a report on the meeting highlights, which included a presentation on the St. Mary's River Channel Stability and Flood Risk Assessment by Bob Barr (IUPUI) and Siavash Beik (Christopher Burke Engineering).
  - b. January 7, 2020 Agronomy Field Day Planning Meeting. Janel attended. She shared the purpose of the meeting was to finalize the agenda and discuss each partners responsibility. Invitations for this four-part series will be sent in early March. The group also determined the cover crop discussion group event should remain a separate meeting. Tentative date for this meeting set for December 8, 2020. Janel will send Mary Martin an email with the Agronomy Field Day meeting dates and locations.
2. Maumee River Basin Commission (MRBC)
  - a. December 12, 2019 MRBC meeting. No report; Chuck was unable to attend.

iii. Entire County

1. CWI Urban Grant
  - a. Janel presented an application for a native-scaping project in Fremont. She reported the project would fit the scope of the grant; the site visit has been scheduled for January 22<sup>nd</sup>. The project discussion was tabled to the February meeting when additional information about the site/location would be presented.
2. Steuben County/Urban (IDEM Rule 5/MS4)
  - a. Orland Electrical Energy Substation Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. Information about the location of the Orland Substation was shared. Construction plans were not available due to printing issues. Janel stated she could be contacted if anyone wanted to review the plans.

Janel reported the City of Angola is now formally including the Steuben County Surveyor/Drainage Board in the review of City projects. This information was shared by Kris Thomas (City of Angola MS4/Engineering Assistant) at the Steuben County Lakes Council's December meeting.

**b. District Operations/Marketing**

**Chuck Howard, Chair**

i. SWCD Training, Public Relations, etc.

1. Field Visits/Trainings
  - a. NNE Indiana District Employee Association (IDEA) Region Meeting • December 12, 2019: Janel and Tara attended. This meeting provided a report on the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB), a discussion on Indiana State Board of Accounts and ISDA reporting deadlines, District activity updates and a discussion on training opportunities for Districts. The letter Janel shared at last month's Board meeting, the SSCB announcement on not funding the Training Reimbursement program for the 2019-2020 year, was also discussed. Districts were advised to send a letter to the CWI Grants Committee expressing concern. Janel volunteered to submit a letter for the Steuben County SWCD on behalf of the Supervisors. She also requested approval to pay 2020 IDEA membership fees.

*Chuck Howard moved to support 2020 IDEA membership fees for Steuben County staff, \$25/employee; seconded by Kayleen Hart. Motion carried.*

- b. Steuben County Life Planning Meeting • December 17, 2019: Janel and Tara met with Bill Schmidt (Steuben County Lakes Council) to begin planning the 2020 Steuben County Life program. Six sessions are scheduled each Tuesday, beginning September 15

through October 20, 2020. Janel reported the 2020 schedule, which included: a farm tour; alternate energy session; Steuben County Coroner and estate planning session; tour of Trine University's Furth Center; Angola USDA Service Center's Agency session featuring FSA, NRCS and the SWCD; final dinner session at Club Paradise featuring presentation on drainage issues at the four-corners.

c. Department Head Meeting • December 18, 2019: Janel attended. She provided a report on items relevant to the SWCD.

- Crystal Dadura, Steuben County Human Resources Director, requested we start thinking about the pros and cons of personal time off (PTO) - whether it is beneficial to pursue or not. Personal time off is a policy that provides a bank of hours in which employers pool sick, vacation, and personal days which allows employees to use as the need or desire arises.
  - County Council Liaisons were discussed and the role they play.
  - Crystal Dadura would like to implement an evaluation form specific to administrative and technical positions. Having a standard evaluation for all county employees plays into the county matrix option.
  - Updated employee handbook release date been pushed back; Council/Commissioner approval still needed.
2. Employee Reviews: Staff evaluations are typically scheduled in January. Janel requested the evaluations be postponed until either the county implements a standard evaluation or the SWCD devises a different form. Janel expressed her dissatisfaction with the current evaluation because it is designed for the private sector. Most of the items listed require a daily direct working relationship with the employee in order to provide a fair evaluation of that employee's competency. The Board meets with staff once/month. Kayleen shared the performance evaluation was introduced by Greg Hughes, former SWCD Supervisor. This was the evaluation Greg's corporation utilized.
  3. 2020 Steuben SWCD Meeting Schedule: The Board discussed the SWCD November 2020 SWCD meeting would be moved to Thursday, November 12. Janel noted the second Wednesday of the month in November is Veteran's Day, a county holiday.
  4. November and December tally sheets were not provided in the Supervisor's packets. Both months are incomplete. Those, and a 2019 year-end summary, will be provided at the February meeting.
- ii. Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP)/Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD)
1. 2019 Fall Tillage Transect: Kate briefly reviewed tillage transect trends. She continues assisting the District by updating charts/graphics with past tillage transect data. Janel would like to add this information into the annual report.
  2. 2020 Annual Conference Legislative Breakfast/Invitations: Invitations from the Steuben County SWCD were sent to our legislators for the January 14, 2020 IASWCD Legislative Breakfast. Senator Susan Glick's Legislative Assistant sent a reply that Senator Glick planned to attend.
- iii. Indiana State Department of Agriculture
1. Steuben SWCD Annual Meeting Planning Updates: Janel suggested the SWCD move away from the standard script and implement a new format. She advised there are only three requirements for the meeting; approval of the prior year's annual meeting minutes, presentation of the SWCD financial report, and the Supervisor election. Janel added a fourth item, the importance of thanking everyone that assists the District with achieving our mission. She requested all Supervisors consider strategies to get the audience engaged earlier, and often. She felt our meetings have become mind-numbing since the audience listens to dry content being delivered, rather than discussed. Janel suggested beginning the meeting with a game, such as conservation Jeopardy or conservation bingo; both requires audience participation. Gene Diehl suggested beginning the meeting with the diminishing apple demonstration. The group will discuss this further at the February Board meeting. Chris Weaver, Bridgewater Dairy, has been confirmed as the keynote speaker.
  2. District Support Specialist/Resource Specialist Update: Kate reviewed:
    - Fort Wayne Farm Show is scheduled January 14-15, 2020. This is the eighth largest farm show in the nation. The NE SWCD/NRCS/ISDA booth

- will be located in the lower level of the Coliseum.
- Kate reminded the SWCD to pay attention to important deadlines for ISDA and Indiana State Board of Accounts reporting. She also reminded everyone that all new staff and supervisors must complete the internal control and preventing sexual harassment training.
- ISDA will be hiring an intern for the WLEB. This individual will work from May-August and be based out of the Allen County USDA Service Center.
- The ICP is planning an all staff meeting for May; meeting will involve all eight agencies that fall under the umbrella of the partnership. Kate emphasized how Indiana is unique since conservation agencies work together.
- Kate encouraged someone from the District attend a succession planning session, which will be offered at the IASWCD Annual Meeting.
- There was a brief discussion about alternate funding for CWI. This is especially important when talking with legislators and the potential impacts of the new federal law, which raised the federal minimum age of sale of tobacco products from 18 to 21 years. CWI is funding by cigarette taxes.
- The SSCB has updated their business plan. A copy of the plan was provided in the Supervisors packets.

**c. Budget and Finance**

**Craig Holman, Chair**

- i. Treasurer/Depository  
Appointment of fiscal officer and financial institution determined at the beginning of each fiscal year.  
*Kayleen Hart moved to designate Janel Meyer as Treasurer/Fiscal Officer for the Steuben County SWCD; seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.*  
*Chuck Howard moved to keep Key Bank as the Steuben County SWCD financial institution/depository; seconded by Kayleen Hart. Motion carried.*
- ii. Encumbrance  
Janel reported our encumbrance request for the part-time position/clerk has been processed and approved. \$1,022.25 was carried forward from FY2019 to FY2020.
- iii. District Budget and Finance Committee Audit  
Kayleen Hart and Craig Holman will complete the District Audit January 22, 2020 @ 4:30 p.m. in the SWCD office. Janel will send out reminder texts.
- iv. 2020 Affiliate Memberships  
2020 Affiliate Memberships will remain at 2019 levels. Janel will complete the Affiliate Membership letter that accompanies the form mailed to businesses/individuals. Tara will be completing the mailing.  
*Gene Diehl moved to approve the 2020 Affiliate Membership levels of bronze - \$25, silver- \$50, gold- \$75, and platinum- \$100 and above; seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.*
- v. Internal Controls  
Janel advised this item was still on the January agenda as a reminder Supervisor David Perkins needs to complete this training and sign the *Internal Control Training Certification for Elected Officials and Appointed Employees* document. David was unable to attend this meeting due to a prior commitment.

**d. Information and Education**

**Kayleen Hart, Chair**

- i. Drainage Board Meetings  
Staff are attending the twice-monthly county Drainage Board (DB) meetings. Janel reported the Drainage Board signed an agreement with Christopher Burke Engineering; purpose of agreement to review prospective development drainage plans (e.g., Eastland Crossing).
- ii. SWCD Website Update  
At the SWCD December Board meeting, Tara shared that Jordan Beehler had the new website almost completed. The site will be ready for release when our contract with Khimaira ends, January 31, 2020. Janel reported Tara met with Jordan on December 26<sup>th</sup> for website training. Janel suggested a review of the website, prior to going live. Kayleen and Janel volunteered. Janel also requested approval to pay an invoice she received today from Oakley Studio, LLC for managed website hosting for the next six months.

