

MINUTES

STEUBEN COUNTY SWCD BOARD MEETING
Steuben County SWCD Office • 1220 N 200 West STE L, Angola, Indiana 46703
May 12, 2020

PLEASE NOTE:

Only essential business was discussed.

The public and staff had the opportunity to participate via conference call in order to be compliant with Governor Eric Holcomb’s Executive Order related to COVID-19.

IN ATTENDANCE:

District Supervisors

Gene Diehl
 Kayleen Hart
 Craig Holman

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Arthur Franke, District Conservationist

Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)

Kate Sanders, Resource Specialist (via conference call)
 Jennifer Thum, District Support Specialist (via conference call)

SWCD

Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator
 Tara Lee, Resource Conservationist (via conference call)

ABSENT

Chuck Howard, Board Supervisor
 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.

II. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (3-11-20)

Craig Holman asked the Board members to consider the minutes of the March 11, 2020 meeting. There being no additions or corrections, Craig asked for a motion to approve. The SWCD Board did not meet in April.

*Kayleen Hart moved to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2020 board meeting; seconded by Gene Diehl.
 Motion carried.*

III. TREASURER’S REPORT

Janel Meyer provided the financial report for March 5 to April 3, 2020 (*prepared for the April SWCD Board Meeting- which was cancelled*) & April 4 to May 8, 2020 period. Financial reports and bank statements were sent to the Board Supervisors for review in advance of the meeting.

Report for period ending April 3, 2020:

<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>			
Checking	\$ 51,395.07		
Statement Savings	<u>41,861.68</u>		
Total	\$93,256.75		
<i>Checking account</i>		<i>Savings account</i>	
<i>balance 03/04/20</i>	<i>\$ 62,808.11</i>	<i>balance 03/04/20</i>	<i>\$ 41,854.76</i>
<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 1,242.09</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 6.92</i>
<i>Disbursement</i>	<i><u>(\$12,655.13)</u></i>	<i>Disbursement</i>	<i><u>(\$ 0.00)</u></i>
	<i>\$ 51,395.07</i>		<i>\$41,861.68</i>

Report for period ending May 8, 2020:

General Fund - All Accounts

Checking	\$ 61,189.86
Statement Savings	<u>41,863.40</u>
Total	\$103,053.26

Checking account

balance 04/03/20	\$ 51,395.07
Receipts	\$ 10,100.00
Disbursement	<u>(\$ 305.21)</u>
	\$ 61,189.86

Savings account

balance 04/03/20	\$ 41,861.68
Receipts	\$ 1.72
Disbursement	<u>(\$ 0.00)</u>
	\$41,863.40

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 \$1,242.09 for period ending April 3rd and \$10,100.00 for period ending May 8th; this included 2020 Steuben SWCD Affiliate Memberships, tree pick-up donations, over-the-counter flag sales, and the Indiana State Department of Agriculture \$10,000 matching operations grant. SWCD savings account interest totaled \$8.64. Disbursement was \$12,655.13 for period ending April 3rd and \$305.21 for the period ending May 8th; this included annual meeting expenses, conservation education materials/supplies, contractual service payment for tree pick-up, flag order, operating expenses, printing/reproduction expenses, SWCD bulk mailing permit, website design and a Great Lakes Commission (GLC) Pigeon Creek Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Grant cost-share payment for 4,725 ft. of fence in the Pigeon Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek.

Craig asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the Treasurer's Report. Hearing none, he called for a motion.

Gene Diehl moved to approve the Treasurer's Report for the period ending April 3, 2020 and May 8, 2020, as presented. Kayleen Hart seconded; motion was approved.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Natural Resources/Technical Assistance

Gene Diehl, Chair

i. Watershed Projects and Organizations/SWCD

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

Sub-watersheds:

1. Pigeon Creek Watershed

a. GLC FY 20-2 Quarterly Report: Janel reported the grant extension for the Pigeon Creek Sediment and Nutrient Reduction grant request was approved by the GLC. Janel sent the required amendment signature page to Craig Holman, which was forwarded to the GLC.

Janel also shared the FY20-2 Quarterly Report was completed and submitted by the April 14, 2020 deadline. Janel invoiced the GLC for the \$8,114.40 fence cost-share payment the SWCD paid in April. Janel offered a copy of the report for review.

2. Fawn River Watershed

a. Forage/Biomass/Fence Contract Application: Janel presented a 10-acre forage/biomass + ~3,000 ft. fencing project to the Board for approval. Project located off North 300 West, just south of Lake James Four Corners area. Fencing would allow producer/landowner to regulate livestock access, permit proper grazing distribution and fence animals out of certain environmentally sensitive areas. Property is located 0.2-miles from a wetland and approximately 0.39-miles from Lake James.

Janel provided an update on the remaining 2018 Fawn River LARE obligated projects. She shared the landowner with the 2,600-acre fencing contract (Snow Lake sub-watershed) requested contract cancellation due to current economic hardship. Project was discussed at the March meeting; Board recommended contract cancellation due to producer's lack of project completion. A second fencing contract, 3,365 ft., also in the Snow Lake sub-watershed, was also discussed. Janel shared the producer and his family were still in discussion about whether to proceed. Producer would provide the family's final decision by the end of May; producer and family in disagreement over project.

With the cancellation of one project, \$4,599.67 was available to fund another project. Due to the small amount of monies available, Janel suggested the contract focus on fencing. A discussion followed regarding the option to move funds to the Lake James fence project if the 3,365 ft. fencing contract is cancelled. Janel stated she would coordinate with the Fawn River Grant

Administrator regarding proper procedures. The Board supported the fencing project, along with moving any funds that would potentially become available into the Lake James fencing contract.

Gene Diehl moved to approve the approximate 3,000 ft. fencing project in the Lake James-Crooked Creek sub-watershed of Fawn River using the 2018 Fawn River LARE grant; Gene also moved to approve providing additional monies for the project if funding becomes available. Kayleen Hart seconded the motion; motion carried.

ii. Entire County

1. District Cost-Share

a. Forage/Biomass Contract Application: Janel advised she has been unable to coordinate with the new landowner of the Town of Orland sub-watershed dairy operation to complete a contract (berm construction, exclusion fence and grass/forage biomass planting). She left phone messages advising he needed to contact the SWCD as soon as possible. Janel reported he began replacing the fence without a contract; however, no return call has been received. Since she is unable to make contact, she presented a 14-acre forage/biomass planting in the Headwaters of Fish Creek to the Board for approval. The property is located adjacent to Fish Creek.

A motion was made by Kayleen Hart to approve the 14-acre forage/biomass planting in the Headwaters of Fish Creek using 2020 District Cost-Share funds; seconded by Gene Diehl. Motion carried.

Kayleen suggested sending a letter to the new dairy operation owner to advise funding is no longer available.

Janel requested approval to make the cost-share payment for the completed 35-acre forage/biomass planting (\$2,500 cost-share cap; 16.67 total acres) in the Otter Lake-Pigeon Creek sub-watershed of Pigeon. Total cost of \$2,500.

Kayleen Hart moved to approve the \$2,500.00 payment for the completed Otter Lake-Pigeon Creek 16.67-acre forage/biomass planting. Gene Diehl seconded the motion; motion was approved.

2. Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Urban Grant

a. Reddington Heights Contract Amendment: Janel requested an official motion to support the verbal (Chuck Howard) & email (Kayleen Hart and Gene Diehl) approval received to amend the Reddington Heights Contract. Because the SWCD was unable to plan/hold meetings due to Governor Holcomb's Executive Order, Janel asked the Board to consider approving the addition of trees/shrubs, an additional \$750 maximum cost-share payment, to the approved contract for the 4,800 sq. ft. native-scaping planting. The landowner hired Sanctuary Native Landscape for project consultation; once site visit completed, recommendation was made to broadcast seed with a woodland edge native seed mix (native-scaping), plant native perennials throughout the property (native-scaping) and plant trees/shrubs. The idea is to return a portion of the site to woodland, which is what the site was originally and wants to be. Woodland seed mix and native perennials used to attract pollinators/provide habitat while the trees/shrubs mature. Native-scaping cost will likely use \$2,000 maximum cost-share (kill turf/weeds; seed cover crop to prohibit erosion/keep out weeds; woodland edge seeding and native-plant installation). Amendment requested since grant has separate practice category for tree/shrub establishment.

Kayleen Hart moved to approve the Reddington Heights contract amendment – add an additional \$750 for tree/shrub establishment to the already approved 4,800 sq. ft. native-scaping project. Seconded by Gene Diehl; motion carried.

Janel and Craig initialed the amendment on the Reddington Heights CWI contract.

b. Grant Extension Request: Janel reported she submitted a 2018 CWI Grant Extension Request to District Support Specialist Jennifer Thum for consideration at the next State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) meeting. She reviewed why the request was submitted (e.g., disruption of work environments/travel that began in March due to COVID-19; USDA Service Centers operating at Level II status; Steuben Co. Commissioners requested Departments reduce number of employees in offices – only a minimum number to work in person in respective offices to perform essential services; educational events relative to grant cancelled; staff recently advised by several contract holders they are unable to complete cost-share projects by contract/planting deadlines because of spending freezes and/or economic hardships & inability to obtain required materials). Jennifer stated the SSCB next meets May 19, 2020.

b. District Operations/Marketing

Chuck Howard, Chair

i. SWCD Office

1. Operations Update: Janel reviewed staff schedules since March 25, 2020. She also discussed the need to complete performance evaluations. Jennifer Thum, per her March SWCD update, advised annual employee performance appraisals for 2019 staff positions should be completed as soon as possible. This allows Supervisors the chance to let employees know how well they've met Board expectations as well as enable staff to know where they might be able to improve their performance and strengthen the District and its services. Janel advised the SWCD had held off on scheduling evaluations since she was waiting until Steuben County finalized a standard employee performance evaluation form. Scheduling them in June would allow the SWCD to complete that task. The Supervisors scheduled staff evaluations for June 10, 2020. Janel shared that 2020, at times, has been challenging. Board Chair Craig Holman mentioned office traffic probably declined since public not being allowed inside. Janel and Kayleen both shared that they are as busy, or busier, because the public is unable to access the Service Center. Even though foot traffic in the office is at a minimum, we continue to complete necessary business by alternative means such as telephone, email, or mail which requires additional time.
Jennifer Thum discussed how lucky the Steuben County SWCD is with two full-time paid positions. Several counties operate on one full or part-time employee. She also discussed how ISDA is being asked to cut 20% from their budget. Travel has been cut, trainings have been cancelled, and the State is under a hiring freeze. She even advised some agencies are being asked to take pay cuts.
Jennifer also clarified requirements for Executive Session (i.e., posting information) and discussed the importance of Board Supervisors having valid email addresses. SSCB and ISDA send information to SWCDs, via email, including announcements such as the \$10,000 matching grant. Jennifer expressed the importance of, at a minimum, the Board Chair having an email that is regularly checked.

c. Budget and Finance

Craig Holman, Chair

i. Public Health Emergency Planning/SOPs

The Indiana State Board of Accounts encouraged all units of government to develop a plan to allow government to continue essential operations through a sustained period of significant absenteeism by employees and public officials during any Public Health Emergency. Janel advised that in the event the unit fiscal officer is temporarily unable to perform duties, the SWCD needs to develop a Delegation of Authority for various duties (treasurer; process payroll; process/pay claims, etc.) and determine an individual to fill in for the fiscal officer. She requested an official Board motion to support the Board's email decision to name Kayleen Hart as the secondary Treasurer/Fiscal Officer. Janel sent an email and text to the Board on April 8, 2020 asking them to designate someone, as soon as possible, in case she was unable to fulfill her duties.

Craig Holman moved to approve naming Kayleen Hart as the secondary Treasurer/Fiscal Officer in the event the current unit fiscal officer is unable to perform duties; seconded by Gene Diehl. Motion carried.

The Board also discussed payment of claims.

Kayleen Hart made a motion for the unit fiscal officer to coordinate with the Board Chair for approval to pay claims in the event the Steuben County SWCD Board of Supervisors is unable to meet. If the Board Chair is not available, then the unit fiscal officer should coordinate with any member of the Board. Seconded by Gene Diehl. Motion carried.

d. Information and Education

Kayleen Hart, Chair

i. I & E Update

Janel advised all of our services and programs are still in effect; however, we have had to cancel or postpone several educational events until further notice. Gene asked about the fall Youth Conservation Field Day. Janel shared they are moving forward with planning educational events but will need flexibility as they continue to work through the dynamic coronavirus pandemic.

ii. Upcoming Regional/National Events

1. NNE Region IDEA Webinar • May 14, 2020
2. Memorial Day Holiday • May 25, 2020 (**County Offices Closed**)
3. Friends of the St. Joseph River Meeting (*Tentative*) • May 28, 2020 (*Benton Harbor, MI*)
4. St. Joseph River Basin Commission Quarterly Mtg. • June 4, 2020 (*Elkhart, IN*)
5. Steuben Co. Youth Fishing Camp (*Tentative*) • June 5, 2020 (*Trine State Rec. Area*)
6. Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting (*Tentative*) • June 6, 2020 (*Angola, IN*)
7. Free Fishing Weekend (Indiana Residents) • June 6-7, 2020

- 8. Steuben SWCD Monthly Board Meeting • June 10, 2020 (*Angola USDA Service Center*)
- 9. 2020 National Pollinator Week • June 22-29, 2020
- 10. Independence Day Holiday • July 3, 2020 (*County Offices Closed*)

V. CLAIMS

5616	Sutton's Deli (Steuben SWCD 3/11/2020 Annual Meeting Dinner; 55 Servings)	\$ 823.90
5617	Todd Schworm (4,725 ft. Fence – GLSNRP; Pigeon Lake-Pigeon Creek)	\$ 8,114.40
5618	KPC Media Group Inc. (Steuben SWCD 3/11/2020 Annual Meeting Legal Advertising)	\$ 25.44
5619	Jordan Beehler (Steuben SWCD Website Design & Updates)	\$ 200.00
5620	Menards (Materials/Supplies for Augmented Reality Sandbox {ARS} Unit)	\$ 35.87
5621	Lonsbury Garage (2010 Ford Expedition Maintenance – Oil Change & Filter)	\$ 54.13
5622	Tim Groosbeck (Contractual Services – 3/24/2020 Tree Pickup)	\$ 472.00
5623	Blackburn Mfg. Co. (2,000 4"x5" Pink Vinyl Flags, 30" Wire)	\$ 206.26
5624	Ceres Solutions (Fuel for Expedition – April Statement)	\$ 47.73
5625	Postmaster (USPS Marketing Mail – Bulk Permit Fee)	\$ 240.00
5626	Amazon Payments, Inc. (EFT; Augmented Reality Sandbox Unit Materials/Supplies)	\$ 17.48
5627	Chuck Howard (Travel/Mileage – Wildlife Food Plot Seed Delivery)	\$ 23.08

Craig asked Board members if there were questions or concerns regarding the claims. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve claims as presented.

Kayleen Hart motioned to accept the claims for May 12, 2020. Gene Diehl seconded the motion. Motion approved.

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, June 10, 2020

Executive Session – 5:00 p.m.

SWCD Board Meeting – 6:00 p.m. (subject to change)

- Office of the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District
Peachtree Plaza 200, 1220 North 200 West, Suite L – Angola, Indiana 46703


VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Steuben SWCD, Craig called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.



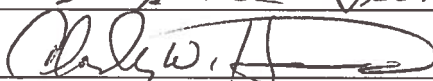
Kayleen Hart moved to adjourn; seconded by Gene Diehl. Motion carried.



Meeting adjourned by Chairman Craig Holman at 5:45 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:


Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator/Treasurer

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board



6/10/2020 (Date)