

**MINUTES**

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

**June 10, 2020**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

District Supervisors

Gene Diehl  
 Kayleen Hart  
 Craig Holman  
 Chuck Howard  
 David Perkins

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Arthur Franke, District Conservationist

Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)

Kate Sanders, Resource Specialist

SWCD

Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

ABSENT

Tara Lee, Resource Conservationist

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The SWCD Board meeting was called to order by Steuben SWCD Chairman Craig Holman at 6:30 p.m. Janel Meyer advised the Ceres Solutions Cooperative June 2020 fuel statement claim was added to the agenda.

**II. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (5-12-20)**

Craig asked the Board members to consider the minutes of the May 12, 2020 meeting. There being no additions or corrections, he asked for a motion to approve.

*Kayleen Hart moved to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2020 board meeting; seconded by Gene Diehl.  
 Motion carried.*

**III. TREASURER’S REPORT**

Janel provided the financial report for the May 9 to June 5, 2020 period. Financial reports and bank statements were sent to the Board Supervisors for review in advance of the meeting. Janel drew attention to warrant #5975 for Chuck Howard’s travel/mileage (wildlife food plot seed pickup). She inadvertently used warrant #5974, originally assigned to pay Chuck Howard, to pay the Postmaster for the 2020 Steuben County SWCD spring newsletter postage. This information was corrected on the May 2020 claim form and within Quickbooks.

*Report for period ending June 5, 2020:*

<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>			
Checking	\$ 58,348.59		
Statement Savings	<u>41,865.17</u>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$100,213.76</b>		
<i>Checking account</i>		<i>Savings account</i>	
<i>balance 05/08/20</i>	<i>\$ 61,189.86</i>	<i>balance 05/08/20</i>	<i>\$ 41,863.40</i>
<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 30.00</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 1.77</i>
<i>Disbursement</i>	<i><u>(\$ 2,871.27)</u></i>	<i>Disbursement</i>	<i><u>(\$ 0.00)</u></i>
	<i>\$ 58,348.59</i>		<i>\$41,865.17</i>

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 \$30.00 for period ending June 5<sup>th</sup> for over-the-counter flag sales. SWCD savings account interest totaled \$1.77. Disbursement was \$2,871.27; which included a 16.67-acre District Cost-Share payment for a forage/biomass planting in the Otter Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek, 2020 Soil and Water Stewardship supplies/awards, postage (2020 Stewardship awards/materials; 2020 SWCD spring newsletter; Steuben County Life reminder postcards), and travel expenses.

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

*Chuck Howard moved to approve the Treasurer's Report for the period ending June 5, 2020, as presented. David Perkins seconded; motion was approved.*

#### IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

**Gene Diehl, Chair**

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

1. a. Arthur Franke shared the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) & Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) deadline is June 19<sup>th</sup>. Steuben County received 55 EQIP applications (cover crops, etc.) and 18 Forestry applications (brush management, tree plantings). He has not received any applications for the Emergency Livestock Mortality sign-up. This program offers financial & technical assistance to livestock producers for animal mortality disposal resulting from COVID-19 impacts. The NRCS office remains at Stage 1 where public access is restricted.

b. Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) Program Technician, provided information on the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) – a relief program that includes direct support to agricultural producers. FSA provides payments on the corn and soybeans that the farmer still owned as of January 15<sup>th</sup>. They also make payments on livestock and dairy production from January to April. Payments are being given to assist with the cash loss the virus caused. The Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) program sign-up is wrapping up June 30<sup>th</sup>. Crop certification is ongoing and continues until July 15<sup>th</sup>.

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

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

##### 1. Fawn River Watershed

a. Janel reported the two Snow Lake-Fawn River fencing projects discussed at May's SWCD Board meeting were cancelled, per the producer's request. Project cancellation allowed additional monies to be moved into the Lake James-Crooked Creek 3,000 ft. fencing project, approved last month. Chairman Holman signed the conservation plan for this project. Janel stated about \$6,000 remains in the grant. Both Janel and Art have individuals/projects available. Project discussion was tabled until additional details have been determined. Janel was hopeful the SWCD 2020 Fawn River LARE application status would be announced shortly.

##### iii. Entire County

##### 1. District Cost-Share

a. Forage/Biomass Contracts/Payments: Janel requested approval to make the cost-share payments for the completed 15-acre forage/biomass planting in the Silver Lake-Pigeon Creek sub-watershed of Pigeon (total cost \$2,250) and 14-acre forage/biomass planting in the Headwaters of Fish Creek (total cost \$2,100). Art completed the Pigeon Creek field check. Staff would complete the field check for the Headwaters of Fish Creek planting in a couple weeks to allow for growth.

*A motion was made by Gene Diehl to approve the \$2,250 and \$2,100 payment for the completed 15-acre forage/biomass planting in the Silver Lake-Pigeon Creek sub-watershed and 14-acre forage/biomass planting in the Headwaters of Fish Creek, respectively. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.*

##### 2. Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Urban Grant

a. Clear Lake Kramer Property Contract: Janel reported this project would be beginning shortly.

b. Project Updates/Payments - Janel provided additional project updates:

- Stoney Ridge Native-Scaping contract: Janel recently performed a site visit; project near completion. Janel planned to request cost-share payment approval; however, no payment request made because homeowner still working on planting.

- Cherry Hill Court Native-Scaping contract: Project may be rescheduled to frost seed this winter due to coronavirus impacts (contractor availability).

- Lake James Christian Camp Contract: Janel sent email regarding project status and whether landowner still wanted to proceed. In March, landowner reported his budget had been frozen due to coronavirus financial impacts.

- Reddington Heights Native-Scaping Contract: Project moving forward, as planned.

- Wohlert Street Demonstration Project: Project schedule of operations amended due to coronavirus impacts. Site to be drilled with native grass seed this March/April.

New plan to frost seed this winter and plant the gullied areas with plugs. City of Angola MS4/Engineering Assistant Kris Thomas has been unable to find anyone to assist with plug planting. Janel, Art, and Kate will be helping. Janel also reported she sent a

letter to Ms. Thomas regarding the importance of proper site management to reduce sediment and nutrients from entering surrounding waterbodies.

b. Grant Extension Request: Janel reported the SWCD 2018 CWI Grant Extension Request was approved by the State Soil Conservation Board. Request granted due to unforeseen coronavirus impacts. New grant expiration date of September 30, 2021.

A brief budget update was provided; \$1,500 remains in the outreach line item. Janel would like to move the remaining outreach funds into cost-share, after the purchase of signage. \$500 has been budgeted for signage. Janel requested an official motion to support a budget amendment for the 2018 Steuben County Urban CWI grant.

*Gene Diehl moved to approve the budget amendment for the 2018 Steuben County Urban Clean Water Indiana Grant, moving remaining outreach line item funds into the cost-share line item. Chuck Howard seconded. Motion carried.*

**b. District Operations/Marketing Chuck Howard, Chair**

i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.

1. Field Visits/Trainings

a. Janel reported the St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC) is offering webinar training from Water Words That Work LLC, focusing on Breaking Barriers/Communication (diversity); Closing the Deal with Rural Landowners and Social Skills for Social Media.

b. Tally Sheets: 2019 and January – May 2020 Tally Sheets were sent to the Board Supervisors for review in advance of the July 10, 2020 Executive Session.

ii. Indiana Conservation Partnership

1. The Steuben SWCD spring tillage transect survey has been scheduled for June 23-24, 2020

iii. Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

1. River Friendly Farmer (RFF): RFF applications are due June 12, 2020. Janel suggested Terry Dailey as a potential candidate. She advised the State Fair has been cancelled; however, the District would still celebrate our RFF at the Steuben SWCD 2021 Annual Meeting. Janel asked the Board for additional candidate suggestions. No additional suggestions provided.

*A motion was made by David Perkins to nominate Terry Dailey as Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District's 2020 River Friendly Farmer; seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.*

iv. Indiana State Department of Agriculture

1. District Support Specialist/Resource Specialist Update: Resource Specialist Kate Sanders reported 2021 CWI applications are due in September. Janel advised the Steuben SWCD would not be submitting a 2021 application; SWCD needs to dedicate time to spending current grant funding. Gene Diehl inquired about options for pollinator cost-share. Janel shared the recently submitted Pigeon Creek and Fawn River LARE grant applications both included conservation cover (i.e., pollinator plantings); however, it remains unknown whether those applications will be funded. Art reported EQIP available for 2021 plantings.

**c. Budget and Finance Craig Holman, Chair**

i. Annual Plan

The Board reviewed the Steuben County SWCD Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary assignments.

*A motion was made by Chuck Howard to keep the current Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary assignments the same; seconded by Gene Diehl. Motion carried.*

Janel advised the group they may want to discuss further since the Chair is required to have email access and future CWI funding may depend on Supervisor participation in the Leadership Institute. Kayleen expressed an interest in the Chair position. No further discussion occurred; motion stood as approved.

Craig Holman, Steuben SWCD Chairman

Chuck Howard, Steuben SWCD Vice Chairman

Kayleen Hart, Steuben SWCD Board of Supervisor's Secretary

The Board reviewed the Steuben County SWCD Committee Assignments.

*A motion was made by Chuck Howard to keep the current Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District Committee Assignments the same; seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.*

Gene Diehl, Chair of the Natural Resources Committee with Chuck Howard as member;

Chuck Howard, Chair of the District Operations Committee with David Perkins as member;

Craig Holman, Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee with Kayleen Hart as member; Kayleen Hart, Chair of the Information and Education Committee with Gene Diehl as member. Janel will complete updates to the body of the annual plan with current project information and have it available for the July Board meeting.

- ii. Conflict of Interest Statements  
Conflict of Interest Statements were tabled to the July Board meeting. Janel reported the office lost power around 1:30 p.m., which prohibited her from being able to print the Conflict Statements for Board Supervisor signatures.
- iii. 2020 Budget Request  
The 2020 budget request was presented. The SWCD 2021 operating grant request will remain \$16,000, same as 2020. The funding amount allocated to each operating expense category was slightly modified. Office supplies, vehicle expenses (repairs and maintenance), treasurer's bond and equipment insurance and education programs/books/materials were adjusted to better reflect past spending. Due to coronavirus, the Commissioners requested everyone submit their requests, explanations and supporting documents in writing. No in person presentations will be scheduled. Janel reported she would check with HR whether Steuben SWCD staff were eligible for a pay step. She reported the County is still discussing the matrix; however, nothing has been finalized. Chairman Holman signed the 2021 Budget Request Worksheets.
- iv. Steuben SWCD Business Plan  
Janel reminded the group our current Business Plan expires in December. She advised the need to begin writing the next 3-year plan. All Supervisor's received a hard copy of the Steuben SWCD Business Plan at the August 2019 Board meeting. They were asked to review the plan, evaluate whether the District is fulfilling the goals/objectives listed and provide comments. Kayleen is the only individual who has provided comments. The Board will need to discuss this further at the July Board meeting and schedule a day/time to begin. Janel recommended asking Indiana State Department of Agriculture District Support Specialist Jennifer Thum for assistance and serve as meeting moderator.

**d. Information and Education**

**Kayleen Hart, Chair**

- i. NACD Stewardship Week Poster Contest  
Due to coronavirus, the Steuben SWCD didn't print the 2020 Soil & Water Stewardship materials for Steuben County MSD and Fremont schools. Janel emailed all of the principals and offered the information electronically. Two schools were interested; the others respectfully declined since their teachers were already overwhelmed with the requirement to complete the school year remotely. The SWCD sponsored the Stewardship Week Poster Contest and received 4 poster entries. Due to the low participation, Janel advised the decision was made to award all entries as "1<sup>st</sup> Place" winners. Winners were mailed a package which included an award certificate, Backyard Birds & Blossoms coloring book, colored pencils, a scratch-art bookmark and a bee house. This year's theme was "Where would we BEE without Pollinators?".
- ii. Educational Events  
An update was provided on upcoming educational events:
  - Conservation Camp - Janel advised a decision was made to cancel the SWCD Conservation Camp at Pokagon. We felt it would be too difficult to maintain social distancing with children that participate in making crafts and swimming together.
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Youth Conservation Field Day (YCFD) - Gene inquired about the YCFD. The SWCD is moving forward with planning, until we hear otherwise. Janel will need to contact the Dumpster Drummers regarding payment and cancellation requirements. She reported Pokagon Nature Center staff are unable to participate; Martin Franke from LaGrange SWCD agreed to lead the "Oh Deer" station.
  - Steuben County Life – the SWCD is still moving forward with planning Steuben County Life. The group discussed an official Board motion to support the program.  
*Kayleen Hart made a motion to (1) support refreshments and materials/supplies for the Steuben County Life program, (2) approve a \$40 registration fee for returning participants and a \$50 registration fee for new participants, and (3) exempt speakers and Steuben County Life program planners from paying the registration fee as this class furthers the mission of the SWCD; seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.*
- iii. Spring Newsletter  
Janel reported the 2020 Steuben SWCD Spring Newsletter was emailed/mailed at the end of May.
- iv. Food Plot Seed  
Kate assisted the District with food plot seed distribution. All food plot seed was gone within 5-hours on the first day of distribution.

v. Associate Supervisors

Janel will be sending the Associate Supervisor letters to Dan Oberst, Julie Reynolds and Tim Groosbeck. The Board also suggested sending Terry Dailey a letter.

vi. Steuben County SWCD Website Training Request

Janel reported Tara Lee is requested Board approval for additional website training with our new host to assist with website upkeep. The training fee is \$50/hour. The group discussed the December 2019 training with website designer Jordan Beehler and the Board motion to spend a maximum of \$1,000 for website design, training and set-up fees. Janel reported the SWCD has currently spent \$984 for website design and set-up fees. Since she was not available for the initial December 2019 training (vacation PTO), Janel requested to be included in the training, if the Board decides to approve Tara's request. Janel explained the importance of having a second individual available to perform website maintenance/updates if Tara is not available. The Board recommended also training a Supervisor for additional backup. The discussion was tabled to the July Board meeting to discuss when Tara present.

vii. Upcoming Regional/National Events

1. 2020 National Pollinator Week • June 22-29, 2020
2. Independence Day Holiday • July 3, 2020 (*County Offices Closed*)
3. Steuben SWCD Monthly Board Meeting • July 8, 2020 (*Angola USDA Service Center*)
4. LaGrange County SWCD Pasture Walk • July 9, 2020 (*Wolcottville, IN*)
5. Steuben County Virtual 4-H Fair • July 17-23, 2020 (*Angola, IN*)

V. CLAIMS

5628	USPS/Postmaster (2020 SWCD Spring Newsletter Postage – 1,552 pieces)	\$ 215.52
5629	Terry Dailey (16.7-ac. Forage/Biomass Planting–District; Otter Lake-Pigeon Creek)	\$ 2,500.00
5630	Meijer (2020 Steuben SWCD Stewardship Week Poster Contest Supplies/Awards)	\$ 71.92
5631	USPS/Postmaster (2020 Poster Contest Supplies/Awards Postage; Steuben Co. Life Postage)	\$ 60.75
5632	Graphics 3, inc. (Spring 2020 Newsletter Reproduction with Mailing Services – 1,625 pieces)	\$ 799.60
5633	Ceres Solutions (Fuel for Expedition – June Statement)	\$ 23.53

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

*Chuck Howard motioned to accept the claims for June 10, 2020. Kayleen Hart seconded the motion. Motion approved..*

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING

**Wednesday, July 8, 2020 – 5:00 p.m.**

**SWCD Board Meeting**

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

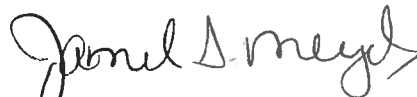
VII. ADJOURNMENT

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

*Gene Diehl moved to adjourn; seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.*

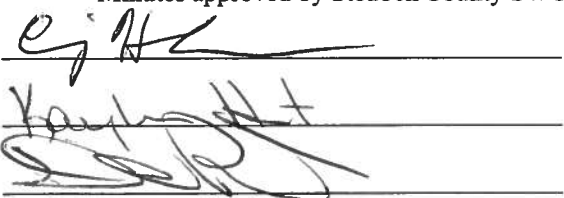
Meeting adjourned by Chairman Craig Holman at 7:17 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator/Treasurer

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board



7/8/2020 (Date)