

**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

July 8, 2020

IN ATTENDANCE:

District Supervisors

Gene Diehl
Kayleen Hart
Craig Holman
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

Chuck Howard, Board Supervisor
Tara Lee, Resource Conservationist

I. CALL TO ORDER

The SWCD Board meeting was called to order by Steuben SWCD Chairman Craig Holman at 5:01 p.m.

II. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (6-10-20)

Craig asked the Board members if there were any corrections to the minutes for the June 10, 2020 Board meeting. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve as presented.

Kayleen Hart moved to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2020 Steuben County SWCD board meeting as presented; seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT

Janel provided the financial report for the June 6 through July 3, 2020 period. Financial reports and bank statements were sent to the Board Supervisors for review in advance of the meeting.

Report for period ending July 3, 2020:

<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>			
Checking	\$ 53,225.46		
Statement Savings	<u>41,866.89</u>		
Total	\$ 95,092.35		
<i>Checking account</i>		<i>Savings account</i>	
<i>balance 06/05/20</i>	<i>\$ 58,348.59</i>	<i>balance 06/05/20</i>	<i>\$ 41,865.17</i>
<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 100.00*</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 1.72</i>
<i>Disbursement</i>	<i>(\$ 5,223.13)</i>	<i>Disbursement</i>	<i>(\$ 0.00)</i>
	<i>\$ 53,225.46</i>		<i>\$41,866.89</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 June vehicle log. Janel reported total receipts of \$75.00* for period ending July 3rd for over-the-counter flag sales and an affiliate membership. SWCD savings account interest totaled \$1.72. Disbursement was \$5,223.13; which included a 15.0-acre and 14.0-acre District Cost-Share payment for forage/biomass plantings in the Silver Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek and the Headwaters of Fish Creek, 4-H award sponsorship and operating expenses. Chairman Holman asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the Treasurer's Report. Hearing none, he called for a motion.

David Perkins motioned to approve the Treasurer's Report for the period ending July 3, 2020, as presented. Kayleen Hart seconded; motion was approved.

*Note: Check #5954 written on 2/18/2020 to the Friends of the St. Joseph River for \$25.00 for their Annual Watershed Celebration was voided 7/2/20. This \$25.00 was added into receipts. Event was cancelled due to COVID-19; check returned/received; voided in QuickBooks 7/2/20.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Natural Resources/Technical Assistance

Gene Diehl, Chair

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

1. Talking Points were provided in the Supervisors packets. Highlights included:
 - o FSA's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) - Clear30 program is a new pilot program offering farmers and landowners an opportunity to enroll in a 30-year CRP contract. The pilot is available to farmers and landowners with expiring water-quality practice CRP contracts in the Great Lakes regions. Signup period is July 6 to Aug. 21, 2020.
 - o COVID-19 Office Status. The Angola Service Center is operating at Stage 2. Public access is restricted; public allowed in office by appointment only. Staff still working by alternate means as much as possible (phone, email, etc.).
 - o The 93rd FFA National Convention & Expo will be held as a virtual experience during the week of Oct. 28.
2. Arthur Franke has been working on EQIP contracts. This year differs from previous years in that contracts are being pre-approved. Landowners who receive a pre-approval letter are required to confirm their interest. Funding for 2020 has decreased significantly. Last year, all Steuben EQIP applications were funded. This is not possible for 2020. Unfunded applications can be rolled into 2021. Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) Resource Specialist Kate Sanders has been assisting Arthur with re-enroll and new CRP contracts.

Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) Program Technician, reported FSA is working on completing crop certification. Kayleen stated is has been challenging requiring producers to have an appointment. Prior to Stage 2, all certifications were being mailed.

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. The next Great Lakes Commission (GLC) Quarterly Report is due July 14, 2020.
 - b. Project Updates: Janel reviewed the amount of funding remaining with the recent cancellation of one contract due to unforeseen circumstances.
2. Fawn River Watershed
 - a. Janel presented two fencing projects to the Board. One for ~2,200 ft. of fence in the Snow Lake sub-watershed and one ~3,000 ft. of fence in the Town of Orland sub-watershed. The Board discussed the need of each applicant to regulate livestock access and fence animals out of certain environmentally sensitive areas. A discussion was held whether to focus on one project or split the remaining funds between the two projects. The Board agreed to fund both projects.

Kayleen Hart moved to approve the estimated 2,200 ft. fencing project in the Snow Lake sub-watershed of Fawn River and the estimated 3,000 ft. fencing project in the Town of Orland sub-watershed of Fawn River using the 2018 Fawn River LARE grant; seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

-Western Lake Erie Basin: 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. Janel reported she received and fulfilled a request from ISDA District Support Specialist Jennifer Thum for a letter of support to extend the Tri-State Western Lake Erie Basin (TWLEB) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The Steuben SWCD first supported this RCPP proposal in 2014. An extension has the potential to bring in \$2M to WLEB farmers. Jennifer/ISDA's thank you card was shared with the Board.

iii. Entire County

1. District Cost-Share
 - a. 2021 Forage/Biomass Application: Janel advised the Board of a 17.24-acre forage/biomass planting request in the Otter Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek (spring 2021). No grant funding currently exists within this sub-watershed. She discussed holding off on deciding whether to fund the project until the SWCD is notified whether the Pigeon Creek LARE grant application is funded. This request could be run through that grant.
2. Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Urban Grant
 - a. Project Updates/Payments: Janel requested an official Board motion supporting the Clear Lake Kramer Property contract. This project was approved in May; however, no official Board motion was recorded.

A motion was made by Kayleen Hart to approve the 1,000 ft² native-scaping project at

the Clear Lake Kramer Property using the 2018 Urban Clean Water Indiana Grant. Seconded by David Perkins; motion carried.

Janel reported the Lake James Camp contract was cancelled due to coronavirus financial impacts. She also provided project updates and pictures for projects either near completion or completed (Stoney Ridge, Cherry Hill Court and Pokagon State Park Nature Center native-scaping projects; Wohlert Street filter-strip project).

Janel requested approval to process the cost-share payment for the completed Stoney Ridge and Pokagon Nature Center native-scaping projects.

David Perkins moved to approve payment for the completed native-scaping projects at Stoney Ridge sub-division and Pokagon State Park Nature Center. Kayleen Hart seconded the motion; motion was approved.

b. Signage: A final copy of the 2018 Urban CWI grant signage for cost-share participants was shared. Janel reported the order was placed and signs will be available within a few days. She requested a motion to approve vendor payment when she obtains the signs.

David Perkins moved to approve payment for the completed 2018 Urban Clean Water Indiana grant signage; seconded by Gene Diehl. Motion carried.

Janel provided an updated grant budget report.

3. Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC)

a. June 6, 2020 Meeting: No report. Janel was unable to participate via Zoom due to internet connectivity issues.

b. June 26, 2020 Water Quality Meeting: Janel attended. The SCLC Water Quality Committee met to discuss water quality sampling finances, testing sites, eDNA testing and the installation of a conservation practice to reduce the *E. coli* levels in Carpenter Ditch.

Janel provided a copy of the spring SCLC Bobber Watchin' publication for review. She submitted an article on WLEB algal blooms and what's being done to address the problem. Janel thanked Kate for assistance with first draft edits.

4. Steuben County/Urban (IDEM Rule 5/MS4)

a. A copy of the Orland-NIPSCO 69kV Transmission Line Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan was provided for review. Janel presented a project summary.

b. A copy of the Steubenville Substation Rule 5 Inspection Report was provided for review.

b. District Operations/Marketing

Chuck Howard, Chair

i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.

1. Field Visits/Trainings

a. SWCD Open Door Law Training Webinar • June 10, 2020. Janel participated. Each Supervisor received a document listing the link to the recorded session to learn more on public rights and the responsibilities of SWCDs under the public access laws.

b. Braking Through Barriers/Communication Training Webinar • June 11 & 18, 2020. Janel participated. These webinar trainings are funded by the St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC). Water Words That Work, LLC is providing the training. Janel shared information about readability tools which can help agencies craft environmental messages easily understood by all segments of the population.

c. SWCD Public Records and Executive Session Training Webinar • June 18, 2020. Janel participated. Each Supervisor received a document listing the link to the recorded session to learn more on public rights and the responsibilities of SWCDs under the public access laws.

d. Closing the Deal w/Rural Landowners Training Webinar • June 30 & July 1, 2020. Janel participated. Webinar trainings are funded by the SJRBC.

e. CWI Grant Management Systems (GMS) Training Webinar • July 8, 2020. Janel participated. All SWCDs required to attend training on this new web-based program.

2. June Tally Sheets were provided in the Supervisors packets.

ii. Indiana Conservation Partnership

1. 2020 Spring Tillage Transect Survey: The Steuben County spring tillage transect survey was completed on June 23-24, 2020 by Arthur, Kate and Janel. Janel shared the tillage graphics for corn and soybean fields. Arthur provided key points regarding the data: most producers no-till soybeans & 98% of the corn fields included in the survey were no-till, mulch-till or reduced till. No-till was not as high as last spring or fall – last year, producers were unable to get into their fields due to excessive precipitation.

iii. Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

1. River Friendly Farmer (RFF): Terry Daily is the Steuben SWCD 2020 River Friendly Farmer. Janel asked the Board for additional ideas to honor Terry since the 2020 Indiana State Fair was cancelled. The Board suggested an article in the Herald-Republican newspaper.
2. Urban Conservation Agreement Request: The Board discussed the IASWCD Urban Conservation Agreement funding request. IASWCD was presented with an opportunity to assist Districts across the state with urban conservation outreach and technical assistance through a proposed NRCS Contribution Agreement. The five-year program would create a statewide Technical Program Coordinator and 4 Urban Conservationists (one for each region in the state). Districts were asked to commit matching cash funds for the position salaries. Board Supervisors were provided this information via email due to the time sensitivity of the request. Janel advised IASWCD Executive Director Joseph Schmees the Steuben SWCD would be unable to commit to the program until the board could meet to further discuss. Additionally, it was important for the Board to know how much of a yearly commitment was required prior to stating our interest. Gene Diehl was not supportive of providing funding. Gene preferred keeping any funds locally for Steuben County projects.

A motion was made by Gene Diehl to oppose the IASWCD Urban Conservation Agreement request to provide matching cash funds; seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

3. SWCD Tort Liability: Janel reviewed the Office of the Attorney General memo re: Tort Claims Act Protections for SWCDs. This memo stemmed from a legal question whether the Tort Claims Act protects supervisors and employees of an SWCD from personal liability. The simple answer: yes, both are covered by the Act and not subject to personal liability actions taken within the scope of employment. A copy of this memo will be kept in our District records.
4. 2020 Membership Dues: The SWCD received the annual statement for IASWCD membership dues (\$2,000).

Kayleen Hart motioned to approve the \$2,000 payment for 2020 IASWCD membership dues; seconded by Gene Diehl. Motion carried.

iv. Indiana State Department of Agriculture

1. District Support Specialist/Resource Specialist Update: Resource Specialist Kate Sanders shared information on Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI) #LovINsoil campaign. This campaign provides awareness and education about soil health for everyone across Indiana. Individuals can share their love for healthy soil by posting soil images with the hashtag #LovINsoil. Kate announced a series of three virtual training opportunities for Indiana District staff and Supervisors on August 25th (District Succession Planning), September 1st (Effective Board Meetings) and September 8th (Roles & Responsibilities of District Staff and Supervisors). All sessions are scheduled from 7-8 p.m. EST. Registration is required. A copy of the training announcement was provided in the Supervisors packets. SWCD staff will participate and will adjust their schedules accordingly.

c. Budget and Finance

Craig Holman, Chair

i. Annual Plan

Janel updated the body of the annual plan with current project information. Per the July Board meeting, committee assignments/committee chairs remained the same.

David Perkins made a motion to approve the Steuben SWCD 2020 Annual Plan of Work; seconded by Gene Diehl. Motion carried.

Craig suggested the incorporation of Steuben County Purdue Extension and Farm Bureau into the technical assistance section for 2021.

ii. Conflict of Interest Statements

Conflict of Interest Statements were completed by Craig, Gene, Kayleen and David. The conflict of interest statement for Chuck will be completed the next Board meeting he is available.

Kayleen Hart motioned to approve the Conflict of Interest Statement for Craig Holman; seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

David Perkins motioned to approve the Conflict of Interest Statement for Gene Diehl; seconded by Kayleen Hart. Motion carried.

David Perkins motioned to approve the Conflict of Interest Statement for Kayleen Hart; seconded by Gene Diehl. Motion carried.

Kayleen Hart motioned to approve the Conflict of Interest Statement for David Perkins; seconded by Gene Diehl. Motion carried.

David Perkins motioned to approve the Conflict of Interest Statement for Chuck Howard;

seconded by Kayleen Hart. Motion carried.

iii. 2021 SWCD Staff Salaries/Wages Request (update)
2021 SWCD staff salaries were reviewed; both positions were eligible for a pay step 4 increase.

iv. Steuben SWCD Business Plan
The Board discussed updating the SWCD business plan for 2021-2024. A Business Plan Committee was formed. Committee will consist of Steuben SWCD staff, Arthur Franke, Chairman Holman and Secretary Hart. The Committee would like the assistance of ISDA District Support Specialist Jennifer Thum. Janel will coordinate with Jennifer on a time convenient for her schedule.

d. Information and Education

Kayleen Hart, Chair

i. Drainage Board

Staff are attending the twice-monthly county Drainage Board (DB) meetings, as their schedules allow. No report was provided.

ii. Summer Newsletter

Janel reported she will begin compiling the SWCD Summer Newsletter. The newsletter may be released later than usual due to current workload.

iii. Steuben County 4-H Fair Awards

Janel sent the 4-H Fair Board a check for sponsorship of the Soil and Water Conservation trophies, at a cost of \$25/trophy for Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion. Since the check amount was under \$100, no board motion necessary. The Board discussed how to increase participation in soil & water. Art shared LaGrange County experiencing the same issues. They received on 2 entries in 2019.

iv. Steuben County SWCD Website Training Request

Discussion on the training request was tabled to the August Board meeting, after Tara returns.

v. Upcoming Regional/National Events

1. LaGrange County SWCD Pasture Walk • July 9, 2020 (*Wolcottville, IN*)
2. Steuben County Virtual 4-H Fair • July 17-23, 2020 (*Angola, IN*)
3. Steuben County Lakes Council Annual Meeting • August 1, 2020 (*Angola, IN*)
4. Steuben SWCD Monthly Board Meeting • August 12, 2020 (*Angola USDA Service Center*)
5. LaGrange County SWCD Pasture Walk • August 13, 2020 (*Wolcottville, IN*)

V. CLAIMS

5634	Steuben County 4-H Fair Board (4-H Award Sponsorship)	\$ 50.00
5635	Paul Christoffel (15.0-ac. Forage/Biomass Planting – District; Silver Lake-Pigeon Creek)	\$ 2,250.00
5636	Jeannie Shutt (14.0-ac. Forage/Biomass Planting – District; Headwaters of Fish Creek)	\$ 2,100.00
5637	Ceres Solutions (Fuel for Expedition – July 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.

Gene Diehl motioned to accept the claims for July 8, 2020 as presented. David Perkins seconded the motion. Motion approved..

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, August 12, 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.

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

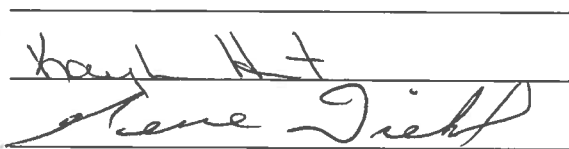
Meeting adjourned by Chairman Craig Holman at 6:34 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator/Treasurer



Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board





8/12/2020 (Date)