

MINUTES

STEUBEN COUNTY SWCD BOARD MEETING
Steuben County Community Center • 317 S. Wayne Street, Angola, Indiana 46703

August 12, 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
 Tara Lee, Resource Conservationist

ABSENT

Chuck Howard, Board Supervisor

I. CALL TO ORDER

The SWCD Board meeting was called to order by Steuben SWCD Chairman Craig Holman at 5:02 p.m.

II. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (7-8-20)

Janel Meyer advised a note was added to the July meeting minutes regarding check #5954. This \$25 check, written on 2/18/20 for the Friends of the St. Joseph River annual meeting registration, was voided July 2, 2020. The event was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic; check was returned to the SWCD. Chairman Holman asked the Board members if there were any additional corrections to the minutes for the July 8, 2020 Board meeting. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve as presented.

Kayleen Hart moved to approve the minutes of the July 8, 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 July 4 through August 5, 2020 period. Financial reports and bank statements were sent to the Board Supervisors for review in advance of the meeting. She also provided an updated treasurer’s report for the period ending July 3, 2020, which included information regarding cancelled check #5954. *Report for period ending August 5, 2020:*

<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>			
Checking	\$ 64,002.46		
Statement Savings	<u>41,868.66</u>		
Total	\$105,871.12		
<i>Checking account</i>		<i>Savings account</i>	
<i>balance 07/03/20</i>	\$ 53,225.46	<i>balance 07/03/20</i>	\$ 41,866.89
<i>Receipts</i>	\$16,114.40	<i>Receipts</i>	\$ 1.77
<i>Disbursement</i>	<u>(\$ 5,337.40)</u>	<i>Disbursement</i>	<u>(\$ 0.00)</u>
	\$ 64,002.46		\$41,868.66

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 July vehicle log. Janel Meyer reported total receipts of \$16,114.40, including an \$8,114.40 reimbursement payment from the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) for a Pigeon Creek Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Grant cost-share payment and the second half of the Steuben SWCD FY20 operating budget from Steuben County Government. Disbursement was \$5,337.40; which included two Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Urban conservation cost-share payments for native-scaping projects in the Lake James/Crooked Creek sub-watershed of Fawn River, educational supplies/ materials for the Urban CWI grant, Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation District dues 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.

Gene Diehl motioned to approve the Treasurer's Report for the period ending August 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. Talking Points were provided in the Supervisors packets. Highlights included:
 - o Indiana offices reported clients received unsolicited seeds in the mail from foreign countries. The USDA Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is the lead agency responsible for collecting seed packets; packets can be mailed to APHIS. Seeds can also be mailed to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Entomology & Plant Pathology or dropped off at the County Extension office.
 - o Indiana landowners have shown great interest in NRCS Farm Bill programs this year; interest has far outreached the initial allocation of funds. Indiana NRCS requested and received an additional \$8.8 million to address conservation needs.
 - o Most Service Centers continue to operate at Stage 2. They anticipate we will stay in this stage for a while longer and request SWCD Boards and FSA County Committees to continue to meet offsite as necessary. Offices are open by appointment only; face masks required.
2. NRCS District Conservationist Arthur Franke reported he continues work on Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts. ISDA Resource Specialist Kate Sanders is assisting with CRP contracts; contracts due September 10, 2020. Art received an email from Ohio NRCS regarding The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Farmer Advocate Outreach program. Kate further explained TNC was funded to develop a program for the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB). The goal is to train 40 outstanding conservation farmers to do farmer to farmer outreach events on conservation systems & methods. Participating farmers will be paid \$30/hr. for time expended on the project. Thirty-six hours of group training in outreach methods, presentations, communication, etc. will be provided. Farmers will be tasked with speaking at events or hosting shop talks/field days. They currently have 14 volunteer farmers need additional volunteers.

Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) Program Technician, reported the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) program added excessive moisture as an additional qualifying disaster event. WHIP+ can help eligible agricultural producers who suffered losses to crops, trees, etc. from 2018 & 2019 natural disasters. The Coronavirus Food Assistance Program provided an upfront payment of 80% for eligible agricultural producers (where prices and market supply chains were impacted); the remaining 20% will be released early next week.

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. GLC FY 20-3 Quarterly Report: The Great Lakes Commission (GLC) FY20-3 Quarterly Report was completed and submitted by the deadline. Ms. Meyer provided a copy of the report for review.
- b. GLC Grant Update: Janel shared concerns regarding the SWCD's ability to meet the pledged match amount listed in our grant application. The match is a required element in the contract. She explained the cover crop prevented plant contracts didn't provide as much in-kind as other practices due to the flat rate of \$35/acre. Kate Sanders suggested contacting Jennifer Thum, ISDA Support Specialist, for assistance. David Perkins suggested contacting the grant administrators and inquire about contract modification. He also suggested investigating cover crop termination costs.
- c. 2020 Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Application: Janel was contacted by LARE grant administrator Taylor Austin who asked the SWCD to prioritize whether the Fawn River or Pigeon Creek application received funding. Janel shared she chose Pigeon due to the lack of cost-share funding for the lower stretches of the watershed since 2017. Janel was advised more than likely a choice may not be required.

2. Fawn River Watershed

- a. Janel requested approval to pay the cost-share payment for the completed +/- 3,000 ft. fencing project in the Lake James/Crooked Creek sub-watershed of Fawn. Art and Jane completed the site

visit on August 4th. Total cost of \$7,500. Janel will invoice LARE; reimbursement to take between 30 and 35 days.

David Perkins moved to approve the \$7,500 payment for the completed +/- 3,000 ft. fencing project in the Lake James/Crooked Creek sub-watershed of Fawn River through the 2018 Fawn River LARE grant; Steuben SWCD to invoice LARE for cost-share reimbursement. Kayleen Hart seconded the motion; motion was approved.

3. Friends of the St. Joseph River Association
 - a. The Friends 13th Annual Watershed Celebration has been rescheduled August 19, 2020 and will be offered in a virtual format. Melissa Widhalm of the Purdue University Climate Research Center will provide the keynote presentation regarding what a changing climate means for the St. Joseph River watershed.
4. St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC)
 - a. The next quarterly SJRBC meeting has been scheduled September 3, 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. August 27, 2020 Agronomy Field Day: Session has been cancelled due to COVID-19.
 - b. July 31, 2020 Indiana Domestic Action Plan (DAP) Advisory Committee Meeting: Janel and Kate attended this webinar where USGS presented 2019 WLEB water quality sampling data. Kate reviewed highlights from the webinar, which included: the St. Joseph River contributes less nitrogen and phosphorus (P) than the St. Mary's River; the St. Mary's River is a hotter spot for P requiring the need for both Indiana and Ohio to continue decreasing nutrient runoff/transport; nitrate loads decreased in 2019 due to the large-scale conservation implemented in the WLEB where many fields were fallow due to excessive precipitation (or cover crops planted); legacy P contributing to loads since no decrease noted between 2018 and 2019 spring P loads.
2. Maumee River Basin Commission
 - a. August 6, 2020 Meeting: No report. Chuck Howard was unable to attend.

iii. Entire County

1. Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Urban Grant
 - a. Year 3, 6-month Report: The CWI Urban grant year 3, 6-month report was completed and submitted by the deadline. Janel provided a copy of the report for review.
 - b. Tree/Shrub & Native-Scaping Applications: Janel presented a tree/shrub project and native-scaping project to the Board for approval. The tree/shrub planting was requested by the Stoney Ridge sub-division landowner that completed a native-scaping project through the grant. This landowner recently purchased property adjacent to their home and would like to add native species to improve biodiversity, attract native animals and decrease erosion.

A motion was made by Kayleen Hart to approve the tree/shrub planting at the Stoney Ridge sub-division property using the 2018 Urban Clean Water Indiana Grant. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

The Board also discussed an application for a native-scaping planting at Pocket Park in Angola. The project was initiated by the Downtown Angola Coalition. The project goal is to provide a public pollinator garden for conservation and educational purposes. The planting will also improve biodiversity and reduce stormwater runoff. Garden to be located in a highly visible location along East Maumee Street. Approximate size of the garden is 1,550 ft². Janel reported up to \$1,500 has not been obligated in the grant.

Kayleen Hart made a motion to approve the ~1,500 ft² native-scaping project at Pocket Park using the 2018 Urban Clean Water Indiana Grant; maximum cost-share payment of \$1,500. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.
 - c. Project Updates/Payments: Chairman Holman signed the approval for payment of incentive funds for the native-scaping project at Pokagon State Park; payment was approved at the July 8, 2020 Board meeting. Janel requested approval to process the cost-share payment for the completed 6,050 ft² native-scaping planting in the Spring Haven addition in Fremont.

David Perkins moved to approve payment for the completed 6,050 ft² native-scaping planting in the Spring Haven addition in Fremont; seconded by Kayleen Hart. Motion carried.
2. Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC)
 - a. August 1, 2020 Annual Meeting: No report; staff did not attend this meeting. Janel reviewed the SCLC's July 11, 2020 eDNA and E. coli sampling results from the Crooked Lake Watershed.

Ten sites were sampled, following a rain event. Six of the ten sites sampled had E. coli counts higher than the Indiana standard for recreational use (235 CFUs/100 ml). Highest E. coli counts were at two sites on the Palfreyman Ditch near Northwood sub-division. Human eDNA was present at seven of the ten sampled sites and in higher concentration than any other source. Palfreyman Ditch was the most important source of E. coli and eDNA loading; human sources accounted for more than 90% of the loading. After the report a brief discussion ensued regarding cost-share assistance for septic replacement. Resource Conservationist Tara Lee reported the lack of septic grants available during her past research.

3. Steuben County/Urban (IDEM Rule 5/MS4)
 - a. A copy of the Wayne Klink Property Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan was provided for review. A project summary was presented.

b. District Operations/Marketing

Chuck Howard, Chair

- i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.
 1. Field Visits/Trainings
 - a. Community Center/Courthouse Rain Garden Consultation • July 1, 2020. Staff assisted Gary Fair with plant identification and provided management recommendations.
 - b. Department Head Meeting • July 15, 2020. Janel attended. She reported the Commissioner's approved the updated Steuben County Employee Handbook. Once Council has approved, an electronic version will be distributed to all County employees. Employees will be required to sign the updated acknowledgement form.
 - c. CCSI Residue Management Webinar • July 16, 2020. Janel participated in this Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative webinar which featured residue management strategies and issues in emerging cash and cover crops due to uneven residue collection. The live webinar was conducted from a recently harvested Kentucky wheat field.
 2. July Tally Sheets were provided in the Supervisors packets.
- ii. Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD)
 1. Virtual Training for Indiana District Staff & Supervisors. Janel encouraged SWCD Board Supervisors to participate in these virtual training opportunities, discussed at the last Board meeting, on August 25 (District Succession Planning), September 1 (Effective Board Meetings) and September 8 (Roles & Responsibilities of District Staff and Supervisors). A copy of the registration flier was included in the Supervisors packets.
- iii. Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
 1. USDA Privacy Law Requirements: Art reviewed a September 9, 2009 USDA Privacy Law Requirements memo from the Indiana State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) which provided guidance on how Districts should comply with privacy requirements on information obtained from USDA program participants. The memo was recently provided as follow-up to a June 10, 2020 SWCD Open Door Law (ODL) training. Privacy requirements impact the way SWCDs review and sign USDA conservation plans. USDA policy is for SWCDs to review/sign conservation plans (CPA-68), but not to review/sign program contracts or associated documents. Contract documents include the Plan of Operation (form 1155) which is not to be reviewed/signed by SWCDs except for the Conservation Reserve Program which requires SWCD signature on 1155 forms by statute. Since SWCD meetings are open to the public under ODL and minutes of such meetings are considered to be public records, SWCDs are required to protect privacy information discussed at board meetings and recorded in meeting minutes. Executive Sessions can be used to review USDA developed Conservation Plans. However, the SSCB recommendation is to avoid the need for an Executive Session and need for any final action in a Board meeting by simply appointing a representative of the district to review/sign USDA developed Conservation Plans and/or contracts throughout the month. This allows USDA staff the ability to obtain the requested signature anytime regardless of when a board meeting is held.
The Board discussed who would be the best contact to serve as the designated "district representative"; determining the primary contact should be office staff who are readily available on a daily basis. The Board also requested general updates (number of plans approved; types of practices approved, etc.) be provided by the NRCS District Conservationist at regular Board meetings.

David Perkins motioned to appoint the Steuben County SWCD Administrative Coordinator as the primary designated district representative and the Steuben County SWCD Board Chair as the secondary district representative to review/sign Conservation Plans and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract Plan of

*Operations form (form 1155), per USDA policy requirements and Indiana State Soil Conservation Board recommendations. General reports, including the number of plans and types of practices approved, etc., will be reported by the NRCS District Conservationist at regular SWCD Board meetings. Seconded by Kayleen Hart.
Motion carried.*

iv. Indiana State Department of Agriculture

1. District Support Specialist/Resource Specialist Update: Kate provided the following updates: The 2021 IASWCD Annual Conference will be held virtually; District Showcase and Supervisor of the Year Award applications are due August 28 and September 6, 2020, respectively; SWCDs should be preparing for Supervisor Elections; ISDA & CCSI are offering soil health and nutrient management workshops, with the first workshop scheduled August 13, 2020.

c. Budget and Finance

Craig Holman, Chair

i. Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance

Janel requested the Board review our current Farm Bureau Insurance policy and provide recommendations on current coverage. Chairman Holman volunteered to review the policy.

ii. County Council 2021 Budget Hearing & 1st Reading • August 25, 2020

Janel advised the 1st budget reading has been scheduled August 25, 2020. The SWCD is not required to be present at the meeting unless we have an interest in being placed on the agenda. No interest was expressed as our FY21 budget request remained the same as our FY20 request.

iii. Postage Stamps

Janel requested a motion to approve the purchase of two rolls of stamps; purchase exceeds the SWCDs SOP purchase limit of \$100 without prior Board approval.

*Kayleen Hart motioned to approve the purchase of 2 rolls of stamps; seconded by David Perkins.
Motion carried.*

iv. Portable Screen

The Board discussed purchasing a new portable screen for educational events and meetings. Janel advised the current portable screen has been broken since she started with the District in 2015. She presented a few options ranging from \$150 to \$250.

A motion was made Gene Diehl to support the purchase of a new portable screen for educational events and meetings; purchase not to exceed \$300. Motion seconded by David Perkins; motion carried.

v. Steuben SWCD Business Plan

The Board discussed when the Business Plan Committee will first meet. Chairman Holman advised he would contact Kayleen Hart with available dates in late August to coordinate a meeting date/time. The Committee consists of Steuben SWCD staff, NRCS District Conservationist Arthur Franke, Chairman Holman and Secretary Hart.

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. Associate Supervisor Update

Janel reported Tim Groosbeck and Dan Oberst signed the 20-21 Associate Supervisor Agreement. Terry Dailey declined our invitation since he is unable to attend Board meetings. Terry still declined after Janel advised meeting attendance was not mandatory.

iii. Steuben County SWCD Summer Newsletter

Janel shared the summer newsletter would be sent to Graphics 3 for reproduction/mailing in a couple days.

iv. 4th Grade Youth Conservation Field Day (YCFD)

Janel advised the September 9, 2020 YCFD was cancelled since schools are not allowing field trips during the first semester of the 20-21 school year. She requested approval to purchase/supply the 4th grade classes with educational materials and backpacks, if schools express an interest. The Board was supportive of the purchase. No Board motion was made.

v. Steuben County Life

Janel reviewed the sessions planned for this year's Steuben County Life Program.

vi. Steuben County SWCD Website Training Request

Tara Lee asked to table the training request until she could review the website and compile a list of necessary training items.

vii. Upcoming Regional/National Events

1. LaGrange County SWCD Pasture Walk • August 13, 2020 (*Wolcottville, IN*)
2. Department Head Meeting • August 19, 2020
3. IASWCD District Succession Planning Virtual Training • August 25, 2020
4. NNE IDEA Region Meeting • August 27, 2020 (*tentative*)
5. LaGrange SWCD Forestry Field Day • August 29, 2020 (*Topeka, IN*)
6. IASWCD Effective Board Meetings Virtual Training • September 1, 2020
7. Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting • September 5, 2020 (*Angola, IN*)
8. **Labor Day Holiday** • September 7, 2020 (*County Offices Closed*)
9. IASWCD Roles and Responsibilities of District Staff & Supervisors Virtual Training • September 8, 2020
10. Steuben SWCD Monthly Board Meeting • Sept. 9, 2020 (*Angola USDA Service Center*)
11. LaGrange County SWCD Pasture Walk • September 10, 2020 (*TBD*)

V. CLAIMS

5638	Indiana Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (2020 Dues)	\$ 2,000.00
5639	Dareen McClelland (Native-Scaping-2018 CWI Urban Grant; Lake James-Crooked Creek, Fawn)	\$ 1,936.38
5640	ACS Graphics, INC (20 Signs – 2018 CWI Urban Grant)	\$ 360.00
5641	Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance (Commercial Auto and Fire Policy, 8/31/20 – 8/31/21)	\$ 723.00
5642	Friends of Pokagon (Native-Scaping-2018 CWI Urban Grant; Lake James-Crooked Creek, Fawn)	\$ 300.00
5643	Ceres Solutions (Fuel for Expedition – August Statement)	\$ 46.47

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 August 12, 2020 as presented. Kayleen Hart seconded the motion. Motion approved.

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, September 9, 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.

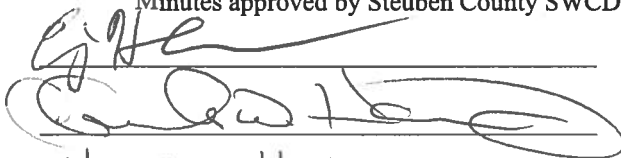
Kayleen Hart moved to adjourn; seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned by Chairman Holman at 6:15 p.m.


Minutes respectfully submitted by:

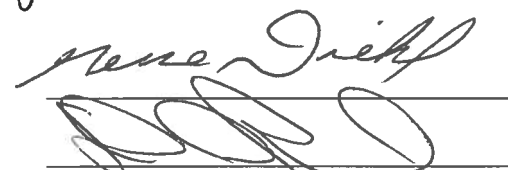
Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator/Treasurer

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board



Kayleen Hart





9/9/2020 (Date)