

**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 Community Center • Multi-Purpose Room • 317 S. Wayne Street, Angola, Indiana 46703

September 9, 2020

IN ATTENDANCE:

District Supervisors

Gene Diehl
Kayleen Hart
Craig Holman
Chuck Howard
David Perkins

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Arthur Franke, District Conservationist

SWCD

Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator
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 (7-8-20)

Chairman Holman asked the Board members to consider the minutes of the August 12, 2020 Board meeting. There being no additions or corrections, the following action was taken:

Kayleen Hart moved to approve the minutes of the August 12, 2020 Steuben County SWCD board meeting as presented. David Perkins seconded. Motion carried.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT

Janel Meyer provided the financial report for the August 6 through September 5, 2020 period. 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 September 5, 2020:

	<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>
Checking	\$ 55,395.15
Statement Savings	<u>41,870.43</u>
Total	\$ 97,265.58

*Checking account
balance 08/12/20*

\$ 64,002.46

Receipts

\$ 50.00

Disbursement

(\$ 8,657.31)

\$ 55,395.15

Savings account

balance 08/12/20

\$ 41,868.66

Receipts

\$ 1.77

Disbursement

(\$ 0.00)

\$41,870.43

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 August vehicle log. Janel Meyer reported total receipts of \$50.00 for a rain barrel sale. Disbursement was \$8,657.31; which included a Fawn River LARE cost-share payment for 3,000 ft. of fence in the Lake James/Crooked Creek sub-watershed, a Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Urban conservation cost-share payment for a native-scaping project in the West Fork of the West Branch of the St. Joseph River, supplies/materials for the Augmented Reality Sandbox, 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.

Chuck Howard moved to approve the Treasurer's Report for the period ending September 5, 2020, as presented; seconded by Kayleen Hart. Motion carried.

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.
2. NRCS District Conservationist Arthur Franke reported on the 2020 Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) sign-up:
 - o 32 EQIP applications & 2 CSP (Forestry) applications funded (includes 10 Forest Management Plans; 388.2 acres Cover Crops; 52 acres Wildlife Habitat Plantings; 46 acres Forage/Biomass Plantings; 2 Grassed Waterways; 1 Wetland Creation and

- 357.9 acres of Invasive Brush Management).
- o Nineteen (19) EQIP/RCPP applications NOT funded.
- o Eight (8) EQIP applications approved for funding were voluntarily cancelled by applicants for various reasons.
- o Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) numbers were not available since contracts still being processed.

Art reported the 19 applications that were not funded will need to re-apply next year as the state has obligated all EQIP and CSP funding.

Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) Program Technician, reported she continues to work on the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) program. WHIP+ can assist eligible agricultural producers who suffered losses to crops, trees, etc. from 2019's excessive moisture. The 2nd round of Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP2) applications' deadline is December 11, 2020. FSA continues to accept applications.

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 Grant Project Updates & Forage/Biomass/Fencing Application: Janel provided an update on the forage/biomass, fencing and watering facility project. Producer working on clearing of fence rows to get fence installed. The planting has not been completed; producer was advised to move planting to spring 2021 if weather/conditions not conducive to a successful planting (i.e., continued drought conditions).

Janel and Art informed the Board of a forage/biomass and fencing application request in the Pigeon Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek (spring 2021). Applicant would like to convert 18 acres of cropland to pasture; exclusion fencing to keep livestock out of environmentally sensitive areas and for rotational grazing. The Board discussed the site characteristics and preferred pasture planting mix. The discussion was tabled to the October Board meeting; Janel to report/confirm landowner interest in moving forward with project.

b. 2020 Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Application: Janel shared the SWCDs application for funding for a Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) in the Pigeon Creek Watershed was conditionally selected for FY20-21 funding from the LARE program. Grant will cover 80% of the cost of a WLTP, not to exceed \$25,000. Janel was thankful the grant was funded, given the fact 2020 LARE requests greatly exceeded available funding and LARE program administrators were advised a budget cut of at least 15% was necessary due to COVID-19. Many projects were not funded at all, and many requests were reduced from the amount applied for. Our application request was \$27,150 and the grant will be \$25,000.

2. Fawn River Watershed

a. 2020 LARE Application: Janel shared the SWCDs application for funding for a WLTP in the Fawn River Watershed was conditionally selected for FY20-21 funding. Grant will cover 80% of the cost of a WLTP, not to exceed \$20,000. Janel again expressed her thanks that the Steuben SWCD was awarded two LARE grants. Our application request was \$20,250 and the grant will be \$20,000.

Janel provided a brief update on the ~3,000 ft. fencing project in the Town of Orland sub-watershed, approved at the SWCD July 8, 2020 Board meeting. The applicant is currently undergoing rehabilitation due to a recent injury; therefore, a contract with the producer has not been finalized.

3. Friends of the St. Joseph River Association

a. The Friends 13th Annual Watershed Celebration was held virtually on August 19, 2020. The keynote speaker, Melissa Widhalm of the Purdue University Climate Research Center, presented what a changing climate means for the St. Joseph River watershed.

b. The Board and Watershed Council meeting will be held virtually September 24, 2020.

4. St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC)

a. The September 3, 2020 quarterly meeting was held virtually. Janel and Tara participated. Highlights included: The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Urban Tree Project, an urban tree canopy assessment for six communities selected for the project (included the City of Angola), and a presentation by Bob Barr and Siavash Beik on the findings for the North Branch of the Elkhart River Corridor Flood Risk Management Plan. Janel and Tara reported because of the Angola Service Center's internet speed, it is becoming more difficult to participate in virtual

webinars and trainings without losing the connection. Especially if NRCS, ISDA and SWCD staff are all trying to use the internet at the same time. Staff will check with USDA IT Specialist Leo Bocko for a solution to this problem.

b. Social Skills for Social Media Training has been scheduled September 8, 15 & 22, 2020.

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

Sub-watersheds:

1. The Maumee Watershed Alliance requested the Steuben SWCD provide a letter of support for a Clean Water Indiana Grant application they are submitting for the long-term sustainability and growth of their group. Specifically, they would like to utilize grant funds to hire a Director for a minimum of two years. The SWCD Board discussed the request and approved Janel drafting a letter of support.

iii. Entire County

1. Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Urban Grant

a. Project Updates/Payments: Various updates were provided for the following projects:

- Pocket Park: Twenty volunteers planted approximately 1,500 plugs in 2.5 hours earlier today.

The Board approved this native-scaping project at the August 8, 2020 Board meeting. Overall project goal to provide a public pollinator garden for conservation and educational purposes. The planting will also improve biodiversity and reduce stormwater runoff. Janel requested the Board consider increasing the amount of funding for the application since the recently completed Clear Lake native-scaping project only used \$599 of their approved \$2,000 contract.

A motion was made by David Perkins to increase the Pocket Park contract cost share of \$1,500 to the maximum cost share allowable of \$2,000 under the 2018 Urban Clean Water Indiana Grant. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.

- Wohlert Street: The plugs are doing well. The City of Angola Fire Department has been watering the plugs and newly seeded oats when soil conditions are too dry.

- Peachtree Plaza Demonstration Project: Landowner has indicated they plan on moving forward with the project. Plugs to be planted in spring 2021. Site preparation has begun. Site was not planted in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC)

a. September 5, 2020 Meeting: Janel attended and shared meeting highlights:

- The second round of eDNA testing will occur as soon as rainfall has been received.

- The SCLC completed an application to host the Smithsonian's *Water/Ways* exhibition in 2021-2022. Indiana Humanities is sponsoring this tour. The exhibit shows the importance of water-an essential component of life on our planet (environmentally, culturally, and historically). Six communities in Indiana will be selected to host the exhibit, receive training and get a grant to develop local programs about how their community has been shaped by its relationship to water. The SCLC will be partnering with other county environmental organizations to develop a display featuring the local relationship to water; the SWCD has been invited to participate. Janel will keep the Board updated on whether Angola has been chosen to host the exhibit. This would be an excellent opportunity to recognize the county and share information about what Steuben Soil & Water and other conservation/environmental organizations provide to the community.

- The SCLC was still willing to sponsor booklets for the canceled 2020 Youth Conservation Field Day.

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

a. A copy of the Cardinal Corp. IG – 2020-21 Building Expansion Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan was provided for review.

b. District Operations/Marketing

Chuck Howard, Chair

i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.

1. Field Visits/Trainings

a. Zoom Virtual Session Training • August 18, 2020. Tara and Janel participated to learn about this virtual platform.

b. Department Head Meeting • August 19, 2020. Janel attended. Crystal Dadura, Steuben County HR Director, reviewed the newly updated/approved Steuben County Employee Handbook. Steuben SWCD staff will be required to review the handbook and sign an updated acknowledgement form.

- c. Indiana Association of Soil & Water Conservation District (IASWCD) Succession Planning Training Webinar • August 25, 2020. Janel and Tara participated in webinar which discussed the importance of having a plan or outline to address organizational readiness for succession, a critical Board and staff responsibility.
- d. ARS Unit Training • August 29, 2020. Tara met with Jordan Beehler to set up the ARS Unit. Jordan was unable to utilize the USDA Service Center's Internet connection to download computer updates and took the unit home for completion.
- e. IASWCD Effective Board Meetings Training Webinar • September 1, 2020. Janel and Tara participated in webinar which outlined how the Board Supervisors and staff should run meetings to ensure they are effective and productive. A copy of the presentation was provided in the Supervisors packets.
- f. Understanding HABs: State of the Science Conference • September 2, 2020. Janel attempted to participate in conference which highlighted the current scientific knowledge related to algal blooms and the WLEB. Unfortunately, the Angola USDA Service Center Internet connection was inadequate to participate in the meeting.
- g. Social Skills of Social Media Training Webinar • September 8, 2020. Janel and Tara participated in webinar provided by the St. Joseph River Basin Commission.
- h. IASWCD Roles/Responsibilities of Staff & Supervisors • September 2, 2020: Janel and Tara participated in webinar which outlined SWCD Board Supervisors and staff duties. A copy of the presentation was provided in the Supervisors packets.
- i. CCSI Ag 101 Training Session 1 • September 9, 2020. Janel participated in virtual training which featured live demonstrations, panel discussions from cash grain, livestock and specialty crop farmers and information from Indiana Conservation Partnership members on types of conservation best management practices.
- j. CCSI Ag 101 Training Session 2 • September 10, 2020. Janel participated in the second day of training.

2. August tally Sheets were provided in the Supervisors packets.

ii. Indiana State Department of Agriculture

- 1. District Support Specialist/Resource Specialist Update: No update.

c. Budget and Finance

Craig Holman, Chair

i. Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance

Craig Holman had an individual from Vice Insurance Services review our policy. They had concerns regarding our liability coverage and our personal property coverage. Janel addressed both concerns from information provided by our Farm Bureau Insurance agent. The SWCD is covered under the IASWCD general liability insurance policy. Our personal property coverage amount is adequate since the SWCD has a small amount of equipment/property we own inside the building. Janel brought her concerns forward regarding the \$5,000 auto medical payments limit and requested the Board consider raising the coverage. Discussion was tabled to October meeting when Janel could get further clarification on what coverage amounts available and cost.

ii. 2020 Additional Appropriation

Janel requested an official Board motion to approve a \$1,000 additional appropriation to fund our part-time/clerical position, filled by Lisa Ledgerwood. Janel explained this position is essential to assist the district with grant administration.

Chuck Howard motioned to approve the deposit of \$1,000 into the Steuben County General Fund for Soil & Water to pay the part-time administrative/clerical position. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

iii. Indiana Woodland Steward

Indiana Woodland Steward sent a request to support the printing of the Woodland Steward Newsletter for Steuben County landowners for FY20-21.

Chuck Howard made a motion to contribute \$250 toward printing costs of the Indiana Woodland Steward Newsletter; seconded by Kayleen Hart. Motion carried.

iv. Conflict of Interest Statement

Chuck Howard completed/signed his conflict of interest statement.

v. Steuben SWCD Business Plan

Chairman Holman reported he was unable to coordinate a meeting date/time for the SWCD 2021-2023 Business Plan Development Committee due to unforeseen circumstances. He advised he would contact Kayleen Hart with available dates as soon as possible. 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. Newsletter / Articles

Janel advised the Summer Newsletter was mailed/emailed. She also shared a copy of the River Friendly Farmer press release, featuring Terry Dailey, recently printed in the Herald Republican.

iii. Augmented Reality Sandbox (ARS)

Tara reported our current projector will not operate the ARS Unit. The unit requires a shorter-throw HDR projector. When Jordan Beehler used our projector, it only covered ¼ of the sandbox. A new projector was not in the initial budget. The best and most economical option, per Jordan, runs \$800. Tara advised a new projector purchase would require about \$500 of SWCD funds since a portion of the purchase could be covered using the Community Foundation Grant. Janel advised we have funding available in our conservation education budget since the schools were not interested in the Soil & Water Stewardship educational materials this past spring.

A motion was made by Kayleen Hart to support the purchase of a new short-throw HDR projector for the Augmented Reality Sandbox (ARS) Unit; seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

Janel requested approval to pay the \$250 Impact Institute invoice for the materials/construction of the ARS Unit/frame.

Kayleen Hart moved to approve the \$250 payment to the Impact Institute for the Augmented Reality Sandbox (ARS) Unit materials and frame construction. Chuck Howard seconded the motion; motion was approved.

iv. Extension / Farm to School / Other Educational and SWCD Projects

Tara provided the following updates:

- She will be meeting with Tami Mosier (Purdue Extension) and Bridget Harrison (Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy) tomorrow to discuss the creation of 5-minute educational videos for schools featuring material from the Youth Conservation Field Day (YCFD) and Duck Days (e.g., water quality, macroinvertebrates, etc.) since both events were canceled. Videos will be STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) approved.
- Farm to School will also be creating harvest-of-the-month videos featuring local producers. This month's video will feature apples. Janel requested Tara provide an overview of her role with Farm to School. She reported her primary role will be education and outreach. Tara volunteered to replace Meegan Peterson on the Farm to School committee and will assist with making the videos. Farm to School exists to help kids understand where their food comes from.

Tara asked the Supervisors to consider purchasing video and related equipment required to make quality educational videos. The Board discussed the need (whether partners have equipment available for use) and cost. Tara presented a camcorder package option through Amazon and requested the approval to purchase editing software, a microphone and headsets. Janel reminded the group of the available funding in the conservation education budget.

Kayleen Hart moved to approve the purchase of video & related equipment and other items necessary (e.g., software and headsets) to develop educational videos for local school districts and additional educational outreach on Steuben SWCD social media and partner agency social media outlets. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

Kayleen inquired about how soil conservation can be worked into the Farm to School outreach to make sure it fits the SWCDs mission and goals.

v. Ralph E. Taylor 202 Conservation Grant

Janel reported she advised the Community Foundation the YCFD was cancelled and asked for guidance on how to handle the \$500 grant funding. Jennifer Danic (President and CEO Steuben County Community Foundation) consulted with the donor who agreed for the SWCD to hold the money and use it towards the 2021 scheduled field day.

vi. Upcoming Regional/National Events

1. Septic Smart Week • September 14-18, 2020
2. Steuben County Life Program • every Tuesday evening, September 15 – October 20, 2020
3. Department Head Meeting • September 16, 2020
4. Free Fishing Day for IN Residents • September 26, 2020
5. Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting • October 3, 2020 (Angola, IN)
6. LaGrange County SWCD Pasture Walk • October 8, 2020 (Shipshewana, IN)
7. **Columbus Day Holiday** • October 12, 2020 (County Offices Closed)
8. Steuben SWCD Monthly Board Meeting • October 14, 2020 (Steuben County Community Center)

V. CLAIMS

5644	Randy Strebis (~3,000 ft. Fence – Fawn River LARE, Lake James/Crooked Creek)	\$ 7,500.00
5645	USPS (Postage Stamps)	\$ 55.00
5646	USPS (2020 SWCD Summer Newsletter Postage – 1,515 pieces)	\$ 209.77
5647	Menards (ARS Unit Materials/Supplies – Pool Filter Sand)	\$ 25.96
5648	Hobby Lobby (ARS Unit Materials/Supplies – Props)	\$ 21.38
5649	Menards (Storage Rack and Bins to Organize Office - Educational Materials/Supplies)	\$ 199.73
5650	Tracy Boland (Native-Scaping – 2018 CWI Grant, West Fork West Branch SJR)	\$ 599.00
5651	JoAnn Henry (Native-Scaping – 2018 CWI Grant, Snow Lake-Crooked Creek, Fawn)	\$ 2,000.00
5652	Graphics 3, inc. (2020 Summer Newsletter Printing w/Mailing Services – 1,625 pieces)	\$ 799.60
5653	Oakley Studio, LLC (July – December 2020 Managed Website Hosting)	\$ 86.00
5654	Ceres Solutions (Fuel for Expedition – September Statement)	\$ 63.11
5655	Janel Meyer (Reimbursement per SWCD SOP-ARS Unit, Office + Steuben Life Program Supplies)	\$ 268.15
5656	Staples (Office Supplies – envelopes; labels; paper; report covers; sheet protectors; tape etc.)	\$ 188.49

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 September 9, 2020 as presented. Kayleen Hart seconded the motion. Motion approved.

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, October 14, 2020 – 5:00 p.m.

SWCD Board Meeting

- Steuben County Community Center Multi-Purpose room
317 S. Wayne Street – Angola, Indiana 46703

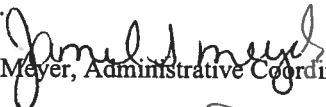
VII. ADJOURNMENT

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

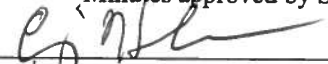


Chuck Howard moved to adjourn; seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.


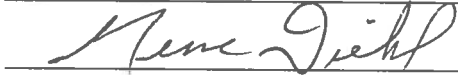
Meeting adjourned by Chairman Holman at 6:24 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:


Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator/Treasurer

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board

10/21/2020 (Date)