

MINUTES

STEUBEN COUNTY SWCD BOARD MEETING

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

February 10, 2021

IN ATTENDANCE:

- | | |
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| <u>District Supervisors</u>
Kayleen Hart
Craig Holman
Chuck Howard
David Perkins

<u>SWCD</u>
Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator | <u>Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)</u>
Arthur Franke, District Conservationist

<u>Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)</u>
Kate Sanders, Resource Specialist

<u>Public Attendees</u>
Ken Shelton, Steuben County Commissioner
Aimee Wentworth, Angola Resident |
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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 (1-13-21)

The Board members were asked to consider the minutes of the January 13, 2021 Board meeting. There being no additions or corrections, the following action was taken:

Kayleen Hart moved to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2021 Steuben County SWCD board meeting as presented. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

III. TREASURER’S REPORT

Janel Meyer provided the financial report for the January 7 to February 5, 2021 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 February 5, 2021:

<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>			
Checking	\$ 47,890.27		
Statement Savings	<u>41,875.66</u>		
Total	\$ 89,765.93		
<i>Checking account</i>		<i>Savings account</i>	
<i>balance 1/6/21</i>	\$ 48,055.55	<i>balance 1/6/21</i>	\$ 41,875.31
<i>Receipts</i>	\$ 0	<i>Receipts</i>	\$ 0.35
<i>Disbursement</i>	<u>(\$ 165.28)</u>	<i>Disbursement</i>	<u>(\$ 0.00)</u>
	\$ 47,890.27		\$41,875.66

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 January vehicle log.
- Janel reported there were no checking account receipts. Disbursement was \$165.28 which included the 2020 sales tax payment and a projector screen.

There being no questions or comments regarding the Treasurer’s Report, Chairman Holman called for a motion to approve.

David Perkins moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report for the period ending February 5, 2021, as presented; seconded by Kayleen Hart. Motion carried.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Natural Resources/Technical Assistance **Vacant, 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 discussed the annual late winter/early spring 2021 Indiana Conservation Transect. The survey was canceled last fall due to COVID. On February 4, staff received training on the updated procedures. All employees required to adhere to safety protocols set by the Indiana Conservation Partnership [no more than two

employees per vehicle; two-row vehicles will be used – driver and other employee in the second row seat; remote communications with other staff (in the office, in separate vehicles, etc.) for entering data into the spreadsheets and navigating; masks required; windows cracked]. All counties to collect data no sooner than 10 days after temperature reaches 40 degrees so cover crops can break dormancy (but prior to start of spring tillage).

Arthur continues work processing Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications.

He also advised the Angola USDA Service Center operating status remains unchanged; in-person appointments are still restricted.

Kayleen Hart, FSA Program Technician, reported the 2021 Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC)/Price Loss Coverage (PLC) signup ends March 15th. Other programs have been put on hold for the new administration to review. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general signup has been extended; however, staff have not been advised of a signup end date.

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. Great Lakes Commission (GLC) FY21-1 Quarterly Report was completed and submitted by the deadline. Janel offered a copy of the report for review.

b. The Board discussed two applications for consideration using Steuben's Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) grant; a ½-acre tree planting and a windbreak/pollinator planting in the Mud Creek sub-watershed of Pigeon. Arthur advised the tree planting was located in the Fawn River Watershed (see information below). Both projects were brought to the SWCD Board for consideration by Arthur. Supervisors were supportive of approving the 3-row windbreak application but tabled the pollinator planting until staff verified the planting acreage.

A motion was made by Kayleen Hart to approve the 3-row windbreak planting in the Mud Creek sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek using the 2020 Pigeon Creek Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) Grant. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

Janel reported tree selection will be limited if the landowner is interested in ordering trees from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) State Nursery.

2. Fawn River Watershed

a. The Board discussed the tree planting application (referenced above) and an application for a forage/biomass planting and fencing (converting 35-acres of row crop into permanent cover). Project was brought to the SWCD Board for consideration by Arthur. Janel advised the SWCD only has \$20,000 available within the grant; one fencing project has already been approved. Janel shared she was not in favor of approving the fencing due to cost and the small nutrient and sediment reduction for this practice. Supervisors tabled the application for staff to confirm whether landowner would drill the seed for the forage/biomass planting. Supervisors were supportive of approving the tree planting.

A motion was made by Kayleen Hart to approve the ½-acre tree planting in the Fawn River watershed using the 2020 Fawn River Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) Grant. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

3. Friends of the St. Joseph River Association (FotSJR)

a. Janel advised she was unable to participate in the FotSJR January 28th virtual meeting.

b. The next FotSJR virtual meeting is scheduled for February 25, 2021. Janel reported she will try to participate if her schedule allows.

4. St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC)

a. Each Supervisor received a copy of the SJRBC 2020 Annual Report which provided an overview of the Commission's purpose and accomplishments.

Janel discussed the SJRBC position for Senate Bill 389, which repeal's protections for Indiana's state regulated isolated wetlands. She also briefly discussed House Bill 1055 concerning watershed development commissions which could have impacts to the SJRBC.

b. The next SJRBC quarterly meeting is scheduled for March 4, 2021. Janel will attend virtually.

-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. West Branch of the SJR and Fish Creek LARE WLTP Grant Application: Janel asked the Board if a motion should be recorded to support the Upper St. Joseph River LARE application. *Kayleen Hart moved to approve the upper St. Joseph River Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) grant application submitted by the Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District on January 15, 2021; seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.*
 - b. The next WLEB Indiana Stakeholder Committee Meeting is scheduled for March 24, 2021. Staff will attend virtually.
2. Maumee River Basin Commission (MRBC)
 - a. No report. Chuck shared he was unable to attend the February 4, 2021 meeting.

iii. Entire County

1. Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Urban Grant
 - a. Grant/Project Updates: Janel reported ISDA NE Region Team Leader and District Support Specialist Jennifer Thum advised that the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) wants the Steuben County SWCD Urban grant completed by July 31, 2021. A modified CWI contract is still required.
 - b. CWI 3-YR Annual Report was completed and submitted by the deadline. Janel offered a copy of the report for review, sans report documentation, due to size.
2. District Cost Share
 - a. The Board discussed an application for consideration using District Cost Share for a 50' x 40' windbreak in the Hiram Sweet Ditch sub-watershed of Fish Creek. The project was brought to the SWCD Board for consideration by Arthur. Landowner will plant double row of evergreens on west side of farmstead to block wind and reduce erosion. Supervisors were supportive of approving the windbreak application. Arthur advised the landowner would not be purchasing trees from the DNR State Nursery. *A motion was made by Kayleen Hart to approve the 50' x 40' windbreak planting in the Hiram Sweet Ditch sub-watershed of Fish Creek using 2020 District Cost Share funding. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried*
3. Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC)
 - a. February 6, 2021 Meeting: Janel attended. Highlights included: State Representative David Abbott provided information about Senate Bill 266, Senate Bill 389, and House Bill 1098; Big Turkey Lake Association submitted a LARE grant application to dredge Turkey Creek; several Lake Associations submitted LARE grant applications to update aquatic vegetation management plans; and the Lake George Association retained an engineering firm to assess dam repair or replacement.
 - b. 2021 Membership Campaign: The SWCD received a request from the SCLC to renew our business/professional membership. Cost is \$40. *David Perkins moved to approve renewing the Steuben County SWCD's \$40 business/professional membership with the Steuben County Lakes Council for FY21. Chuck Howard seconded the motion; motion carried.*
 - c. The next SCLC monthly board meeting is scheduled for March 6, 2021.

b. District Operations/Marketing

Chuck Howard, Chair

i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.

1. New Employee Motion
Kayleen Hart made a motion to hire Aimee Wentworth as the new Resource Conservationist; seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.
2. Field Visits/Trainings
 - a. Department Head Meeting • January 20, 2021 (*teleconference*): Janel was not able to participate; however, she reviewed the summary of the meeting provided by Steuben County Human Resources Administrator Crystal Dadura. Janel reported Crystal left her position with the county; the new HR Director is Angela Campbell.
 - b. INField Advantage Call Out Meeting • January 26, 2021 (*virtual*): Janel and Kate participated. Kate discussed the enrollment deadline (March 12th), the \$200 first time participant bonus, and the Truterra™ Insights Engine software which provides environmental stewardship baselines and profitability insights for enrolled agricultural fields. David Perkins expressed interest in participating in the 2021 INField program.

- c. Special Districts 100R and AFR Training • January 27, 2021 (*virtual*). Janel participated. The meeting was an overview of the Gateway portal local government units are required to utilize to upload financial information, and a review of upcoming reporting deadlines.
- d. Marshall County SWCD Annual Meeting • January 28, 2021 (*virtual*): Janel participated. She reported how the virtual format worked for an SWCD annual meeting.
- e. Virtual Soil Health Workshop • February 4, 2021 (*virtual*). Janel was unable to participate due to poor internet connectivity.
- 3. January Tally Sheets will be provided at the next Board meeting.
- ii. Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP)
 - 1. February 4, 2021 Conservation Tillage Transect Training (*see page 2, "Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018*).
 - 2. ICP Virtual Training Opportunities (information)
 - a. Wetland Restoration Planning/Design Part 1 & 2 • February 11 & 17, 2021
 - b. Identification of Trees in Indiana • March 2, 2021
 - c. Identification of Shrubs in Indiana • March 4, 2021
 - d. Backyard Habitat Planning and Technical Assistance • March 5, 2021
- iii. Indiana State Department of Agriculture
 - 1. Supervisor Appointment Recommendations: Supervisors discussed candidates to serve the remainder of Gene Diehl's term. Janel recommended the Board form a Supervisor Appointment Committee; Kayleen and Craig volunteered. Committee to identify potential appointees and report back to the SWCD Board.
 - 2. Steuben SWCD Meeting Planning Updates: Janel advised she approached Purdue Extension about our annual meeting. They agreed to let the SWCD use the Pillar Room of the Community Center, where the Board can meet and the public can participate via Zoom. She reported Kate has agreed to participate as the meeting moderator. Janel is working with Amy Work (Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation District) to schedule a practice Zoom meeting and the Board/Annual meeting.
 - 3. District Support Specialist/Resource Specialist Update: Kate reminded the SWCD to review Supervisor information on Conservation Link's supervisory directory. She also shared that the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) provides funding opportunities to further enhance conservation district technical assistance and advance conservation in developed or developing areas across the nation. More information is available on their website.

c. Budget and Finance

Craig Holman, Chair

- i. District Budget and Finance Committee Audit

Craig Holman and Chuck Howard will complete the District Audit February on 12, 2021. Janel will find a location to hold the meeting and advise the Committee.
- ii. County Council 2021 Departmental Liaison Assignment

The Steuben SWCD 2021 Department Liaison is Dan Caruso.
- iii. Tim Groosbeck Contract

Craig signed the contract for services to pay Tim Groosbeck any donations received for picking up the Steuben County tree order on March 23, 2021.
- iv. 2021 Affiliate Membership Updates

Janel reported the 2021 Affiliate Memberships will be mailed at the end of February. She thanked Kate for her assistance.
- v. 2021 Indiana District Employee Association (IDEA) Dues

Janel asked for a Board motion to renew our IDEA membership. IDEA provides support and training for SWCD District employees. Cost is \$25/person.

A motion was made by David Perkins to pay the \$50 Indiana District Employee Association (IDEA) FY21 membership fee for Steuben SWCD staff. Seconded by Kayleen Hart; motion carried.

d. Information and Education

Kayleen Hart, Chair

- i. Drainage Board

Staff are attending the twice-monthly county Drainage Board (DB) meetings. Janel reported on the Bridge 51/George Powers bridge replacement and drain realignment project. The project may impact a USDA NRCS conservation easement. Janel has been keeping Arthur informed.

- ii. Annual Report
Janel shared the 2020 annual report will be completed next week and forwarded to Graphics 3 for printing/mailing.
- iii. Tri-State Regional Science Fair Conservation Award Sponsorship
The SWCD received notification the Tri-State Regional Science Fair will be held Saturday, March 13, 2021. Steuben SWCD supports the special conservation awards. Estimated cost of sponsoring cash awards and conservation books is \$75. Janel will serve as a judge for this event.
Chuck Howard motioned to approve the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District support the Tri-State Regional Science Fair Special Conservation Awards for March 13, 2021. Seconded by Kayleen Hart. Motion was approved.
- iv. Tree Pickup • March 23, 2021
Steuben County tree pickup has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 23rd.
- v. Monroe County SWCD Educational Book
A copy of the educational book “A Seriously Silly Story of a Waterdrop’s Journey” was shared. The story’s purpose is to help people understand the impact and importance of our actions on our water sources. It was authored by Martha Miller, Monroe County SWCD District Manager and is available for purchase at \$10/book.
- vi. Upcoming Regional/National Events
 - 1. NNE IDEA Meeting (for SWCD staff) • February 12, 2021 (virtual)
 - 2. President’s Day • February 15, 2021 (County Offices Closed)
 - 3. So, You Want Me to Change How I Farm Webinar • February 16, 2021
 - 4. Indiana Streams & Wetland Mitigation Program Webinar • February 17, 2021
 - 5. Midwest Cover Crops Council Annual Conference • February 23-25, 2021 (virtual)
 - 6. “Do I Need a Permit” Lake Webinar • February 25, 2021
 - 7. Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting • March 6, 2021 (virtual)
 - 8. Fort Wayne Farm Show CANCELED (March 9-11, 2021)
 - 9. Steuben SWCD Monthly Board Meeting • March 10, 2021 (virtual)
 - 10. Steuben SWCD Annual Meeting • March 10, 2021 (virtual)
 - 11. Beneficial Invertebrates in Our Soil Webinar • March 17, 2021
 - 12. Good Friday • April 2, 2021 (County Offices Close at 12:00 p.m.)

V. CLAIMS

5702	IN Department of Revenue (ACH – 2020 Flag and Rain Barrel Sales Tax)	\$ 15.29
5703	Oakley Studio, LLC (Managed Website Hosting – January through June 2021)	\$ 104.00
5704	DeKalb County SWCD (2020 1099-NEC Tax Forms)	\$ 37.23

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

Kayleen Hart motioned to accept the claims for February 10, 2021. Chuck Howard seconded the motion. Motion approved.

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, March 10, 2021 [Board Meeting (5:00 p.m.); Annual Meeting (6:30 p.m.)]

- Steuben SWCD Board will meet at the Steuben County Community Center, Pillar Room
317 S. Wayne Street, Angola, IN 46703

The Board and Annual meetings will be held virtually as ZOOM meetings; attendees will need to request links for these meetings by contacting the SWCD office by phone at 260-665-3211, ext. 3 or emailing steubenswcd@gmail.com by 12:00 p.m. on March 9, 2021.

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 6:32 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Janel S. Meyer
Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator/Treasurer

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board

[Handwritten signatures]

03/10/2021 (Date)