

**MINUTES**  
**STEUBEN COUNTY SWCD BOARD MEETING**  
**Steuben County Community Center • Pillar Room • 317 S. Wayne Street, Angola, Indiana 46703**  
**March 10, 2021**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

<u>District Supervisors</u> Kayleen Hart Craig Holman Chuck Howard Beth Williams <sup>1</sup>	<u>Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)</u> Arthur Franke, District Conservationist (virtual)
<u>SWCD</u> Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator Aimee Wentworth, Resource Conservationist	<u>Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)</u> Kate Sanders, Resource Specialist (virtual) Jennifer Thum, District Support Specialist (virtual)

ABSENT  
 David Perkins, 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 (2-10-21)**

The Board members were asked to consider the minutes of the February 10, 2021 Board meeting. There being no additions or corrections, the following action was taken:

*Kayleen Hart moved to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2021 Steuben County SWCD board meeting as presented. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.*

**III. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Janel Meyer provided the financial report for the February 6 to March 8, 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 March 8, 2021:*

<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>			
Checking	\$ 55,458.98		
Statement Savings	<u>41,875.98</u>		
Total	\$ 97334.96		
<i>Checking account</i>		<i>Savings account</i>	
<i>balance 2/5/21</i>	<i>\$ 47,890.27</i>	<i>balance 2/5/21</i>	<i>\$ 41,875.66</i>
<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 8,200.00</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 0.32</i>
<i>Disbursement</i>	<i>(\$ 631.29)</i>	<i>Disbursement</i>	<i>(\$ 0.00)</i>
	<i>\$ 55,458.98</i>		<i>\$41,875.98</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 February vehicle log. Janel reported total checking account receipts of \$8,200 which included affiliate memberships and the first half of the Steuben SWCD operating budget from the County. Disbursement was \$631.29 which included computer web hosting, office supplies, operating expenses, and postage for mailing the annual report. Janel advised the Indiana State Board of Accounts is now requiring Districts report uncleared check detail; this

<sup>1</sup>The Steuben County SWCD Board of Supervisors selected Beth Williams to complete Supervisor Gene Diehl's remaining term. Her appointment to be approved by the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) at their March 16, 2021 meeting. Beth abstained from Board motions at the March 10, 2021 Board meeting.

information will be included in all future financial reports. There being no questions or comments regarding the Treasurer's Report, Chairman Holman called for a motion to approve.

*Chuck Howard moved to approve the Treasurer's Report for the period ending March 8, 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 Senate Bill 389 regarding wetland regulations. He stated any changes in state statute will not affect how NRCS administers their federal USDA regulations.

Arthur continues work processing Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications; he has received 39. The March 5<sup>th</sup> application ranking deadline has been moved back due to software problems. A new deadline has not been set.

He also advised the Angola USDA Service Center operating status remains unchanged; in-person appointments are still restricted. Due to recommended tightened security requirements from the Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) Homeland Security, the NRCS/SWCD office door will be locked.

Kayleen Hart, FSA Program Technician, reported the 2021 Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC)/Price Loss Coverage (PLC) signup ends March 15<sup>th</sup>. She has 80% enrollment to 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. Chairman Holman signed the contract for the Heavy Use Protection Area in the Mud Creek sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek; project approved at the December 9, 2020 Board meeting.
- b. Janel requested the Board consider amending the January 13, 2021 motion for a 30-acre forage/biomass planting in the Silver Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek using the Pigeon Creek Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) grant. The landowner would like to increase the planting to 52.1 acres.

*Kayleen Hart moved to approve amending the January 13, 2021 Board motion, increasing the forage/biomass planting in the Silver Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek from 30.0 acres to 52.1 acres using the 2020 Pigeon Creek Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Watershed Land Treatment Project Grant. Chuck Howard seconded the motion; motion passed.*

##### 2. Friends of the St. Joseph River (FotSJR)

- a. No report. Staff did not attend their February 25, 2021 board meeting.

##### 3. St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC)

- a. Janel and Aimee attended the SJRBC quarterly meeting virtually on March 4, 2021. Janel discussed existing SJRBC projects; she also shared information about a proposed future Pigeon Creek/River corridor flood assessment project, similar to the recently completed North Branch Elkhart River flood risk management study. Project proposed for 2022 if funding available. She also shared the SJRBC Board discussion on writing a position statement for Senate Bill 389 regarding wetlands. The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual SJRBC Symposium will be held virtually on May 14, 2021.

##### iii. Entire County

##### 1. District Cost Share

The Board discussed the 50' x 40' windbreak planting in the Hiram Sweet Ditch sub-watershed of Fish Creek, approved at the February 10, 2021 board meeting. Under the current LARE WLTP maximum cost-share rate of \$600/acre, the landowner would receive \$60 for the planting. The group discussed other program cost-share rates. Instead of paying per linear foot as NRCS pays or per acre rate, discussion on paying a percentage up to a maximum amount ensued.

*Kayleen Hart made a motion to pay 80% of the total cost for the 50' x 40' windbreak planting in the Hiram Sweet Ditch sub-watershed of Fish Creek, up to a maximum of \$500. Chuck Howard seconded the motion; motion carried.*

##### 2. Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC)

- a. March 6, 2021 Meeting: Janel and Aimee attended virtually. Highlights included:
  - Arizona Fox from Biometer in Indianapolis, IN presented information on eDNA source tracking. Arizona shared human eDNA can be measured from skin cells and saliva, not just fecal contamination. eDNA is not an EPA approved testing method.
  - Parkside Channel Crooked Lake dredging will begin this month; project located in southwest corner of CR 200W and Lan 101. Project to remove sediment deposits discharged by the Palfreyman Regulated Drain to accommodate boat traffic for adjacent property owners.
  - A concern was brought up regarding clear-cutting that is taking place near the Love's truck stop near Silver Lake.
- b. The next SCLC monthly board meeting is scheduled for April 3, 2021.

**b. District Operations/Marketing**

**Chuck Howard, Chair**

i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.

1. Field Visits/Trainings

- a. NNE Indiana District Employee Association (IDEA) Region Meeting • February 12, 2021 (*virtual*): Janel participated in this meeting which provided updates from ISDA, the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation District (IASWCD) and other Districts. IASWCD will be hosting four Lunch 'n Learn sessions in April. The next meeting has been scheduled for May 14, 2021 at Par Gil in LaGrange.
  - b. Marion Co. SWCD Annual Meeting • February 16, 2021 (*virtual*): Janel participated to observe how they conducted their annual meeting. The featured speaker, Doug Tallamy, presented information on ways for nature to thrive in urban landscapes. Doug started the "Homegrown National Park" grassroots initiative to restore biodiversity and ecosystem function by planting native plants on privately-owned properties. Their goal is 20 million acres of native plantings in the U.S.; this represents approximately ½ of the green lawns in the nation. Janel will share this program with participants of our Urban CWI grant program; landowners have an opportunity to "register" their native planting.
  - c. Department Head Meeting • February 17, 2021 (*teleconference*): Janel participated; she reviewed the highlights: Steuben County does not have a policy regarding teleworking. Teleworking can be determined on a case by case basis; however, most county positions are not set-up to work remotely.
  - d. Zoom Training Meeting • February 22, 2021 (*virtual*): Janel and Kate participated in this meeting to practice for the Steuben SWCD Annual Meeting.
  - e. Nature's Soil Health Principles w/Ray Archuleta • February 23, 2021 (*virtual*): Janel was unable to participate due to poor internet connectivity.
  - f. The Value of All Wetlands: IN Researchers Weigh-in • February 24, 2021 (*virtual*): Janel participated. Webinar held to highlight the importance of wetlands; related to SB 389.
  - g. DNR "Do I need a Permit?" Webinar • February 25, 2021 (*virtual*): Janel and Aimee participated.
  - h. IASWCD Midsession Legislative Webinar • February 26, 2021 (*virtual*): Janel and Aimee participated.
  - i. Identification of Trees in Indiana for ICP staff • March 2, 2021 (*virtual*): Janel and Aimee participated in this training webinar.
  - j. Identification of Shrubs for ICP staff • March 4, 2021 (*virtual*): Janel and Aimee participated in this training webinar.
  - k. Backyard Habitat Planning & Technical Assistance for ICP staff • March 5, 2021 (*virtual*): Janel and Aimee participated in this training webinar which discussed the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge. This program is intended to bring attention the need to preserve and create gardens and landscapes that help revive the health of pollinators across America. Janel will share this program with participants of our Urban CWI grant program; landowners have an opportunity to "register" their native planting.
2. January and February Tally Sheets were provided in the Supervisor's packets.

ii. Indiana State Department of Agriculture

- 1. Steuben SWCD March 10, 2021 Annual Meeting Update: Agenda's and scripts were provided in the Supervisor's packets. The Board reviewed the script and discussed the election. Jennifer Thum explained the election result announcement must distinguish in-person vs. virtual votes.
- 2. District Support Specialist/Resource Specialist Update: Jennifer reported information from the CWI Grant meeting. Specifically, changes to equipment modifications [RTK (real time

kinematic) will no longer be eligible for funding] and the program has reduced funds available. Kate Sanders reminded the group all new staff and supervisors are required to complete the internal controls and preventing sexual harassment trainings.

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

- i. State Board of Accounts/Gateway Annual Financial Report (AFR)  
 Janel reported the 2020 Steuben SWCD AFR was completed/entered in Gateway by the deadline.
- ii. 2021 Credit Card and Meal SOP Review  
 A copy of the credit card and meal SOP were provided the Board for review prior to the meeting. No modifications were suggested for either policy. Craig asked the Board members if there were any questions or concerns. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve.  
*Kayleen Hart made a motion to accept the Steuben County SWCD credit card and meal standard operating policies as presented, seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion Carried.*  
 The SOP's were presented to Craig Holman and Aimee Wentworth for signatures.
- iii. 2021 Affiliate Memberships  
 Janel reported affiliate memberships are being received. She thanked Kate for her assistance with this program.

**d. Information and Education **Kayleen Hart, Chair****

- i. Drainage Board  
 Staff are attending the twice-monthly county Drainage Board (DB) meetings. Janel shared information about a DB project on Pigeon Creek; excavating/cleaning 3100' of creek channel and bank to remove obstructions within the waterway. Project begins at the East Metz Road stream crossing and extends downstream to Angola. The DB is also working with a landowner in the George Shrimplin Regulated Drain of Pigeon Creek on a wetland project (Little Dawg Project Wetlands). Purpose of the project is to add water storage capability and slow flow further to benefit West Otter Lake and Lake Arrowhead. The landowner is willing to donate the property; however, an additional portion of the project area runs through a different property where the landowner is not willing to sell.
- ii. 2020 Annual Report  
 The annual report was completed and mailed/mailed at the end of February.
- iii. NACD Stewardship Week Materials  
 Soil and Water Stewardship Week is set for the last week of April. This year's theme is Healthy Forests. Inventory will be taken to determine material need; however, Janel requested a Board motion to purchase materials as needed up to \$1500.  
*Chuck Howard made a motion to spend a maximum of \$1,500, if necessary, to print the 2021 National Association of Soil and Water Conservation District's Stewardship Week materials. Kayleen Hart seconded the motion; motion carried.*
- iv. Upcoming Regional/National Events
  - 1. Department Head meeting (for SWCD staff) • March 17, 2021
  - 2. Beneficial Invertebrates in Our Soil Webinar • March 17, 2021
  - 3. How Water Quality Practices Can Benefit Pollinators Webinar • March 31, 2021
  - 4. **Good Friday** • April 2, 2021 (**County Offices Close at 12:00 p.m.**)
  - 5. Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting • April 3, 2021 (virtual)
  - 6. Steuben SWCD Monthly Board Meeting • April 14, 2021 (Angola, IN)

**V. CLAIMS**

5705	Steuben County Lakes Council (FY21 Business/Affiliate Membership)	\$ 40.00
5706	IDEA (FY21 Membership for Steuben County SWCD staff)	\$ 50.00
5707	USPS/Postmaster (2020 Annual Report Postage, 1,529 pieces)	\$ 400.06
5708	Graphics 3, inc. (2020 Annual Report Printing and Mail Prep)	\$ 2,338.95
5709	KPC Media Group, Inc. (Annual Meeting Legal Advertising)	\$ 33.59
5710	Ceres Solutions (Fuel for Expedition – March Statement)	\$ 29.75

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

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

**VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING**  
**Wednesday, April 14, 2021 (5:00 p.m.)**  
**SWCD Board Meeting**

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

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Janel asked the Board to consider reimbursing Aimee for using her personal cell phone to conduct SWCD business (i.e., review training videos, etc.) while waiting for Federal computer clearance. Jennifer Thum stated Adams County SWCD has set a precedent for this. Kayleen inquired where we are at in the computer access process; Art advised he would check with his immediate supervisor.

*Chuck Howard motioned to approve reimbursing Aimee Wentworth for the percent of time she utilizes her personal cell phone for official Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District business versus personal use, based on her calling plan rate. Kayleen Hart seconded the motion; motion carried.*

Craig Holman inquired about the availability of District cost-share for interseeding a grassed waterway. He was approached by a landowner with property located near Hwy 20 and 675 E in Fish Creek. Janel recommended addressing the request at the next Board meeting after a property map could be generated and Art performed a site visit to assess the resource need.

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 Chuck Howard. Motion carried.*

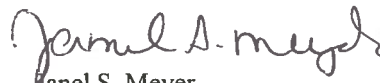
Meeting adjourned by Chairman Holman at 5:58 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



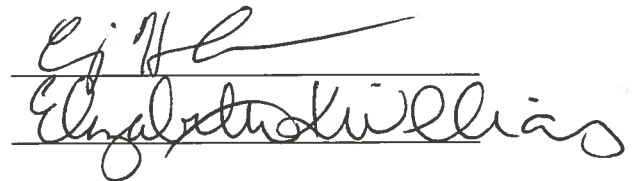
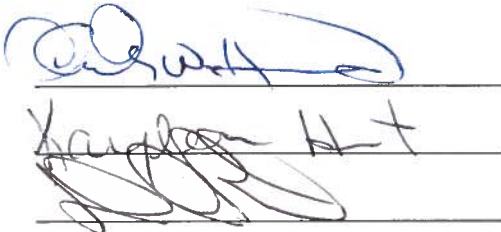
Aimee M. Wentworth  
Resource Conservationist

Minutes amended by:



Janel S. Meyer  
Administrative Coordinator

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board



04/14/2021 (Date)