

**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
December 9, 2020**

IN ATTENDANCE:

<u>District Supervisors</u> Gene Diehl Kayleen Hart Craig Holman Chuck Howard David Perkins	<u>Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)</u> Arthur Franke, District Conservationist
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SWCD
Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

ABSENT
Tara Lee, Resource Conservationist

I. CALL TO ORDER

The SWCD Board meeting was called to order by Steuben SWCD Chairman Craig Holman at 5:00 p.m. Janel Meyer stated Fawn River project updates were added to the agenda.

II. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (11-12-20)

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

Kayleen Hart moved to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2020 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 November 13 through December 4, 2020 period. Financial reports and bank statements were sent to the Board Supervisors for review in advance of the meeting. Janel communicated the information she received from the Indiana State Board of Accounts regarding the checking account discrepancy (ProFed Credit Union error when keying check #6008).

Report for period ending December 4, 2020:

	<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>		
Checking	\$ 49,853.99		
Statement Savings	<u>41,874.95</u>		
Total	\$ 91,728.94		
<i>Checking account balance 11/12/20</i>	<i>\$ 50,455.37</i>	<i>Savings account balance 11/12/20</i>	<i>\$ 41,873.92</i>
<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 212.15</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 1.03</i>
<i>Disbursement</i>	<i><u>(\$ 813.53)</u></i>	<i>Disbursement</i>	<i><u>(\$ 0.00)</u></i>
	<i>\$ 49,853.99</i>		<i>\$41,874.95</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 November vehicle log. Janel reported total checking account receipts of \$212.15 from the Steuben County Lakes Council for sponsorship of 2020 Youth Conservation Field Day materials. Disbursement was \$813.53 which included a COVID Sneeze Shield for the front office, petty cash reimbursement, Steuben Co. SWCD fall newsletter postage, Indiana Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts 2021 Annual Meeting registration for Janel and Tara Lee, and operating expenses. There being no questions or comments regarding the Treasurer’s Report. Chairman Holman called for a motion to approve.

Gene Diehl moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report for the period ending December 4, 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. Main points included December 18, 2020 deadline for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications and a January 8, 2021 deadline for Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications.
2. NRCS District Conservationist Arthur Franke reviewed the Angola USDA Service Center's Stage 0 operating status. Based on the rise of COVID cases, effective December 1, offices located in counties with significant COVID-19 infection rates stepped back to Phase 0 of USDA's phased reopening process. The office is closed to the public until further notice. We are open for business and will work with producers by phone and email.

Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) Program Technician, provided additional information regarding number of staff allowed in the FSA office. Kayleen is working on wheat certification.

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) Pigeon Creek Grant Updates: Janel advised the amendment request to modify the total forage/biomass acreage and total feet of fencing within the Pigeon Creek Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Grant was submitted to the GLC for approval. She provided project updates, reporting the grant will cover the total forage/biomass acreage and about 19% of the total cost of fencing for the 11.2-acre & 8,289 ft. of fencing project in the Pigeon Lake sub-watershed project, approved at the October Board meeting. This project is utilizing the remaining funds within the grant. She opened a discussion whether there was interest to provide additional cost-share funding through the Pigeon Creek Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP). The Supervisors were not supportive of providing additional monies due to the small level of funding received.
- b. WLTP Fencing & Forage/Biomass Contract: Chairman Holman signed a copy of the modified contract for the 3.3-acre forage/biomass planting & 1,321 ft. of fencing project in the Otter Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon, approved last month.
- c. WLTP Forage/Biomass Application: Janel presented an application for a 17.24-acre forage/biomass planting in the Otter Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek. She advised this application was shared at the July 2020 Board meeting for funding with District cost-share. The application was put on hold since the SWCD was awaiting a decision whether the Pigeon Creek WLTP grant application received funding.

A motion was made by Kayleen Hart to approve the 17.24-acre forage/biomass planting in the Otter Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek using the 2020 Pigeon Creek Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) WLTP Grant. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.

- d. WLTP Heavy Use Area Protection (HUAP) Application: Janel presented an application for a HUAP on a property located in the Mud Creek sub-watershed of Pigeon. Landowner would like to stabilize three areas within his field that are frequently/intensively used by cattle. Janel was advised by our grant administrator no contract amendment would be required, even though this practice was not listed in the original application.

Kayleen Hart moved to approve the heavy use area protection application in the Mud Creek sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek using the 2020 Pigeon Creek Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) WLTP Grant. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.

2. Fawn River

- a. Janel requested approval to make the cost-share payment for the completed ~2,400 ft. fencing project in the Snow Lake sub-watershed of Fawn River, total cost of \$7,236.87. Art completed the field check. Janel will invoice the state before the end of December as this grant expires December 31, 2020.

A motion was made by David Perkins to approve the \$7,236.87 payment for the completed ~2,400 ft. of fencing in the Snow Lake-Fawn River sub-watershed. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.

3. Friends of the St. Joseph River Association (FotSJR)
 - a. The FotSJR scheduled a meeting on December 10. Janel will participate if her schedule allows.
Janel shared the Steuben SWCD was asked by the Michigan St. Joseph County Conservation District for a letter of support for their invasive species and watershed inventory grant proposal to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). A letter was provided since invasive species are a critical problem impacting natural resources and agricultural production and profitability.
4. St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC) FotSJR Association
 - a. December 3, 2020: Janel participated in this virtual meeting and shared highlights:
 - Local government appropriations will be short due to unmet appropriation request increases. Timing of the increase in funding from cities/counties not ideal because of COVID. Local appropriations fund the SJRBC base of operations expenses.
 - State of Indiana FY21 funding for the SJRBC was reduced by 15% due to negative impact on revenues from COVID. The State Budget Agency informed the SJRBC the FY21 15% decrease would continue through the next biennium budget, with potential for an additional 15% decrease; essentially resulting in a \$32,000 net loss to Commission's budget. This would impact their ability to do special projects.
 - Matt Meersman, SJRBC Director, has been talking with legislators about creating a dedicated funding source for the Commission rather than funding from the State's general fund.
 - Special Project Updates: Two interns worked with the Commission this fall, one focused on communication and the other on water quality. The drainage assessment project on 4 watersheds in LaGrange Co. was completed; project tested a new method for apportioning costs associated with drain maintenance (based on acreage, as well as land cover and soil type to estimate the benefit each parcel receives from the drain). SJRBC will be collecting information from other county surveyors on the types and scope of drainage projects. The SJRBC will offer a demonstration project to one county showing what a reassessment would look like using the tools developed for the LaGrange drainage project.
 - 2021 Meetings: March 4th, June 3rd, Sept. 2nd and December 2nd.
 - 2021 Elections: Daragh Deegan, Chair; Kris Thomas, City of Angola, Vice Chair; Alicia Walsh, Steuben Co. Health Department, Secretary; Adam Bowden, City of Mishawaka, Treasurer.

-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. Janel and Art participated in the November 16 & December 29, 2020 Urban & Small Farms Contribution Agreement Steering Committee virtual meetings. Janel reported the Allen County SWCD received a \$300,000 Urban & Small Farm Grant from NRCS. It is specific to the WLEB and runs through May 2023. Purpose of grant is to heighten awareness of NRCS programs and provide education. Janel advised the Board the Steuben County SWCD would likely have minimal involvement, other than assisting with program promotion and hosting or participating in educational events.
 - b. November 17, 2020 WLEB Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Informational Meeting – Letter of Support: The Steuben SWCD submitted an in-kind letter of support to Jennifer Thum, Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) District Support Specialist, for the new RCPP application ISDA is submitting. Art provided additional information about the RCPP grant; if funded, it would provide cost-share for agronomic practices. Funding would be available next year with the general EQIP sign-up. The November 17th meeting was held to discuss the proposal and confirm the agronomic practice list.
2. Maumee River Basin Commission (MRBC)
 - a. The next MRBC meeting is scheduled for December 10, 2020.

iii. Entire County

1. Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC)
 - a. December 5, 2020: Janel participated in this virtual meeting and shared highlights:
 - The December meeting showcased the water quality testing annual report information; information presented focused on the upper portions of Pigeon Creek. They also reported considerable E. coli improvement was noted in Black and Fish Creek. Janel advised the Board the information presented comes from 3 grab samples collected in May, July and August.

- The Supervisors received a copy of the eDNA results from the October 22, 2020 sampling which occurred after a 0.75 inch rainfall [Carpenter and Palfreyman ditches (9 sites), Lake George (3 sites), Hamilton Lake (2 sites), Clear Lake (1 site) and Crooked Lake (1 site)]. Eleven of the sixteen sites sampled exceeded the maximum *E. coli* IDEM water quality target of 235 CFU (Colony Forming Units)/100 mL. Nine of 15 sites sampled detected the presence of human *E. coli*. Janel reported there are many unanswered questions regarding this information. Several sites reported the presence of poultry and dog eDNA; however, unknown whether DNA can be attributed to specific species or specific orders containing those species (i.e., order that contains all fowl, including wild turkeys, and all canines, including coyotes). Samples were tested for cattle eDNA, none was detected. Many sites had high *E. coli* measurements, which could be attributed to other wildlife.
b. Next SCLC meeting scheduled for February 6, 2020.

b. District Operations/Marketing
Chair

Chuck Howard,

i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.

1. Field Visits/Trainings

- a. Soil & Water Conservation Society Virtual Workshop • November 12, 2020: Janel and Tara participated. Janel shared information about the Seed a Legacy Pollinator Habitat Program.
 - b. Well Water Safety & Protection Webinar • November 12, 2020. Tara participated in this conservation webinar which featured information about well maintenance.
 - c. Beneficial Insects for ICP Staff Virtual Training • November 13, 2020. Janel and Tara participated in this Marion County SWCD conservation webinar which outlined beneficial agricultural insects.
 - d. SWCD Website Virtual Training • November 13, 2020: Tara training with SWCD webmaster Peter Oakley.
 - e. Department Head Meeting • November 18, 2020. Janel participated in this conference call where COVID protocols and ER Leave procedure updates were discussed.
 - f. SWCD Website Virtual Training • November 18, 2020. Tara training with SWCD webmaster Peter Oakley.
 - g. LM Basin Webinar Series (NRCS & SWCDs) • November 18, 2020: Tara participated.
 - h. NACD U & C Webinar – Yard by Yard Urban Program • November 19, 2020. Tara and Janel participated.
 - i. Soil & Water Conservation Society Virtual Workshop • November 19, 2020: Tara and Janel participated in day 2 of this conservation workshop.
 - j. NE IN Farm to School Virtual Team Meeting • November 24, 2020: Tara participated. No report available.
 - k. VISME 101 Webinar • November 24, 2020. Tara participated in this training webinar for the SWCD educational video series.
 - l. SWCD Website Virtual Training • November 25, 2020: Tara training with SWCD webmaster Peter Oakley.
 - m. Indiana State Board of Accounts SWCD Virtual Training • December 1, 2020: Janel and Tara participated in webinar which covered audits, virtual meetings, annual meetings, and monthly and annual upload requirements. Janel advised the Board she drafted a letter regarding communications about alternate operations due to COVID for Kayleen to submit if she can't fulfill her duties as the units' financial officer/treasurer. This letter provides primary and alternate contact information.
 - n. ARS Unit Programming/Set-Up • December 1, 2020: Jordan Shedd was at the office to continue programming and train Tara on hardware operation (i.e., computer, camera, projector, etc). The Board inquired whether the unit is ready for use; Janel was not able to answer the question since Tara has been out of the office since the December 1st meeting.
2. November Tally Sheets were not provided in the Supervisors packets; sheets incomplete (missing Tara's information).

ii. Indiana Conservation Partnership

1. 2020 Fall Tillage Transect: The transect was cancelled. ISDA made decision to conduct a late winter/early spring cover crop & tillage transect. They announced the fall transect was optional; however, ISDA would not use any data collected. SWCD & NRCS staff decided to wait until the spring to complete.

- iii. Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
 - 1. Delegate Registration for IASWCD Annual Meeting: The Board discussed Supervisor availability to attend this virtual meeting. Due to scheduling conflicts, the Steuben SWCD will not be participating.
 - 2. IASWCD Legislative Training December 9 & December 16, 2020: IASWCD is offering two virtual training events on the legislative process and talking with legislators.
- iv. Indiana State Department of Agriculture
 - 1. Steuben SWCD Annual Meeting Planning Updates: Janel reserved March 17, 2021 as the snow date. The Board would like to move forward with two plans; an in-person and virtual option if we are unable to meet due to COVID restrictions.
 - 2. How to Facilitate a Virtual Meeting Training • December 17, 2020: ISDA is offering training on conducting a virtual meeting and elections. Janel will be participating.
 - 3. District Support Specialist/Resource Specialist: No update.

c. Budget and Finance

Craig Holman, Chair

- i. 2020 Steuben County Budget Allocation & Wages/Salary Ordinance

Janel advised no county employee will receive a STEP for 2021. Both SWCD staff were eligible for an increase. The Steuben County Council and Commissioners approved our \$16,000 allocation request for FY21.

Janel advised she will be completing the form to encumber the remaining \$1,422.25 in the fund which pays our part-time employee.
- ii. Office Supply Order Update

The Board discussed the total cost to update our office supplies, \$1,695.99, which exceeded the FY20 budget estimate of \$1,000. This difference was covered by funds available within the travel/training and vehicle expense budget items since COVID-19 impacted the ability of staff to attend in-person training and meetings.
- iii. Steuben SWCD Business Plan

A copy of the revised/reformatted business plan was sent to the Board Supervisors for review in advance of the meeting. Craig asked if there were any questions or discussion regarding the updated document. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve the 2021-2023 Steuben County SWCD Business Plan.

Kayleen Hart moved to approve the 2021-2023 Steuben County SWCD Business Plan.
David Perkins seconded. Motion carried.
- iv. Internal Controls

A copy of the updated Steuben SWCD Internal Control (IC) Policy was sent to the Board Supervisors for review in advance of the meeting. Craig asked if there were any questions or discussion regarding the updated document. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve the 2021 Steuben SWCD IC Policy.

David Perkins moved to approve the 2021 Steuben County SWCD Internal Control Policy. Chuck Howard seconded. Motion carried

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 the Bridge 51/George Powers Drain project (ditch realignment). This project will occur just west of the Powers two-stage ditch project. Janel confirmed with Steuben County Highway Engineer Jennifer Sharkey there would be no impact to the two-stage. Based on the plans, the ditch realignment project ends approximately 50 feet before the two-stage ditch begins.

Janel also shared information about the Steuben SWCD signage that was removed on Old 27. Jennifer Sharkey requested for the Board to reach out to the property owner the county received permission from to remove brush and cut down some of the hill for better visibility. He may be willing to work with the District to place our sign. Chuck Howard agreed to contact the landowner to discuss.
- ii. Augmented Reality Sandbox Update (ARS)

No update available.
- iii. Extension / Farm to School / Other Educational and SWCD Projects

No updates available.
- iv. SWCD Website Training

Tara completed four training sessions. She scheduled an additional session on December 11, 2020

to cover various topics that were not covered. Janel paid the invoice for five training sessions with Webmaster Peter Oakley.

v. Upcoming Regional/National Events

1. Christmas Holiday • December 24, 2020 (County Offices Closed)
2. Christmas Holiday • December 25, 2020 (County Offices Closed)
3. New Year's Day Holiday • January 1, 2021 (County Offices Closed)
4. National No-Till Conference • January 12-15, 2021 (Indianapolis, IN)
5. Steuben SWCD Monthly Board Meeting • January 13, 2021 (Community Center)
6. Martin Luther King Jr. Day • January 18, 2021 (County Offices Closed)
7. Fort Wayne Farm Show • March 9-11, 2021

V. CLAIMS

5687	USPS Postmaster (2020 SWCD Fall Newsletter Mailing; 1,530 Pieces)	\$ 212.68
5688	USPS Postmaster (2 rolls Forever Stamps)	\$ 110.00
5689	Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance (Commercial Auto Policy Adjustment 8/31/20 – 8/30/21)	\$ 11.00
5690	CMC Global (J. Meyer & T. Lee Jan. 11-13, 2021 IASWCD Annual Conf. Registration)	\$ 100.00
5691	Amazon.com (Freestanding Acrylic Barrier/Guard for Reducing Germ Transfer)	\$ 171.19
5692	Jordan Shedd (Travel/Mileage – Augmented Reality Sandbox Unit Set-Up)	\$ 103.36
5693	Petty Cash (Petty Cash Fund Replenishment)	\$ 54.99
5694	Graphics 3, inc. (SWCD 2020 Fall Newsletter Printing w/Mailing Services; 1,625 total)	\$ 799.60
5695	Oakley Studio, LLC [WordPress Training (11/11/20; 11/13/20; 11/18/20; 11/25/20; 12/11/20)]	\$ 250.00
5696	IASWCD (River Friendly Farmer Shirts for 2020 Steuben Co. SWCD RFF)	\$ 91.00
5597	Staples (Office Supplies – copy paper; sanitizing supplies; tax forms & envelopes)	\$ 115.85
5598	Staples (Office Supplies – restock Steuben SWCD supply cabinet)	\$ 679.48

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 December 9, 2020. Chuck Howard seconded the motion. Motion approved.

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, January 13, 2021 – 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.

Kayleen Hart moved to adjourn; seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned by Chairman Holman at 6:10 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator/Treasurer

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board

01/13/2021 (Date)