

MINUTES

STEUBEN COUNTY SWCD BOARD MEETING

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

December 8, 2021

IN ATTENDANCE:

<u>District Supervisors</u> Craig Holman David Perkins Beth Williams <u>Absent</u> Kayleen Hart, Board Supervisor Chuck Howard, Board Supervisor	<u>Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)</u> Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator Aimee Wentworth, Resource Conservationist <u>Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)</u> Arthur Franke, District Conservationist
--	---

I. CALL TO ORDER

The SWCD Board meeting was called to order by Steuben SWCD Board Secretary Beth Williams at 5:02 p.m.

II. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (11-10-21)

Board Secretary Williams asked the Board Supervisors to consider the minutes of the November 10, 2021 meeting. There being no additions or corrections, the following action was taken:

Craig Holman moved to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2021 Steuben County SWCD Board meeting as presented. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.

III. TREASURER’S REPORT

Janel Meyer provided the financial report for the November 6 to November 30, 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 November 30, 2021:

	<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>		
Checking	\$ 52,242.77		
Statement Savings	<u>41,879.14</u>		
Total	\$ 94,121.91		
 <i>Checking account</i>		 <i>Savings account</i>	
<i>balance 10/08/21</i>	<i>\$ 40,049.82</i>	<i>balance 10/08/21</i>	<i>\$ 41,878.80</i>
<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 15,440.35</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$.34</i>
<i>Disbursement</i>	<i>(\$ 3,247.40)</i>	<i>Disbursement</i>	<i>(\$ 0.00)</i>
	<i>\$ 52,242.77</i>		<i>\$41,879.14</i>

Additional information provided with monthly claims for Board review and verification included 1. November 2021 Deposit & Check detail reports; 2. November 2021 checking & savings account bank statements; 3. November 2021 checking & savings account reconciliations; 4. Staff payroll approval form, time sheets, compensatory time logs and vehicle logs. Janel advised checking account receipts totaled \$15,440.35 which included the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) Pigeon Creek grant cost-share reimbursement/payment to the SWCD.

Disbursement was \$3,247.40, which included bank service charges (check reorder), conservation education program supplies (2021 Forestry Field Day and Steuben County Life), dues and memberships, newsletter printing/reproduction, operating expenses, and travel/registration [2022 Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation District (IASWCD) Annual Meeting fees for staff; 2022 Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy fee for Resource Conservationist Aimee Wentworth]. Janel noted the net income was negative since the SWCD was waiting for the final GLC conservation cost-share payment reimbursement payment, plus the unexpected cost for vehicle repairs. Hearing no questions or comments regarding the Treasurer’s report, Board Secretary Williams called for a motion to approve.

Craig Holman moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report for the period ending November 30, 2021, as presented. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Natural Resources/Technical Assistance **Beth Williams, Chair****

- i. Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (Farm Bill) / NRCS / FSA**

1. Talking Points were provided in the Supervisors' packets. NRCS District Conservationist Arthur Franke reported he is completing FY 21 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) payments. He reminded the Board FY 22 EQIP applications are due December 17. Thirty-two applications have been received, similar to the number received last year. There is also funding available for farmers through the Western Lake Erie Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP); all applications for RCPP funding consideration must also be received by December 17, 2021. Arthur stated he needs the NRCS payment rates to begin ranking applications. Arthur also advised NRCS has reorganized and renamed Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs) into three new categories—Conservation Planning Activities (CPAs), Design and Implementation Activities (DIAs), and Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring Activities (CEMAs). NRCS broke these activities out to clarify which phase of the NRCS conservation planning process the technical service provider (TSP/Provider) will be supporting. Indiana is accepting applications for enrollment in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP); interested producers should submit applications by January 28, 2022 to be considered for this funding period.

Kayleen Hart provided an FSA report via email, which Janel shared. Kayleen reported FSA has been working on finishing up wheat and other fall small grains certification. Deadline is December 15th. They also have been working on making many farm changes/updates, such as performing map work for newly farmed ground, removing crop ground for buildings, and reconstitutions on properties that need split from sales or other reasons. Kayleen has been finishing up the 2021 organic certification cost-share program (OCCSP) and is working on implementation of the new pandemic organic program (OTECP) and processing commodity loans. The Dairy Margin Coverage Insurance Program begins Monday, December 13, and Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC)/Price Loss Coverage (PLC) 2022 enrollment continues through March 15, 2022.

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. Janel requested approval to make a partial cost-share payment for one field (12.1-acres) included in a completed 52.1-acre forage/biomass planting in the Silver Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek [Pigeon Creek Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP)]; . Total cost of the 12.1-acre planting was \$1,815. Janel advised she invoiced the State for the 52.1-acre project in mid-October; however, payments are being delayed due to staff shortages. The \$1,815 payment would provide partial reimbursement to the landowner. This request was not included as in the original agenda.

A motion was made by David Perkins to approve a \$1,815 partial payment for 12.1-acres of a completed 52.1-acre forage/biomass planting in the Silver Lake Sub-Watershed of Pigeon Creek. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried
2. Friends of the St. Joseph River (FotSJR)
 - a. Aimee Wentworth participated in the FotSJR November 18, 2021 virtual meeting. She reported the organization is currently down \$6,274.85. The FotSJR and the St. Joseph River Basin Commission partnered to provide scholarships to the Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy. The joint committee selected 4 applicants. They are discussing whether to host an in-person or virtual Annual Meeting. The Watershed Celebration Event has been scheduled for March 18, 2022. If in-person, it will be held at the Beck Ballroom in Sturgis, Michigan. Aimee also reported representatives of Lake Bel Aire approached the FotSJR Board for a letter of support regarding a silt mitigation dam. While a letter of support would not be outside of the realm of possibility, the group from Bel Aire was advised they will need to have a conversation with their project group and contact the Hillsdale County SWCD. The next meeting will be virtual on January 27, 2022.
3. St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC)
 - a. Janel attended the SJRBC fourth quarter meeting on December 2, 2021. She reported Kris Thomas, City of Angola MS4 Coordinator/Engineering Assistant, will be the 2022 Board Chair and Alicia Walsh, Chief Administrator - Steuben County Health Department, will be the 2022 Board Vice Chair. The SJRBC is also discussing whether to hold their Annual Symposium in-person or virtually. The Symposium has been scheduled for May 13, 2022. If an in-person event, it will be held at Fernwood Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve in Niles, Michigan.

- iii. -Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB): St. Joe River East (HUC) (Lake Erie).
Sub-watersheds:
 1. Upper St. Joe River – Includes Fish Creek, Nettle, and West Branch Sub-Watersheds:
 - a. Janel advised December 9, 2021 is the date for the next Maumee River Basin Commission meeting. Materials for the meeting were provided in Chuck Howard’s folder.
- iv. Entire County
 1. District Cost-Share
 - a. An update was provided on the 2.0-acre Tree/Windbreak Planting application in the Little Turkey sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek, discussed at the last Steuben SWCD Board meeting. The Board was not supportive of the windbreak installation but was supportive of a one-acre tree planting. Arthur shared the Board’s decision with the landowner; he reported the landowner decided to pursue EQIP funding rather than District Cost-Share funding for the project.
 - b. Janel presented an application for a 3.0-acre tree/shrub establishment in the Mud Lake & Long Lake sub-watersheds of Pigeon Creek. She advised all available funding in the Pigeon Creek WLTP grant has been obligated. District Cost-Share is the only funding option; project would require a maximum payment of \$1,800. Landowner worked with Tom Crowe and DeKalb SWCD on a tree planting at their previous residence. The Steuben County property was recently purchased. They want to work with Tom Crowe again to convert a >5 year-old pasture into trees to promote wildlife habitat and timber. The Board discussed the property location and resource concerns; Board was supportive of the project.

David Perkins moved to approve the 3.0-acre tree/shrub planting in the Mud Lake and Long Lake Sub-Watersheds of Pigeon Creek using the Steuben County SWCD 2022 District Cost-Share Program. Seconded by Craig Williams. Motion carried.
 2. Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC)
 - a. Janel did not attend the SCLC December 4, 2021 monthly Board meeting. She advised the water quality data and report presented by Scott Banfield of Aquatic Enhancement and Survey is available on their website. Janel reported she had concerns after reviewing the SCLC’s proposed 2022 budget, sharing those concerns with the Board. The SCLC’s proposed 2022 educational budget line item was reduced to \$300. The SWCD has a Conservation Education Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Lakes Council, through 2023, for up to \$600 of financial support for the cost of Stewardship Week and Youth Conservation Field Day educational booklets. Janel forwarded an email to Cheri Carpenter, SCLC Office Manager, expressing her concern and to verify the SCLC’s interest and financial ability to support the MOU.
 3. Steuben County/Urban (IDEM Rule 5/MS4)
 - a. Aimee reported a total of 27 contractors and 4 speakers/staff participated in the December 3, 2021 Contractor Workshop and the majority of evaluations received were positive. Attendees agreed the workshop was worthwhile. An article about the workshop was printed in the December 4, 2021 edition of the Herald Republican.

b. District Operations/Marketing

Chuck Howard, Chair

- i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.
 1. Field Visits/Trainings
 - a. Septic System Workshop • November 15, 2021: Janel and Aimee participated to learn the best way to conduct a virtual septic system workshop.
 - b. Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) New Construction Stormwater General Permit Webinar • November 16, 2021: Janel and Aimee participated in this webinar which focused on IDEM’s process of transitioning from a permit by Rule to a Master General Permit for the three stormwater programs currently administered through Indiana Administrative Code (Construction Stormwater; Municipal Storm Sewer Systems or MS4s; Industrial Stormwater).
 - c. Smithsonian Water/Ways Exhibit Planning Meeting • November 16 & 30, 2021: Janel and Aimee are participating in these planning meetings to assist in the production of a local companion exhibit on the impact of water on Steuben County. This exhibit will be displayed in conjunction with the Smithsonian Water/Ways Exhibit, which is scheduled to be at the Carnegie Public Library for 6-weeks this summer. The goal is to look at water in the county from a historical point of view, where we are now, and where we will be going. The local exhibit will have information from many local county agencies and the environmental community.

- d. SWCD Finance Basics for Supervisors • November 17, 2021: Janel participated in this virtual training. Information how to access a recording of the training was provided in the Supervisor's folders.
 - e. Annual Meeting & Virtual Chat Webinar • November 18, 2021: Janel and Aimee participated in this webinar which provided an overview of SWCD Annual Meeting requirements.
 - f. NACD Fighting Forest Invasive Species Webinar • November 19, 2021. Janel participated.
 - g. BHM Seed Cleaning Tour • November 20, 2021: Janel, Aimee and Arthur participated in this educational training session outlining how Blue Heron Ministries collects/prepares locally collected native seeds for conservation projects.
 - h. Urban Soil Health Teams Meeting • November 22, 2021: Janel and Aimee participated in this virtual meeting with Urban Soil Health Program Director Elli Blaine to discuss what Soil Health Specialists can do for the District.
 - i. SWCD Finance Overview for Staff • December 1, 2021: Janel participated in this Indiana State Board of Accounts (SBOA) training which reviewed year-end reporting requirements and enhanced regulatory updates to the Annual Financial Report (AFR). She advised SBOA is requiring optical images of checks (front and back) to be uploaded into Gateway. Janel reported an inquiry has been made with Key Bank on how to obtain these images. She informed the Board the SWCD will likely incur a monthly bank fee for this information.
 - j. ISDA QuickBooks Training • December 7, 2021: Janel attended this in-person training with LaGrange County SWCD.
2. November tally sheets were provided in the Supervisors folders.
- ii. Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP)
 1. SWCDs were advised the 2021 fall tillage transect will be conducted in late winter/early spring (2022). A new system to calculate results will also be implemented. The Steuben survey will likely be completed sometime in March (timing based on weather).
 - iii. Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD)
 1. 2022 Annual Conference / Delegate: Janel reminded the Board of the January 14, 2022 deadline to register a delegate for the 2022 IASWCD Annual Conference.
 - iv. Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)
 1. District Support Specialist/Resource Specialist update: Janel reported ISDA is working to fill the vacant NE District Support Specialist (DSS) position. Laura Fribley, the southern Indiana DSS/Team Leader, will continue as our acting DSS.
 2. Steuben SWCD Annual Meeting Planning: Aimee provided information regarding the price of the meal for the March 9, 2022 SWCD Annual Meeting, with and without drinks: \$13.02/person with beverages or \$10.72/person without for 60 individuals. Staff advised the SWCD can provide water, lemonade, and coffee to keep the \$10.72/person price. The caterer requires a 50% deposit for the meal, with the remainder to be paid a week prior to the event. The deposit is refundable.

David Perkins moved to approve a free dinner to individuals attending the Steuben County SWCD March 9, 2022 Annual Meeting; seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.

David Perkins moved to approve the 50% deposit/payment to Lakeside Meats for the Steuben County SWCD March 9, 2022 Annual Meeting meal; seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.

Staff shared information about the keynote speaker they chose for the annual meeting, Meteorologist Greg Shoup with Fort Wayne's WANE 15 News. Staff advised he typically charges for his appearance; the Board discussed payment for his services.

David Perkins moved to approve a payment of \$100 to Meteorologist Greg Shoup of Fort Wayne's WANE 15 News for his keynote presentation at the Steuben County SWCD March 9, 2022 Annual Meeting; seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.

The Board also discussed the free-will donation for the use of the Presbyterian Chapel of the Lakes for the meeting.

A motion was made by Craig Holman to approve a donation of \$75 to the Presbyterian Chapel of the Lakes for facility use on March 9, 2022 for the Steuben County SWCD Annual Meeting. Seconded by David Perkins; motion carried.
3. Supervisor David Perkins completed the training method survey, as requested by our acting DSS.

- c. **Budget and Finance** **Kayleen Hart, Chair**
1. Janel reviewed a November 23, 2021 Memo from the Steuben County Commissioners and Steuben County Council regarding pandemic pay for employees with full-time employment status.

- d. **Information and Education** **David Perkins, Chair**
- i. **Drainage Board**
Staff are attending the twice-monthly county Drainage Board (DB) meetings. Janel reported on an ongoing issue with the Fred Emerson open ditch/#554 Hammond Greeno watershed – complaints regarding standing water due to topographical changes on an adjacent property being developed (house construction).
- ii. **4-H/Purdue Extension/SWCD/Other SWCDs**
Aimee Wentworth reported:
- Work continues on an invasive species and SWCD promotional video. Filming for the invasive species video was completed with assistance from Purdue Extension Educator Tami Mosier and John Brittenham of Blue Heron Ministries. Unfortunately, the lapel microphone was not working correctly and the recording has significant wind noise in the background. She advised the video will need to be redone in the spring.
- Planning for the Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) class has been completed; all speakers and dates have been confirmed. The next step is to submit the workshop application to the IMN Council for approval. She is waiting for Pokagon State Park Naturalist Nicky Ball to review/approve the application prior to submittal.
Janel shared a project idea with the Board regarding the development of a self-guided conservation tour for Steuben County. The goal is to highlight various conservation practices throughout the major watersheds and provide education/information on best management practices and the benefit of those practices for water quality and soil health. She advised the District would need to work with willing landowners that have practices easily accessible on a low-traffic road. The Board discussed various ways to implement a tour and suggested using the National Park Service tour format as a guide. Staff will further discuss and provide information to the Board as the idea is developed. The goal is to have the self-guided tour available by late spring.
- iii. **Upcoming Regional / National Events**
1. ***Christmas Holiday • December 23, 2021****
 2. ***Christmas Holiday • December 24, 2021****
 3. ***New Year's Day Holiday • December 31, 2021****
 4. National No-Till Conference • January 4-7, 2022 (*Louisville, KY*)
 5. Steuben SWCD Monthly Board Meeting • January 12, 2022 (*Community Center*)
 6. ***Martin Luther King Jr. Day • January 17, 2022****
 7. Fort Wayne Farm Show • January 18-20, 2022
****Angola USDA Service Center Closed***

V. CLAIMS

5812	Purdue University (2022 IN Watershed Leadership Academy Registration)	\$ 750.00
5813	CMC Global (IASWCD Jan. 23-25, 2022 Annual Conference Registration-Staff)	\$ 660.00
5814	NACD (FY22 Membership Dues)	\$ 775.00
5815	Petty Cash (Petty Cash Fund Replenishment)	\$ 61.32
5816	Meijer (Materials/Supplies for 12/3/2021 Contractor Workshop)	\$ 38.53
5817	Key Bank (ACH – Check Fee)	\$ 146.89
5818	Ceres Solutions (Fuel for Expedition – December Statement)	\$ 62.60
5819	Staples (Conservation Education & Office Supplies – folders, envelopes, paper clips, etc)	\$ 95.45

Craig Holman moved to accept the claims for December 8, 2021; seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING

Janel advised the Steuben County Community Center Multi-Purpose Room has been reserved through July 2022 for the SWCD Board meetings. Next meeting:

Wednesday, January 12, 2021 – 5:00 p.m.

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

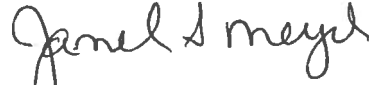
VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Steuben SWCD, Board Secretary Williams called for a motion to adjourn.

David Perkins moved to adjourn the December 8, 2021 Steuben County SWCD Board meeting. Seconded by Craig Holman; motion carried.

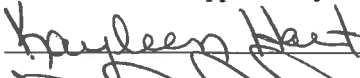
Meeting adjourned by Board Secretary Williams at 6:05 p.m.


Minutes respectfully submitted by:

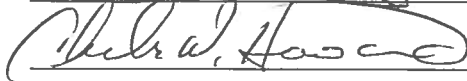


Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board







1/12/2022 (Date)