
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 • 317 S. Wayne Street, Multi-Purpose Room, Angola, Indiana 46703
April 13, 2022

IN ATTENDANCE:

<u>District Supervisors</u> Kayleen Hart, Chair Chuck Howard, Vice Chair Craig Holman Beth Williams	<u>Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)</u> Arthur Franke, District Conservationist <u>Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)</u> Kate Sanders, Resource Specialist
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Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)
Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator
Aimee Wentworth, Resource Conservationist

Absent
David Perkins, Supervisor

I. CALL TO ORDER

Steuben County SWCD Board Chair Kayleen Hart called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

II. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (3-9-22)

Board Chair Hart asked the Supervisors to consider the minutes of the March 9, 2022 meeting. There being no further additions or corrections, she requested a motion to approve.

Beth Williams moved to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2022 Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District Board meeting, as presented. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT

Administrative Coordinator Janel Meyer provided the financial report for March 1 – 31, 2022. Financial reports were sent to the Board Supervisors for review in advance of the meeting. A hard copy was also provided in the Supervisors folders.

Report for period ending March 31, 2022:

<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>			
Checking	\$ 59,101.10		
Statement Savings	<u>41,880.53</u>		
Total	\$100,981.63		
<i>Checking account</i>		<i>Savings account</i>	
<i>balance 2/28/22</i>	<i>\$ 61,966.58</i>	<i>balance 1/31/22</i>	<i>\$ 41,880.17</i>
<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 1,809.00</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$.36</i>
<i>Disbursement</i>	<i><u>(\$ 4,674.48)</u></i>	<i>Disbursement</i>	<i><u>(\$ 0.00)</u></i>
	<i>\$59,101.10</i>		<i>\$41,880.53</i>

Additional information provided with the monthly claims for Board review and verification included: 1. March 2022 checking & savings account bank statements and reconciliations; 2. March 2022 deposit/check detail and general ledger reports; 3. Staff payroll approval form, time sheets, compensatory time logs and 4. March 2022 vehicle log.

Janel shared checking account receipts totaled \$1,809.00; this included affiliate memberships, flag sales, Indiana Master Naturalist workshop registrations, and donations received from the tree pickup/tree delivery.

Disbursement was \$4,674.48; this included 2022 annual meeting expenses, contract services, conservation education (April 9, 2022 Urban Soil Health Workshop; Regional Science Fair conservation award sponsorship), operating expenses, Steuben Co. SWCD 2021 Annual Report printing, and travel expenses.

Board Chair Hart asked whether there were any questions or comments regarding the Treasurer's report. Hearing none, she called for a motion to approve.

Beth Williams moved to approve the Treasurer's Report for the period ending March 31, 2022 as presented. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Natural Resources/Technical Assistance

Beth Williams, Chair

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

1. NRCS District Conservationist Arthur Franke reviewed the annual Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity Partner/Civil Rights Responsibility Partner Checklist. Board Chair Hart and Art completed the Affirmation of Review.
2. Talking points were provided in the Supervisors packets. Art reviewed key Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) Report findings; Steuben and DeKalb County data were included in this report.
3. Art advised he will be completing/processing FY22 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts; 29 of 32 applications were pre-approved. He shared a new NRCS Soil Conservationist will be stationed at the Angola USDA Service Center, shortly.

Kayleen Hart, FSA Program Technician, reported voter files are being reviewed and any outdated information is being updated. FSA has several re-enrolls and new contracts for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP); the sign-up deadline for CRP was March 11.

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 presented a 2.1-acre wildlife habitat planting application in the Pigeon Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon for consideration; project cost estimate of \$1,365. She advised funds are available due to the recent cancellation of two contracts. Since the grant ends in 2022, all projects must be completed by December. Art provided project information. He reviewed site preparation requirements (multiple herbicide treatments this year) and explained that although two-years is preferable for site preparation, this site would be ready in one season. The Board discussed the preparation requirements, the type of seeding (no-till drilling vs. frost-seeding), and the benefits of adding this conservation practice to the property. The Board approved the project and asked Art to contact the applicant to discuss the strict timeline for project completion.

*Chuck Howard moved to approve the 2.1-acre Wildlife Habitat planting in the Pigeon Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek using the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District 2020 Pigeon Creek Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) grant. Seconded by Beth Williams.
Motion carried.*

- b. Janel shared information about a call she received from Commissioner Wil Howard regarding the new Steuben County Judicial Center Construction and the removal of the northeast corner rain garden on Martha/Wall Streets. The County plan is to break ground in August. Her discussion with Commissioner Howard focused on contractual obligations, since the project was funded through an Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grant, and the County's proposal to replace the rain garden with a larger stormwater basin/rain garden. She advised Commissioner Howard the Board would submit a letter to the Commissioners about the project. The Board discussed options for the plants and agreed they would like for the SWCD to be notified prior to construction to salvage plants. Board Chair Hart and Board Supervisor Williams volunteered to draft the letter.

Janel provided information regarding the solicitation for IDEM 319 grant funds and the requirement for a Notice of Intent to be filed by June 1st if applying. She asked the Board to share their thoughts on an update to 2014 Pigeon Creek Watershed Management Plan. She will discuss the project with IDEM to determine how favorably this project would rank.

2. Friends of the St. Joseph River (FotSJR)
 - a. Resource Conservationist Aimee Wentworth attended the FotSJR March 15, 2022 virtual Watershed Celebration and Board meeting. She reported Travis Childs spoke on the history of the SJR. Director elections were held during the Board meeting.
 - b. The next FotSJR virtual meeting is scheduled for April 28, 2022.
3. St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC)
 - a. Janel advised staff will be attending the SJRBC 22nd Annual Symposium on May 13, 2022.

-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 presented a request from the Hillsdale, Michigan SWCD for financial sponsorship of an August 11, 2022 “Tri-State” soil health workshop/field day at Person Farms (located on the MI/OH border). Keynote speaker is Ray Archuleta. The proposal is for expenses to be evenly split between all SWCD’s involved, after sponsorships have been received. The Board discussed their interest in the field day, costs associated with the event, and approved a \$500 sponsorship.

Chuck Howard moved to approve a maximum of \$500 towards the financial support of the August 11, 2022 Tri-State Soil Health Workshop with Ray Archuleta. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.

iii. Entire County

1. Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC)

a. Janel attended the SCLC March 25, 2022 water quality meeting and reviewed the meeting agenda (changes to 2022 test sites, DNA testing/cost and a general discussion on their testing program). Janel advised she and Kris Thomas, City of Angola/Trine University MS4 Coordinator, cautioned the meeting participants about the eDNA analysis cost quote. The quote listed the testing as a “fecal source panel” analysis which is misleading since the test can only tell whether DNA is present; not all DNA is fecal in nature (e.g., humans shed skin cells containing DNA). Their test is unable to conclude the DNA source. Currently, if the company finds high E. coli levels, along with human DNA, an assumption is being made – it’s fecal DNA from failed septic systems. Janel forewarned assumptions can and will be misleading.

b. Janel attended the SCLC April 2, 2022 meeting and reported meeting highlights: (1) to date, an extra \$12,000 has been collected for water quality testing from their membership; (2) SCLC updated their website (lakescouncil.org); (3) 2 storage units are being proposed near Lake Gage and Lake Pleasant (State Road 120) and a County fueling station on 200 W is being proposed; and (4) the 2022 Annual Business Meeting will be held August 13, 2022 at the Lake James Christian Camp (8:00 a.m.), followed by their 50th Anniversary Celebration at Commons Park (2 – 6 p.m.). Meeting attendees discussed the Environmental Integrity Project which reported Indiana ranks first in the nation for water recreation impairments. Janel shared a copy of the newspaper article with the Supervisors. She explained an important caveat which was excluded from the article: Indiana has a lot of river miles – many of those miles have been tested by IDEM for various water quality parameters. This data is being compared to other states which may perform little to no water quality testing. Therefore, the data would show Indiana ranking lower in water quality than a state with lower river miles and/or no water quality data.

b. The next SCLC Board meeting is scheduled for May 7, 2022.

2. Steuben County/Urban (IDEM Construction Stormwater General Permit (CSGP)/MS4)

a. As of December 18, 2021, Indiana no longer administers the construction stormwater program under Rule 5; permitting coverage is now issued under the CSGP. Janel reviewed the major changes that will impact active projects changing from Rule 5 to CSGP. IDEM forwarded a survey to gauge our interest in participating in plan reviews and/or inspections on behalf of IDEM. Supervisors were not supportive of the Steuben Co. SWCD staff performing reviews/inspections as the SWCD is a non-regulatory agency. Janel will complete the survey and return to IDEM.

b. District Operations/Marketing

Chuck Howard, Chair

i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.

1. Field Visits/Trainings

a. Capture the Credits Meeting and Tradeshow • March 16, 2022. Janel and Aimee participated in this workshop, featuring Keynote Speaker Michelle Miller (aka the “Farm Babe”). Michelle is a dedicated myth-buster in the food industry and an agricultural advocate. Her social media reach averages 2-3 million/month with 200K followers.

b. Envirothon • March 17, 2022. Janel and Aimee assisted with the NE Indiana Envirothon competition. First place team was Warsaw Senior Team, 2nd Place Whitko High School and 3rd Place Warsaw Junior Team. Janel stated she would like to see participation from our county. Board Supervisor Holman advised Hamilton has a new FFA Educator.

c. NE Indiana Tri-State Regional Science Fair • March 19, 2022. Janel served as a judge for the conservation awards. 1st Place was awarded to Olivia Rigby, DeKalb High School, for her project “The effect of fertilizer levels on hydroponic tomato plants”, 2nd Place was awarded to DeKalb 3rd-grader Mylan Mosier for her project “Soil absorption: which soil absorbs the most water”, and 3rd Place was awarded to Emma Creager, Fremont Middle School, for her project “Effluent water, ground water, and surface water-how does effluent water compare to potable and leisure water sources in terms of meeting state standards for water quality”.

d. Steuben County Tree Pickup • March 22, 2022.

- e. OSU: Emerging Technology in Water Quality • March 23, 2022 (*virtual*). Janel participated in this webinar which featured the Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework (ACPF) Financial and Nutrient Reduction Tool and the Nutrient Tracking Tool.
- f. Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy • March 29-30, 2022. Aimee attended the in-person training at McCormick’s Creek. She started working on the group project, due May 25. The project is for realtors to provide rain barrels as gifts to homebuyers upon the closing.
- g. Smithsonian Local Display Planning Meeting • March 30, 2022. Janel attended a meeting with SCLC’s Bill Schmidt and Graphic Designer Bill Eyster to provide final edits for each of the eight panels. The economic panel, featuring Ag information, required major revisions to improve the message. ISDA’s Kate Sanders and Art Franke assisted Janel with these updates. Janel reported 300 copies of the book “A Seriously Silly Story of a Waterdrops Journey” by Monroe County SWCD’s Martha Miller were purchased to distribute to kids attending the Water/Ways Exhibit.
- h. CCSI Cover Crop and Soil Health Training • April 5, 2022 (*virtual*). Aimee is participating in this training.
- i. IASWCD Lunch ‘n Learn: Resources to Assist Small Farms & Urban • April 6, 2022 (*virtual*). Janel and Aimee are participating in this virtual training series for District staff and Supervisors.
- j. Indiana Lakes Management Society (ILMS) Annual Conference • April 7-8, 2022. Janel attended the ILMS Annual Conference after being asked to serve as an ILMS Board member. ILMS promotes the understanding and comprehensive management of Indiana lakes and reservoirs and their watershed ecosystems; they also provide a forum and technical assistance network for sharing information. She reported the organization is similar to the FotSJR, just on a larger scale. Janel received approval to attend the Conference and serve as a Board member, prior to the April 2022 SWCD Board meeting.
- k. Conservation Education Resource Roundtable • April 11, 2022. The Steuben SWCD partnered with Kris Thomas and hosted a meeting to bring together environmental organizations and discuss educational resources each group offers and how we might work together. Janel attended and will be providing the meeting minutes.
- l. CCSI Cover Crop and Soil Health Training • April 12, 2022. Aimee was unable to attend.
- m. North Northeast IDEA Region Meeting • April 14, 2022. Janel reported SWCD staff will be out of the office on the 14th to attend the NNE IDEA Region Meeting in Marshall County.
- 2. March 2022 tally sheets were provided in the Supervisors folders.

ii. Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP)

- 1. Art, Kate and SWCD staff completed the Steuben winter-spring tillage on March 31st and April 1st. Janel shared preliminary information about the data: the majority of 2021 corn and soybean fields included in the survey were no-till; about 15% of the survey fields were planted with cover crops. Art stated the wet fall resulted in a late harvest for many producers, prohibiting the use of cover crops.

iii. Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD)

- 1. River Friendly Farmer: Janel asked the Supervisors to start thinking about individuals to nominate.
- 2. Lunch ‘n Learn Training Sessions: IASWCD is offering a series of lunch ‘n learn training webinars on Tuesdays in April for District staff and Supervisors.

iv. State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)

- 1. District Support Specialist/Resource Specialist update: Kate reported she will be uploading the transect data file for the District. She is currently working with Art on EQIP applications and assisting other Districts with tillage transects. ISDA is offering a virtual series for SWCDs focusing on grant and funding opportunities.
- 2. Steuben SWCD March 9, 2022 Annual Meeting: Aimee provided a summary of the annual meeting evaluation: participants ranked the meal, meeting location, and speaker presentation as “excellent”; 54% of participants ranked the current natural resources status of Steuben County as “good”, 42% ranked them as ‘excellent’; only 15% thought significant resource concerns were not being addressed (e.g., invasive species, e. Coli levels in ditches/streams/lakes). Most attendees stated they preferred educational presentations for future annual meetings. Supervisor Beth Williams completed the oath of office (not completed at 2021 annual meeting).

c. Budget and Finance

Kayleen Hart, Chair

i. Annual Plan

Each Supervisor was emailed a copy of the Annual Plan prior to the meeting for review. A hard copy was also available in their packets. Janel reviewed sections she updated and asked the Board to provide

feedback before the May meeting to finalize the document. The Board reviewed the Steuben County SWCD Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary assignments.

- *A motion was made by Chuck Howard to keep the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary positions the same as 2021 (Kayleen Hart, Chair; Chuck Howard, Vice Chair; Beth Williams, Secretary). Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.*

The Board also reviewed Steuben County SWCD Committee Assignments.

- *Beth Williams made a motion to keep the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District Committee Assignments the same as 2021 (Beth Williams, Chair of the Natural Resources Committee; Chuck Howard, Chair of District Operations; Kayleen Hart, Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee; and David Perkins, Chair of the Information and Education Committee). Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.*

ii. Flag Order

Janel requested a motion to approve the purchase of flags as the purchase will exceed the Steuben Co. SWCD's SOP purchase limit of \$100 without prior Board approval.

Craig Holman motioned to approve up to \$400 for the purchase of flags for over-the-counter sales; seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.

d. Information and Education

David Perkins, Chair

i. Drainage Board

Staff are attending the twice-monthly county Drainage Board (DB) meetings as schedules allow. Janel reported the Pigeon Creek Drainage Board and Steuben/DeKalb Join Drainage Board met for the appointment of officers and certification of drains/drain assessments.

ii. NACD Stewardship Week Materials and Poster Contest

Janel requested an amendment to the March 9, 2022 motion approving the purchase of Stewardship Week Materials as the cost exceeded the approved amount (\$1,500). Total cost equaled \$1,870.87, of which \$300 will be paid by a SCLC educational material sponsorship. She also requested the approval to pay the KPC printing invoice.

Kayleen Hart made a motion to amend the original March 9, 2022 motion, increasing the maximum amount the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District will spend for 2022 National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts' (NACD) Stewardship Week materials to \$1,600; seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Chuck Howard to pay the \$1,870.87 KPC invoice for printing the 2022 National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts' (NACD) Stewardship Week materials; seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.

iii. Steuben County SWCD July 12, 2022 Conservation Camp

Kayleen Hart made a motion to support refreshments/food and approve the purchase of materials/supplies for Steuben County Conservation Camp on July 12, 2022 since this event furthers the mission of the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District; seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.

iv. Food Plot Seed Pickup

Board Supervisor Chuck Howard volunteered to pick up the food plot seed when available.

v. Steuben County Life

Kayleen Hart made a motion to (1) support refreshments and approve the purchase of materials/supplies for the 2022 Steuben County Life class; (2) approve the \$50 registration fee for all participants; and (3) exempt speakers and Steuben County Life planners from paying the registration fee as this event furthers the mission of the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District; seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.

vi. 2022 Spring Newsletter

Janel advised she will be working on the spring newsletter at the beginning of May. Kate and Art agreed to submit an invasive species article.

vii. 4-H/Purdue Extension/SWCD/Other Educational and SWCD Projects

Aimee Wentworth reported:

- The Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) registration deadline was April 8. The workshop is full (17 participants). Since inquiries are still being received about the workshop, she began a list of interested individuals for a future workshop.

- The April 9, 2022 Soil Health Workshop had 16 participants, not including speakers and staff. All evaluations received were positive; only one person stated they were unlikely to change their practices after the workshop.

- A draft of the Pollinator video has been recorded; the script for the Stormwater video has been written

and is being reviewed by Tami Mosier, Steuben County Purdue Extension Educator, and Bridget Harrison, Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy.
 - The signs for the Steuben County Conservation Tour were ready for Board review/approval. Cost is \$18 each for 15 1/2" x 23 3/4"; 30" tall heavy-duty stakes are \$5/sign from local company or \$2.40/sign from Amazon. Two copies of each sign and 20 stakes required. She shared her idea to offer a prize to participants at the end of the event (random drawing for a gift card for participants that submitted a photo of all ten stops) to encourage participation.

Chuck Howard made a motion to approve up to \$500 towards the purchase of signage and stakes, plus \$50 for a participant prize gift card for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District 2022 Conservation Tour. Seconded by Kayleen. Motion approved.

viii. Upcoming Regional / National Events

1. Life Hacks Over Lunch: A meet-up series for Watershed Professionals • March 18, April 15, & May 20, 2022
2. **Good Friday Holiday • April 15, 2022***
3. Earth Day • April 22, 2022
4. NACD Stewardship Week (Healthy Soil, Healthy Life) • April 24 – May 1, 2022
5. **Primary Election Day • May 3, 2022 (Steuben County Government Holiday)**
6. Indiana Master Naturalist Class • May 3, 2022 (Angola, IN)
7. Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting • May 7, 2022 (Angola, IN)
8. Indiana Master Naturalist Class • May 10, 2022 (Angola, IN)
9. Steuben SWCD Monthly Board Meeting • May 11, 2022 (Angola, IN)
10. **Memorial Day Holiday • May 30, 2022 (Angola USDA Service Center Closed)**
**Steuben County SWCD staff 1/2-day Holiday (12 – 4:30 p.m.)*

V. CLAIMS

5849	USPS/Postmaster (2 Rolls Forever Stamps)	\$ 136.00
5850	Oakley Studio, LLC (Managed Website Hosting – Jan.– June 2022)	\$ 104.00
5851	Elkhart Co. SWCD (3/16/22 Capture the Credits Workshop Registration – Staff)	\$ 20.00
5852	ILMS (Apr. 7-8, 2022 Annual Lakes Management Conf. Registration – Janel Meyer)	\$ 110.00
5853	KPC Media Group, Inc. (March 9, 2022 Annual Meeting Legal Advertising)	\$ 28.36
5854	Tim Groosbeck (Contractual Services – Steuben County Tree Pickup)	\$ 604.00
5855	Amazon (ACH–April 9, 2022 Steuben SWCD Soil Health Workshop Materials/Supplies)	\$ 49.27
5856	Amazon (ACH–April 9, 2022 Steuben SWCD Soil Health Workshop Materials/Supplies)	\$ 11.15
5857	Canyon Inn – McCormick’s Creek (Travel – Aimee Wentworth IWLA)	\$ 79.99
5858	LaGrange Co. SWCD (2022 Regional Science Fair Award Sponsorship)	\$ 90.00
5859	Jimmy Johns (April 9, 2022 Steuben SWCD Soil Health Workshop Lunch)	\$ 61.99
5860	Meijer (April 9, 2022 Steuben SWCD Soil Health Workshop Materials/Supplies)	\$ 60.01
5861	Aimee Wentworth (March 38-30, 2022 IWLA Travel Expenses)	\$ 35.41
5862	USPS/Postmaster (USPS Marketing Mail Permit Renewal)	\$ 265.00
5863	Ceres Solutions (Fuel for Expedition – April 2022 Statement)	\$ 173.18

Craig Holman moved to accept the claims for the April 13, 2022 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District: seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, May 11, 2022 – 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 Chair Hart called for a motion to adjourn.


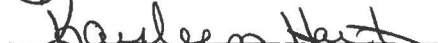

Chuck Howard moved to adjourn the April 13, 2022 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned by Board Chair Hart at 7:13 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:


 Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board

5/11/2022 (Date)
6/8/2022