

**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

Angola USDA Service Center • 1220 N 200 W, Suite L, Angola, Indiana 46703

January 11, 2023

IN ATTENDANCE

District Supervisors

Kayleen Hart, Chair

Chuck Howard, Vice Chair

Craig Holman

Beth Williams

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Arthur Franke, District Conservationist

Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Aimee Wentworth, Resource Conservationist

Absent

David Perkins, Board Supervisor

I. CALL TO ORDER

Steuben County SWCD Board Chair Kayleen Hart called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

II. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (12-14-22)

Board Chair Hart asked the Supervisors to consider the minutes of the December 14, 2022 meeting. There being no further additions or corrections, she requested a motion to approve.

Chuck Howard moved to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2022 Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting, as presented. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT

Administrative Coordinator Janel Meyer provided the financial report for December 1 – December 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 December 31, 2022:

<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>	
Checking	\$ 55,556.75
Statement Savings	<u>41,914.71</u>
Total	\$ 98,856.82
<i>Checking account</i>	<i>Savings account</i>
<i>balance 11/30/22</i>	<i>balance 11/30/22</i>
<i>Receipts</i>	<i>Receipts</i>
<i>Disbursement</i>	<i>Disbursement</i>

Additional information provided with the monthly claims for Board review and verification included: 1. December 2022 checking & savings account bank statement and reconciliation; 2. December 2022 deposit/check detail and general ledger reports; 3. Staff payroll approval forms, time sheets, compensatory time logs (December 2 and 16, 2022 pay dates); and 4. December 2022 vehicle log.

Janel shared checking account receipts totaled \$3,059.80 (R3510 – R3511) which included Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) Grant cost-share payments for a 16' x 40' Heavy Use Area Protection Area (HUAP) in the Hamilton Lake sub-watershed of the Upper St. Joseph River and a 10-acre Pasture/Hay Planting in the Green Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek.

Disbursement was \$4,458.59 (Claim #5961 – #5968); this included conservation education expenses (*December 9, 2022 Contractors' Workshop*), office supplies, operating expenses, petty cash reimbursement, printing of the Steuben County SWCD fall newsletter, and the 16' x 40' HUAP and 10-acre Pasture/Hay Planting cost-share payments. 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.

Chuck Howard moved to approve the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Treasurer's Report for the period ending December 31, 2022, as presented. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.

Janel advised the Board she would like to revisit the approval to pay reoccurring costs, such as insurance and newsletter printing and postage fees, between Board meetings. The Board tabled the discussion to the February meeting in order for Janel to prepare and present the list of Steuben SWCD reoccurring fees currently approved for payment between Board meetings.

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.
2. District Conservationist (DC) Arthur Franke advised a new Northeast Area Conservationist, Keith Williams, will begin in February due to the recent retirement of Sherman Leichty. Keith is currently serving as a Planning Team Leader in Southern Indiana. The NRCS State Conservationist will be moving to D.C.; his position has not been posted. Art will continue serving as the NRCS Steuben County DC and acting NRCS Lagrange County DC until that position is filled. The last day to submit applications for the FY23 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was December 16, 2022. Art received 27 applications and is currently working on processing for ranking. The last day to submit applications for the FY23 Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is January 20. Six new applications were received for Steuben County. Art also advised the Grasslands for Gamebirds and Songbirds Initiative (GGS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), established by 23 partner conservation organizations, received FY23 funding and will begin this spring. Janel reminded the Board the Steuben SWCD committed cash and in-kind support towards the GGS RCPP project.

Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) Program Technician, reported Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC)/Price Loss Coverage (PLC) sign-up is due in March. Angola FSA Program Technician Kathy Allen will be assisting in LaGrange and DeKalb counties until the positions vacated, due to recent retirements, are refilled. Kayleen is currently processing loans/payments.

ii. Watershed Projects and Organizations/SWCD

-Southeastern Lake Michigan Basin: St. Joe River West (HUC 8) (Lake Michigan)

Sub-watersheds:

1. Fawn River Watershed
 - a. Janel advised the outstanding contract for fence in the 2020 Fawn River WLTP was completed by the December 31, 2022 deadline.
2. Friends of the St. Joseph River (FotSJR)
 - a. The next meeting is scheduled for January 26, 2023. It will be held virtually.

-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 provided a WLTP grant update. Art will be scheduling a meeting with two landowners that have expressed interest in the installation of grassed waterways on their adjacent properties. There is ample funding available to cover the cost of the waterways. Janel advised she will need to confer with the Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) grant administrator how to correctly complete the grant contract for a grassed waterway.
 - b. Janel participated in the virtual December 19, 2022 Domestic Action Plan (DAP) Advisory Committee Meeting where updates on 2022 water quality sampling data were provided, and the group discussed required updates for the Milestone and Action Table [table shows the progress Indiana is making towards achieving the mandated 40% phosphorus (P) load reduction into the WLEB].

iii. Entire County

1. Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC)
 - a. The next SCLC meeting is scheduled for February 4, 2023. Janel received the SCLC 2023 Membership Campaign request to renew our business/professional membership. The membership cost increased by \$5 and is now \$45/year.

Chuck Howard moved to approve renewing the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) \$45.00 business/professional membership with the

Steuben County Lakes Council for FY23. Beth Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2. Steuben County/Urban (IDEM CSGP/MS4)
 - a. The Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan for The Watershed Storage Condos Subdivision on SR-127 (Angola) was provided for review.

b. District Operations/Marketing

Chuck Howard, Chair

i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.

1. Field Visits/Trainings

a. IDEA NNE Region Meeting • December 15, 2022. Staff attended the NNE Region meeting of the Indiana District Employees Association (IDEA) where District issues were discussed (e.g., best ways to promote educational events) and Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP) updates were provided. Aimee shared she was asked by the NNE Region Director, Julie Knudson, to be involved in a pilot career development program to help provide feedback and input to ensure its future success. It will begin in February with four in-person sessions and several online activities. Janel asked the Board to confirm their support for Aimee’s participation since there would be some overnight travel involved. The Board gave their support.

b. Steuben County Water Monitoring Meeting • December 19, 2022 & January 11, 2023. Janel continues working with the City of Angola/Trine University MS4 Coordinator Kris Thomas, the Steuben County Health Department, Bill Schmidt (SCLC), and St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC) Aquatic Ecologist Kate Barrett on the development of a county strategic water monitoring program. OTT Hydromet Specialist Brent Register attended the December 19 meeting to review the water quality sampling equipment (sonde) and maintenance requirements. The January 11 meeting focused on a review of the draft strategic water quality program for Steuben County and a budget discussion for the Steuben County Community Foundation grant application. Janel advised if the application was funded, the SWCD would provide technical in-kind support. She asked the Board if they would also be supportive of cash in-kind support. Much discussion ensued on why current sampling equipment, such as the City of Angola Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) meter, couldn’t be used for the project instead of purchasing a Hydromet water quality sonde. Board Supervisor Williams and Holman also suggested tracking down data from the City of Angola WWTP to use for the project and approaching them about processing E. coli samples. Janel explained their equipment is likely outdated; however, she would research and provide a report at the next meeting on the type of meter utilized and what data may be available. The Board agreed to provide up to \$2,500 cash in-kind support for the grant application.

Craig Holman made a motion to approve the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) support for the Steuben County water quality monitoring pilot program by the City of Angola/Trine University MS4, Steuben County Department of Health, Steuben County Lakes Council, and St. Joseph River Basin Commission, in the form of a one-time \$2,500 cash sponsorship, along with in-kind technical assistance for the life of the project. Seconded by Kayleen Hart. Motion carried.

c. IASWCD Annual Meeting • January 8 – 10, 2023. Aimee and Janel provided a report on the conference and shared their favorite session. Aimee’s was “Addressing Difficult Conservations” where the instructor advised to take a good look at yourself, approach with clear goals and positive intent, respond to defensiveness (yours and theirs), and use the dialog approach. Janel’s was “Indiana Science Assessment-Tracking Indiana’s Conservation Efforts and Impacts” where the goal of the program is to strengthen and improve the existing method that the ICP uses to capture sediment and nutrient load reductions from conservation practices so that dissolved nutrients and other practices, not tied to sediment (e.g., nutrient management), can be captured. Information about the Indiana Science Assessment was provided in the Supervisor’s folders. Beth provided an update on the resolutions considered at the January 10, 2023 IASWCD Annual Business Meeting and shared additional background information on the reason the resolutions were introduced (State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management (SICIM) membership in the ICP; inclusion of the office of SWCD Supervisor on the general ballot; restructuring of Conservancy Groups; and closed landfill funding). The SICIM membership in the ICP resolution was the only one approved.

2. The December tally sheet was provided in the Supervisors folders.

- ii. Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD)
 - 1. Updates for the “Next level Conservation for Indiana’s Working Lands” initiative were provided. There is a proposed \$1.6M increase/year for Clean Water Indiana funding and a \$423,624 increase/year for ISDA’s Soil Conservation Division. The recent statement from the Governor to invest \$25M in conservation is focused on land conservation rather than soil/water conservation. IASWCD will continue moving forward with the additional \$8.6 million/year for the Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Program request. Janel shared neither Senator Glick nor Representative Zent attended the 2023 IASWCD Legislative Breakfast.

- iii. Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)

- 1. CWI training funds are available for SWCD supervisors and staff for trainings that fall between March 16, 2022 and March 15, 2023. Janel advised she will submit an application/reimbursement request to ISDA to cover the registration fees for the 2023 IASWCD Annual Conference. The maximum reimbursement request is \$1,000.

Janel shared information from Sandra Hoffarth, ISDA District Support Specialist, that SWCDs should be following the state per diem rate of \$35.00/day and not the county per diem rate of \$60.00. The state per diem is set in statute. Supervisors were still supportive of their November 17, 2022 motion to have the ability to provide a 15% to 20% tip when on official business travel.

- 2. The Board discussed alternate venues for the March 8, 2023 SWCD Annual Meeting due to a burst pipe at the Pleasant Township Trustee’s office. Their meeting room will not be ready for our event. Aimee advised she also has Commons Hall and Club Z reserved. Staff advised the acoustics in Commons Hall are less than ideal and Club Z requires the SWCD use their caterer. The current meal price is \$16.00/person; the meal at Trine would be \$15.95/person and includes drinks and dessert.

Kayleen Hart moved to approve moving the March 8, 2023 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Annual Meeting venue from the Pleasant Township Trustee’s Office Event Center to Club Z at Trine University. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.

c. Budget and Finance

Kayleen Hart, Chair

- i. Treasurer / Depository

Appointment of fiscal officer and financial institution are determined at the beginning of each fiscal year.

Kayleen Hart moved to designate Administrative Coordinator Janel Meyer as Treasurer/ Fiscal Officer for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and keep Key Bank as the Steuben SWCDs financial institution/depository. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.

Janel reported she completed an acknowledgement page at Key Bank regarding SWCD ownership of, or rights to, our savings account funds. A letter was received advising State law requires banks to consider an account dormant when its owner has not initiated a transaction for a specified period. She explained state laws typically do not consider interest earned as a transaction.

- ii. District Budget and Finance Committee Audit

Board Chair Hart and Board Vice Chair Howard volunteered to perform the District Budget and Finance Committee Audit. The group will work together on scheduling.

- iii. 2023 Affiliate Memberships

2023 Affiliate Memberships will remain at the 2022 levels. Janel will complete the Affiliate Membership letter which accompanies the form mailed to businesses/individuals. Aimee will complete the mailing.

Beth Williams moved to approve the 2023 Affiliate Membership levels of Bronze - \$25, Silver- \$50, Gold - \$75, and Platinum - \$100 and above. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried

- iv. Office Supplies

Janel requested a motion to approve the purchase of office supplies; purchase will exceed the SWCD’s SOP credit card purchase limit of \$100 without prior Board approval. The Board discussed amending the current credit card purchase limit due to rising costs of goods and services.

Chuck Howard motioned to increase the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) credit card purchase limit from \$100 to \$150; seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.

- v. Annual Plan

Janel will be providing each Supervisor with a copy of the 2022 Annual Plan with the February Board meeting materials or in their packets at the meeting. She requested the Supervisors begin thinking about assignments and what may need to be added/deleted to the 2022 plan.

d. Information and Education

David Perkins, Chair

i. Drainage Board

Janel reported a maintenance hearing for the Painter-Dally regulated drain and Thomas Lucas regulated drain has been scheduled for February 21, 2023.

ii. Tree Pickup

The 2023 Steuben County SWCD tree pickup has been scheduled for April 17, 2023.

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

Aimee Wentworth reported:

- Aimee is working with Guidance Counselor Tammi Elwood of Angola Middle School on the creation of co-curricular group led by the SWCD. Ms. Elwood will speak with the principal for the approval. Aimee would have the ability to limit the number of students. She advised a background check would not be required if a staff person is available and in the room for the session. If that's not possible, then a \$35 background check would be required. Board Chair Hart recommended Aimee inquire whether our federal vetting would be adequate.

Kayleen Hart motioned to approve the \$35.00 background check fee for Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff Aimee Wentworth and Janel Meyer, if required by the MSD of Steuben County; seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.

- The soil video has been posted. It received 146 views in a month, compared to the water pollution video that has a total of 8 views since posted on August 31. The invasive species video had 79 views since August 31. The final version of the recycling video has been sent out to various individuals for their review/comments.

- The Steuben County SWCD Augmented Reality Sandbox (ARS) Unit may be used at the Boy Scout Camp for part of their summer programming. Nicholas Wentworth manufactured a new and improved projector mount arm which enables staff to remove the projector and raise/lower it to be able to project the image on the entire sand box surface.

- The January 28, 2023 Urban Soil Health Workshop, focusing on cover crops, is quickly approaching. The deadline to register is January 16. A press release was forwarded to the Herald Republican with a request for it to be printed the week of December 27th; however, the release was not printed until January 8, 2023. There are 7 individuals currently registered.

- The application for the spring Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Workshop has been approved. The information has been posted on the Steuben SWCD website and Facebook page. One registration has been received. Today, she responded to 5 emails requesting program information.

iv. Spring Newsletter / Annual Report

Janel requested an article from Board Chair Hart for the Steuben County SWCD 2022 annual report. She also requested a group photograph.

v. Upcoming Regional / National Events

1. National No-Tillage Conference • January 10 – 13, 2023 (*St. Louis, MO*)
2. ***Martin Luther King Jr. Day • January 16, 2023****
3. Ft. Wayne Farm Show • January 17 – 19, 2023
4. City of Angola Water Availability Study Public Meeting • January 18, 2023 (*Angola, IN*)
5. Purdue Extension: The Power of Negotiation and Communication – Land Leasing Strategies for Midwestern Ag Women • January 18 & 25, February 1 & 8, 2023 (*various sites throughout Indiana and virtually*)
6. Indiana Horticultural Conference • January 23 – 24, 2023 (*West Lafayette, IN*)
7. Steuben Co. Community Foundation Grant Writing Workshop • January 25, February 8 & 22, 2023 (*Trine University; Angola, IN*)
8. Urban Soil Health Workshop • January 28, 2023 (*Carnegie Public Library; Angola, IN*)
9. Northern Indiana Grazing Conference • February 3-4, 2023 (*Shipshewana, IN*)
10. Steuben County Lakes Council Monthly Board Meeting • February 4, 2023 (*Angola, IN*)
11. Steuben County SWCD Monthly Board Meeting • February 8, 2023 (*Angola Service Center*)
12. Elkhart County SWCD “Pay Dirt” Field Day • February 28, 2023 (*Goshen, IN*)
13. ***President’s Day • February 20, 2023****
****Angola USDA Service Center Closed***

Staff requested approval to attend Elkhart County SWCD “Pay Dirt” program on February 28, 2023 featuring Ray Archuleta. The registration fee is \$25.00, which includes lunch.

Kayleen Hart moved to approve the \$25.00 registration fee for Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff and Board Supervisors to attend the February 28, 2023 Pay Dirt workshop/event at the Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds in Goshen; seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.

V. CLAIMS

5966	Jerry Shull (640ft2 HUAP – LARE, Hamilton Lake USJR)	\$ 1,500.00
5967	Timothy Groosbeck (10-ac. Pasture/Hay Planting – LARE, Green Lake-Pigeon)	\$ 1,499.80
5968	PageCrafter (Jan. – June 2023 Website Hosting & WordPress Updates)	\$ 240.00
5969	USPS (1099MISC Form Postage)	\$ 8.04
5970	Nicholas Wentworth (ARS Unit – New Projector Frame/Extension Arm)	\$ 140.00
5971	Janel Meyer (Reimbursement per SWCD SOP-2023 IASWCD Conf. Travel)	\$ 281.80
5972	Aimee Wentworth (Reimbursement per SWCD SOP-2023 IASWCD Travel)	\$ 294.43
5973	Beth Williams (Reimbursement per SWCD SOP-2023 IASWCD Conf. Travel)	\$ 277.00
5974	Ceres Solutions (Fuel for Expedition – January 2022 Statement)	\$ 51.00

Chuck Howard made a motion to pay the claims for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) January 11, 2023 Board meeting. Beth Williams seconded the motion. Motion passed.

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, February 8, 2023 – 5:00 p.m.

- Angola USDA Service Center, 1220 N 200 W, Suite L, Angola, IN

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 January 11, 2023 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting. Seconded by Kayleen Hart. Motion carried.

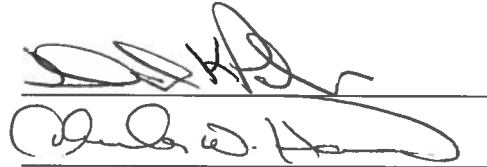
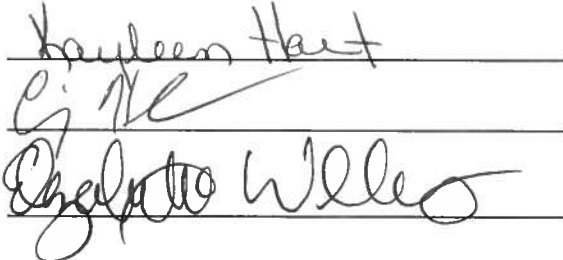
Meeting adjourned by Board Chair Hart at 6:21 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board:



02/8/2023

(Date)