

**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**

**February 8, 2023**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

District Supervisors

Kayleen Hart, Chair

Chuck Howard, Vice Chair

Craig Holman

David Perkins

Beth Williams

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Arthur Franke, District Conservationist

Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)

Kate Sanders, Resource Specialist

Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Aimee Wentworth, Resource Conservationist

Associate Supervisors

Daniel Oberst

**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 (1-11-23)**

Board Chair Hart asked the Supervisors to consider the minutes of the January 11, 2023 meeting. There being no further additions or corrections, she requested a motion to approve.

*Chuck Howard moved to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2023 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 January 1 – January 31, 2023. 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 January 31, 2023:*

<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>	
Checking	\$ 56,048.03
Statement Savings	<u>41,928.95</u>
Total	\$ 97,976.98
<i>Checking account</i>	<i>Savings account</i>
<i>balance 12/31/23</i>	<i>balance 12/31/23</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. January 2023 checking & savings account bank statement and reconciliation; 2. January 2023 deposit/check detail and general ledger reports; 3. Staff payroll approval forms, time sheets, compensatory time logs; and 4. January 2023 vehicle log.

Janel shared checking account receipts totaled \$1,670.00 (R3512 – R3532) which included 2023 Affiliate Membership donations and 2023 Indiana Master Naturalist Program Workshop Registrations.

Disbursement was \$1,178.72 (Claim #5969 – #5978); this included conservation education expenses (*January 28, 2023 Urban Soil Health Workshop; ARS Unit modification*), dues and subscriptions, operating expenses, postage, and travel expenses [*reimbursement per Steuben SOP SWCD for 2023 Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Annual Meeting travel (staff and Board Meeting Supervisor Beth Williams) and staff registration for the February 28, 2023 Elkhart County SWCD "Pay Dirt" Event*]. 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 January 31, 2023, as presented. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.*

Janel advised she reviewed the SWCD's claims policy/approval of claims which allows payments of claims between meetings for bulk mailing fees, lease agreements and rental agreements, emergency expenses, recurring or periodic expenses specifically authorized by resolution, and expenditures up to \$250.00. Cost-share payments for Board-approved contracts after grant payments have been received into the Steuben SWCD bank account was approved/added to this list at the January 11, 2017 SWCD Board meeting. Janel requested Board approval to add payment for the printing of our quarterly newsletters to the list of recurring expenses within the Steuben SWCD claims/approval of claims policy.

*Chuck Howard motioned to amend the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) claims policy and authorize payments for Steuben County SWCD newsletter printing and mailing services between meetings as this is a recurring district expense. 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.
2. District Conservationist (DC) Arthur Franke advised the deadline for processing FY23 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications is mid-February; this includes all practices excluding cropland and forestry. The cropland and forestry application processing deadline is March. In May, he will switch over to processing FY23 Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications. Art reviewed an email Janel received regarding the 2023 Grasslands for Gamebirds and Songbirds Initiative (GGI), which was successfully renewed for an additional 5 years and for \$2,602,721.40. This segment of the GGI Initiative will target the development of 1,500 acres of grassland habitat on private lands through land management contracts in an EQIP type approach. Additionally, select partner contributions will target the development of 1,620 acres of grassland habitat throughout the targeted focal regions for a total combined acreage of 3,120 acres. The first sign-ups will begin in the fall of 2023 with first projects targeted for establishment in FY24.

Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) Program Technician, reported she continues sign-up for the Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC)/Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs; sign-up ends March 15. She is also working on a new program for Beginning, Socially Disadvantaged, and Veteran Farmers. Program Technician Kathy Allen continues to assist LaGrange and DeKalb counties until their vacant positions are filled. LaGrange FSA hired an individual to begin February 13. DeKalb FSA will be completing interviews and begin the selection process soon.

##### ii. Watershed Projects and Organizations/SWCD

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

Sub-watersheds:

1. Friends of the St. Joseph River (FotSJR)
  - a. Resource Conservationist Aimee Wentworth attended the FotSJR January 26, 2023 virtual meeting. She reported the meeting focused on the upcoming meeting schedule and nominations were being accepted for their Watershed Steward award. She also reported the State of Michigan is considering changing the designation of the Prairie River in Michigan from warm water to cold, which would enact stricter regulations for water withdrawals. Michigan Conservation Districts may also see an increase in funding.
  - b. The next meeting is scheduled for February 23, 2023 and will held virtually.
2. St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC)
  - a. The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for March 2, 2023. It will be held in-person. Janel is planning to attend.

-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 the 5.5-acre Pasture/Hay Planting application listed on today's agenda no longer required discussion. She emailed the grant information and standards to the landowner on January 25; however, during her follow-up phone call, the landowner advised he no longer had an interest in pursuing the project.

- b. A virtual WLEB Technical Committee Meeting has been scheduled for February 27, 2023 to discuss the first round of applications and what partners may want to see for the next round. Janel plans to participate.
- c. A WLEB Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Project update meeting has been scheduled for March 4, 2023. The goal of this meeting is to train partners how to correctly report time/cash match in the WLEB RCPP in-kind tracking portal.

iii. Entire County

- 1. Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC)
  - a. Janel attended the February 4, 2023 monthly board meeting and provided meeting highlights, including: (1) A discussion regarding the BZA CAFO variance request denial. President Steve Schroeder reported the operator now plans to split cattle into different barns or building new facilities to keep the number of animals under the maximum that doesn't require an Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) permit. Manure management and animal rights were also discussed at length, with the SCLC Public Policy Committee stating they planned to contact the State Chemist and animal rights groups. It was reported the cattle operator currently has 59 farms/parcels which contain a total of 15,000 head in Steuben County; (2) Public Policy Committee Chair Cheryl Silverhart advised after the CAFO hearing she was approached by a new Environmental group – SRAP (Socially Responsible Agricultural Production) with a goal of shutting-down the cattle operation; an operation worth an estimated 28 million; (3) Karen DeForest advised the county is beginning work on updating the 1996 stormwater ordinance which will hopefully incorporate water quantity and water quality; (4) Brian Klein with the Steuben Lakes Regional Waste District (SLRWD) spoke at the meeting and offered their assistance with the SCLC water quality sampling program (collecting and processing some of their samples). Bill Schmidt will be meeting Mr. Klein tomorrow to discuss the proposal. The SLRWD is looking to identify areas which may require their expansion to protect water quality, generate additional revenue, and improve their public image. The SLRWD recently petitioned the 4 townships they service – Millgrove, Jackson, Pleasant, and Jamestown – for the responsibility of all wastewater management within the townships; (5) a Clear Lake condo association lacking 501C-3 status approached the SCLC to serve as a pass-through for their LARE grant application (dredge the north side marina channel). The SCLC Board was not supportive of being a 3<sup>rd</sup> party since there are many Clear Lake organizations with 501C-3 status to handle the grant. It was reported the association approached the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy but were turned down by their Board due to the recent transition between Executive Directors. It was noted the condo association already applied for the LARE grant and listed the SCLC as the sponsor without receiving prior Board approval; (6) Big Turkey Lake is hopeful to be able to complete a LARE funded dredging; the LARE grant expires in 2023. There is also a dredging project on the channel between Lake Gage/Lime Lake which will begin July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Janel advised the SWCD Board part of her report to the Lakes Council included comments regarding the December SCLC water quality presentation and lack of data transparency. One of the slides reported Site 2 on Pigeon had an E. coli result of 5,776.3 CFU/ml. However, what the presenter didn't share is the sample was tested out of hold time, resulting in a "suspect" result. The hold time is the maximum amount of time a sample can be held before analysis and still be considered valid. She advised the Lakes Council meeting participants that even though the report lists the sample result as suspect, it's very important all data limitations are clearly listed and defined – not only within the report but also the presentation to avoid providing misleading information.

- b. The next SCLC meeting is scheduled for March 4, 2023.

b. District Operations/Marketing

**Chuck Howard, Chair**

i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.

- 1. Field Visits/Trainings
  - a. ILMS Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) ID & Management Tactics Webinar • January 12, 2023. Staff participated in this webinar covering what is a HAB, HAB facts and identification, HAB toxins and risks to human and animal health, and common management techniques.
  - b. City of Angola Public Meeting on Water Availability Study • January 18, 2023. Staff attended this meeting where Jack Whitman from INTERA, the company hired to conduct the study, presented information on the hydrology of Steuben County, the results of the water availability assessment conducted for watersheds in the county, an assessment of potential threats to water availability in the county, and on-going work to develop a county aquifer and surface-water

monitoring network. Approximately 75 people were in attendance. Janel provided a copy of her notes and various slides from the presentation for review.

c. Steuben Co. Water Monitoring Meeting • January 20 & 25, 2023 (*virtual*). These meetings were held to discuss the Steuben County Community Foundation Grant application and any edits to the application and/or budget prior to submission. Janel provided answers to Board Supervisor Williams and Board Supervisor Craig Holman’s questions posed during the January SWCD meeting. She advised the Wastewater Treatment Plant meter is used for stormwater purposes and measures only temperature, DO, conductivity, pH, and TSS. The meter would not be appropriate for the proposed project. Past data is available; however, the data would be of little value to already existing data. For processing samples, the current WWTP lab technician is out on maternity leave. At this time, it’s likely the WWTP wouldn’t have the ability or extra time to process additional samples.

d. Grant Writing Workshop Part 1: How to Find Grant Opportunities • January 23, 2023 (*virtual*). Staff are taking advantage of this free training offered by the Steuben County Community Foundation. Part 1 discussed how to find grant opportunities. Part 2 offered information on how to tell your organizations’ story. Part 3, scheduled February 22, 2023, will focus on grant management.

e. Urban Soil Health Workshop (Cover Crops) • January 28, 2023. Aimee provided an update on the urban soil health workshop and the value compared to our first urban workshop. We had a total of 8 participants. All evaluations rated the workshop as “excellent”.

f. ILMS Board Meeting • February 1, 2023 (*virtual*). Janel participated in the Indiana Lakes Management Society (ILMS) meeting where the group reviewed/discussed Executive, Conference, Outreach, and Legislative Committee reports.

g. Toxins Associated with Fresh Water HABs and Their Mammalian Health Effects Webinar • February 2, 2023. Aimee participated in this webinar that provided scientific data on experiments/studies conducted on lab mice to determine the lowest possible dose of HABs that will cause health problems in mammals.

h. Grant Writing Workshop Part 2: Telling Your Organization’s Story in a Grant Proposal • February 8, 2023.

2. The January 2023 tally sheet was provided in the Supervisors folders. Janel advised she overlooked adding the 2022 tally sheet and will provide it at next month’s meeting.

ii. Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP)

1. Grasslands for Gamebirds and Songbirds 2023: See Arthur Franke’s report on page 2 [Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (Farm Bill)/NRCS/FSA].

iii. Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)

1. District Support Specialist/Resource Specialist update: Resource Specialist Kate Sanders discussed the availability of Clean Water Indiana Training grants, Governor Holcomb’s Invasive Species Awareness Week Proclamation, and beginning February 15, ISDA will seek project proposals from Indiana’s specialty crop sector for funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. This year, Indiana’s allocation is \$484,966. Eligible projects must enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in Indiana, defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, horticulture, and nursery crops. Kate provided ISDA business cards with mental health information/resources for individuals in the Ag industry. Troubles in the Ag community have led many farmers to struggle with their mental health. Recent data shows Ag suicide rates 1.3 times the national average for male workers – an industry that has consistently had a higher rate of death by suicide than others.
2. The Board discussed final details for the March 8, 2023 SWCD Annual Meeting at Club Z. Janel advised she would forward a copy of the annual meeting script to the Board prior to the meeting.

c. Budget and Finance

**Kayleen Hart, Chair**

i. Steuben County Council Department Liaison Assignment

The Steuben SWCD County Council Department Liaison Assignment is Dan Caruso.

ii. District Budget and Finance Committee Audit

Board Chair Hart and Board Supervisor Howard reported there were no discrepancies found during the 2022 District Budget and Finance Committee Audit.

iii. 2023 Affiliate Memberships

2023 Affiliate Membership letters were completed and mailed. Janel provided the most recent copy of the 2023 Affiliate Membership List for review.

- iv. 2023 Annual Plan of Work  
Each Board Supervisor received a copy of the 2022 Annual Plan. Janel requested the Supervisors begin reviewing committee assignments and what may need to be added/deleted to update the 2022 plan for 2023.
- v. Tim Groosbeck Contract  
Janel presented the Independent Contractor Agreement between the Steuben SWCD and Tim Groosbeck for approval. The agreement is for assistance with the districts' annual tree sale, including but not limited to, picking up trees from Jasper-Pulaski State Nursery (using personal vehicle with or without trailer) and the SWCD providing all donated proceeds to contractor Tim Groosbeck to help offset the cost of fuel, vehicle wear/tear, and his time.  
*A motion was made by David Perkins to accept the Independent Contractor Agreement between the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Contractor Timothy Groosbeck; agreement made and entered into the 8<sup>th</sup> day of February 2023. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.*
- vi. Credit Card and Meal SOP Review  
A copy of the credit card and meal Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) was provided to the Board for review. Janel updated the credit card SOP to reflect the approved January 11, 2023 Board motion increasing the credit card purchase/daily limit of \$100 to a maximum of \$150/day without Board approval. Board Chair Hart asked the Board members if there were any questions or concerns. Hearing none, she called for a motion to approve.  
*Beth Williams motioned to accept the 2023 Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Standard Operating Policy (SOP) for Purchasing Meals for District Activities. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.*  
*Craig Holman motioned to accept the 2023 Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Standard Operating Policy (SOP) for Credit Cards. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.*

The SOPs were presented to Board Chair Hart, Aimee, and Janel for signatures.

**d. Information and Education**

**David Perkins, Chair**

- i. Drainage Board (DB)  
Staff are attending the twice-monthly county Drainage Board (DB) meetings as schedules allow. Due to time constraints, no report was provided.
- ii. Steuben SWCD 2022 Annual Report  
Janel advised the 2022 Annual Report was sent to Graphics 3 for printing. It will be distributed via mail/email next week.
- iii. Tri-State Regional Science Fair Conservation Award Sponsorship  
The SWCD received notification the Tri-State Regional Science Fair will be held Saturday, March 18, 2023. The Steuben SWCD supports the special conservation awards. Janel asked the Board to sponsor the cash awards and conservation books at a maximum of \$150.  
*Chuck Howard motioned to approve the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) support for the March 18, 2023 Tri-State Regional Science Fair Special Conservation Awards with a maximum sponsorship level of \$150.00. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.*
- iv. 4-H/Purdue Extension/SWCD/Other Educational and SWCD Projects  
Aimee Wentworth reported:
  - The recycling video has been posted. She is currently writing the script for a native species video.
  - An article regarding the 2023 Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Workshop was featured on the front page of the Herald Republican on January 26, 2023. As of today, 15 individuals have registered; the limit is 16. Deadline to register is March 24.
  - Aimee requested approval to attend the 2023 Indiana Natural Resources Teacher Institute from June 19 -23, 2023 in Martinsville, Indiana. Applications are due March 1 (2 essay questions). Notifications will be received by April 1. If selected, there is a \$50 fee to hold the spot. Meals and lodging are included in this fee. Aimee requested approval in 2022; however, the Board requested she wait until 2023 to attend.  
*David Perkins moved to approve Resource Conservationist Aimee Wentworth's application to attend the June 19-23, 2023 Indiana Natural Resources Teacher Institute in Martinsville, IN and pay the \$50 registration fee if she is selected to participate in the program. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion approved.*

- Aimee and Janel presented banner design examples for the Supervisors to review. The Board discussed designs they liked. A final design example will be presented to the Board at either the March or April meeting.

Janel advised:

- Kris Thomas, City of Angola MS4 Coordinator, expressed interest in partnering with the Steuben SWCD on a billboard campaign. The Board was supportive of this partnership and discussed potential ideas (e.g., Everybody Makes a Healthy Watershed”). An official motion will be requested once the SWCD cost has been determined.

- Janel advised she received the renewal request for FY23 Indiana District Employee Association (IDEA) membership dues. She asked for approval to pay since this organization furthers professional development. Cost is \$25/individual.

*Beth Williams moved to support 2023 Indiana District Employee Association (IDEA) membership dues for Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff (Administrative Coordinator and Resource Conservationist) at \$25/employee as this organization furthers staff professional development. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.*

- A copy of the updated cover crop booklet Kate completed for the Steuben SWCD was provided for review.

- Information was shared about funding available through the Alliance of Indiana Rural Water, USDA FSA and NRCS for partners to promote USDA conservation programs that will assist in protecting Indiana’s drinking water sources. Monies can be used to host community field days and workshops to educate about the importance of limiting sediment and nutrient runoff, bring in subject-matter experts to local community events, etc.

-Staff informed the Board the SWCD was low on our workshop/field day promotional pens and asked if there was interest in placing an additional order.

*Chuck Howard motioned to approve a reorder of the green Starlight retractable pens with the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) white imprint from JY Design and Print, Inc., maximum spending limit of \$500. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.*

v. Upcoming Regional / National Events

1. Hoosier Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society Winter Meeting • February 9, 2023 (*Odon, IN*)
2. **President’s Day • February 20, 2023\***
3. Heart of America Grazing Conference • February 20 – 21, 2023 (*Ferdinand, IN*)
4. 2023 Women in Agriculture Ag Women Engage Conference • February 21 – 23, 2023 (*Terre Haute, IN*)
5. Steuben Co. Community Foundation Grant Writing Workshop • February 22, 2023 (*Trine University; Angola, IN*)
6. TNC Ohio Ag Lunch & Learn Livestock and Manure Management • February 22, 2023 (*virtual*)
7. Elkhart County SWCD “Pay Dirt” Field Day • February 28, 2023 (*Goshen, IN*)
8. CCSI-SARE Introduction to Soil Health Training • February 28, 2023 (*virtual*)
9. Indiana Small Farms Conference • March 2 – 4, 2023 (*Danville, IN*)
10. Steuben County Lakes Council Board Meeting • March 4, 2023 (*Angola, IN*)
11. Steuben County SWCD Board and Annual Meetings • March 8, 2023 (*Club Z, Trine University, Angola, IN*)
12. Project WET: Climate, Water, and Resilience Educator Workshop • March 30, 2023 (*North Salem, IN*)
13. **Good Friday • April 7, 2023\*\***  
*\*Angola USDA Service Center Closed*  
*\*\*Steuben County Employee ½ Day Holiday*

V. **CLAIMS**

5975	Steuben County Lakes Council (FY23 Business/Affiliate Membership)	\$	45.00
5976	Elkhart Co. SWCD (Feb. 28, 2023 Field Day Registration for SWCD Staff)	\$	50.00
5977	Indiana Dept. of Revenue (ACH – 2022 Indiana Sales Tax Annual Filing)	\$	13.29
5978	Meijer (January 28, 2023 Urban Soil Health Workshop Refreshments/Supplies)	\$	18.16
5979	AutoZone (Wiper Blade Replacements for Steuben SWCD Ford Expedition)	\$	59.98
5980	IASWCD (1/22/23 River Friendly Farmer Program Apparel for 2021/2022)	\$	132.00
5981	Staples (Office Supplies – copy paper envelopes, Velcro, etc.)	\$	124.20

*Chuck Howard made a motion to pay the claims for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) February 8, 2023 Board meeting. David Perkins seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

**VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING**

Wednesday, March 8, 2023 – 4:45 p.m. (Annual Meeting 6:30 p.m.; dinner served at 6:00 p.m.)  
- Club Z in the MTI Center of Trine University, 1215 Thunder Drive, Angola, IN

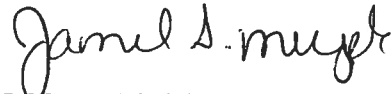
**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

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 February 8, 2023 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.*

Meeting adjourned by Board Chair Hart at 6:27 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board:



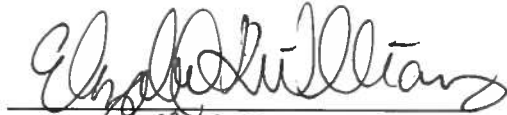
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03/8/2023 (Date)