

**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

Club Z in the MTI Center at Trine University • 1215 Thunder Drive, Angola, Indiana 46703

March 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

Public Attendees

Andy Laughlin, Steuben County Commissioner

I. CALL TO ORDER

Steuben County SWCD Board Chair Kayleen Hart called the meeting to order at 4:45 p.m.

II. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (2-8-23)

Board Chair Hart asked the Supervisors to consider the minutes of the February 8, 2023 meeting. There being no further additions or corrections, she requested a motion to approve.

Chuck Howard moved to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2023 Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting, as presented. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT

Administrative Coordinator Janel Meyer provided the financial report for February 1 – February 28, 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 February 28, 2023:

General Fund - All Accounts

Checking	\$ 73,226.75
Statement Savings	<u>41,941.82</u>
Total	\$115,168.57

Checking account

<i>balance 1/31/23</i>	\$ 56,048.03
<i>Receipts</i>	\$ 18,673.20
<i>Disbursement</i>	<u>(\$ 1,494.48)</u>
	\$73,226.75

Savings account

<i>balance 1/31/23</i>	\$ 41,928.95
<i>Receipts</i>	\$ 12.87
<i>Disbursement</i>	<u>(\$ 0.00)</u>
	\$41,941.82

Additional information provided with the monthly claims for Board review and verification included: 1. February 2023 checking & savings account bank statement and reconciliation; 2. February 2023 deposit/check detail and general ledger reports; 3. Staff payroll approval form, time sheets, compensatory time logs (2/24 and 3/10/23 pay periods); and 4. February 2023 vehicle log.

Janel shared checking account receipts totaled \$18,673.20 (R3533 – R3560) which included a Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) Grant cost-share payment for a 2,720 ft. Fence Project in the Town of Orland sub-watershed of Fawn River, the first half of the Steuben County SWCD operating budget from Steuben County Government, 2023 Affiliate Membership donations, and 2023 Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Workshop Program registrations.

Disbursement was \$1,494.48 (Claim #5979 - #5983, #5986 - #5987); this included conservation education expenses (*Trees of Indiana and The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North American for the 2023 IMN Program Workshop and ARS Unit materials/supplies*), dues and subscriptions, office supplies, operating expenses, postage,

and a payment to the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) for River Friendly Farmer fees. 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.

David Perkins moved to approve the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Treasurer's Report for the period ending February 28, 2023, as presented. Seconded by Chuck Howard. 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 not available.
2. District Conservationist (DC) Arthur Franke advised he is working on pre-approvals for the FY23 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). He also received five to six Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications and will be working on processing. A DC has been hired for LaGrange County, Erika Weiss, who will begin on April 10, 2023. Art will assist with training Erika and will continue working in both LaGrange and Steuben. NRCS will be hiring a Soil Conservationist for Steuben County and Forestry Field Technician that may be housed in the Angola USDA NRCS office. Art did not have a timeline when hiring would occur.

Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) Program Technician, reported she is completing sign-up for the Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC)/Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. She announced the 2023 CRP General Sign-Up is occurring now through April 17th. Rental rates/acre have increased. FSA will have 25 to 30 potential new offers. Kayleen also advised FSA received training on various new programs last week.

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 provided 2022 Pigeon Creek WLTP grant updates:
 - The 3.82-acre Pasture and Hay (Forage/Biomass) Planting + ~2,340 ft. Fence project in the Turkey Creek sub-watershed of Pigeon, approved at the December 14, 2022 SWCD Board meeting, will be cancelled. Janel advised the landowner does not want to move forward with the project/sign a contract since he may be selling the tract.
 - b. Janel and Art presented a 5.0-acre Wildlife Habitat/Pollinator Planting application in the Mud Creek sub-watershed of Pigeon for consideration. Art presented project and current land-use information. He also reviewed site preparation considerations which he has discussed with the landowner. The Board discussed the benefits of adding this conservation practice to the property and approved the project.

Chuck Howard moved to approve the 5.0-acre Wildlife Habitat/Pollinator Planting project in the Mud Creek sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek using the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) 2022 Pigeon Creek Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) grant. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.
2. Friends of the St. Joseph River (FotSJR)
 - a. Resource Conservationist Aimee Wentworth attended the FotSJR February 23, 2023 virtual meeting. She reported final details were determined for the May 12, 2023 FotSJR Watershed Celebration. There are two nominations for the Al Smith Watershed Stewardship Award. The award will be presented to one individual at the Watershed Celebration.
 - b. The next meeting is scheduled for March 23, 2023 and will be held virtually. This is the annual membership meeting where new Board Members are elected.
3. St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC)
 - a. Janel attended the SJRBC March 2, 2023 meeting. She reported: (1) The 23rd Annual St. Joseph River Basin Symposium will be held at the Pinhook Park Community Center. The Annual Symposium keynote presentation will focus on drainage. The Symposium will be held from 1 – 4 pm and will be followed by the FotSJR Watershed Celebration. (2) A copy of the Steuben County Stormwater and Floodplain Management Needs

Assessment, completed by Christopher B Burke Engineering, was provided in the Supervisor folders. Steuben County Director of Building and Planning Clint Knauer attended the SJRBC quarterly meeting and was asked where the county stood with implementing recommendations in the Assessment (i.e., updating ordinances and collecting fees). Mr. Knauer shared Steuben County is in the beginning stages of ordinance review and in discussions on fee structure.

Janel said she would like to provide a more detailed report at the next Board meeting due to time constraints.

-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 2020 Upper St. Joseph River WLTP grant updates:
 - The 5.3-acre Tree/Shrub Planting + 1.2-acre Windbreak in the Headwaters of Fish Creek, approved at the January 12, 2022 SWCD Board meeting, will be cancelled. Janel advised the landowner requested the contract cancellation. The landowner did not provide a reason. She reported the contract was amended last year from a spring 2022 planting to a 2023 planting per the landowner's request.
 - The 5.8-acre Warm Season Grass Planting + 1.2-acre Windbreak/Shelterbelt + 0.5-acre Pollinator Planting + 9.0-acre Pasture Planting in the Headwaters of Fish Creek, also approved at the January 12, 2022 SWCD Board meeting, will be cancelled. Janel advised the landowner requested the contract cancellation because he didn't have enough time in his schedule to complete.With the cancellation of both contracts, \$10,065 in cost-share funds are available to obligate. Janel will feature information about this available funding in the SWCD spring newsletter. Funds will need to be used this year since the Upper St. Joseph River WLTP grant ends December 31, 2023.
 - b. Janel, Art, and Resource Specialist Kate Sanders participated in a February 27, 2023 virtual WLEB-Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Technical Team meeting. The meeting was held to discuss the first round of applications and what partners may want to see for the next round. Several partners representing various agencies, Ohio State University, and non-profit groups from Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana participated.
 - c. Agronomy Field Day • August 2, 2023: The date has been set for Agronomy Field Day at The Andersons. Janel requested the Board consider sponsorship for the event. The Board discussed the 2022 support level of \$500 and approved the same level for 2023.

David Perkins motioned to approve the Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District \$500 sponsorship for the August 2, 2023 Agronomy Field Day at The Andersons. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.

iii. Entire County

1. Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC)
 - a. Janel attended the March 4, 2023 monthly board meeting and provided meeting highlights, including: (1) A Water Quality Committee Meeting has been scheduled for March 24, 2023 to discuss their 2023 sampling program; (2) SCLC member Vicki Lamb reported she has reached out to area legislators, including Mary Martin (Regional Director for U.S. Senator Mike Braun), to discuss the Lakes Council's concerns with the Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) in the Fish Creek Watershed; (3) Karen DeForest advised the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) received an additional petition for a special exception for farms (confinement feeding) on the Steuben/DeKalb County line. The BZA will hold a public hearing on April 10, 2023 to consider the petition. Janel advised due to time constraints a more detailed report will be provided at the next Board meeting if there were any important updates she may have missed.
 - b. The next SCLC meeting is scheduled for April 1, 2023.

b. District Operations/Marketing

Chuck Howard, Chair

i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.

1. Field Visits/Trainings
 - a. SLRWD/SCLC Water Quality Testing Program Meeting • February 9, 2023. Janel attended a meeting with Bill Schmidt at the Steuben Lakes Regional Waste District (SLRWD), at Bill's request. The meeting was held to discuss the SLRWD's proposed

- water quality sampling program and their offer to sample 10 of the Lakes Council's current sites. The SLRWD program would be structured to analyze water quality in areas of Steuben County they currently service. The goal is to document water quality trends and assist the Regional Waste District with determining areas they may need to incorporate. Samples would be collected every two-weeks, on the same day and as close to the same time, as possible. Sampling would be on a year-round schedule.
- b. Pollinator/Beneficial Insect Habitat – Small Farms & Community Spaces Webinar • February 9, 2023. Janel participated in this Xerces Society webinar which featured information on resources and techniques individuals can use on small urban farms or gardens to increase native biodiversity and attract pollinating insects, beneficial predatory insects, and more.
 - c. ILMS Education and Outreach Committee Meeting • February 13, 2023 (*virtual*). This meeting was held to discuss article ideas for the Indiana Lakes Management Society (ILMS) spring newsletter and begin planning a spring workshop.
 - d. IDEA Employee Training Pilot Program (Administration) • February 14, 2023. Aimee participated in first in-person Indiana Employee Districts Association (IDEA) Pilot Career Development Program. The pilot program is being held to help provide feedback/input to IDEA organizers to ensure the program succeeds. This first session focused on SWCD Administration.
 - e. Workplace Violence Prevention (AgLearn) • February 14, 2023. Janel completed this mandatory USDA AgLearn training.
 - f. Virtual Tree Planting Workshop • February 15, 2023. Janel participated in this workshop which covered conservation tree planting steps to success. She advised the training was extremely helpful and will provide a link to the webinar to individuals picking up their trees this year.
 - g. National Invasive Species Awareness Week • February 20 – 26, 2023. Posts on the Steuben County SWCD Facebook page were made each day during National Invasive Species Awareness Week.
 - h. Steuben Co. Water Monitoring Meeting • February 22, 2023 (*virtual*). Janel participated in this meeting to discuss the next steps for the Water Monitoring Strategic Planning Committee. She advised their Community Foundation grant application was moved into the next cycle. The group will hear whether the application is funded by May. She also shared the Steuben County Health Department has offered to purchase the water quality sampling sonde, which would remove the financial burden from the program. The Health Department currently has the funds available; however, approval to utilize those funds would be required by both County Commissioners and County Council.
 - i. Grant Writing Workshop Part 3: Grant Management 101 • February 22, 2023 (*virtual*). This was the last session for the 3-part grant writing workshop. Staff took advantage of this free Steuben County Community Foundation training to further their professional development.
 - j. Elkhart Co. SWCD “Pay Dirt” Event • February 28, 2023. Janel, Aimee, Art, and Kate attended this meeting which featured renown Certified Professional Soil Scientist Ray Archuleta who discussed the importance of reconnecting and mimicking nature in all land activities instead of working against them.
2. The 2022 and February 2023 tally sheets were provided in the Supervisors' folders. A copy of each tally sheets was also provided to County Commissioner Andy Laughlin. Janel explained the purpose of the sheets – to track projects and staff time spent on each project.
- ii. Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)
 1. District Support Specialist (DSS)/Resource Specialist (RS) update: Kate shared there is a DSS vacancy within ISDA since Tara Wessler-Henry has moved into a ISDA Grant & Training Coordinator position. Don Lamb is the new ISDA Director. Former Director Bruce Kettler moved to the Agribusiness Council of Indiana.
 2. The Board discussed last-minute details for the evening's annual meeting. A copy of the meeting script was forwarded to the Supervisors for review prior to the meeting. Janel shared staff purchased heavy duty grocery totes with our logo and 75th Anniversary printing since they wanted a way to mark this SWCD milestone. Board Chair Hart approved the purchase. Janel requested approval to pay the Bon Appetit annual meeting catering invoice when it's received.

Beth Williams motioned to approve the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) payment to Bon Appetit for catering the March 8, 2023 annual meeting as soon as an invoice has been received. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

c. Budget and Finance Kayleen Hart, Chair

- i. State Board of Accounts/Gateway Annual Financial Report
Janel reported the Steuben SWCD AFR was completed/entered in Gateway by the deadline. She also completed the AFR entry into the ISDA portal. AFR submission to ISDA is required to receive the \$10k legislative match funds.
- ii. Request for Additional Appropriation/Transfer of Funds
Janel requested an official Board motion to approve a \$1,000 additional appropriation to fund our part-time clerical position, filled by Lisa Ledgerwood. Janel explained this position is essential to assist the district with grant administration.
Beth Williams motioned to approve the deposit of \$1,000 into the Steuben County General Fund to pay the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District part-time administrative/clerical position. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.
- iii. Receipt Books
Janel advised the SWCD needed new State Board of Accounts approved receipts. A quote was received from Graphics 3 inc. since the prior vendor the SWCD used is no longer in business. Graphics 3 inc. quoted \$50/book (5-book minimum order). Board Chair Hart approved the purchase prior to the Board meeting based on need and the five-week production time. Cost was similar to what the SWCD paid to the prior vendor for production.

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. Maintenance hearings were held for the Painter-Dally and Thomas Lucas Ditch. Both maintenance fee increases were approved by the DB since the current amounts being collected are no longer sufficient.
- ii. Food Plot Seed Pickup
Board Supervisor Chuck Howard volunteered to pick up the food plot seed.
- iii. NACD Stewardship Week Materials and Poster Contest
Soil and Water Stewardship Week is set for the last week of April. This year's theme is One Water. Janel requested a Board motion approving the purchase of educational materials and poster contest prizes for the area elementary schools. Due to the rising cost of materials/supplies, no limit was set. Janel will work with Board Chair Hart to keep her updated on the cost of materials/supplies and booklet production.
David Perkins made a motion to support the printing of the 2023 National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts' (NACD) Stewardship Week materials and purchasing materials/supplies for the 2023 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Stewardship Week Poster Contest. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.
- iv. 4-H/Purdue Extension/SWCD/Other Educational and SWCD Projects
Aimee Wentworth reported:
 - The native species video narration has been recorded. She has started video editing.
 - The 2023 Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) workshop is full.
 - LaGrange County Parks and Recreation asked Aimee to assist with their maple syrup days on March 14 & 21, 2023. She would lead the photosynthesis and maple syrup lesson. Four total rotations/day for Carlin Park 5th graders and Angola Middle School 6th graders.
- v. Upcoming Regional / National Events
 1. Indiana Lakes Management Society 2023 Annual Meeting • March 9-10, 2023 (*Bloomington, IN*)
 2. Conservation Tillage and Technology Conference • March 14 – 15, 2023 (*Ada, OH*)
 3. Steuben Co. Community Foundation Marketing Series: Effective Storytelling – How to Create Emotional Connections with Audiences That Inspire Action • March 15, 2023 (*Angola, IN*)
 4. 2023 Northeast Indiana Envirothon • March 16, 2023 (*Columbia City, IN*)
 5. Going Green for Ag • March 16, 2023 (*New Haven, IN*)
 6. Northeastern Indiana Tri-State Regional Science Fair • March 18, 2023 (*Angola, IN*)
 7. Beating the Weeds Without Herbicides: Soil Friendly Organic Weed Management • March 20, 2023 (*virtual*)
 8. World Water Day • March 22, 2023

- 9. Project WET: Climate, Water, and Resilience Educator Workshop • March 30, 2023 (*North Salem, IN*)
 - 10. Steuben County Lakes Council Board Meeting • April 1, 2023 (*Angola, IN*)
 - 11. *Good Friday • April 7, 2023**
 - 12. Steuben County SWCD Board Meeting • April 12, 2023 (*Angola USDA Service Center*)
 - 13. Steuben County SWCD Tree Pickup • April 17, 2023 (*Angola USDA Service Center*)
 - 14. Northeast Indiana Solid Waste Management District Earth Day Celebration • April 22, 2023 (*Ashley, IN*)
- *Steuben County Employees ½ Day Holiday*

V. CLAIMS

5982	USPS (Steuben County SWCD 2022 Annual Report Postage)	\$ 594.86
5983	IDEA (FY23 Dues)	\$ 50.00
5984	Timothy Avila (2,720 ft. Fence – LARE, Town of Orland/Fawn River)	\$ 8,160.00
5985	Aimee Wentworth (Reimbursement per SWCD SOP-2/14/23 IDEA Travel)	\$ 169.28
5986	Amazon (Supplies for 2023 IMN Workshop: 101 Trees of IN; 16 copies)	\$ 325.60
5987	Amazon (Supplies for 2023 IMN Workshop: Sibley Bird Guide; 16 copies)	\$ 207.84
5988	Amazon (Supplies for 2023 IMN Workshop: Kaufman Field Guide; 16 copies)	\$ 320.00
5989	Graphics 3 Inc. (Steuben Co. SWCD 2022 Annual Report Printing & Mail Prep.)	\$ 2,574.45
5990	iPROMOTEu (Steuben Co. SWCD Conservation Education Pens; 782 Total)	\$ 480.18
5991	iPROMOTEu (Steuben Co. SWCD Annual Meeting Totes)	\$ 354.68
5992	Ceres Solutions (Fuel for Expedition – March 2023 Statement)	\$ 54.22
5993	Staples (2023 IMN Workshop Supplies & Office Supplies)	\$ 141.60

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

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, April 12, 2023 – 5:00 p.m.

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

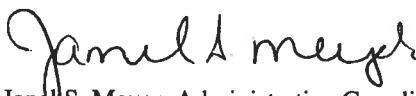
VII. ADJOURNMENT

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

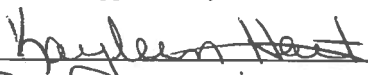
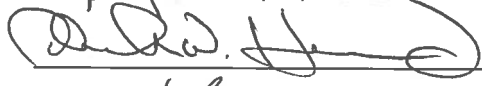

Chuck Howard moved to adjourn the March 8, 2023 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned by Board Chair Hart at 5:30 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:


Janet S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board:

	
	
	04/12/2023 (Date)