

**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

**July 12, 2023**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

District Supervisors

Kayleen Hart, Chair

Chuck Howard, Board Supervisor

Beth Williams, Board Supervisor

Craig Holman, Board Supervisor

David Perkins, Board Supervisor

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Arthur Franke, District Conservationist

Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation

District (SWCD)

Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Aimee Wentworth, Resource Conservationist

**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 (6-14-23)**

Board Chair Hart asked the Supervisors to consider the minutes of the June 14, 2023 meeting. There being no further additions or corrections, she requested a motion to approve.

*A motion to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2023 Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting, as presented, was made by Chuck Howard. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.*

**III. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Administrative Coordinator Janel Meyer provided the financial report for June 1 - June 30, 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 June 30, 2023:*

	<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>
Checking	\$ 65,648.11
Statement Savings	<u>41,997.93</u>
Total	\$107,646.04

*Checking account*

*balance 5/31/23*

*\$ 69,735.83*

*Receipts*

*\$ 6,616.00\**

*Disbursement*

*(\$10,703.72)*

*\$65,648.11*

*Savings account*

*balance 5/31/23*

*\$ 41,984.13*

*Receipts*

*\$ 13.80*

*Disbursement*

*(\$ 0.00)*

*\$41,997.93*

Additional information provided with the monthly claims for Board review and verification included: 1. June 2023 checking & savings account bank statement and reconciliation; 2. June 2023 deposit/check detail and general ledger reports; 3. Staff payroll approval form, time sheets, compensatory time logs (6/30 and 7/14/23 pay periods); and 4. June 2023 vehicle log.

Janel shared checking account receipts totaled \$6,616.00\*. This included \$6,560.00 (R3588 – R3594 for July 11, 2023 Conservation Camp registrations, Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC) Soil & Water Stewardship educational material booklet sponsorship, a stipend for the Resource Conservationist attendance at the 2023 Natural Resources Institute for Forestry on June 19-23, 2023, and a Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) grant cost-share payment for a 600 linear ft. grassed waterway project in the Otter Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek) and \$56.00 from check #6313 to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources which was voided in QuickBooks on 7/10/2023. Janel advised the check was voided and a stop payment request made because the check was lost in the mail. She also advised R3586 was a voided receipt.

Disbursement was \$10,703.72 (Claim #6034; #6036- #6044; #6046-#6050; Claim #6056). This included conservation education expenses [*Augmented Reality Sandbox (ARS) Unit supplies (banner cleaner); Enviroscope supplies (spray*

bottles); Environmental Educators Association of Indiana 2024 conference sponsorship; and 2023 Indiana Master Naturalist supplies/program fees], dues and subscription, office supplies, operating expenses, postage (Steuben SWCD 2023 spring newsletter mailing; Upper St. Joseph River WLTP Grant postcard mailing), printing and reproduction (2023 Steuben SWCD Spring Newsletter; Upper St. Joseph River WLTP Grant Promotion), travel expenses (Aimee Wentworth travel expenses for May 9, 2023 IDEA Career Development Program; May 12, 2023 St. Joseph River Basin Commission Annual Symposium), and the Pigeon Creek WLTP grant cost-share payment for the 600 linear ft. grassed waterway project and a District cost-share payment for 1-year of follow-up herbicide treatment for a 3.0-acre tree/shrub establishment project.

Janel shared she received an email from Key Bank stating they were able refund \$132.85 to the SWCD for the Amazon double charge for order #111-9266865-8645851. The refund will be entered into QuickBooks once the July checking/savings account statements have been received to verify the refund.

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 June 30, 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 provided in the Supervisors' folders. NRCS District Conservationist Arthur Franke reported if any Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) applications are not approved, they may be deferred to the next fiscal year that begins in October. There may be monies from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) available in the fall for additional funding. He continues working on Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) reviews and advised there will be a signup period for Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Grasslands for Gamebirds and Songbirds (GGS) this fall. In staffing updates, there may be a soil conservationist assigned to the Steuben County USDA office; however, there is nothing definite, yet.
2. Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) Program Technician, reported that crop certification has been completed ahead of the July 17, 2023 deadline. She also reported there have been six applications received for the Pandemic Assistance Relief Program (PARP), which has a deadline of July 14, 2023. This program is based on a producer's tax returns/income.

##### 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 reported that she was unable to attend the last meeting of the FotJR because she was out of town for the Natural Resources Teacher Institute.
  - b. The next FotSJR is scheduled for August 24, 2023. It will be held in-person at Conservation Park in Three Rivers, Michigan.

##### -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 5,595 ft. fence/rotational grazing WLTP grant application in the Hiram Sweet Ditch sub-watershed of Fawn River. Arthur and Janel performed a site visit and approved the project, per the June 14, 2023 Board motion authorizing SWCD staff with the ability to approve Upper St. Joseph River WLTP applications/projects (Art and Janel deemed the project feasible and valuable).
  - b. Janel presented a grassed waterway application in the Hamilton Lake sub-watershed of Fish Creek for consideration. She reported the NRCS Technical Team will need to visit the property to complete a project survey. Janel advised the 2021 Upper St. Joseph River WTLTP grant would be used to pay for the 5,595 ft. fence/rotational grazing project and a portion of the grassed waterway. Since the grassed waterway will exceed the remaining funding available in the grant, she requested approval to use the Steuben SWCD District Cost-Share Program to assist in funding the waterway. The Board discussed the benefits of adding this conservation practice to the property and approved the project.

*David Perkins moved to approve the Fence/Rotational Grazing project in the Hiram Sweet Ditch sub-watershed and Grassed Waterway project in the Hamilton*

*Lake sub-watershed using the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) 2021 Upper St. Joseph River Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) grant and the Steuben County SWCD District Cost-Share Program to assist with providing additional monies for the Grassed Waterway project. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried (Board Supervisor Chuck Howard recused himself from the vote).*

- c. Arthur attended the July 12, 2023 WLEB Educational Tour. He reported there were approximately 20 people in attendance, including agency personnel and Senator Sue Glick. Janel reported Jennifer Thum [(Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) Deputy Director, Division of Soil Conservation] requested the Steuben County SWCD pay for the catered lunch pending reimbursement by Corn and Soy, who is the lunch sponsor. She advised Board Chair Hart approved the request.
- d. Janel reported the invitations for the August 2, 2023 Agronomy Field Day were mailed.
- e. Janel reported the Hamilton Water Quality Field Day flyer, with staff edits, were sent to event organizer Toby Days, Alliance of Indiana Rural Water, for consideration. She also discussed logistical details with Chuck, who is hosting the event. She requested Chuck's approval to provide Toby with his personal phone number to further discuss details. Janel advised the event is invitation only and requested recommendations how to best determine who to invite, considering the workshop purpose is to promote USDA and other conservation programs to producers and other eligible landowners. No suggestions were made.

iii. Entire County

- 1. Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC)
  - a. Janel attended the July 1, 2023 monthly board meeting and provided meeting highlights, including: (1) Steuben County Council and Steuben County Commissioners approved an increase in the loan to the Lake George Lake Association for up to \$1.5 million for dam repairs. The Association is still waiting on notification from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) whether their grant applications have been funded; (2) Walleye will be stocked in Lake Pleasant to reduce the blue gill population; (3) eDNA testing is scheduled for after July 4, 2023, after a rain event; (4) The Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy received a grant to install continuous water quality monitoring gage stations at two major Clear Lake inflows and one partial station at the lake outflow. Janel advised the Steuben County SWCD wrote two letters of support for the project.
  - b. The next SCLC meeting is their Annual Meeting, scheduled for August 12, 2023 (in-person).
- 2. Steuben County/Urban (IDEM CSGP/MS4)
  - a. City of Angola/MS4 Updates  
Janel reported the billboard she has been coordinating on with Kris Thomas, City of Angola MS4 coordinator, has been installed and will be on display until August 6, 2023. It's located along I69 between exits 348 and 350. Unfortunately, Kris reported the billboard is difficult to see due to the billboard company designer's choice of colors and map image. Kris would like to use this billboard within city limits next year. Janel advised she hasn't received the invoice for the Steuben County SWCD portion of the billboard cost.

b. District Operations/Marketing

**Chuck Howard, Chair**

i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.

1. Field Visits/Trainings

- a. YMCA Summer Camp • June 15, 2023. Aimee Wentworth reported she read a book about pollinators and led a Cheetos pollination activity in four classes totaling approximately 80 students from preschool to fifth grade.
- b. Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Information/Networking Session • June 15, 2023 (*virtual*). Janel reported she participated in the session and is considering applying for another urban conservation grant, possibly for rain barrels or to address invasive species and native-scaping.
- c. Natural Resources Teacher Institute • June 19-13, 2023. Aimee attended the Institute and reported it was a good week and covered a lot of information and ways to educate audiences about forestry. Participants received a lot of reference materials. Aimee advised she received a stipend for creating a lesson plan and will receive an additional stipend once proof is submitted the lesson has been presented.

- d. Anthony Wayne Boy Scout Summer Camps • June 19 & 26 and July 3 & 10, 2023. Staff have been providing presentations at the camps to help scouts meet the requirements for the Soil and Water Conservation Merit Badge.
  - e. Media Relations - Telling Your Story via Digital, Broadcast, & Print • June 21, 2023. Janel attended and provided highlights, including a recommendation the SWCD should begin to implement immediately – following-up press release emails to newspaper editors/staff with a phone call.
  - f. ILMMS 2024 Conference, Board & Education/Outreach Committee Meetings • June 21 & 26 and July 10, 2023 (*virtual*). Janel reported the Indiana Lakes Management Society (ILMS) is planning an aquatic invasive plant identification workshop at Pretty Lake in August. She also reported she secured Matt Meersman of the St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC) as the keynote speaker for the 2024 conference being held in March at Potawatomi Inn.
  - g. Urban Soil Health (USH) Working Groups Lunch ‘n Learn • June 22, 2023 (*virtual*). Janel participated in the webinar and reported it was informative to see what other working groups are doing since the Steuben and DeKalb County SWCDs are partnering with Purdue Extension to form a group. Janel also reported the DeKalb County SWCD agreed to handle the funds for the working group.
  - h. IDEA Career Development - Technical Assistance • June 27, 2023. Aimee reported the session was informative in showing what other SWCDs in the area are doing for technical assistance. She has an assignment to complete for the module, due September 12, 2023. Aimee reported she is planning to design a native wildflower planting.
  - i. Steuben/DeKalb USH Working Group Meeting • July 6, 2023 (*virtual*). Janel reported the group will meet in August to finalize a group name and mission.
  - j. Steuben Co. Strategic Water Quality Monitoring Program • July 10, 2023 (*virtual*). Janel reported the landowner project information letters had been sent. Kate Barrett of the SJRBC is writing a letter of intent to apply for a Steuben County Community Foundation Grant. The water quality Sondes should be delivered by the end of the month and currently, two Trine University students, employed through AmeriCorps, are performing weekly water quality sampling at ten sites.
  - k. Steuben County Conservation Camp • July 11, 2023. Janel and Aimee reported only two registered children did not attend the camp, resulting in a total of 12 kids that participated. They also shared that offering pizza for lunch was a great idea.
2. A copy of the June 2023 tally sheet was provided in Supervisors’ folders.
- ii. Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP)
    1. Janel advised the Indiana DNR is seeking participation in updating the Statewide Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). They are looking for organizations that would like to be involved to help guide the SWAP update. There will be a workshop in Plymouth, Indiana on September 26 & 27, 2023, with virtual pre- and post- workshop sessions on September 11 & 13 and October 11, 2023. Beth and Kayleen were interested in participating and requested information be sent to them.
    2. The July 11, 2023 ICP Accomplishments and Updates Webinar was scheduled for the same day as the Steuben County SWCD Conservation Camp so neither Janel nor Aimee could participate. A recording of the webinar should be available soon.
  - iii. Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD)
    1. The Board discussed the IASWCD FY23 membership dues (\$2,000). Janel shared issues with the lack of communication between IASWCD and Districts, including the recent announcement of hiring +/- 12 new staff who can “float” between SWCDs to assist SWCDs with on the ground technical assistance work. Those staff would be IASWCD employees managed by the IASWCD Program Director. The Board Supervisors approved paying the FY23 dues and recommended sending a letter outlining concerns.

*David Perkins made a motion to pay the \$2,000 FY23 Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) dues. Chuck Howard seconded the motion. Motion carried.*
    2. The North-Northeast Summer Summit will be on September 7, 2023 at Par-Gil in LaGrange from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. The cost is \$25 per person. Janel requested approval for staff to attend and solicited for interest by Board Supervisors. Kayleen and Beth expressed interest. Janel advised she would complete their registrations.

*Beth Williams made a motion to approve Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff (Administrative Coordinator Janel Meyer and Resource*

*Conservationist Aimee Wentworth) and Board Supervisors (Kayleen Hart and Beth Williams) registration for the North-Northeast Summer Summit on September 7, 2023 at Par-Gil in LaGrange at a cost of \$25 per person. Chuck Howard seconded the motion. Motion carried.*

- iv. Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)
1. No District Support Specialist (DSS)/Resource Specialist (RS) update was provided. Janel advised a State Board of Accounts financial training has been scheduled for December 7, 2023. She did not know if there will be a virtual option.

**c. Budget and Finance Kayleen Hart, Chair**

i. Vehicle Maintenance

Janel reported the Steuben County SWCD District vehicle had been taken to Bill's Repair and Towing to inspect the rear blend door actuator and the shimmy at highway speeds. Bills' estimate was \$1,364.32 and included a recommendation to replace the rear brakes and change the rear shaft U-Joints. She advised the cost of replacing the rear brake calipers and hoses was included as a worst-case scenario, but Chuck suggested Bill's change them while the vehicle is torn apart. Although Kayleen approved the repairs before the meeting, Janel requested the Board Supervisors approve a motion.

*David Perkins made a motion to approve the repairs to the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) vehicle as recommended in the Bill's Towing and Repair estimate including replacing the rear brake hoses and calipers for a total cost of \$1,364.32. Chuck Howard seconded the motion. Motion carried.*

ii. Business Plan

Janel advised the Board needs to schedule a separate public meeting to update the Steuben County SWCD Business Plan. The meeting was scheduled for July 26, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. Janel advised she would send the meeting information to the Herald Republican for publication.

**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. Janel reported the Edna Dole ditch maintenance hearing has been scheduled on July 17, 2023. She also provided information about a business owner near Crooked Lake who had begun filling in the ditch adjacent to his property and was advised by the Surveyor to remove it, however, the owner seeded the area, then requested a 25' variance to build in the right of way. Although the ditch is not considered a regulated ditch, the Drainage Board granted approval 2:1 (Will Howard opposed).

ii. Associate Supervisor Update

Janel reported the SWCD has a new Associate Supervisor, Brad Hamlin. She has not heard back from several other people to whom she sent a letter to gage interest. She will follow-up on their interest.

iii. Steuben County SWCD 2023 Summer Newsletter

Janel plans to include information about the ongoing Steuben Co. Strategic Water Quality Monitoring Program. She requested Board input on information to include, and Beth suggested we highlight and promote youth education and outreach programs. Janel advised she would try and include if space was available since our education/outreach programs were recently highlighted in the fall 2022 issue.

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

Janel reported:

- The Steuben County SWCD 4-H display will focus on soil health; cover crop seed packets containing a mixture of oats and crimson clover to cover 200 sq. ft. will be made available. Janel requested permission to pay Angola Seed & Supply for the cover crop seed as soon as the invoice is received.

*Chuck Howard made a motion for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to pay the Angola Seed & Supply invoice for the oat and crimson clover cover crop seed, used at the Steuben County SWCD 2023 4-H display, when it is received. Motion seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.*

- The SWCD will be judging 2 entries in the 4-H Soil and Water Science project.

Aimee Wentworth reported:

- The Steuben County Augmented Reality Sandbox (ARS) unit is still not functioning properly, and they are borrowing the Branch County (Michigan) Conservation District ARS Unit for upcoming 4-H events at Huntington and Angola.

Staff requested approval to attend the Maumee Watershed Alliance State of the Lake Luncheon in Fort Wayne on July 27, 2023 at a cost of \$25 per person. The featured speaker is Dr. Chris Winslow who will discuss the State of the Great Lakes and efforts in the WLEB. A pontoon tour will follow.

*David Perkins made a motion to approve Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff (Administrative Coordinator Janel Meyer and Resource Conservationist Aimee Wentworth) registration for the Maumee Watershed Alliance State of the Lake Luncheon on July 27, 2023 at a cost of \$25 per person. Motion seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.*

v. Upcoming Regional / National Events

1. Steuben County 4-H Fair • July 21 – 27, 2023 (Crooked Lake, Angola, IN)
2. Pleasant Township Community Building Open House • July 27, 2023 (Angola, IN)
3. NE Indiana Districts Conservation Day Camp • August 1, 2023 (Columbia City, IN)
4. Agronomy Field Day • August 2, 2023 (Waterloo, IN)
5. Steuben County SWCD Board Meeting • August 9, 2023 (Angola, IN)
6. LaGrange County Pasture Walk – Organic Dairy, Forages, Genetics, etc. • August 10, 2023 (Nappanee, IN)
7. Steuben County Lakes Council Annual Meeting • August 12, 2023 (Angola, IN)
8. Hillsdale County Nutrient Management Field Day • August 17, 2023 (Waldron, MI)
9. Allen County SWCD “Day at the Bay” • August 23, 2023 (Fort Wayne, IN & Put-In-Bay, OH)
10. Hamilton Water Quality Field Day • August 29, 2023 (Hamilton, IN)

V. **CLAIMS**

6046	Scott Shultz (600 LF Grassed Waterway – Pigeon LARE, Otter Lake)	\$	6,000.00
6047	PageCrafter (WordPress Website Hosting & Monthly Updates)	\$	240.00
6048	EEAI (Nov. 10-12, 2023 EEAI Conference Registration for Resource Conservationist)	\$	28.00
6049	EEAI (Nov. 10-12, 2023 EEAI Conference Sponsorship)	\$	500.00
6050	Heather Ford (3.0-ac. Tree Establishment Herbicide Treatment-District Cost-Share)	\$	160.00
6051	Walmart (July 11, 2023 Conservation Camp & Conservation Education Supplies)	\$	97.47
6052	Oriental Trading (July 11, 2023 Conservation Camp Supplies)	\$	51.56
6053	Aimee Wentworth (Travel & July 11, 2023 Conservation Camp Supplies Reimbursement)	\$	267.25
6054	Janel Meyer (Conservation Ed./July 11, 2023 Conservation Camp Supplies Reimbursement)	\$	93.96
6055	City of Angola (MS4/Steuben SWCD Partner Billboard Sponsorship)	\$	228.75
6056	Key Bank (Bank Charges/Fees – Check 6313 Stop Payment)	\$	34.00
6057	Ceres Solutions (Fuel for Expedition – July 2023 Statement)	\$	306.80
6058	Staples [Office Supplies (labels, push pins) & Conservation Education (envelopes)]	\$	114.85

*Chuck Howard made a motion to approve the claims for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) July 12, 2023 Board meeting. Beth Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried.*

VI. **NEXT BOARD MEETING**

**September 13, 2023 – Board Meeting – 5:30 p.m.**  
 - Location TBD

VII. **ADJOURNMENT**

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

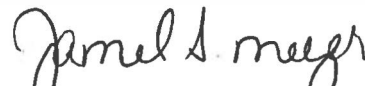
*Chuck Howard moved to adjourn the July 12, 2023 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.*

Meeting adjourned by Board Chair Hart at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



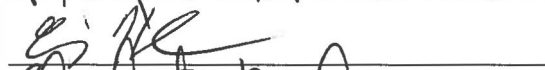
Aimee M. Wentworth, Resource Conservationist

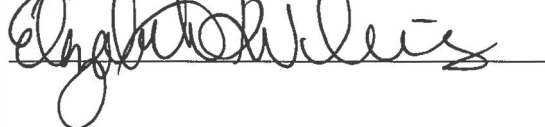


Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board:







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~~09/13/2023~~

10/4/2023 JSM

(Date)