

**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

May 8, 2024

IN ATTENDANCE

District Supervisors

Kayleen Hart, Chair
Craig Holman, Board Supervisor
Beth Williams, Secretary

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Arthur Franke, District Conservationist

Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)

Kate Sanders, Resource Conservationist

Steuben County Soil & Water
Conservation District (SWCD)

Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator
Aimee Wentworth, Resource Conservationist

Associate Supervisors

Brad Hamlin

Absent

Chuck Howard, Vice Chair
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. Administrative Coordinator Janel Meyer advised claim #6174, support for Steuben County Strategic Water Quality Monitoring Program (SWQMP), was added to the agenda. She also shared this would be the last meeting Resource Conservationist Aimee Wentworth would attend; May 8 was her last day with the district. Aimee thanked the Supervisors, staff, and office partners for the support and opportunity to help address conservation needs within the county.

II. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (4-17-24)

Board Chair Hart asked the Supervisors to consider the minutes of the April 17, 2024 Steuben County Soil and Water Board meeting. There being no further additions or corrections, she requested a motion to approve.

Craig Holman motioned to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2024 Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting, as presented. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT

Janel gave the financial report for April 1 – April 30, 2024. The 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 April 30, 2024:

<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>			
Checking	\$ 74,988.98		
Statement Savings	<u>42,138.55</u>		
Total	\$117,127.53		
<i>Checking account</i>		<i>Savings account</i>	
<i>balance 3/31/24</i>	\$ 56,523.09	<i>balance 3/31/24</i>	\$ 42,124.69
<i>Receipts</i>	\$ 21,615.01	<i>Receipts</i>	\$ 13.86
<i>Disbursement</i>	<u>(\$ 3,149.12)</u>	<i>Disbursement</i>	<u>(\$ 0.00)</u>
	\$ 74,988.98		\$ 42,138.55

April checking account receipts totaled \$21,615.01 (R3697-R3707) which included Steuben SWCD FY24 Affiliate Memberships, the LaGrange County SWCD sponsorship for the March 14, 2024 Joint Annual Meeting keynote speaker, over-the-counter flag sales, registration fees for the July 16, 2024 Steuben SWCD Conservation Camp and Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) program, reimbursement for conservation education expenses provided at the Indiana District Employee Association (IDEA) Professional Development program, tree pickup donations, and the 2024 Clean Water Indiana Matching Grant.

Savings account interest totaled \$13.86.

Disbursement was \$3,149.12 (Claim #6150 - #6164). This included conservation education expenses [2024 IMN materials and supplies (field guides, binders, refreshments for all sessions, etc.); materials/supplies for the April 16, 2024 IDEA Professional Development program, April 20, 2024 Earth Day at the Northeast Indiana Solid Waste

Management District (NISWMD), and the July 16, 2024 Steuben County SWCD Conservation Camp; and a pop-up table display], Fawn River Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) grant postcard mailing, IMN registration refund, native plant kit sales, operating expenses, travel expenses [April 15-16, 2024 IDEA Director's Meeting & Professional Development Program for Resource Conservationist Aimee Wentworth], and sponsorship for the 2024 Tri-State Regional Science Fair and Steuben County 4-H Fair.

Additional information provided with the monthly claims for Board review and verification included: 1. April 2024 checking & savings account bank statements and reconciliations; 2. April 2024 deposit/check detail and general ledger reports; 3. Staff payroll approval form, time sheets, compensatory time logs (5/3 and 5/17/24 pay periods); and 4. April 2024 vehicle log.

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.

Craig Holman moved to approve the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Treasurer's Report for the period ending April 30, 2024, as presented. Seconded by Beth Williams. 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. District Conservationist Arthur Franke presented information about a Critical Habitat Program providing private landowners payments to support and protect local endangered bat populations. He reported the program is targeting Southern Indiana landowners.
2. Art continues to work on the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). He also advised the Local Working Group (LWG) will need to convene for 2025 Steuben County natural resource concern priority ranking. Janel advised they typically schedule the LWG meeting prior to the August SWCD Board meeting.

Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) Program Technician, reported they will be working on crop certification and organic cost-share signup will begin next week and run through September.

ii. Watershed Projects and Organizations/SWCD

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

Sub-watersheds:

1. Pigeon Creek
 - a. Janel reported the Pigeon Creek WLTP grant has \$905 available to obligate. She received an inquiry about funding for fencing (sheep) in the Pigeon Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon; however, the project would require fencing for approximately 2.0-acres – which exceeds current funding available.
Janel also shared information from Kris Thomas, City of Angola MS4 Coordinator regarding the new Courthouse and Martha/Wall Street rain garden. Building Management Company Weigand presented a bid to the Steuben County Commissioners to demolish/reconstruct the rain garden. It was not removed for the courthouse construction; rather, the rain garden was used as a dewatering basin. The Commissioner's rejected the bid. Janel advised the only requirement for the rain garden, per the plan submitted to and approved by the City of Angola, was for it to remain and confirmed to be "functional" through construction. There was no requirement to rebuild/reinstall the rain garden.
2. Fawn River
 - a. Janel reported the 0.5-acre filter strip/critical area planting in the Town of Orland, approved by the Board last month, will not be moving forward using the Fawn River WLTP grant. The landowner will be pursuing funding through NRCS.
3. Friends of the St. Joseph River (FotSJR)
 - a. Aimee attended the virtual FotSJR April meeting where they discussed the May 10th Watershed Celebration/Symposium and the three nominees for the Watershed Stewardship Award. The FotSJR Board will select the winner with the announcement at the Celebration.
 - b. Janel advised she will not be attending the May 10th St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC) Symposium/FotSJR Watershed Celebration since she will be assisting LaGrange County SWCD with a Prairie Heights Conservation Field Day.

- c. The next meeting is scheduled for May 23, 2024 via Zoom. June's meeting on the 27th will be 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 participated in the virtual May 6, 2024 Spring Domestic Action Plan (DAP) Advisory Committee Meeting. She reported the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) provided updates on the revised Indiana updated DAP submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and presented 2023 water quality sampling data updates. The DAP document states failing septic systems will be tracked; however, new laws no longer allow local ordinances to require septic inspections.
 - b. Janel shared the next Maumee River Basin Commission (MRBC) quarterly meeting was May 9, 2024. She asked Board Supervisor Beth Williams if she had an interest in attending future MRBC's meetings due to scheduling conflicts with Board Supervisor Chuck Howard's schedule (Chuck currently volunteers to attend MRBC meetings). Beth advised she has an interest and requested a copy of the 2024 MRBC schedule.

iii. Entire County

1. Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC)
 - a. Janel provided a brief report on the SCLC's May meeting, including: (1) the SCLC's annual water quality sampling program will begin in May; eDNA sampling is scheduled for July, after a rain event; (2) the SCLC's Public Policy Committee discussed, in detail, the Lake Erie Waterkeepers and how members of the Socially Responsible Agriculture Project (SRAP) have offered to provide water monitoring training to Steuben County residents located in the Western Lake Erie Basin; (3) the rain barrel project completed by Steve Schroeder and Trine University student Clay Batio. Janel provided information about the Lake Erie Waterkeepers and a copy of an article published in the Herald Republican regarding the rain barrel project for review.
 - b. The next SCLC meeting is scheduled for June 1, 2024.

b. District Operations/Marketing

Chuck Howard, Chair

i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.

1. Field Visits/Trainings
 - a. Tree Pickup • April 18, 2024.
 - b. Northeast Indiana Solid Waste Management District (NISWMD) Earth Day Celebration • April 20, 2024. Janel and City of Angola MS4 Coordinator Kris Thomas participated in this event where the new rain barrel display was presented. Janel advised there are some minor leaking issues that will be addressed. Janel shared the District provided free trees to anyone that attended the event. Unfortunately, public attendance was poor.
 - c. How to Prep Your Site: Unlocking the Key to Building a Successful Pollinator Habitat Webinar • April 23, 2024. Janel participated in this online seminar which discussed the importance of proper and thorough site prep.
 - d. Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Program (Session 1) • April 27, 2024. Aimee shared they have a total of 11 participants taking the workshop. Session 1 and 2 went well.
 - e. 2024 Stewardship Week "May the Forest Be With You Always" • April 28 – May 4, 2024. Stewardship materials were delivered to Fremont Elementary and MSD of Steuben County Elementary schools on April 22, 2024.
 - f. Steuben County Strategic Water Quality Monitoring Program (SCSWQMP) Committee Meeting • May 1, 2024 (virtual). Janel participated and shared that the Committee discussed the costs and logistics of pharmaceutical testing, deliberated on the budget for sampling activities, the selection of sites for the program, and the optimization of travel routes.
 - g. Water & Recreation in Indiana: Impacts & Opportunities Webinar • May 2, 2024. Janel participated in this online seminar presented by The White River Alliance and Institute for a Sustainable Future. She offered to provide a link to the webinar for anyone that had an interest in viewing.
 - h. Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Program (Session 2) • May 4, 2024.
2. Janel advised copies of the April 2024 tally sheet will be provided at the next Board meeting.

- ii. Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD)
 - 1. A copy of the 2023 IASWCD Annual Report was provided in the Supervisors' folders.
 - 2. Janel presented a request from IASWCD to become a Gold Level Member by contributing an additional 10% of our annual dues. The Board discussed what the District would receive for the additional contribution and determined to pay our dues at the current amount of \$4,000.
 - 3. The Board discussed individuals they wanted to nominate for the Steuben County River Friendly Farmer Award. Janel will review the suggestions and complete the required paperwork.
 - 4. IASWCD will be hosting Grant Workshops for Districts in June. All sessions will be held virtually.
- iii. Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)
 - 1. Resource Conservationist Kate Sanders advised Clean Water Indiana (CWI) grant application guidance will be available soon.
- iv. Annual Plan
 - 1. Janel advised she moved the annual plan agenda item from Budget and Finance to District Operations. She received comments/edits from Board Chair Hart and Aimee, which were incorporated into the final document. Board Chair Hart suggested a format change for next year's plan. The group discussed different formats, how other SWCD's hold meetings to write annual plans (i.e., holding a day retreat to discuss/compile the document), and who would have time to investigate alternate formats. Board Chair Hart and Supervisor Williams volunteered to spearhead this effort. Janel will contact ISDA District Specialist Sandra Hoffarth for examples of other SWCDs. The Board moved to approve the current format/annual plan.

Beth Williams made a motion to approve the Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) 2024 Annual Plan of Work. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.

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

- i. 2025 Steuben County Government Budget Request

Janel requested the Board begin planning for the Steuben County SWCD FY 25 operating budget request. The group discussed future needs/funding for the District. The discussion centered on a replacement vehicle for the aging Ford Expedition. Associate Supervisor Hamlin volunteered to investigate prices for used vehicles like the Expedition. Janel advised they need a vehicle that can comfortably seat 5+ occupants and carry educational items such as the Augmented Reality Sandbox (ARS) Unit and the new rain barrel display.

d. Information and Education **David Perkins, Chair**

- i. Drainage Board (DB)

Staff are attending DB meetings as schedules allow. No update was provided.
- ii. Food Plot Seed Pickup

Janel shared the Pheasants Forever food plot seed distribution will be delayed. They are still waiting on sorghum. Aimee split the soybean seed that Board Supervisor Howard donated.
- iii. Associate Supervisors

The Board discussed extending invitations to current Associate Supervisors to continue their appointments. They also discussed Board Supervisor Perkins and Associate Supervisor Hamlin switching roles. Janel explained it's becoming difficult completing SWCD business when meetings are cancelled due to the lack of a quorum. The idea of switching Perkins and Hamlin's role with the Board was discussed as a potential solution to address this problem.
- iv. Steuben SWCD 2024 Spring Newsletter

The completion of the Steuben County SWCD 2024 spring newsletter has been delayed but will be completed as soon as possible for printing/distribution.
- v. 4-H/Purdue Extension/SWCD/Other Educational and SWCD Projects

Aimee report:
- She updated Janel on all upcoming education programs and the activities planned for them. She also packed half of the Stewardship Poster Contest prize bags.

Janel report;
- 4-H Fair:

Craig Holman made a motion for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to reserve an indoor commercial exhibit space and purchase one gate pass for the June 21-27, 2024 Steuben County 4-H Fair. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.

- A copy of Wood-Land-Lakes May 2024 newsletter was provided for review. Executive Director Jon Zirkle offered to attend a board meeting in the future to share information.

V. CLAIMS

6162	Walmart (Office Supplies – cardstock, envelopes, etc.)	\$	21.87
6163	Laura Miller (2024 Indiana Master Naturalist Program Registration Refund)	\$	300.00
6164	Steuben County 4-H Fair Board (4-H Fair Soil & Water Science Sponsorship)	\$	25.00
6165	USPS (Postcard Postage for 2024 Steuben Life & Food Plot Seed Program)	\$	140.45
6166	Walmart (Supplies for 5/4/24 IMN Program & 7/16/24 Conservation Camp)	\$	21.85
6167	Timothy Groosbeck (Contractual Services – Tree Pickup)	\$	868.00
6168	LaGrange County SWCD (Trees for 4/20/24 NISWMD Earth Day Celebration)	\$	95.00
6169	Amazon (Supplies for 2024 Poster Contest Prizes and 6/27/24 YMCA Camp)	\$	425.03
6170	Ft. Wayne Newspapers (2024 Stewardship Week Material Printing)	\$	510.00
6171	John Wagner (24.3-acre Forage/Biomass Planting-LARE-Otter Lake/Pigeon)	\$	3,465.00
6172	Keystone Cooperative (Fuel for Expedition – May 2024 Statement)	\$	252.22
6173	Amazon (Supplies for 2024 Poster Contest Prizes)	\$	51.97
6174	SCLC (SCSWQMP 2024 Water Quality Testing Support)	\$	1,250.00

Craig Holman made a motion to approve the claims for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) May 8, 2024 Board meeting. Beth Williams seconded. Motion carried.

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING

June 12, 2024 – Board Meeting – 5:00 p.m.

- Angola USDA Service Center, 1220 N 200 W, Suite L, Angola, IN 46703

VII. ADJOURNMENT

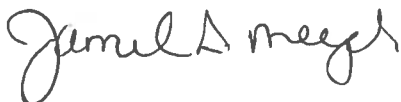
Janel shared the Resource Conservationist position has been posted on the Steuben County Government website and shared with the Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy and Environmental Educator Association of Indiana Listservs. It was also sent to IASWCD for posting on their job board. The Board discussed other websites and places to post.

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

Beth Williams moved to adjourn the May 8, 2024 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.

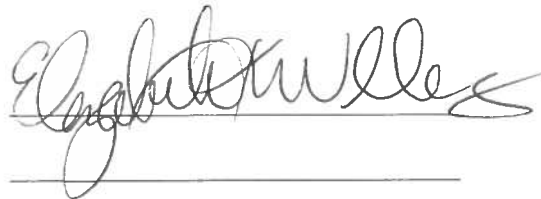
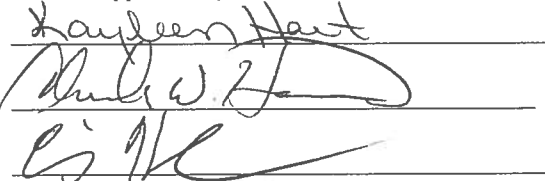
Meeting adjourned by Board Chair Hart at 6:42 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board:



6/12/2024 (Date)