

**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 10, 2024**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

District Supervisors

Kayleen Hart, Chair

Chuck Howard, Vice Chair

Beth Williams, Secretary

Brad Hamlin, Board Supervisor

Craig Holman, Board Supervisor

Steuben County Soil & Water

Conservation District (SWCD)

Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Arthur Franke, District Conservationist

**CALL TO ORDER**

- I.** Steuben County SWCD Board Chair Kayleen Hart called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

**II. OATH OF OFFICE**

At the June 12, 2024 SWCD Board meeting, the Supervisors motioned to approve Board Supervisor David Perkin's May 30, 2024 resignation and to temporarily appoint Associate Supervisor Brad Hamlin to serve the remainder of David's term. Steuben SWCD Board Vice Chair Chuck Howard (elected member) administered the Oath of Office to Brad Hamlin. Brad affirmed he would support the Constitution of the U.S., Constitution of the State of Indiana, and would faithfully discharge the duties of the office of Supervisor of the Steuben County SWCD.

**III. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (6-12-24)**

Board Chair Hart asked the Supervisors to consider the minutes of the June 12, 2024 Steuben County SWCD Board meeting. There being no further additions or corrections, she requested a motion to approve.

*Chuck Howard motioned to approve the minutes of the June 12, 2024 Steuben County Soil & Water*

*Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting, as presented. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.*

**IV. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Janel gave the financial report for June 1 – June 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 June 30, 2024:*

| <u>General Fund - All Accounts</u> |                             |                        |                         |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Checking                           | \$ 63,989.95                |                        |                         |
| Statement Savings                  | <u>42,166.72</u>            |                        |                         |
| Total                              | \$106,156.67                |                        |                         |
| <i>Checking account</i>            |                             | <i>Savings account</i> |                         |
| <i>balance 5/31/24</i>             | <i>\$ 67,256.89</i>         | <i>balance 5/31/24</i> | <i>\$ 42,152.86</i>     |
| <i>Receipts</i>                    | <i>\$ 110.00</i>            | <i>Receipts</i>        | <i>\$ 13.86</i>         |
| <i>Disbursement</i>                | <i><u>(\$ 3,376.94)</u></i> | <i>Disbursement</i>    | <i><u>(\$ 0.00)</u></i> |
|                                    | <i>\$ 63,989.95</i>         |                        | <i>\$ 42,166.72</i>     |

June checking account receipts totaled \$110.00 (R3710-R3711) which included a platinum level Affiliate Membership and over-the-counter sales (flags). Savings account interest totaled \$13.86.

Disbursement was \$3,376.94 (Claim #6181 - #6188). This included conservation education expenses [July 24, 2024 Agronomy Field Day support; Steuben SWCD informational banner], native plant sale kits, operating expenses, printing (Steuben SWCD 2024 spring newsletter w/ mailing services), postage, and website hosting.

Additional information provided with the monthly claims for Board review and verification included: 1. June 2024 checking & savings account bank statements and reconciliations; 2. June 2024 deposit/check detail and general ledger reports; 3. Staff payroll approval form, time sheets, compensatory time logs (6/28 and 7/12/24 pay periods); and 4. June 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.

*Beth Williams moved to approve the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)*

*Treasurer's Report for the period ending June 30, 2024, as presented. Seconded by Chuck Howard.*

*Motion carried.*

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Natural Resources/Technical Assistance

Beth Williams, Chair

i. Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (Farm Bill) / NRCS / FSA

1. The Board discussed scheduling a Local Working Group meeting prior to the September 11, 2024 SWCD Board meeting. The meeting is held to prioritize county resource concerns. These concerns will help prioritize ranking for USDA's NRCS conservation programs including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Janel advised she will share information about this public meeting via a news release and invitations to various individuals who can provide input into the wide range of natural resource and agricultural concerns for the county. The meeting will be held from 5 to 5:30 p.m.
2. Talking Points were provided in the Supervisors' folders.
3. Arthur shared he has 5 Wetland Reserve Enhancement (WRE) offers; 4 have been accepted and 1 didn't rank high enough and will be deferred to FY25 (*the property is located adjacent to one of the recently approved WRE's; therefore, should rank higher next year*). The 4 accepted offers will need surveys, deed acquisitions, etc. This will take 1-2 years to complete. Art is completing Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications. Eight applications were funded in signup 1 (cropland and forestry); 7 applications in signup 2 were not funded and will be deferred to FY25. Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) Program Technician, reported crop certification continues with a deadline of Monday, July 15<sup>th</sup>. Nominations for the 2024 County Committee Election are being accepted now through Aug. 1, 2024. The election is for area LAA1 (northern Steuben County townships).

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 announced the Steuben SWCD's application for additional funding for the Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) in the Pigeon Creek Watershed was conditionally selected for FY24-25 funding from the Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) program. The grant will cover 80% of the cost of eligible watershed treatment practices, not to exceed \$40,000.
2. Fawn River
  - a. Janel reported the 11.1-acre critical area & 48.9-acre forage/biomass project in the Snow Lake sub-watershed of Fawn River, approved at the June 12, 2024 Board meeting, will be moved to a fall planting. NRCS seeding guidelines/planting windows will be followed. An update on the 1.3-acre windbreak/shelterbelt establishment project in the Town of Orland sub-watershed of Fawn, approved at the May 10, 2023 Board meeting, was also provided. Arthur completed a site visit on July 3 with the individual hired to complete the planting. He explained the trees were one of the last orders to leave the nursery at the end of May and have been stored in a cooler. Janel advised she will contact the LARE Grant Administrator for guidance on cost-share payment eligibility since the planting falls outside of the NRCS planting window.

-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. July 24, 2024 Agronomy Field Day flyers were provided in the Supervisors' folders.
  - b. Janel announced the Steuben SWCD's application for additional funding for the WLTP in the Upper St. Joseph River Watershed was conditionally selected for FY24-25 funding from the LARE program. The grant will cover 80% of the cost of eligible watershed treatment practices, not to exceed \$30,000

iii. Entire County

1. Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC)
  - a. Janel did not attend the July 6, 2024 SCLC monthly board meeting but provided a report from the meeting recording she viewed: (1) The May water quality sampling was completed. Many sites in Pigeon and Fish Creek had E-coli results that exceeded the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's (IDEM) 235 Colony Forming Units (CFU) standard, ranging from 272.3 to >4,839.2. Samples were collected within approximately 48 hours of a rain event; (2) A DNR public hearing is scheduled for July 30, 5:00 p.m. at Potawatomi Inn for a proposed public pier on the third basin of Crooked Lake. The Crooked Lake Association is encouraging support to join forces through the SCLC to

oppose developments that will damage the lake; (3) Vicki Lamb, SCLC's Public Policy Committee Representative, reported she met with several congressional representatives and senators to discuss concerns with factory farming in Steuben on a recent trip to Washington D.C. The Socially Responsible Agricultural Project (SRAP) invited Vicki to serve as the Steuben County representative; (4) several individuals expressed dissatisfaction with the recent BZA meeting – stating they believed the meeting violated open door and open records act laws because of audio issues, the requirement to provide “technical” rather than “emotional” testimonies, and the 3-minute limit speaking rule.

- b. The next SCLC meeting is their annual meeting, scheduled August 3, 2024.
2. Steuben County/Urban (IDEM Construction Stormwater Inspection Permit (CSCP), MS4)
  - a. The Splash of Color – Steuben County Rain Barrel Revival Initiative was briefly discussed. Janel reported the SWCD and City of Angola MS4 Coordinator Kris Thomas would be setting up the new rain barrel display for the August 3, 2024 Angola Art Festival. The “People’s Choice” rain barrel will be announced at the event. She advised a new pond pump will be purchased for the display because a smaller pump is required rather than the donated sump pump. No request for an approval motion was made since the cost of the item falls under the \$150 purchase limit.

**b. District Operations/Marketing**

**Chuck Howard, Chair**

i. New Employee Motion

Arthur discussed the new in-house procedures for employee vetting and federal computer access. The new employee motion was inadvertently overlooked and will need to be completed at the next Steuben SWCD Board meeting.

ii. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.

1. Field Visits/Trainings

- a. Anthony Wayne Boy Scout Camp Soil & Water Conservation Merit Badge Presentations • June 18 & 25 and July 2 & 9, 2024. Arthur and Janel provided presentations to help boy scouts meet the requirements for the Soil & Water Conservation Merit Badge. Janel thanked Arthur for his willingness to assist and expertise leading the sessions. She reported the Augmented Reality Sandbox (ARS) was not working and has contacted Aimee Wentworth to help troubleshoot. The Board discussed replacing the ARS unit because of the frequent operating/computer program problems.
- b. Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Program (Session 8) • June 15, 2024.
- c. LaGrange County SWCD Conservation Camp • June 20, 2024. Staff assisted the LaGrange County SWCD with their Conservation Camp. Janel advised there was a low number of children that registered/attended the camp.
- d. Steuben County 4-H Fair • June 21 – 27, 2024. A picture of the Steuben SWCD 4-H Fair display was provided. Janel reported they received several compliments on the display and approximately 200 seed packets were picked up by fair attendees.
- e. Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Program (Session 9) • June 22, 2024.
- f. Steuben County Strategic Water Quality Monitoring Program (SCSWQMP) Committee Meeting • June 26, 2024 (*virtual*). Program updates were discussed at this meeting (financial report, field sampling and laboratory analysis reports, and upcoming required grant reporting).
- g. YMCA Summer Camp • June 27, 2024. Janel reported she presented information about trees and students participated in a tree cookie coloring activity. There were three classes totaling approximately 75 students, ranging from preschool to fifth grade.
- h. Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Program (Session 10) • July 6, 2024. One additional “optional” session about Hoosier Riverwatch has been planned for Saturday, July 13, 2024.
- i. Indiana Lakes Management Society (ILMS) Outreach Meeting (*virtual*) • July 8, 2024. Janel shared upcoming ILMS Education and Outreach Committee events, including: (1) July 13, 2024 Metazoa Hellbender Release Party; (2) July 16, 2024 Hellbender Release at Rothrock’s Mill Blue River Access Point; (3) August 5, 2024 TetraTech Webinar on In-Lake Treatment/Management; (4) September 4, 2024 webinar on lakes and groundwater connections. A future webinar is also being planned to highlight the LARE program (i.e., “LARE application 101”). A request was sent to Governor Holcomb to designate July as Lakes Appreciation Month; no response has been received.
- j. *NNE IDEA Region Meeting • July 25, 2024.* Janel advised this was added to the agenda in the event a motion was necessary to approve travel per-diem to cover the cost of lunch. Staff were advised Allen County SWCD would be covering the cost.

2. Copies of the April 2024 tally sheet were provided in the Supervisors' folders. Janel reported the May and June 2024 sheets would be provided at the next meeting. She advised Art will need to update the months of April – June and she needs to complete May and June.
  - iii. Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP)
    1. June 20, 2024 ICP Accomplishments and Updates Webinar recording links were provided in the Supervisors' folders.
    2. Four virtual Conservation Programs have been scheduled for ICP staff on Mondays in July. Various programs will be featured weekly, including (1) Urban and Small-Scale Farm Programs; (2) Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CRP), Indiana Private Lands Access Program, and Classified Forest and Wildlands Program; (3) LARE, USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration, Grasslands for Gamebirds and Songbirds; (4) Cost-Share/Gamebird Development Assistance and State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement Initiative. Sessions will be recorded.
  - iv. Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD)
    1. Janel reminded the Board of the upcoming North-Northeast Summer Summit scheduled on August 20, 2024 at Grace Lutheran Church in Columbia City from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. The cost is \$20 per person and includes dinner. The registration deadline is August 13. She asked for a motion to support staff and Supervisors attending, in the event anyone would like to participate.

*Beth Williams made a motion to approve the registration fee of \$20 per person for Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff (Administrative Coordinator Janel Meyer and Resource Conservationist Bailey Temple) and Board Supervisors (Brad Hamlin, Kayleen Hart, Craig Holman, Chuck Howard, Beth Williams) to attend the North-Northeast (NNE) Summer Summit on August 20, 2024 at Grace Lutheran Church in Columbia City. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.*
  - v. Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)
    1. No District Support Specialist report was provided.
  - vi. Annual Plan
    1. Janel requested the Board revisit the Steuben SWCD Committee assignments listed in the Annual Plan because of David Perkin's May 30, 2024 resignation. His resignation left the Information and Education Committee Chair position vacant.

*Chuck Howard made a motion for Brad Hamlin to Chair the Information and Education Committee with member Craig Holman. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.*
- c. Budget and Finance Kayleen Hart, Chair**
- i. Office Supplies/SWCD Apparel

Janel advised she would be ordering copy paper for the office. She also advised she would need to order SWCD apparel for the new Resource Conservationist and asked the Board to consider a color change from hunter green to navy blue for future SWCD clothing. Supervisor Beth Williams requested quotes from different vendors for various items (*t-shirts, polo shirts, sweatshirts, etc.*) be presented at the next Board meeting.
  - ii. Vehicle Maintenance

Janel provided a report on the A/C diagnosis/problem on the 2010 Ford Expedition. The A/C clutch is not operating correctly, requiring a new air conditioning compressor. Total estimated cost to repair is \$1,293.94 (*quote includes replacing the entire compressor due to vehicle age*). The A/C is currently set to blow cold until repairs can be made. The Board discussed having a different shop evaluate the system; however, it was pointed out any new shop would require an additional A/C evaluation, at an additional cost, which has already been completed. The Board approved moving forward with the repairs and instructed Janel to ensure the expansion valve dryer is also changed out when replacing the compressor. Janel will collaborate with Board Chair Hart on the A/C repair and repair costs.

*Chuck Howard motioned to approve the A/C repair (i.e., compressor replacement) for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District's 2010 Ford Expedition. Seconded by Brad Hamlin. Motion carried.*
- d. Information and Education Vacant, Chair**
- i. Drainage Board (DB)

Staff are attending DB meetings as schedules allow. Janel reported 3 maintenance hearings have been scheduled for August 5, 2024 for #609 Alfred Hantz/Fish Creek Basin, #555 Henry Bolinger/Pigeon Creek Basin, and #600 John Griffin/Pigeon Creek Basin.
  - ii. 4-H/Purdue Extension/SWCD/Other Educational and SWCD Projects

- A thank you note from the 4-H Soil & Water Science Grand Champion was provided for review. Janel reported:

- DeKalb County SWCD is deciding whether they want to continue their participation in the Soil Guardians of DeKalb-Steuben. They do not believe their residents will take an interest in the program. Steuben SWCD and Steuben County Purdue Extension are moving forward with launching the group and will evaluate success after the public launch. If DeKalb SWCD terminates their participation, Steuben SWCD would be required to be the new financial holder for the Guardians.

- Only 3 children are registered for the July 16 Steuben County Conservation Camp. The NE Indiana Conservation Districts discussed offering the 2024 Conservation Camps for free; she asked Board Chair Hart for approval to change the fee from \$10/person to no charge. Board Chair Hart was approached prior to the July 10 Board meeting for approval since the camp needed to be advertised as "free" as soon as possible to garner additional interest. Janel asked for an official Board motion supporting no charge to attend the Steuben County SWCD Conservation Camp.

*Craig Holman motioned to approve no charge for the July 16, 2024 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Conservation Camp at Pokagon State Park for youth ages 8 -14 and to refund individuals that paid the \$10 fee to register their child. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.*

- She provided a copy of the email reply sent to Keith Schneider, a Michigan-based journalist reporting on challenges associated with farm nutrient discharges in NE Indiana. His questions focused on economics in the cattle feeding sector and manure management practices. She directed him to the appropriate contacts/individuals/agencies. Mr. Schneider writes for a group of nonprofit news organizations supporting the "Toxic Terrain Project."

**VI. CLAIMS**

|      |   |    |        |
|------|---|----|--------|
| 6187 | Folia Nova, LLC (Expedited Delivery Fee for 6' x 3' Banner with Grommets)       | \$ | 15.00  |
| 6188 | PageCrafter (Premium WordPress Website Hosting/Monthly Updates)                 | \$ | 240.00 |
| 6189 | White River Alliance (2024 IN Water Summit Registration for Janel Meyer)        | \$ | 195.00 |
| 6190 | Lonsbury Garage [Ford Expedition Vehicle Maintenance (Oil Change/Tire Rot./AC)] | \$ | 322.27 |
| 6191 | Janel Meyer (Reimbursement per Steuben SOP: IMN & Steuben 4-H Fair Supplies)    | \$ | 579.87 |
| 6192 | Keystone Cooperative (Fuel for Expedition – July 2024 Statement)                | \$ | 122.74 |

*Brad Hamlin made a motion to approve the claims for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) July 10, 2024 Board meeting. Chuck Howard seconded. Motion carried.*

**VII. NEXT BOARD MEETING**

**August 14, 2024 – Board Meeting – 5:00 p.m.**

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

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

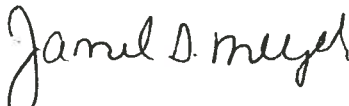
Janel shared current Associate Supervisors signed a 3-year agreement (2023-2026) and no further action will be required, unless the Board wants to add additional Associate Supervisors.

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 July 10, 2024 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.*

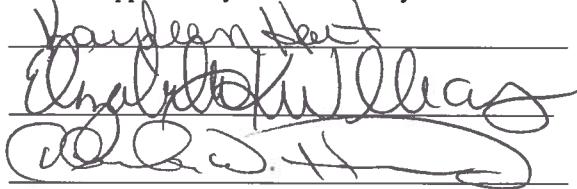
Meeting adjourned by Board Chair Hart at 6:31 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board:



8/14/2024 9/11/2024 (Date)