

**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

October 2, 2024

IN ATTENDANCE

District Supervisors

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

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Arthur Franke, District Conservationist

Public Attendees

Lois Mann, NE Program Manager, Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI)

Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator
Bailey Temple, Resource Conservationist

Absent

Chuck Howard, Vice Chair

CALL TO ORDER

- I.** Steuben County SWCD Board Chair Kayleen Hart called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. Lois Mann, the NE Program Manager with Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI), introduced herself, outlined the CCSI program, and provided details about soil health training opportunities.

II. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (9-11-24)

Board Chair Hart asked the Supervisors to consider the minutes of the September 11, 2024 Steuben County SWCD Board meeting. There being no further additions or corrections, she requested a motion to approve.

Brad Hamlin motioned to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2024 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 September 1 – September 30, 2024. The Board Supervisors received a copy of the report in their folders since the Steuben SWCD bank statement was not available until October 2.

Report for period ending September 30, 2024:

<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>			
Checking	\$ 66,880.40		
Statement Savings	<u>42,209.26</u>		
Total	\$109,089.66		
<i>Checking account</i>		<i>Savings account</i>	
<i>balance 8/31/24</i>	<i>\$ 68,060.24</i>	<i>balance 7/31/24</i>	<i>\$ 42,195.38</i>
<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 1,830.00</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 13.88</i>
<i>Disbursement</i>	<i><u>(\$ 3,009.84)</u></i>	<i>Disbursement</i>	<i><u>(\$ 0.00)</u></i>
	<i>\$ 66,880.40</i>		<i>\$ 42,209.26</i>

September checking account receipts totaled \$1,830.00 (R3717-R3744) which included registration fees for the 2024 Steuben County Life Program.

Savings account interest totaled \$13.88.

Disbursement was \$3,009.84 (Claim #6210 - #6221). This included conservation education expenses [*Sept. 10, 2024 4th Grade Youth Conservation Field Day (lunch/refreshments for 26 volunteers; Dumpster Drummers performance), supplies for the worm’s education lesson kit; 2024 Steuben County Life Program (Sept. 17, 24, and Oct. 1 refreshments)*], operating expenses, travel expenses [*travel/mileage reimbursement for Resource Conservationist Bailey Temple (Aug. 20, 2024 Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts’ (IASWCD) NNE Summer Summit); travel reimbursement for Administrative Coordinator Janel Meyer (Aug. 21-22, 2024 Indiana Water Summit); SWCD staff registration fees for the 2024 Indiana District Employee Association (IDEA) fall conference*]], and support for the Steuben County Strategic Water Quality Monitoring Project (SCSWQMP).

Additional information provided with the monthly claims for Board review and verification included: 1. September 2024 checking & savings account bank statements and reconciliations; 2. September 2024 deposit/check detail and general ledger reports; 3. Staff payroll approval form, time sheets, compensatory time logs (10/4 pay period); and 4. September 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 September 30, 2024, as presented. Seconded by Brad Hamlin. 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.
2. District Conservationist Arthur Franke shared he is signing up interested landowners for the FY25 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). December 6 is the application deadline. He advised the 2018 Farm Bill expired on September 30, 2024. Some programs shut down immediately; however, some conservation programs will continue due to funds from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act which added \$18 B in funding for farm bill conservation programs. New enrollments for most of the rest of USDA's conservation programs, however, ended, including the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), livestock projects, and the Grassland Conservation program.

Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Executive Director (CED), reported FSA can still work on a few programs, such as the Organic Certification Cost Share Program, and they will begin issuing annual rental payments to ag producers and private landowners through CRP. They will also issue payments to 2023 crop producers through the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs soon, if any are made. Otherwise, FSA is in a holding pattern until a new Farm Bill is signed into law.

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 requested an amendment to the Sept. 11, 2024 Board motion approving the 205-acre cover crop application in the Otter Lake and Silver Lake sub-watersheds of Pigeon Creek. She advised the Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Grant Administrator approved using the remaining Fawn River Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) Grant to fund a portion of the planting.

Craig Holman moved to amend the September 11, 2024 motion, for the 205-acre Cover Crop planting in the Otter Lake and Silver Lake sub-watersheds of Pigeon Creek using the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) 2022 and 2024 Pigeon Creek Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) Grants, to include the 2022 Fawn River WLTP Grant as an additional funding source. Seconded by Brad Hamlin. Motion carried.

2. Fawn River

- a. Janel reported site visits for the remaining 2022 Fawn River WLTP Grant contracts (*windbreak/shelterbelt establishment in the Town of Orland sub-watershed and a forage/biomass + critical area planting in the Snow Lake sub-watershed*) will be completed in early November. The state will be invoiced once practices have been confirmed.

-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. A copy of the new Tri-State Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) flyer was provided in the Supervisors' folders. Arthur shared additional information about RCPP and EQIP programs, along with the amount of funding currently available in the WLEB. Janel shared the WLEB may receive additional monies if

the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy's Readiness Grant Application receives funding. The Steuben SWCD provided a letter of support for their grant application.

iii. Entire County

1. Janel is planning on attending the Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC) October 5 and November 2, 2024 monthly board meetings.
2. Steuben County/Urban (IDEM Construction Stormwater Inspection Permit (CSCP), MS4)
 - a. A copy of the flyer and agenda for the December 6, 2024 Contractor Workshop was provided in the Supervisors' folders). Bailey is currently working on obtaining door prizes from area businesses to help increase workshop interest/attendance.

b. District Operations/Marketing

Chuck Howard, Chair

i. Steuben County SWCD Materiality Policy and District Capitalization Policy

Janel reviewed an email from Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) District Support Specialist Sandra Hoffarth regarding our Materiality Policy and District Capitalization Policy. She advised both should be reviewed yearly, typically right after elections, and recorded in the minutes as reviewed which ensures all Supervisors have a chance to review/understand the policies.

ii. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.

1. Field Visits/Trainings

- a. Steuben County Life Session #1 (Stockwell Farms) • September 17, 2024.
- b. Angola Middle School Water Quality Field Day • September 19, 2024. Steuben County SWCD staff, with assistance from LaGrange County SWCD (Martin Franke, Kyle Burchett, and Amy Renkenberger), held a water quality field day for three hundred seventy-six (376) 8th grade Angola Middle School students, walking them through an introduction into Hoosier Riverwatch water quality testing protocols.
- c. CLTLC Meeting • September 20, 2024. Janel and Bailey met with Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy Executive Director Caroline Barth and Board Member Dan Rippe to share information about SWCD cost-share programs.
- d. IASWCD "Ride Along with Local Farmers" Webinar • September 20, 2024. Bailey participated in this CCSI and Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) sponsored webinar to learn why staff should experience farming firsthand to understand what it takes to cultivate Indiana's land.
- e. Steuben County Life Session #2 (Pokagon SP) • September 24, 2024.
- f. Indiana Lakes Management Society (ILMS) Education and Outreach Committee Meeting • September 25, 2024 (*virtual*). Janel reported the ILMS Education and Outreach Committee will be offering a LARE Grant program overview webinar on October 22.
- g. NCDEA Selling Urban Ag to Rural Residents Training Webinar • September 25, 2024. Bailey participated in this webinar that featured strategies to engage rural communities/populations in the urban ag discussion.
- h. Steuben County Life Session #3 (Buck Lake Ranch) • October 1, 2024.

2. Copies of the July, August, and September 2024 tally sheets were provided in the Supervisors' folders.

iii. Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD)

1. The IASWCD Annual Conference has been scheduled for January 27-28, 2025. Janel provided information about registration fees and hotel rates for the conference. SWCD staff requested approval to attend. Supervisor Williams shared she will check her availability and advise staff as soon as possible.

Craig Holman moved to approve registration expenses, \$395/person, and travel expenses (separate hotel rooms for January 26 and January 27, 2025, at \$140 + taxes/night, plus per diem) for Administrative Coordinator Janel Meyer, Resource Conservationist Bailey Temple, and Board Supervisor Beth Williams to attend the January 27-28, 2025 Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts' Annual Meeting in Indianapolis. Seconded by Brad Hamlin. Motion carried.

iv. Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)

1. No District Support Specialist report was provided.
2. Janel reviewed an ISDA memo regarding SWCDs holding funds for outside groups (i.e., Urban Soil Health, etc.) and a State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) memo regarding District Capacity Reports to show the impact of the increased Clean Water Indiana (CWI) funding.
3. Board Supervisor Holman volunteered to Chair the Election Committee. Board Chair Hart and Janel reported they have two individuals willing to serve on the Steuben SWCD Election

Committee (Tom Saggars and Bill Schmidt). Janel advised nominees for election are due in SharePoint by December 1.

4. The Board was asked to consider Supervisor Kayleen Hart as the recommendation for Supervisor Appointment and Brad Hamlin as a nominee for election. Kayleen expressed interest in being re-appointed and Brad expressed interest in being a candidate for the election.

Beth Williams moved to recommend reappointing Kayleen Hart to serve an additional term in the appointed supervisor position on the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District Board. Seconded by Brad Hamlin. Motion carried.

Beth Williams moved to recommend Brad Hamlin as a nominee for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor election. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.

5. Steuben SWCD Annual Meeting Planning: The Board set March 12, 2025 as the date for the SWCD Annual Meeting. A discussion on venues and keynote speaker ideas followed. Bailey will provide a report on venues at the next meeting.

c. Budget and Finance

Kayleen Hart, Chair

- i. Indiana Woodland Steward Indiana Woodland Steward sent a request to support the printing of the Woodland Steward Newsletter for Steuben County landowners for FY24-25. Janel shared the newsletter is mailed to 343 landowners in the county and provides science-based articles to help woodland owners better understand/manage forests and back yards.
Beth Williams made a motion to contribute \$576.24 toward FY24-25 printing costs for the Indiana Woodland Steward Newsletter. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.
- ii. District Cell Phone/Hotspot
Bailey reviewed cell phone carriers and plans available. The Board discussed the options and selected Verizon Wireless for the cell phone purchase/plan. Janel reminded the Board a motion to approve the purchase and plan contract signing was approved at the last meeting.
- iii. SWCD Apparel
Bailey reviewed apparel quotes from three local vendors, which included fees associated with logo digitization/embroidery. The Board discussed the vendors and determined to utilize Gauntlet Design Studio DBA Angola Sports Center. A staff spending limit was also set.
Craig Holman motioned to approve up to \$200, each, for the Administrative Coordinator Janel Meyer and Resource Conservationist Bailey Temple to spend on Steuben Soil and Water Conservation District business apparel from Gauntlet Design Studio (Angola Sports Center). Seconded by Brad Hamlin. Motion carried.
- iv. Steuben SWCD Signs
Janel shared a picture of the Steuben County SWCD county welcome sign on U.S. 20 on the IN/OH state line. She asked the Board to consider replacing/updating all four county welcome signs since they're outdated, the IN/OH sign doesn't match the other signs, the SWCD has updated their logo, and the DeKalb/Steuben sign has never been reinstalled. Bailey presented information (specifications/pricing) to replace four SWCD county welcome signs. The discussion focused on the cost of framing and installation. Board Supervisor Hamlin volunteered to obtain pricing from a local contact regarding the cost of materials and labor for framing. The Board was supportive of purchasing new signage but tabled the discussion to the November meeting to consider the information Supervisor Hamlin obtains and requirements for sign registration.

d. Information and Education

Vacant, Chair

- i. Drainage Board (DB)
Staff are attending DB meetings as schedules allow. No update was provided. Janel shared the Steuben County Plan Commission was holding a public hearing today for the consideration of general ordinance review/updates, ETJ discussion, a pond ordinance draft, stormwater ordinance draft, and watershed protection discussion/confined feeding discussion.
- ii. Steuben SWCD 2024 Summer/Fall Newsletter
Janel requested Board approval to pay the Graphics 3 invoice for the printing/ mailing of the 2024 newsletter since the invoice would be received after the October Board meeting.
Beth Williams moved to approve paying Graphics 3, inc. for printing and mailing services for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) 2024 Summer/Fall Newsletter after invoice receipt. Seconded by Brad Hamlin. Motion carried.

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

- Bailey presented a list of vendors that sell Augmented Reality Sandbox (ARS) units. The Board discussed a maximum amount to spend on a new unit and requested Bailey contact other SWCDs with a reality sandbox to determine their satisfaction level, where it was purchased, and purchase price.

Craig Holman moved to approve purchasing a new Augmented Reality Sandbox (ARS) Unit for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Conservation Education program, with a spending cap of \$9,500, including shipping costs. Seconded by Brad Hamlin. Motion carried.

- Janel requested Board approval to partner with Pokagon State Park (i.e., Interpretive Naturalist Aimee Wentworth) for a 2025 Indiana Master Naturalist Program. The program will be held for 10 weeks on Thursday evenings from April to June. The Supervisors were agreeable to another co-sponsorship with Pokagon.

V. **CLAIMS**

6216	Walmart (Supplies/Refreshments for 9/17/24 Steuben County Life Session #1)	\$	71.54
6217	IDEA (2024 Fall Conference Registration for Steuben SWCD Staff)	\$	300.00
6218	SCLC (Steuben County Strategic Water Quality Monitoring Program)	\$	1,250.00
6219	Walmart (Supplies/Refreshments for 9/24/24 Steuben County Life Session #2)	\$	87.09
6220	Walmart (Supplies/Refreshments for 10/1/24 Steuben County Life Session #3)	\$	18.82
6221	Dutch Heritage (Refreshments for 10/1/24 Steuben County Life Session #3)	\$	52.50
6222	Bailey Temple (July – September Hotspot Payment/Reimbursement)	\$	81.25
6223	Keyston Cooperative (Fuel for Expedition – October 2024 Statement)	\$	59.90
6224	USPS (Steuben SWCD 2024 Summer/Fall Newsletter Postage; 1,622 Pieces)	\$	277.19
6225	Pokagon State Park (9/24/24 Steuben County Life Session #2 Interpretive Program Fee)	\$	32.00
6226	IN Division of Fish & Wildlife (Grasslands for Gamebirds & Songbirds)	\$	300.00

Brad Hamlin motioned to approve the claims for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) October 2, 2024 Board meeting. Craig Holman seconded. Motion carried.

VI. **NEXT BOARD MEETING**

November 13, 2024 – Board Meeting – 5:00 p.m.

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

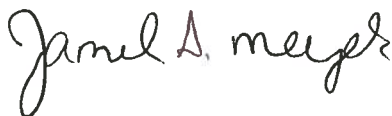
VII. **ADJOURNMENT**

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 October 2, 2024 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.




Meeting adjourned by Board Chair Hart at 6:41 p.m.

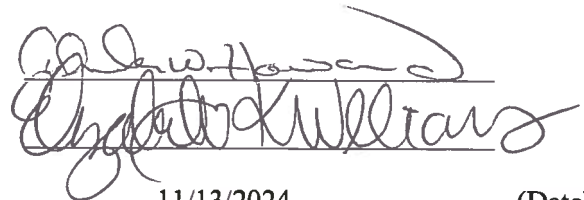
Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board:



11/13/2024

(Date)