

**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

November 13, 2024

IN ATTENDANCE

District Supervisors

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

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Arthur Franke, District Conservationist

Associate Supervisors

Ryan Waite

Public Attendees

Rachel Williams

Steuben County Soil & Water
Conservation District (SWCD)

Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator
Bailey Temple, Resource Conservationist

CALL TO ORDER

I. Steuben County SWCD Board Chair Kayleen Hart called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

II. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (10-2-24)

Board Chair Hart asked the Supervisors to consider the minutes of the October 2, 2024 Steuben County SWCD Board meeting. There being no further additions or corrections, she requested a motion to approve.

Craig Holman moved to approve the minutes of the October 2, 2024 Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting, as presented. Seconded by Brad Hamlin. Motion carried.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT

Administrative Coordinator Janel Meyer provided the financial report for October 1 – October 31, 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 October 31, 2024:

General Fund - All Accounts

Checking	\$ 61,139.78
Statement Savings	<u>42,223.60</u>
Total	\$103,363.38

Checking account

balance 9/30/24	\$ 66,880.40
Receipts	\$ 50.00
Disbursement	<u>(\$ 5,790.62)</u>
	\$ 61,139.78

Savings account

balance 9/30/24	\$ 42,209.26
Receipts	\$ 14.34
Disbursement	<u>(\$ 0.00)</u>
	\$ 42,223.60

October checking account receipts totaled \$50.00 (R3745) which included the registration fee for the 2024 Steuben County Life Program.

Savings account interest totaled \$14.34.

Disbursement was \$5,790.62 (Claim #6222 - #6234). This included conservation education expenses [2024 Steuben County Life Program [Sept. 24 (Pokagon State Park fees) and Oct. 15 & 22 refreshments)], dues and subscriptions, office supplies, operating expenses, printing/postage (Steuben SWCD 2024 summer – fall newsletter w/ mailing services), SWCD vehicle maintenance, and support for the Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife's Grasslands for Gamebirds and Songbirds Program.

Additional information provided with the monthly claims for Board review and verification included: 1. Oct. 2024 checking & savings account bank statements and reconciliations; 2. Oct. 2024 deposit/check detail and general ledger reports; 3. Staff payroll approval form, time sheets, compensatory time logs (10/18, 11/1, and 11/15/24 pay periods); and 4. Oct. 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.

Brad Hamlin moved to approve the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Treasurer's Report for the period ending October 31, 2024, as presented. Seconded by Craig Holman. 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. Two Herald Republican articles, "USDA and Indiana expand successful conservation partnership" and "Indiana's future is down the drain" were also provided.
2. District Conservationist Arthur Franke reported the number of Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications he's received. Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Executive Director (CED), reported the wheat certification deadline is December 15. She also discussed the most recent U.S. Drought Monitor information for Steuben County (categorized as "D2" or "severe drought") and disaster assistance programs USDA offers, such as low-interest loans, to help offset losses for farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers. Individuals can learn about USDA disaster assistance programs by using the Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. The Featured Farmer program is looking for farmers to showcase the diversity of Indiana agriculture and recognize farmers who supply the state with food, fiber, and fuel at the 2025 Indiana State Fair. The new Steuben County FSA Program Analyst, Jyssica Delancey, will begin employment on November 18. Kayleen shared FSA is also busy with processing loans for corn and beans (FY25 – on harvested 2024 crops).

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. The next FotSJR meeting is scheduled for December 10. It will be held virtually. Resource Conservationist Bailey Temple will participate.
2. St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC)
 - a. The next SJRBC quarterly meeting is scheduled for December 5. Janel and Bailey will attend. Bailey will attend to gain a better understanding of the Commission. SJRBC Executive Director Matt Meersman requested to attend today's SWCD Board meeting but cancelled due to a last-minute change in his schedule. Janel advised Matt may attend the SWCD's December meeting.

-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. An update on the 1.0-acre tree planting in the West Branch of Fish Creek, funded through the 2021 Upper St. Joseph River (USJR) Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) grant, was presented. This was the 2023 planting inadvertently sprayed by the tenant farmer. An October 31st site visit confirmed no tree survival. Janel advised the landowner has an interest in replacing the trees or installing a pollinator planting. The Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Grant Administrators will not require the trees to be replaced; the landowner will be eligible for additional WLTP grant funding if they choose to reinstall/install a conservation practice. The Board discussed the tree replacement and installation of a pollinator/wildlife planting and the benefits of adding either practice.
Chuck Howard moved to approve a 1.0-acre Tree/Establishment or Pollinator/Wildlife Planting in the West Branch sub-watershed of Fish Creek using the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) 2024 Upper St. Joseph River (USJR) Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) Grant. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.
 - b. Janel reported the NRCS Technical Team was working on the design for the Erosion Control/Grade Stabilization structure (s) on the ACRES Land Trust Ball Lake easement. The Indiana Waterways Inquiry ACRES submitted revealed a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) permit will not be required but an Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) Isolated Wetland and/or Clean Water Act Section 401 authorizations will be.

iii. Entire County

1. Janel asked the Board to consider adding a septic cost-share assistance option using the SWCD District Cost-Share Program. The discussion centered on the type of assistance to offer, including

maintenance/inspection and septic replacement. The Board was supportive with Janel advising she would be working with the Health Department (HD) to determine the best use of funding. The program would be supported by the additional Clean Water Indiana (CWI) matching grant funds received in 2024. Janel will share more information as the program develops.

2. Steuben County Lakes Council
 - a. A brief report was provided on the SCLC's October and November meetings: (1) the Steuben County Plan Commission created a sub-committee to create an ordinance for animal feeding operations in the county; (2) the Plan Commission created an online platform to apply for various permits with a credit card payment option; (3) the SCLC is planning to submit a monthly newsletter article to the Herald Republican to focus on their mission and promote the organization; (4) no decision has been made from the July 30 DNR public hearing for the proposed public pier on the third basin of Crooked Lake – over 100 individuals attended with the majority not in support of the pier construction; (5) Lake James Association is concerned with stormwater runoff as the new Saranova property is developed – this is the property located just south of Meijer with Croxton Ditch running through the parcel; (6) plans have been developed to begin the 2025 Hamilton Lake comprehensive lake study which will assess water quality impacts from tributaries and new developments (e.g., Crystal Bay and Crystal Cove) since the last study was conducted; (7) Lake of the Woods/McClish Lake continues fundraising for dredging. Janel provided information to November's SCLC attendees about the availability of the 2025-2029 Indiana State Nonpoint Source Program Management Plan. A copy of the Plan's Table of Contents was provided to the Steuben SWCD Board Supervisors for review.
 - b. The SCLC's Water Quality Committee meeting was held on October 25 to discuss the 2024 sampling season and potential changes for their 2025 program. The SWCD was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict.
 - c. The next SCLC Board Meeting is December 7, 2024.
3. Steuben County/Urban (IDEM Construction Stormwater Inspection Permit (CSCP), MS4)
 - a. A copy of the flyer for the December 6 Contractor Workshop was provided in the Supervisors' folders. Bailey reported the current number of individuals registered and the door prizes obtained from area businesses to help increase workshop interest/attendance.

b. District Operations/Marketing

Chuck Howard, Chair

- i. Steuben County SWCD Job Descriptions

Copies of the District Coordinator (formerly Administrative Coordinator) and Resource Conservationist job descriptions were sent to the Board Supervisors for review in advance of the meeting. Board Chair Hart asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, she called for a motion to approve.

Brad Hamlin moved to approve the final 2024 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) job descriptions for the District Coordinator (formerly Administrative Coordinator) and Resource Conservationist. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.
- ii. Steuben County SWCD Resource Conservationist Performance Evaluation

Bailey's 90-day performance review was scheduled for December 11, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. Janel will mail the evaluation form and associated materials to the Board.
- iii. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.
 1. Field Visits/Trainings
 - a. Garrett Middle Schools Soils Presentation • October 7-8, 2024. Bailey and Kate Sanders, Resource Specialist with the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, assisted Art with the soil's presentation at this DeKalb County youth conservation event.
 - b. Steuben County Life Session #4 (Miller Poultry) • October 8, 2024.
 - c. Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Planning Meeting • October 10, 2024. SWCD staff met with Pokagon State Park Interpretive Naturalist Aimee Wentworth to discuss partnering on a 2025 IMN program. A minimum of 8 and maximum of 16 participants will be required. The SWCD will collect the \$120 registration fees. The Board discussed providing refunds if the minimum number of registrations is not met.

Chuck Howard motioned to support refunding the \$120 registration fee for the 2025 Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Program the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is sponsoring with Pokagon State Park if the minimum number of 8 participants is not met. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.

- d. LaGrange County SWCD Pasture Walk (Fremont, IN) • October 10, 2024. Staff attended the LaGrange SWCD pasture walk hosted by Jonathon Needham in Steuben County. The pasture walk highlighted a beef, sheep, poultry, and small-scale hay operation.
 - e. Steuben County Life Session #5 (Trine University Best Hall of Science & SDI Center Tour) • October 15, 2024.
 - f. Field/Site Visits • October 17, November 1, 4, and 8, 2024. Field/Site visits performed for Steuben SWCD's LARE WLTP grants and an NRCS Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE).
 - g. Indiana Lakes Management Society (ILMS) Education/Outreach Committee Meeting • October 21, 2024 (*virtual*). Janel reported the ILMS 36th Annual Conference is scheduled for March 20-21, 2025 at Embassy Suites in Noblesville, IN. The conference is an opportunity for lake supporters and water professionals to share information about protecting our water resources. Janel asked the Board to consider a conference sponsorship; sponsorship levels will be provided at the next Board meeting.
 - h. ILMS LARE Overview Webinar • October 22, 2024. Staff participated.
 - i. Steuben County Life Session #6 (Stormwater/Mulligan's Restaurant) • October 22, 2024. The last 2024 Steuben Life session featured a presentation on stormwater by City of Angola MS4 Coordinator Kris Thomas. Bailey provided a brief overview of the participant evaluation. All felt the program was worth their time and money. The favorite session was Miller Poultry and least favorite was Pokagon because of the weather/tornado warning.
 - j. 2024 IDEA Fall Conference • October 22, 2024. Staff attended the Indiana District Employee Association (IDEA) Fall Conference in Michigan City and participated in sessions focusing on district operations (succession planning, Board recruitment, etc.) and education (working with schools, educator resources, etc.).
 - k. Fairview Missionary Church/Homeschool Group Stormwater Presentation • October 29, 2024. Bailey presented the Enviroscope®/stormwater lesson kit to 14 1st and 2nd-grade homeschooled children.
 - l. Lincpass Appointment • October 31, 2024. Bailey had the first of two appointments in West Lafayette to obtain a Lincpass. Her Department of Homeland Security background check is finally moving forward thanks to assistance from Jennifer Walker, NRCS Albion South Planning Team Leader.
 - m. "Anti-Harassment Certification", "Workplace Violence Prevention Certification", "Understanding and Interrupting Unconscious Bias Certification", and "Section 508: What is it? Why is it important Certification" • November 4, 2024. SWCD staff completed required annual USDA training.
 - n. Soil Guardians of DeKalb-Steuben Meeting • November 6, 2024. SWCD staff met with Reba Wicker, Purdue Extension Natural Resources Educator, to discuss moving forward with the Soil Guardians group sans DeKalb SWCD if DeKalb terminates their involvement. The goal is to fully launch the soil sampling program by spring. An email was sent to all the Steuben Master Gardeners who expressed interest in volunteering to advise of the spring start date. They also discussed hosting a workshop to educate individuals on the basics of nutrient management. Janel asked the Board to consider helping offset the registration fee to help individuals attend. The Board was supportive and will discuss in more detail once a workshop date has been determined.
 - o. DeKalb-LaGrange-Steuben SWCD Olive B. Cole Foundation Grant Meeting • November 7, 2024. Grant ideas the SWCD's discussed for an Olive B. Cole Foundation joint grant application were shared with the Board, including a watershed awareness campaign and a conservation education trailer.
2. Copies of the October and November 2024 tally sheets will be provided at the December Board meeting.
- iv. Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD)
 1. Board Supervisor Beth Williams confirmed she will attend the IASWCD January 27-28, 2025 Annual Conference and serve as the Steuben SWCD delegate. Janel will complete the delegate registration.
 - v. Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)
 1. No District Support Specialist report was provided.

2. Temporary appointed Board Supervisor Brad Hamlin indicated he wants to be considered as a candidate for the 2025 SWCD election. The Election Committee reported they were unable to garner any additional interest. Nominations from the floor will be accepted the evening of the annual meeting. Janel advised she will enter the committee nominee for election information in SharePoint.
3. Steuben SWCD March 12, 2025 Annual Meeting Planning: Bailey reported the venues checked regarding availability and rental fees. The best option was Pleasant Township Hall for its location, space, and no rental fee. The Board discussed moving the annual meeting around the county but determined the best area to hold is a centrally located venue. Board Chair Hart asked for a motion to select the 2025 Annual Meeting location.

Beth Williams moved to approve holding the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) March 12, 2025 Annual Meeting at the Pleasant Lake Township Trustees Office. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.

A discussion for a keynote speaker also occurred. The Board agreed to ask Tom Selman, City of Angola Water Superintendent, to speak about the City of Angola's water availability study. Bailey will reach out to him. A "Save the Date" card has been completed.

vi. National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (NACD)

1. Membership Renewal: NACD mailed an invoice for FY25 membership dues. A copy of the most recent NACD Annual Report was provided for review.

Beth Williams moved to support dues for the National Association of Conservation Districts' (NACD) 2025 fiscal year at \$450. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.

c. Budget and Finance

Kayleen Hart, Chair

- i. Request for Additional Appropriation/Transfer of Funds Janel provided a report on the current funding balance for the SWCD-funded part-time administrative position. The Board determined they would like to wait until next year for an additional appropriation.
- ii. Position Schedule Fidelity Bond: Janel presented the \$20,000 Position Schedule Fidelity Bond. She will record it with the County.
Chuck Howard motioned to approve the \$20,000 fidelity bond for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). Seconded by Brad Hamlin. Motion carried.
- iii. 2025 Steuben County Final Adopted Budgets & Wages: Janel will present the 2025 final adopted budget and wages at the December Board meeting. To date, no information has been received.
- iv. Steuben SWCD Signs
Bailey reviewed the sign specifications/pricing she presented at the October Board meeting to replace four SWCD county welcome signs. Board Supervisor Hamlin reviewed pricing for the cost of materials to frame and install the signage. The estimate was \$750, total, versus the cost of \$1,200 per frame/sign to have manufactured by a commercial sign vendor. Board Supervisor Chuck Howard offered his assistance with design review, material pricing, and sign installation. The Board approved purchasing the signs at \$480/sign. Bailey will contact the sign vendor to proceed with the order. The Board also discussed permits and working with the Highway Department on reinstalling the DeKalb/Steuben line sign.
- v. 2026 IDEA Conference Support Janel presented a request from the NNE IDEA Region Director to providing monetary assistance for reserving Potawatomi Inn for the 2026 IDEA Fall Conference. If all 10 NNE region districts sponsor the conference with \$1,000, this would allow enough for the deposit plus extra to help offset additional expenses. The deposit total is \$9,675. The 2026 membership dues plus registration will help cover the remaining fees. The Board was supportive and discussed whether districts would be reimbursed. This would depend on the number of sponsors secured to help offset costs.
Brad Hamlin motioned to approve \$1,000 from the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to support the \$9,675 deposit required to reserve Potawatomi Inn for the 2026 Indiana District Employee Association's (IDEA) Fall Conference. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.

d. Information and Education

Brad Hamlin, Chair

- i. Drainage Board (DB)
Staff are attending DB meetings as schedules allow. Janel reviewed the new maintenance rates for the #557 John Berlien (Pigeon Creek) and #634 George Walberry (Fish Creek). The last rate increase received for each was in 1975 and 1996, respectively. Both units are in debt.
- ii. Steuben SWCD 2024 Fall/Winter Newsletter
The 2024 fall/winter newsletter will be available by the first or second week of December.
- iii. 4-H/Purdue Extension/SWCD/Other Educational and SWCD Projects
- Bailey reached out to districts with Augmented Reality Sandbox (ARS) units to inquire about where

they purchased an ARS unit, price, and function. All were self-built. She took the computer to Weaver Computer Repair for a free inspection of the black screen problem, which has been resolved. Former Resource Conservationist Aimee Wentworth provided consultation services to help recalibrate the unit. The recalibration was not successful. Bailey continues to work on the unit. Staff advised they didn't want to move forward purchasing a new ARS Unit, yet, due to the probability of running into the same issues currently being experienced.

- Bailey reported the SWCD was contacted by a representative regarding our website ADA compliance. She reached out to PageCrafter, the SWCD Webmaster, who ran a free scan to check compliance. The software indicated only a handful of items to address, including buttons with no defined text, images without alt tags, and low-contrast text. Bailey has been working to correct those issues.

V. CLAIMS

6227	Woodland Steward (FY24-25 Woodland Steward Newsletter Printing-Steuben)	\$	576.24
6228	Lonsbury Garage (Ford Expedition Maintenance-Remove/Replace Compressor)	\$	1,332.70
6229	Graphics 3, inc. (Steuben SWCD Summer/Fall Newsletter Printing & Mailing)	\$	933.55
6230	Walmart (Supplies/Refreshments for 10/15/24 Steuben County Life Session #5)	\$	44.56
6231	iPROMOTEu (Steuben County SWCD Pens for Conservation Education/Events)	\$	486.53
6232	Mulligan's Restaurant (10/22/24 Final Steuben Co. Life Session; 39 servings)	\$	1,603.80
6233	Menards (Supplies for Rain Barrel Modification-2024 IDEA Fall Conference)	\$	12.05
6234	Bon Appetit (Refreshments for 10/15/24 Steuben County Life Session #5)	\$	50.85
6235	cmglobal (2025 IASWCD Annual Conf. Registration for SWCD staff & Board)	\$	1,185.00
6236	Purdue U. (2025 IWLA Registration Fee for Resource Con. Bailey Temple)	\$	950.00
6237	Jacob Insurance (Pekin Ins. Co. Position Schedule Bond Policy Renewal 11/24 - 11/25)	\$	100.00
6238	Keystone Cooperative (Fuel for Expedition - November 2024 Statement)	\$	112.45
6239	Bailey Temple (Reimbursement per SWCD SOP-2024 IDEA Conf. Travel)	\$	43.40
6240	Janel Meyer (Reimbursement per SWCD SOP-2024 IDEA Conf. Travel for Staff, Software)	\$	476.59
6241	Gauntlet Design Studio (Steuben SWCD Business Apparel for Staff & SWCD Board)	\$	524.65
6242	KPC Media (Subscription Renewal 11/28/24 - 11/28/25)	\$	312.00

Chuck Howard motioned to approve the claims for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) November 13, 2024 Board meeting. Brad Hamlin seconded. Motion carried.

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING

December 11, 2024 – Board Meeting – 5:30 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.

Chuck Howard moved to adjourn the November 13, 2024 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting. Seconded by Brad Hamlin. Motion carried.

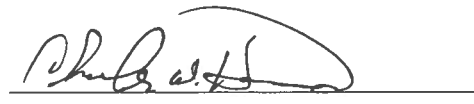
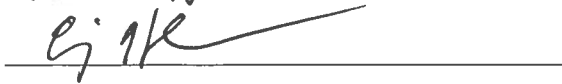
Meeting adjourned by Board Chair Hart at 6:52 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board:



12/11/2024

(Date)