

**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

**December 11, 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

Public Attendees

Matt Meersman, President (Friends of the St. Joseph River (FotSJR) and Executive Director (St. Joseph River Basin Commission)

Steuben County Soil & Water  
Conservation District (SWCD)

Janel Meyer, District Coordinator  
Bailey Temple, Resource Conservationist

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Steuben County SWCD Board Chair Kayleen Hart called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. An Executive Session was held from 5 – 5:30 p.m. to discuss job performance evaluations of individual employees of the SWCD.

**II. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (11-13-24)**

Board Chair Hart asked the Supervisors to consider the minutes of the November 13, 2024 Steuben County SWCD Board meeting. There being no further additions or corrections, she requested a motion to approve.

*Chuck Howard moved to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2024 Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting, as presented. Seconded by Brad Hamlin. Motion carried with five (5) ayes..*

**III. TREASURER’S REPORT**

District Coordinator Janel Meyer provided the financial report for November 1 – November 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 November 30, 2024:*

General Fund - All Accounts

Checking                      \$ 57,457.90  
Statement Savings         42,237.48  
Total                            \$ 99,695.38

*Checking account*

*balance 10/31/24            \$ 61,139.78*  
*Receipts                      \$ 656.93*  
*Disbursement              (\$ 4,338.81)*  
*\$ 57,457.90*

*Savings account*

*balance 10/31/24            \$ 42,223.60*  
*Receipts                      \$ 13.88*  
*Disbursement              (\$ 0.00)*  
*\$ 42,237.48*

November checking account receipts totaled \$656.93 (R3746) which included the Steuben County Lakes Council’s monetary support for the 2024 Soil and Water Stewardship Week and 2024 Youth Conservation Field Day educational materials.

Savings account interest totaled \$13.88.

Disbursement was \$4,338.81 (Claim #6235 - #6246). This included conservation education expenses [November 20, 2024 Angola Middle School presentation materials/supplies and Augmented Reality Sandbox (ARS) Unit calibration/training], dues and subscriptions, office supplies (business apparel for staff and Board Supervisors), operating expenses, postage (stamps), and training/travel expenses [registration fees for Resource Conservationist (RC) Bailey Temple to attend the 2025 Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy (IWLA), registration fees for District Coordinator Janel Meyer, Bailey Temple (RC), and Board Supervisor Williams to attend the January 26-28, 2025 Indiana

*Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) Annual Meeting, and staff travel reimbursement (October 23-25, 2024 Indiana District Employee Association (IDEA) Fall Conference).*

Additional information provided with the monthly claims for Board review and verification included: 1. Nov. 2024 checking & savings account bank statements and reconciliations; 2. Nov. 2024 deposit/check detail and general ledger reports; 3. Staff payroll approval form, time sheets, compensatory time logs (11/29 and 12/13/24 pay periods); and 4. Nov. 2024 vehicle log.

Board Chair Hart asked whether there were any questions/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 November 30, 2024, as presented. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried with five (5) ayes.*

#### 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 reported he received 18 EQIP and 22 CSP applications. He is working on contracts for 12 applications that were preapproved. Processing of CSP applications will begin as soon as he receives ranking guidance/information.

Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Executive Director (CED), reminded the group of the upcoming wheat and small grain certification deadline on December 15. She discussed the new Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC) program is now accepting applications. It will cover fruits, vegetables, nursery crops, honey, etc. The deadline to apply is January 8, 2025.

The program is being supported through special funds since there is no current Farm Bill. Kayleen advised congress will likely wait until the new administration begins to pass a new Farm Bill. She also shared the new administration has been discussing a 30% work force reduction. Kayleen is interested in reaching new producers and requested collaborating with the SWCD on future outreach events to share information about FSA programs.

##### 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. Matt Meersman, President of the FotSJR and Executive Director of the St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC) introduced himself and shared information on the FotSJR collaborative effort to protect, restore, and foster stewardship among the 15 counties within the St. Joseph River Watershed. He reviewed the SJRBC, why it was established by the Indiana General Assembly in 1988, and the membership as specified in Indiana Code (*Director of Indiana DNR and at least five representatives from the 6 Indiana counties within the watershed*). He expanded on various projects the SJRBC is conducting to address water quality (*e.g., basin-wide monitoring*) and water quantity (*e.g., real-time water level/flow monitoring devices at various locations, including on the Fawn River at Nevada Mills, to develop stage-discharge curves, which allows the estimate of volume/discharge at each site*). He is working on a new project – the SJRBC solicited for proposals to perform a study focusing on watershed factors such as land management practices, soil conditions, vegetation, and drainage improvement to help develop a model for predicting the impact of changes in watershed conditions that could also be used to make informed water management decisions such as creating financial incentives for private landowners and identifying where to hold/manage water on public lands. Matt was appointed to represent the environmental stewardship/sustainability seat on the Drainage Handbook Advisory Board. Janel shared information how the public can join the first advisory board meeting scheduled December 17.

Bailey participated in her first FotSJR meeting on December 10 (virtual meeting).

##### 2. St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC)

- a. See above (under FotSJR).

-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. Arthur Franke reviewed the engineering design plans for the ACRES Land Trust Ball Lake easement project (Erosion Control/Grade Stabilization structure which has developed into a Streambank Stabilization project). The project will include armoring banks, the installation of a plunge pool, and removal of woody vegetation and planting a native plant/grass mix. Copies of the plan were provided for review. Janel advised the contract would be completed in January.
  - b. Janel reported the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy (CLTLC) readiness grant proposal to perform an updated watershed assessment in Clear Lake was selected for funding. Readiness grants are a precursor for a National Water Quality Incentives Program (NWQI) designation for watersheds where additional monies would be available to install best management practices.
  - c. A copy of the November 25, 2024 Domestic Action Plan (DAP) Advisory Committee meeting minutes were provided in the Supervisors’ folders. Janel was unable to participate due to a scheduling conflict. She reminded the Board that Indiana, along with other Great Lake states, have committed to reducing phosphorus loadings and concentrations by 40% to assist in meeting nearshore and open water phosphorus objectives within Lake Erie.

iii. Entire County

1. A 7.2-acre Forage/Biomass + 3,376 ft. Fence application in the Snow Lake sub-watershed of Fawn River was presented to the Board. The landowner would like to convert a former crop field (last planted in 2023) to pasture to expand his small beef operation. He plans to start small, with a 10-year timeline to convert the entire farm. Arthur performed the site visit. He advised his programs were not an option and shared information about the tract (categorized as highly erodible). Janel provided an estimate on the amount of cost-share that would be required for 3,376 ft. of fence. The Board discussed the project, benefits of converting the crop field into pasture, acreage available for the current number of animals on the property, fencing costs, and the amount of District Cost-Share available.

*Chuck Howard moved to approve the 7.2-acre Forage/Biomass planting and a portion of the Fence required for the project (the linear section on the western edge of the property) in the Snow Lake sub-watershed of Fawn River using the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) 2025 District Cost-Share Program. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried with five (5) ayes.*
2. Steuben County Lakes Council
  - a. A brief report for the SCLC’s December 7, 2024 meeting was provided: (1) Scott Banfield, Aquatic Enhancement and Control, gave an overview of the SCLC’s 2024 water quality sampling season. (2) Individual and business membership dues will be each be increased by \$5.00 beginning in 2025; (3) Crooked Lake is still awaiting a decision from the July 30 DNR public hearing for the proposed public pier on the third basin. The developer has since modified the design, shortening the pier – but widening it along the shoreline. It’s unknown whether a new hearing will be scheduled. (4) The updated county ordinances may be completed/available by December 2025. The sub-committee charged with creating an ordinance for animal feeding operations between Hobby Farm and Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)-size has been dissolved for unknown reasons.
  - b. The next SCLC Board Meeting is February 1, 2025.
3. Steuben County/Urban (IDEM Construction Stormwater Inspection Permit (CSCP), MS4)
  - a. Bailey reported 53 individuals registered & 44 attended the December 6 Contractor Workshop. Individuals that completed the evaluation indicated they enjoyed the workshop and the speakers. Staff advised a different venue will be selected for the 2025 Contractor Workshop.

**b. District Operations/Marketing**

**Chuck Howard, Chair**

i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.

1. Field Visits/Trainings
  - a. 2024 Steuben County Life Wrap-Up Meeting • November 14, 2024. Bill Schmidt requested a meeting with staff to discuss the 2024 program.
  - b. Steuben County Strategic Water Quality Monitoring Program (SWQMP) Meeting • November 15, 2024 (virtual). Program updates were discussed at this meeting (financial

- report, data and data analysis, upcoming required grant reporting). The group will be meeting in-person at the end of January to discuss 2025 sampling. Janel shared information on the 32 pharmaceutical analytes being analyzed from the water samples.
- c. Indiana Lakes Management Society (ILMS) Education/Outreach Committee and Quarterly Board Meeting • November 18 and December 4, 2024 (*virtual*). The Education/Outreach Committee will be hosting a watershed management planning webinar on January 17, 2025. The 2025 ILMS Annual Meeting agenda is still being developed; the abstract submission deadline has been extended to December 27. The committee is developing the “mitigating farm runoff” session.
  - d. Field/Site Visits: November 20 and December 2, 2024.
  - e. Angola Middle School Composting Presentation • November 20, 2024. Bailey helped Ag & Natural Resources Extension Educator Reba Wicker with an Angola Middle School afterschool program for 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. She presented a composting lesson.
  - f. Lake Access Magazine Meeting • November 20, 2024. Janel and City of Angola MS4 Coordinator Kris Thomas met with Lake Access Magazine’s founder/creator Dennis Babjack to help develop an article to educate the lake and business community on water quality.
  - g. USDA Information Security Awareness Training and Acknowledgement • November 22, 2024. Bailey completed this USDA required training for a second time.
  - h. Soil Guardians of DeKalb-Steuben Quarterly Meeting • December 3, 2024. The working group met to discuss the official 2025 launch of the Soil Guardians and scheduled next year’s quarterly meetings, and an educational event planned for June 4, 2025 at Doc Coleman Landing in DeKalb County. The event will feature a pollinator planting and a presentation by Maraiiah Russell, the Indiana Project Wingspan State Coordinator with the Pollinator Partnership. DeKalb SWCD confirmed their continued participation in the working group.
  - i. Water Needs and the Prospect of Water Reuse Webinar • December 5, 2024. Janel participated in this science-policy webinar which focused on a discussion of industrial water needs in the state of Indiana and how we can manage these needs through innovative approaches to industrial water reuse. Janel advised previous Science & Policy Forums are available online on Purdue University’s Institute for a Sustainable Future YouTube page/channel.
  - j. NNE IDEA Region Meeting • December 12, 2024. SWCD staff requested business travel meal expense approval for the NNE IDEA Region Meeting and whether the Board would support the business meal expense incurred for the December 5 SJRBC Quarterly Meeting as these meetings are >50 miles from the county seat.

*Beth Williams moved to approve business travel meal expenses for Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff for the December 5, 2024 St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC) Quarterly Meeting in Goshen, Indiana and the December 12, 2024 NNE Indiana District Employee Association (IDEA) Region Meeting in Elkhart, Indiana. Seconded by Brad Hamlin. Motion carried with five (5) ayes.*
2. Copies of the October and November 2024 tally sheets were provided in the Supervisors’ folders.
- ii. Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD)
    1. A copy of the IASWCD Resolutions for the 2025 Annual Business Meeting were provided in the Supervisors’ folders for review. Board Supervisor Williams asked for review/input since she is the Steuben SWCD representative for the meeting.
  - iii. Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)
    1. Janel reminded the Supervisors of the availability of the Board Leadership Program website which features required new training modules, as well as additional resources and trainings.
    2. Bailey reported the keynote speaker has been confirmed for the Steuben SWCD March 12, 2025 Annual Meeting; Dr. Eric Anderson from INTERA Engineering who will discuss the City of Angola’s water availability study. He will not require assistance with mileage or lodging. She shared the Pleasant Township Trustee Office has been reserved and she is working on completing a flyer and a registration page on the Steuben SWCD website. Bailey also reviewed various catering options with the Board selecting a taco buffet.

**c. Budget and Finance**

**Kayleen Hart, Chair**

- i. 2025 Steuben County Final Adopted Budgets & Wages Janel presented the 2025 final adopted budget and wages for full-time Steuben SWCD staff. She also advised the job descriptions have been officially approved by the Personnel Advisory Committee, County Commissioners, and County Council.
- ii. Steuben Submission Requirements for Funding Requests Janel presented a November 27 Steuben County Commissioner memo requiring all annual allocation recipients that requested assistance for FY25 submit financial information/documents and a letter of request for the funds no later than January 31, 2025. Janel advised she will reach out to Commissioner Assistant Abby Teller for clarification since the SWCD already submitted a letter of request with their FY25 budget appeal.
- iii. FY24 Capacity Report Janel completed/submitted the required Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Capacity Report by the December deadline. The State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) requested this information to show legislators the impact of the increased CWI funding.
- iv. Asset Inventory  
Janel reviewed the SWCD asset inventory on record with Steuben County Government. She advised the SWCD is in possession of all office equipment/furniture listed; however, everything recorded is fully depreciated per the Steuben SWCD Capitalization Policy as the acquired dates range from 1978 to 1995. All items have outlived their "useful life".
- v. Office Supplies/Stand-Up Desks  
SWCD staff asked the Board to consider purchasing stand-up desk converters to help them reduce the long hours of sitting and lower risks of health-related issues linked to sitting for long periods. Bailey presented three different options for review.

*Chuck Howard made a motion to approve the purchase of two stand-up desk converters/risers for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District's (SWCD) District Coordinator and Resource Conservationist desks, not to exceed \$500 total for both risers. Seconded by Brad Hamlin. Motion carried with five (5) ayes.*

**d. Information and Education**

**Brad Hamlin, Chair**

- i. Drainage Board (DB)  
Staff are attending DB meetings as schedules allow. Janel provided an update on the H. Wagler Regulated Open Drain/#525 Fish Creek #6 Basin issue where the landowner hired a contractor to work on a regulated drain without DB approval. On November 7, various state and federal agencies met on-site to review the work and determine necessary permits. The DB has separated themselves from the permitting issues and will focus on verifying whether the project was completed per required DB specifications.
- ii. 4-H/Purdue Extension/SWCD/Other Educational and SWCD Projects
  - Janel shared that Interpretive Naturalist Aimee Wentworth completed all the scheduling and forms for the 2025 Indiana Master Naturalist Program the Steuben SWCD is co-sponsoring with Pokagon State Park and the Friends of Pokagon. Bailey created an IMN informational page on the SWCD website and Janel will advertise on our Facebook page. Janel asked the Board for a formal motion supporting the purchase of food/refreshments for the program.  
*Brad Hamlin moved to approve purchasing food/refreshments for the 2025 Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Program the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is co-sponsoring with Pokagon State Park and the Friends of Pokagon as this event furthers the mission of the Steuben County SWCD. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried with five (5) ayes.*
  - Bailey asked the Board for approval to attend the 2025 IMN program.  
*Beth Williams made a motion to support \$120 registration fee for Resource Conservationist Bailey Temple to attend the 2025 Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Program the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is co-sponsoring with Pokagon State Park and the Friends of Pokagon. Seconded by Brad Hamlin. Motion carried with five (5) ayes.*
  - Janel shared they would like to offer a spring 2025 native plant sale kit program and asked for Board support.  
*Craig Holman motioned to approve the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) offering a spring 2025 native plant sale in conjunction with Stantec Native Plant Nursery with plant kits selling for \$150 each and the new Keystone Pollinator Kit selling for \$200. Seconded by Brad Hamlin. Motion carried with five (5) ayes.*
  - Bailey informed the Board the final sew-out for the business apparel has been completed and Gauntlet will be working on the order the week of 12/2 – 12/6.

- Bailey informed the Board the Steuben SWCD county road signs are in production and should be available by the end of December. The final invoice from TLA signs was received. Brad Hamlin reported the supplies necessary for the framing system.
- Janel asked the Board to consider allowing Bailey travel approval for an additional overnight stay for the Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy sessions scheduled at McCormick’ Creek State Park and the Garrison State Park on January 9-10 and May 28, 2025, respectively, since the training begins at 9:00 a.m. EST and travel will require >3.0 hrs. to each session.

*Chuck Howard motioned to approve overnight travel for Resource Conservationist Bailey Temple on Wednesday, January 8, 2025 and Tuesday, May 27, 2025 for the Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy (IWLA) January 9-10, 2025 session at McCormick’s Creek State Park in Spencer, IN and the May 28, 2025 session at Garrison State Park in Indianapolis, IN. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried with five (5) ayes.*

- Janel shared the Steuben SWCD Fall/Winter Newsletter was mailed/emailed the first week of December.

**V. CLAIMS**

6243	USPS (1-roll Forever Stamps & Postage for SWCD Board Supervisor Packets)	\$	81.16
6244	Walmart (Cons. Education–Materials/Supplies for 11/20/24 School Presentation)	\$	43.56
6245	NACD (FY25 Membership Dues)	\$	450.00
6246	Aimee Wentworth (ARS Unit Calibration)	\$	60.00
6247	USPS (Steuben SWCD 2024 Fall/Winter Newsletter Postage; 1,596 Pieces)	\$	271.78
6248	Petty Cash (Petty Cash Fund Reimbursement)	\$	71.91
6249	Keystone Cooperative (Fuel for Expedition – December 2024 Statement)	\$	95.44
6250	TLA Signs (4 60”Wx48”H Aluminum Composite Full Color SWCD Signs)	\$	1,920.00
6251	Amazon [Office Supplies (batteries, binder clips, copy paper, tape, 1099-forms, etc.)]	\$	251.79
6252	PMA LLC (11.1-ac. Critical Area+48.9-ac. Forage/Biomass Planting – LARE Snow Lake, Fawn River)	\$	13,995.00
6253	Avila (1.3-ac. Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment – LARE Town of Orland/Fawn River)	\$	780.00
6254	Graphics 3, inc. (2024 Fall/Winter Newsletter Printing w/Mailing Services, 1,650 copies)	\$	933.55
6255	Bon Appetit (December 6, 2024 Contractor Breakfast Workshop Sponsorship)	\$	349.65

*Craig Holman motioned to approve the claims for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) December 11, 2024 Board meeting. Chuck Howard seconded. Motion carried with five (5) ayes.*

Janel requested the Board consider adding the cell phone monthly invoice to the list of claims allowed to be paid between meetings as this will be a recurring bill necessary for district operation.

*Craig Holman made a motion to authorize the payment of the monthly cell phone bill/invoice to the allowed list of payment of claims between Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) monthly Board meetings as this will be a recurring expense necessary for the operation of the SWCD with the understanding that the claim (s) will be presented at the next regular Board meeting for approval and signature. The Board of Supervisors recognizes the risk associate with this procedure and assumes the risk. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried with five (5) ayes.*

**VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING**

**January 3, 2025 – Board Meeting – 5:30 p.m.**

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

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Janel announced the Michiana Irrigation Association (MIA) Winter meeting is scheduled for December 13 in Shipshewana. She asked if anyone from the Board had an interest in attending and whether the \$60 registration (includes lunch and MIA dues) could be covered by the district. Board Supervisor Holman expressed an interest.

*Brad Hamlin motioned to approve the \$60 registration fee for Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board Supervisor Craig Holman to attend the Michiana Irrigation Association (MIA) Winter Irrigation Workshop on December 13, 2024 in Shipshewana, Indiana. The cost includes lunch and MIA dues. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motioned carried with four (4) ayes. Board Supervisor Craig Holman abstained from the vote.*

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 December 11, 2024 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting. Seconded by Brad Hamlin. Motion carried with five (5) ayes.*

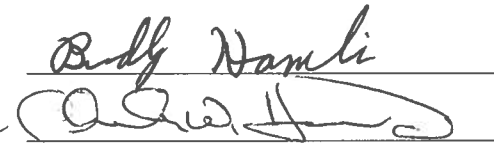
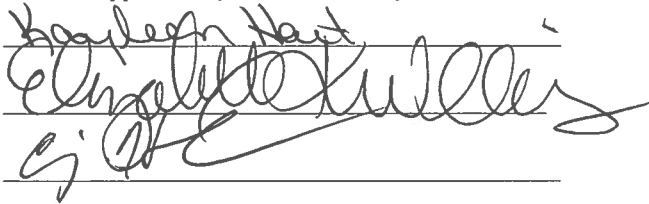
Meeting adjourned by Board Chair Hart at 7:11 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Jane S. Meyer, District Coordinator

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board:



1/8/2025

(Date)