

**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
Stroh Church of Christ • 4540 S 1100 W, Hudson, Indiana 46747
March 14, 2024**

IN ATTENDANCE

District Supervisors

Kayleen Hart, Chair
David Perkins, Board Supervisor
Beth Williams, Board Supervisor

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Arthur Franke, District Conservationist
Jamie Perry, Natural Resource Specialist

Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation
District (SWCD)

Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator
Aimee Wentworth, Resource Conservationist

Indiana State Department of Agriculture

Sandra Hoffarth, District Support Specialist
Kate Sanders, Resource Specialist

Associate Supervisors

Brad Hamlin

Absent

Craig Holman, Board Supervisor
Chuck Howard, Board Supervisor

I. CALL TO ORDER

Steuben County SWCD Board Chair Kayleen Hart called the meeting to order at 4:45 p.m.

II. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (1-10-24)

Board Chair Hart asked the Supervisors to consider the minutes of the January 10, 2024 meeting. There being no further additions or corrections, she requested a motion to approve.

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2024 Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting, as presented, was made by Beth Williams. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT

Administrative Coordinator Janel provided a financial report for January 1 – January 31, 2024 and February 1 – February 29, 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 January 31, 2024:

<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>			
Checking	\$ 49,075.55		
Statement Savings	<u>42,097.00</u>		
Total	\$ 91,172.55		
<i>Checking account</i>		<i>Savings account</i>	
<i>balance 12/31/23</i>	<i>\$ 48,612.86</i>	<i>balance 12/31/23</i>	<i>\$ 42,082.71</i>
<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 2,075.00</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 14.29</i>
<i>Disbursement</i>	<i><u>(\$ 1,612.31)</u></i>	<i>Disbursement</i>	<i><u>(\$ 0.00)</u></i>
	<i>\$ 49,075.55</i>		<i>\$42,097.00</i>

January checking account receipts totaled \$2,075.00 (R3629-R3651) which included Steuben SWCD FY24 Affiliate Memberships and registration fees for the 2024 Indiana Master Naturalist program. Savings account interest totaled \$14.29.

Disbursement was \$1,612.31 (Claim #6125 - #6131). This included dues and subscriptions, operating expenses, travel expenses [*Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts' (IASWCD) 2024 Annual Meeting for Board Supervisor Beth Williams and Resource Conservationist Aimee Wentworth*], and sponsorship for the March 21-22, 2024 Indiana Lakes Management Society 35th Annual Conference at Pokagon State Park.

Report for period ending February 29, 2024:

<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>	
Checking	\$ 58,470.24
Statement Savings	<u>42,110.39</u>
Total	\$100,580.63

<i>Checking account</i>		<i>Savings account</i>	
<i>balance 1/31/24</i>	\$ 49,075.55	<i>balance 1/31/24</i>	\$ 42,097.00
<i>Receipts</i>	\$ 10,730.80	<i>Receipts</i>	\$ 13.39
<i>Disbursement</i>	<u>(\$ 1,336.11)</u>	<i>Disbursement</i>	<u>(\$ 0.00)</u>
	\$58,470.24		\$42,110.39

February checking account receipts totaled \$10,730.80 (R3652-R3678). This included Steuben SWCD FY24 Affiliate Memberships, the first half of the Steuben SWCD’s operating budget from Steuben County Government, registration fees for the 2024 Indiana Master Naturalist program, and a training reimbursement for the 2024 IASWCD Annual Meeting registration expenses for Beth and Aimee. Janel advised Aimee’s credit card receipt was adjusted by the Indianapolis Westin. State and room taxes were removed when Aimee compared her receipt with the credit card statement. Aimee reimbursed the SWCD for the \$40.80 travel overpayment she received. Beth’s credit card receipt and credit card statement charges matched. Savings account interest totaled \$13.39. Disbursement was \$1,336.11 (Claim #6132 - #6138). This included office supplies, operating expenses, promotional materials (*convertible table cover with Steuben SWCD logo*), and travel expenses [*parking fee reimbursement for the 2024 Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) Annual Meeting*].

Additional information provided with the monthly claims for Board review and verification included: 1. January and February 2024 checking & savings account bank statements and reconciliations; 2. January and February 2024 deposit/check detail and general ledger reports; 3. Staff payroll approval form, time sheets, compensatory time logs (1/26/24, 2/9/24, 2/23/24, 3/8/24 and 3/22/24 pay periods); and 4. January and February 2024 vehicle logs.

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.

David Perkins moved to approve the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Treasurer’s Report for the periods ending January 31, 2024 and February 29, 2024, as presented. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Natural Resources/Technical Assistance **Beth Williams, Chair**

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

1. Talking points were provided in the Supervisors’ folders. NRCS District Conservationist Arthur Franke reported he has 21 Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) applications preapproved for 2024. He shared there are a few additional EQIP applications that have not been preapproved, and will not be this year, because a lot of Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) money is going to the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and not as much towards EQIP. For Steuben, there are 14 new CSP applications (3 cropland focused and 11 forestry/wildlife habitat focused). He expects all will be approved based on IRA CSP funding availability in Indiana.
2. Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) Program Technician, reported she has been working on the Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC)/Price Loss Coverage (PLC) signup which ends March 15th. There is a new continuous CRP signup; sign-up will be completed in batches. The first batch signup ends on March 15th; the second will run into June. FSA will continue taking applications in batches until they run out of acres. A general CRP signup is running until March 29th. Enrolling in general CRP involves a point and bidding process, and enrollment is not guaranteed, like in the continuous CRP program.

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 presented a 24-acre pasture/hay (forage/biomass) planting application in the Otter Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek. She advised the landowner will be converting cropland to hay and would like to complete the planting this spring. She advised the landowner has participated in prior SWCD grant cost-share programs. The Board discussed available grant funding, project location, benefits of adding the conservation practice and approved the planting.

David Perkins moved to approve the Hay/Pasture (Forage/Biomass) Planting Project in the Otter Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek using the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) 2022 Pigeon Creek Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) grant. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.

2. Fawn River

- a. Janel requested Board approval to complete a mass postcard mailing to agricultural landowners located in the Fawn River WLTP grant priority areas; the grant ends in December 2024 with a considerable amount of funding still available. She estimated the cost would be about \$350.

Beth Williams moved to approve the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) completing a postcard mailing to agricultural producers in the Fawn River Watershed to promote the Steuben SWCD's 2022 Fawn River Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) grant. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

-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. Agronomy Field Day • August 7, 2024: The date has been set for Agronomy Field Day at The Andersons. Janel requested the Board consider continuing Steuben SWCD sponsorship for the event. The Board discussed the 2023 support level of \$500 and approved the same level for 2024.

Beth Williams moved to approve the Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) \$500 sponsorship for the August 7, 2024 Agronomy Field Day at The Andersons. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

iii. Entire County

1. Steuben County/Urban (IDEM CSGP/MS4)

- a. Splash of Color – Steuben County Rain Barrel Revival: Janel provided information about a rain barrel display and rain barrel public painting art project between the SWCD and City of Angola MS4 Coordinator Kris Thomas. A picture of the recently built rain barrel display was shared with the Board. Steve Schroeder with the Steuben County Lakes Council and Trine University student Clay Batio donated the materials and their time to construct the display. Janel asked Aimee to develop two videos, one on stormwater management in the landscape and one specific to rain barrels, to use alongside the rain barrel display. Aimee has met with Kris to develop the script. The SWCD is also working with Kris on a rain barrel painting contest like the 2011 Rain on Angola program (no money will be raised). The project “Splash of Color – Steuben County Rain Barrel Revival” will be coordinated with Mackenzie Bird, City of Angola Community Coordinator and Executive Director of Angola Main Street. Eight rain barrels will be provided by the City of Angola/Trine University MS4 Program and the Steuben County SWCD for individuals, organizations, and/or businesses, free of charge, to be turned into works of art to be displayed in the Public Square from July 1 to August 3. Barrels will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis, and can start being claimed on April 8 with a painting deadline of June 27. Sponsors of the barrels will be responsible for donating their time and art supplies. The project will be promoted via social media, a press release, and a WLKI radio spot scheduled for April 8. The public will be able to vote on a “Peoples Choice” award and enter for a chance to win their favorite barrel.

b. District Operations/Marketing

Chuck Howard, Chair

i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.

1. Staff Performance Reviews: Janel and Aimee’s yearly employee performance reviews were scheduled for April 17, 2024 at 4:30 and 5:00 p.m. Janel will forward the appropriate forms/associated materials to the Board.

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

1. Janel reported at IASWCD’s Annual Business Meeting on January 9, the delegate body voted to change the dues structure for the Association and approved the Strategic Growth budget with the Variable dues structure. Dues invoices, along with IASWCDs’ FY23 annual report, will be emailed/mailed to districts by mid-April. Membership dues will be due by September 30. The Steuben SWCD’s new annual dues will be set at \$4,532.66.

iii. Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)

1. District Support Specialist (DSS) Sandra Hoffarth discussed the new Board Certification Program (BCP) for SWCD Supervisors to help empower them with additional training and resources. Current trainings available include code responsibilities, district finances, district management, elections/recruitment, leadership, and Supervisor responsibilities.

2. March 14, 2024 LaGrange-Steuben County SWCDs' Joint Annual Meeting: The Board discussed last-minute details for the evening's annual meeting. Janel shared invitations were sent to County Council members, County Commissioner's, legislators, etc. The LaGrange and Steuben scripts were blended and mailed to the Board for review prior to the meeting.

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

- i. Key Bank Key2Business Commercial Card and Fraud Protection Janel provided information about an option for the Steuben SWCD to obtain a business purchasing card. First step is for the Board Chair and Treasurer to complete an application. Janel provided the application/contract to Board Chair Hart for review prior to the Board meeting. There is also an option for payment/fraud protection which would require daily transaction review (business working days). There is a \$5.00 monthly fee for this service; however, the Senior Client Manager advised he could submit a request to waive the monthly fee if we decide to setup payment protection.
David Perkins moved to approve the Key2Business Commercial Card application and enrolling in the Fraud/Payment Protection Program which may incur a \$5.00/month fee. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.
- i. Tim Groosbeck Contract Janel presented the Independent Contractor Agreement between the Steuben SWCD and Tim Groosbeck for approval. The agreement is for assistance with the annual tree sale, including but not limited to, picking up trees from Jasper-Pulaski State Nursery (using personal vehicle with or without trailer) with the SWCD providing all donated proceeds to contractor Tim Groosbeck to help offset the cost of fuel, vehicle wear/tear, and his time.
Beth Williams made a motion to accept the Independent Contractor Agreement between the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Contractor Timothy Groosbeck; agreement made and entered into the 14th day of March 2024. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.
- ii. Credit Card and Meal SOP Review The information/action for this agenda item was tabled to the April meeting due to time constraints.
- iii. 2024 Indiana District Employee (IDEA) Dues Janel requested Board approval to pay the 2024 IDEA dues for SWCD staff.
David Perkins made a motion to pay the \$50 Indiana District Employee Association (IDEA) FY24 membership fee for Administrative Coordinator Janel Meyer and Resource Conservationist Aimee Wentworth as this organization assists with Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff professional development. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.

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

- i. Food Plot Seed Pickup
Janel advised Supervisor Chuck Howard was willing to donate soybeans since Pheasants Forever would not be providing them. David also agreed to donate beans. Janel shared Pheasants Forever is waiting to receive the corn and sorghum. She also shared individuals on their food plot seed list would receive a postcard in the mail as opposed to staff and ISDA Resource Conservationist Kate Sanders calling all 200+ individuals on the list.
- ii. NACD Stewardship Week
Soil and Water Stewardship Week is set for the last week of April. This year's theme focuses on Forests (May the Forest be with You Always). Janel advised they have older materials available for students in grades two through five but need to have materials printed for the 1st grade classes. She requested a Board motion approving the purchase of educational materials and poster contest prizes for the area elementary schools. Due to the rising cost of materials/supplies, no limit was set. Janel will work with Board Chair Hart to keep her updated on the cost of materials/supplies and booklet production.
David Perkins made a motion to support the printing of the National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts' (NACD) Stewardship Week materials and purchasing materials/supplies for the 2024 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Stewardship Week Poster Contest. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.
- iii. 4-H/Purdue Extension/SWCD/Other Educational and SWCD Projects
Aimee report:
 - She completed a video featuring changing weather pattern. The link is posted on our website. She is currently working on a rain barrel display slide show and video.
 - On Friday, March 1, Aimee discussed freshwater availability and conducted an icebreaker activity with 11 attendees at the Fort Wayne Home & Garden show. Art also attended and discussed soil health and performed the soil infiltration demonstration.
 - 9 individuals have registered for the 2024 Indiana Master Naturalist program.

- Aimee asked for ideas for individuals for the Conservation Farming Legacies video series.

Janel asked the Board to consider supporting the annual 4-H Fair, in addition to sponsoring the Soil and Water Science Awards. Funds help offset expenses for large and small items. She reviewed the various sponsorship levels. The Board supported funding at the Emerald level (\$250) which includes newspaper recognition and outdoor banner space.

Beth Williams moved to approve a 2024 Steuben County 4-H Fair Sponsorship by the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) at the Emerald Level for \$250. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.

Janel also requested Board discussion for the approval of purchasing a custom Steuben County SWCD hanging banner to complement the new custom Steuben SWCD pop-up banner. Board Chair Hart asked for a discussion and motion on purchasing a custom Steuben SWCD hanging banner.

Beth Williams made a motion to approve the purchase of a Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) custom hanging banner. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

V. CLAIMS

6128	USPS (2 Rolls Forever Stamps)	\$	132.00
6129	Steuben County Lakes Council (FY24 Business/Affiliate Membership)	\$	45.00
6130	ILMS (March 21-22, 2024 Annual Meeting Sponsorship/Registration & Dues)	\$	525.00
6131	Indiana Dept. of Revenue (Steuben SWCD 2023 Indiana Sales Tax Filing)	\$	157.05
6132	Aimee Wentworth (Reimbursement per SWCD SOP-2024 IASWCD Conf. Travel&Supplies)	\$	72.92
6133	iPROMOTEu (6'8' SWCD Table Cover & Art Fee)	\$	347.95
6134	Ceres Solutions (Fuel for Expedition – February 2024 Statement)	\$	84.76
6135	Max Troyer (Sechler's; 9 Empty Black Barrels)	\$	135.00
6136	Column Software PBC (Legal Ad for March 14, 2024 Annual Meeting)	\$	24.42
6137	C & A Engraving (Steuben SWCD Staff Name Tags & Shipping)	\$	21.99
6138	USPS/Postmaster (Steuben SWCD 2023 Annual Report Postage)	\$	649.07
6139	Walmart (Office & March 14, 2024 Annual Meeting Supplies)	\$	60.82
6140	Stroh Church of Christ (March 14, 2024 Annual Meeting Facility Use)	\$	125.00
6141	Dumpster Drummers™ (March 14, 2024 Annual Meeting Speaker Fee)	\$	600.00
6142	Graphics 3, inc. (Steuben SWCD 2023 Annual Report Printing/Mailing Services)	\$	2,619.90
6143	Aimee Wentworth (Reimbursement per SWCD SOP-IDEA Meeting Travel)	\$	107.00
6144	Ceres Solutions (Fuel for Expedition – March 2024 Statement)	\$	57.40
6145	Nicholas Wentworth (Ford Expedition Repair-Replace Door Handle)	\$	60.42

David Perkins made a motion to approve the claims for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) March 14, 2024 Board meeting. Beth Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried.

VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING

April 17, 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.

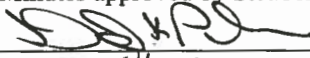


Beth Williams moved to adjourn the March 14, 2024 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

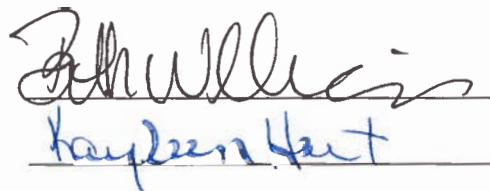
Meeting adjourned by Board Chair Hart at 5:23 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:


 Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board:


 Kayleen Hart

4/17/2024 (Date)