

**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

**June 12, 2024**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

District Supervisors

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

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Arthur Franke, District Conservationist

Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)

Kate Sanders, Resource Conservationist

Steuben County Soil & Water  
Conservation District (SWCD)

Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Steuben County SWCD Board Chair Kayleen Hart called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Administrative Coordinator Janel Meyer advised:

- Claim #6185 for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) spring/summer newsletter printing with mailing services (Graphics 3, inc.) and Claim #6186 for the 6' x 3' Steuben SWCD Banner design/production (Folia Nova, LLC) were added to the agenda.
- David Perkins submitted his resignation from the Steuben SWCD Board, effective May 30, 2024. In the resignation, David advised he would like to step down to an Associate Supervisor position because a current Associate was willing to finish out the remainder of his term. Janel will complete the temporary appointment paperwork in Conservation Link.  
*Chuck Howard motioned to accept Board Supervisor David Perkin's resignation to step down from a Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board Supervisor to an Associate Supervisor. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.*  
*Craig Holman made a motion to temporarily appoint Associate Supervisor Brad Hamlin to serve the remainder of David Perkin's term. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.*
- Janel clarified Robert's Rules of Order for the Chair voting or making motions. While the Chair is a member of the voting body, due to impartiality required, they should not make motions or vote unless to break a tie (i.e., the impartiality required of the presiding officer precludes exercising rights to make motions or speak in debate while presiding, and also requires refraining from voting except (1) when the vote is by ballot, or (2) whenever his or her vote will affect the result).

**II. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (5-8-24)**

Board Chair Hart asked the Supervisors to consider the minutes of the May 8, 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 May 8, 2024 Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting, as presented. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.*

**III. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Janel gave the financial report for May 1 – May 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 May 31, 2024:*

<u>General Fund - All Accounts</u>			
Checking	\$ 67,256.89		
Statement Savings	<u>42,152.86</u>		
Total	\$109,409.75		
<i>Checking account balance 4/30/24</i>	<i>\$ 74,988.98</i>	<i>Savings account balance 4/30/24</i>	<i>\$ 42,138.55</i>
<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 3,867.90</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 14.31</i>
<i>Disbursement</i>	<i><u>(\$11,599.99)</u></i>	<i>Disbursement</i>	<i><u>(\$ 0.00)</u></i>
	<i>\$ 67,256.89</i>		<i>\$ 42,152.86</i>

May checking account receipts totaled \$3,867.90 (R3708-R3709) which included a Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) grant cost-share payment for a 24.3-acre forage/biomass planting in the Otter Lake sub-watershed of

Pigeon Creek and registration fees for the 2024 Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) program. Savings account interest totaled \$14.31.

Disbursement was \$11,599.99 (Claim #6165 - #6180). This included conservation education expenses [April 20, 2024 Northeast Indiana Solid Waste Management District (NISWMD) Earth Day Celebration supplies (white pine, buttonbush, etc., trees); May 4 & June 1, 2024 IMN refreshments; May 18, 2024 IMN speaker fees; June 21-27, 2024 Steuben County 4-H Fair indoor space rental and weekly fair pass; June 27, 2024 YMCA Day Camp supplies (tree cookies); July 16, 2024 Conservation Camp materials/supplies (sifter); lesson kit supplies (Forestry Book); Stewardship Week booklet printing; Stewardship Week poster contest winner and participation prizes; and 2024 Steuben County Life Program (post card mailing)], the cost-share payment for the 24.3-acre forage/biomass planting in the Otter Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon, contractual services (2024 Tree Pickup), dues and subscriptions, food plot seed program [postcard stamps for 2024 program postcard mailing (241 total)], operating expenses, and support for the FY24 Steuben County Strategic Water Quality Monitoring Program (SCSWQMP).

Additional information provided with the monthly claims for Board review and verification included: 1. May 2024 checking & savings account bank statements and reconciliations; 2. May 2024 deposit/check detail and general ledger reports; 3. Staff payroll approval form, time sheets, compensatory time logs (5/31 and 6/14/24 pay periods); and 4. May 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.

*Craig Holman moved to approve the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Treasurer's Report for the period ending May 31, 2024, as presented. Seconded by Chuck Howard. 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. Indiana NRCS is accepting project proposals now through July 2 that will help farmers and forest landowners adopt and expand conservation strategies to enhance natural resources while tacking the climate crisis. Two separate funding opportunities were announced: Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Classic and RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA) with funding priorities that include climate-smart ag, urban ag, conservation, and environmental justice.
2. Art shared he is performing Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) status reviews. He reported fifteen Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications were received; nine have been pre-approved with the other six coming in during the second sign-up period. Those six will likely be deferred to FY25 funding.

Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) Program Technician, reported they are working on crop certification. Acreage reports document a crop grown on a farm or ranch, its intended use, and its location.

##### 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 reminded the Board the Pigeon Creek WLTP grant has \$905 available to obligate.
2. Fawn River
  - a. Janel reported Board Chair Hart approved an 11.1-acre critical area planting & 48.9-acre forage/biomass planting in the Snow Lake sub-watershed of Fawn River. Due to the short timeline with NRCS spring seeding/planting deadlines plus the Fawn River WLTP grant December 31, 2024 expiration date, Janel requested Chair approval to move forward with the project and obligate the funding. The project was presented to the Board for an official motion.

*Chuck Howard moved to approve the 11.1-acre Critical Area Planting + 48.9-acre Forage/Biomass (Hay/Pasture) Planting Project in the Snow Lake sub-watershed of Fawn River using the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) 2022 Fawn River Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) grant. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.*

Janel also reported she received approval from the Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Program Grant Administrators to use the Fawn River WLTP funding for projects in LaGrange County's portion of the Fawn River Watershed. There is \$4,075 available to obligate.

3. Friends of the St. Joseph River (FotSJR)
  - a. Janel was unable to participate in the May 23, 2024 meeting due to a scheduling conflict.
  - b. The next meeting is scheduled for June 27, 2024 at Conservation Park in Three Rivers, Michigan.
4. St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC)
  - a. Janel attended the May 30, 2024 Quarterly Meeting. She reported (1) the 2023 biological sampling (macroinvertebrate assessment) showed only 1 of the 12 sites sampled was rated as “marginally good.” The site was on the Little Elkhart (County Road 18) in Middlebury. All other sites rated between “good” to “exceptionally good.” These results will help establish baseline scores of stream health since 2023 is the third year of sampling data; (2) there is a new Bowman Creek Watershed Study being conducted in collaboration with Notre Dame. It is a water monitoring project with students that will also work on modeling to see if land cover and other data can predict downstream water quality changes. This is a small-scale pilot project of the SJRBC to see the applicability on a larger scale for the entire watershed; (3) Senate Bill 140 provides certain guidelines for cutting, relocating, or removing logs that are crossways in a channel without obtaining a permit from the DNR and Senate bill 105 authorizes ISDA to oversee the process to update the Drainage Handbook; (4) the Steuben County Surveyor plans to work around State Road 327 to “clear out” Pigeon to the LaGrange County line. Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Fishery Biologist Matt Horsely expressed concerns regarding the project since the IDNR is promoting a brown trout program/restocking in that section of Pigeon. A copy of the SJRBC FY25 Work Plan was provided in the Supervisors’ folders.
  - b. The 3<sup>rd</sup> SJRBC Quarterly meeting is scheduled for September 5, 2024.

-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. Janel presented pictures of a 2023 tree planting (1.0-acre) in the West Branch of Fish Creek, funded through the 2021 Upper St. Joseph River (USJR) WLTP grant. The landowner reported the individual that farms the property may have inadvertently sprayed the new planting. LARE Grant Administrators will leave the decision to the landowner whether to replace the trees. They will not require them to be replaced. The project would be eligible for cost-share assistance if monies are awarded to the Steuben County SWCD 2024 USJR WLTP application. The Board discussed performing a site visit in late summer/early fall to determine tree survival, then discuss replanting if many of the trees succumbed to herbicide. Financial assistance to help offset the costs associate with tree replacement will also be discussed.
  - b. Janel presented a Steuben County SWCD Letter of Support for a Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy Readiness Grant application. The grant proposal would lead to additional resources available to help reduce non-point source pollutants and improve collaboration among stakeholders in the Clear Lake Watershed. Janel advised Board Chair Hart approved the letter since the application deadline was June 10, prior to the scheduled SWCD Board meeting. She asked for an official motion for the letter.

*Chuck Howard motioned to approve the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy Readiness Grant Application Letter of Support as one of the SWCDs main priorities is to work with landowners to reduce sediment and nutrient loading into lakes and streams, including Clear Lake. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.*
  - c. Janel announced Agronomy Field Day, original scheduled for August 7, was moved to July 24, 2024 due to a scheduling conflict with the host, The Andersons.

iii. Entire County

1. Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC)
  - a. No report. Janel did not attend the June 1, 2024 SCLC Monthly Board meeting.
  - b. The next SCLC meeting is scheduled for July 6, 2024.
2. 2025 Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Grant
  - a. The 2025 Clean Water Indiana (CWI) grant application guidance has been released. Janel shared she will try her best to complete a grant application as time allows with training a new employee and paid time off she already has scheduled.

**b. District Operations/Marketing**

**Chuck Howard, Chair**

**i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.**

**1. Field Visits/Trainings**

- a. Steuben County Strategic Water Quality Monitoring Program (SCSWQMP) Committee Meeting & Training Session • May 9 (*virtual*), May 15 (*in-person*), June 12, 2024 (*virtual*). The meetings discussed the logistics of pharmaceutical testing, including sample collection, transportation, and timing, with a focus on the most efficient sampling routes across multiple sites. The in-person meeting was held to train the SCSWQMP Committee on SOPs related to collection of surface water samples and estimating stream discharge. Janel shared the Steuben County SWCD flowmeter is no longer functioning. A new flowmeter will be purchased using SCSWQMP funds (will become the property of the SCSWQMP Committee; the SWCD flowmeter will be retired).
- b. LaGrange County SWCD Conservation Field Day • May 10, 2024. Janel, Art, and Kate assisted the LaGrange County SWCD with their 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Prairie Heights Conservation Field Day.
- c. Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Program (Session 3) • May 11, 2024. Janel advised Aimee agreed to be the lead for the remaining IMN sessions/program with the SWCD providing administrative support.
- d. Indiana Lakes Management Society (ILMS) Outreach Meeting • May 13, 2024 (*virtual*). Upcoming ILMS Education and Outreach Committee events include: (1) June 13, 2024 Healthy Shorelines Workshop with The Watershed Foundation; (2) June 22, 2024 Aquatic ID Workshop with Valparaiso Chain of Lakes Watershed Group; (3) June 25, 2024 Lakes Appreciation Webinar featuring the Hellbender; (4) July 13, 2024 Metazoa Hellbender Release Party; (5) August 5, 2024 TetraTech Webinar on in-lake treatment/management; (6) September 4, 2024 Webinar on lakes and groundwater connections.
- e. Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Program (Session 4) • May 18, 2024.
- f. Native Plant Sale Kit Pickup (Water's Edge Kits) • May 21, 2024.
- g. Soil Guardians of DeKalb-Steuben Call-Out Meeting • May 21, 2024. Janel, Art, and Kate attended the first Soil Guardians Call-Out meeting to discuss soil health and soil sampling, the new working group and volunteer opportunities.
- h. Stewardship Week Poster Contest Prize Distribution • May 21, 2024. Winners included:  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade: 1<sup>st</sup> Place (Evelyn Welch - Mrs. Stuke, Fremont), 2<sup>nd</sup> Place (Ireland Butler – Mrs. Fitzpatrick, Fremont);  
2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: 1<sup>st</sup> Place (Tanner Shamp – Mrs. Clary, Ryan Park), 2<sup>nd</sup> Place (Harper Mitchell – Mrs. Clary, Ryan Park), 3<sup>rd</sup> Place (Gunner Gephart – Mrs. Perschke, Hendry Park);  
4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade: 1<sup>st</sup> Place (Evelynn Corwin – Mrs. Walters, Pleasant Lake), 2<sup>nd</sup> Place (Remi Knox – Mrs. Antos, Ryan Park), 3<sup>rd</sup> Place (Jayla Slabaugh – Ms. Snow, Hendry Park), and Honorable Mention (Sophia Graber – Mrs. Walters, Pleasant Lake).
- i. Wetland Restoration Strategies in Ag Landscapes Webinar • May 23, 2024. Janel participated in this online seminar which demonstrated how the type of vegetation in wetlands can drive rates of nitrogen and carbon cycling to better support restoration & conservation efforts.
- j. Food Plot Seed Distribution • May 29, 2024. Janel thanked Kate for her assistance with the food plot seed distribution.
- k. Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Program (Session 5) • May 30, 2024
- l. Steuben County Heritage Club Presentation • May 31, 2024. Janel presented information about the SWCD and what we do, a “Drop in the Bucket” and the group performed a “Water Cycle” activity to illustrate some of the educational programming the SWCD offers to youth.
- m. Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Program (Session 6) • June 1, 2024
- n. Native Plant Sale Kit Pickup (Stantec) • June 4, 2024
- o. Indiana Lakes Management Society (ILMS) Board Meeting • June 5, 2024 (*virtual*). Janel participated in the meeting which provided various committee updates.
- p. Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Program (Session 7) • June 8, 2024
- q. IASWCD Grant Basics Workshop II • June 11, 2024. Janel participated in this training which provided an overview of what districts should and shouldn't do when writing grant applications.
- r. *Steuben County Department Head Meeting • June 18, 2024.* Janel advised she would not be able to attend this meeting due to a scheduling conflict with the Boy Scout Camp

presentations. Janel shared how former Resource Conservationist Aimee Wentworth answered the employee engagement survey questions.

2. Janel advised copies of the April and May 2024 tally sheets will be provided at the July meeting.
  - ii. Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP)
    1. The Board discussed the value of conducting the spring-summer transect (after planting survey). The survey timing has changed with a fall-winter survey switching to a winter-spring survey (conducted no sooner than 10 days after the first predicted period of 3 consecutive daytime temperatures above 40F but before planting begins). The SWCD has conducted both winter-spring and spring-summer surveys, annually. The discussion centered around whether anything new would be captured conducting the survey after planting that was not already captured when the winter-spring transect survey was completed. Janel expressed a desire to run the transect in the WLEB to assess field/landscape changes.
  - iii. Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD)
    1. Janel reported the required River Friendly Farmer (RFF) forms were completed/submitted for our RFF nominee, Denver Booth. She asked for a Board motion supporting purchasing additional RFF apparel for the Booth family, if requested.

*Chuck Howard motioned to approve the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District's (SWCD) support for additional apparel for our 2024 River Friendly Farmer (Denver Booth). Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.*
    2. The North-Northeast Summer Summit will be held 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. Janel asked the Board to consider attending and to let her know their interest at the next SWCD Board meeting. The Summer Summit will provide insights to SWCDs on Watershed Development Commissions and their implications for districts and conservation in Indiana.
    3. Information about the new Resilient Indiana Technical Assistance (RITA) for SWCDs was shared. Camille Sczerbowicz from Auburn, Indiana is the new NE Technician. The RITA Techs will be working one-on-one with districts that requested their services to develop, support, and expand programs that support the district's priorities. Janel advised Steuben requested Camille's assistance to help with educational events.
  - iv. Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)
    1. No District Support Specialist report was provided. Copies of business plans from other districts were provided in Board Chair Hart and Board Supervisor Williams folders.
- c. Budget and Finance Kayleen Hart, Chair**
- i. 2025 Steuben County Government Budget Request

Janel reported the Steuben County SWCD did not receive the Steuben County Auditors email regarding submitting budget requests/forms by June 12. The Auditor emailed her Department Head list, used for daily and meeting notifications, which did not include the SWCD. Janel was able to complete the budget request but needed final Board approval regarding the SWCD FY25 operating budget amount. The Board discussed replacing the vehicle and asking for additional monies to cover any increased costs associated with maintaining the aging Ford Expedition. The Board agreed to request an additional \$2,500 for vehicle expenses/repairs to ensure the 2010 Ford Expedition is in working order and safe for staff to operate.

*Chuck Howard motioned to submit the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) FY25 Operating Budget Request at \$18,500, an additional \$2,500 over the FY24 Operating Budget Request of \$16,000 to cover costs associated with vehicle repairs/maintenance to ensure the 2010 Ford Expedition is in good working order and safe for staff to operate. Seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.*
  - ii. Vehicle Maintenance

Janel reported the Ford Expedition will need an oil change and tire rotation. She also advised the A/C was not working, again, and would need to be evaluated to determine why it's not functioning correctly. Janel will collaborate with Board Chair Hart on the required vehicle repairs.
- d. Information and Education David Perkins, Chair**
- i. Drainage Board (DB)

Staff are attending DB meetings as schedules allow.
  - ii. Steuben SWCD 2024 Spring/Summer Newsletter

The Steuben County SWCD 2024 spring newsletter has been completed and mailed/emailed. It was renamed "spring/summer" due to the later than anticipated distribution date.
  - iii. 4-H/Purdue Extension/SWCD/Other Educational and SWCD Projects

- Janel reported the Steuben County SWCD 4-H display will focus on stormwater management and

requested approval to purchase native plant seed packets from Prairie Moon Nursery to distribute at the SWCD 4-H Fair booth display from June 21-27. She advised last year's display focused on soil health where cover crop seed packets were provided. Janel requested permission to purchase 300 native plant seed packets. Prairie Moon would provide the seed at their reduced bulk seller rate.

*Chuck Howard made a motion for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to purchase 300 native seed plant packets from Prairie Moon Nursery to be used at the Steuben County SWCD 2024 4-H display from June 21-27, 2024. Motion seconded by Craig Holman. Motion carried.*

- Janel asked the Board for approval to attend the 2024 Indiana Water Summit in Indianapolis on August 21-22, 2024. She advised the cost associated with attending the Summit would include registration and any meal costs outside of what's covered in the registration fees. She would travel to Indianapolis on August 20 with overnight accommodations being provided by family.

*Beth Williams moved to approve registration and travel fees (meal per diem, if required) for Administrative Coordinator Janel Meyer to attend the 2024 Indiana Water Summit in Indianapolis (August 21-22, 2024). Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.*

**V. CLAIMS**

6175	PageCrafter (Web Services – captcha settings)	\$	25.00
6176	Steuben County 4-H Fair Board (2024 Indoor Booth Space Rental & Fair Pass)	\$	60.00
6177	IASWCD (FY24 Dues)	\$	4,000.00
6178	Walmart [Steuben Co. Poster Contest Supplies (1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Place Prizes & Stickers)	\$	98.00
6179	Carrie Vlabel (May 18, 2024 IMN Wild Edibles Program Speaker Fee)	\$	150.00
6180	Walmart (June 1, 2024 IMN Supplies/Refreshments - Fruit)	\$	7.47
6181	USPS (Steuben SWCD 2024 Spring/Summer Newsletter Postage; 1,612 Pieces)	\$	278.39
6182	DeKalb County SWCD (2024 Agronomy Field Day Support/Sponsorship)	\$	500.00
6183	Visa (Steuben Gov. Resource Conservationist Job Advertisement on Indeed.com)	\$	150.00
6184	Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. (Native Plant Kits – 9 Total)	\$	1,080.00
6185	Graphics 3, inc. (SWCD 2024 Spring/Summer Newsletter Printing w/Mailing Services)	\$	933.55
6186	Folia Nova, LLC (6' x 3' Banner with Grommets – Design and Produce)	\$	180.00

*Chuck Howard made a motion to approve the claims for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) June 12, 2024 Board meeting. Beth Williams seconded. Motion carried.*

**VI. NEXT BOARD MEETING**

**July 10, 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.

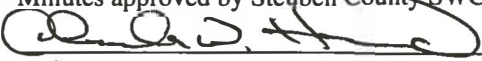
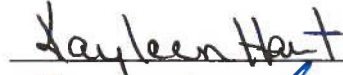
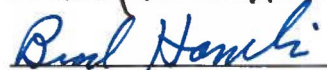
*Chuck Howard moved to adjourn the June 12, 2024 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.*

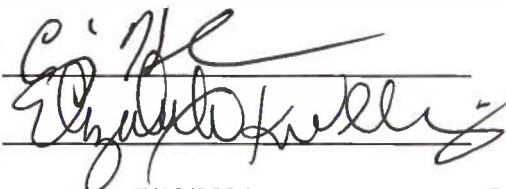
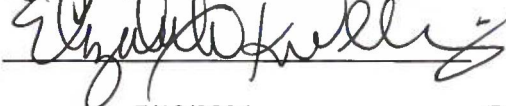
Meeting adjourned by Board Chair Hart at 6:51 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board:

  
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7/10/2024

(Date)