

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER - On Tuesday February 21, 2017, at 9:06 am a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the St Joseph County SWCD at Farm Credit Services was called to order by John Dooms, Chairman.

PRESENT – SWCD

John Dooms, Chair/Supervisor
Jeremy Cooper, Vice-Chair/Supervisor
Stacey Silvers, Supervisor
Dave Vandewalle, Supervisor
Richard Schmidt

PRESENT – SWCD/NRCS

Rick Glassman, SWCD EEC
Sarah Longenecker, SWCD CC
Sandra Hoffarth, SWCD AA
Debbie Knepp, NRCS DC

Present - EX-OFFICIO

n/a
PRESENT – Public
David Straughn
Jim Eller
Matt Meersman (St.
Joseph River Basin Commission)
Max Niespodziany
Hannah Scrafford

ABSENT – SWCD

Mike Burkholder, Supervisor
Randy Matthys
Dale Stoner
Jan Ivkovich
Arlene Schuchman
Chuck Lehman
Joe Long
Jim LaFree
Dru Wrasse
Carole Riewe
Dave Craft

II. Award Presentation to Jim Eller who was unable to attend our annual meeting. Jim received the 2016 Conservation Farmer of the Year award.

III. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA - n/a

IV. REGULAR BUSINESS

- a. **Legislative Updates** –Hoffarth updated the supervisors on the Statehouse visit which will be on March 7th. So far 5 state representatives have set up appointment times to meet with those attending.
- b. **Indiana Conservation Partnership Updates** – n/a
- c. **Minutes: January 17, 2017 board meeting & the 57th Annual Meeting Minutes**– Both minutes were reviewed and approved as presented.
- d. **Treasurer’s Report: (1/17/2017-2/17/2017)** – The treasurer’s reports were both reviewed and approved as submitted.
- e. **Approval of Claims (1/17/2017-2/17/2017)** –A recommendation (Silvers, Vandewalle) & motion (Cooper, Silvers) was made to approve Claim Nos. 11205-11213 for a total of \$4,782.98 as presented. Both carried

V. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **St. Joseph Co. Soil & Water Conservation Partnership Staff Written Reports** – The field office & Education reports were presented to the board & reviewed. (Attached). Debbie Knepp updated the board on the program applications and deadlines that NRCS is currently working on.
- b. **Committee Reports**
 - i. **Annual Meeting** –Hoffarth went over the numbers for the 57th Annual Meeting (attached).
 - ii. **Education** – Glassman gave a recap on Science Alive which was on Feb 4th. He mentioned that Jordan from Elkhart Co. SWCD will be bringing her Watershed Model to Jackson School on March 24th for some classroom presentations.
- c. **Annual Financial Review (AFR)** – Hoffarth explained the audit committee met after the January board meeting to go over the findings Hoffarth found while completing the AFR worksheets. In doing so she realized an error when voiding a \$500 check. The reconciliations come out even each month but starting cash on the State Board of Accounts doesn’t match because of this error. It is the recommendation of the committee to force the beginning balance to be able to compete the AFR for 2016. A recommendation (Vandewalle, Schmidt) and motion (Silvers, Cooper) was made to approve the committee’s recommendation. Both carried.
- d. **Tri County Farming for the Future Workshop** – Longenecker reminded the board of the workshop and if anyone still needs to register to let us know ASAP. As of the board meeting there are 4 vendor booths. Between vendors and sponsors and the money from CWI there shouldn’t be any expenses paid out by the counties, even with this year being a free workshop.
- e. **Green Industry Professionals Group** – Cooper informed the board of this informational first meeting. The group has numerous goals they would like to reach, several of which either the SWCD or NRCS is currently doing. The next meeting will be Thursday March 9th from 5-6pm at the University of Notre Dame.
- f. **Food Expenditure Policy** – This policy was originally adopted on April 19, 2016 but needs to be reviewed every year (attached). Silvers, Vandewalle, Cooper & Dooms signed the form agreeing again to the food policy.
- g. **CWI Grants** – watershed modifications – after completing the first year of funding to applications through the CWI grants it was brought to our attention that one of the counties paid out about half of their applications to fields

that are not within the Kankakee Watershed, but instead within the Tippecanoe Watershed. A recommendation (Cooper, Schmidt) and motion (Cooper, Vandewalle) was made to add the Tippecanoe River Watershed & St. Joseph River Watershed to the Conservation Cropping Systems CWI grant and to add the Tippecanoe River Watershed to the Rainscaping CWI grant. Both carried.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Schedules/ Upcoming Events / Any Related Claims** - calendars were handed out explaining upcoming special events & holiday schedules on the back of the agenda.
 - i. **Ginger Valley Home Show** – April 1st & 2nd. Discussion was made if after attending last year there was a justification for attending again this year. Cooper & Vandewalle motioned for us to pass this year and focus our outreach to a workshop this summer.
 - ii. **NNE Region Meeting** – March 22nd – This is geared more for the supervisors than staff but both are encouraged to attend. Registration is \$20. A recommendation (Cooper, Vandewalle) and motion (Vandewalle, Silvers) was made to release the \$20 for those who wish to attend. Both carried.
- b. **Materiality Threshold – addendum to Internal Controls** – our current verbiage is missing amounts for a threshold, therefore we need to add amounts and details for our amounts. A draft (attached) was presented. A recommendation (Cooper, Vandewalle) and motion (Vandewalle, Silvers) was made to set variances, losses and shortages of \$500 or less the SWCD board will make a unanimous decision as to the course of action and amounts over \$500 will be immediately reported to the State Board of Accounts. Both carried.

VII. PRIVILEGE OF FLOOR – A thank you letter from CCSI for our \$500 contribution was read (attached). A letter from Jane Hardisty was included in the board meeting packets (attached).

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – The board meeting adjourned at 10:09 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Hoffarth

Administrative Assistant

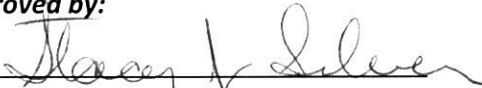
St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District

2903 Gary Drive, Plymouth, IN 46563

Email: Sandra.hoffarth@in.nacdnet.net

www.stjosephswcd.org

Approved by:



Supervisor



Supervisor



Supervisor

Supervisor

Supervisor

Field Office Report
January 16, 2017 – February 17, 2017

Deb – Acting DC in LaPorte from Jan 4 – Feb 3rd (spent 8 days in LaPorte or working with LaPorte clients)

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (19 applications)

Field visits – pollinator habitat, 6 cover crop tracts, Grazing system

Eligibility /process info – 2 applications

Assign payment for Seasonal High Tunnel

Eligibility letters mailed out

Modification – cover crop acre adjustment

Rank – 3 applications

Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program (5 applications)

Maps/legal drains to Area office

Reviewed engineering plans

Conservation Stewardship program (**12 applications**)

Eligibility issues

Mail eligibility letters

Mail letter to explain requirements and process

Meet with landowners

Conservation Reserve program

Meet with producer about filter strips

Field visit on 2 CRP grasslands

Wetlands – 10 wetland determinations

Office visit to discuss drainage projects – 2

Highly Erodible Determinations 2

SWCD strategy plan

Annual Report

Vehicle Inspections

Civil Rights Office Review

Meetings:

Staff Meetings – 3

IASWCD Annual Conference

SWCD Annual Meeting

Toolkit/CSP Training

Pokagon/State Office teleconference

Indiana Field Employee Council meeting

Webinar – Forest pest Update

Wetland process Webinar

CWI Grant meeting

CSP Training

MSP meeting

Office Closed – January 16

Education Report

January 16, 2017 – February 17, 2017

Science Alive prep & Science Alive

17 in-school program days for 17 different schools.

Program	# of presentations
Amphibian & Reptiles	16
Sense of Wonder	7
Legends & Folktales	5
Spirit of America	2
Soil Health Penn HS and St Mathew 7th grade	2
Animals	10
Hollow tree	5
Soils of IN	1
Owls of IN	3
Birds of IN	1
Nature Games	1
Wildlife Dynamics	2
Water and you	1
Endangered Species	3
Earthworm	6
Wetlands	1
Invasive Species	1
Bats of IN	1

Annual Meeting

	2016	2017
Attendance	152	120

Income

Ticket Sales	\$1,845.00	\$1,470.00
Ticket Sales still owe	\$0.00	\$120.00
Donors	\$825.00	\$15.00
Silent Auction	\$784.00	\$642.00
Silent Auction still owe	\$0.00	\$33.00

Total Income	\$3,454.00	\$2,280.00
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Expenses

Hall Rental	\$350.00	\$500.00
Awards	\$246.98	\$268.64
Catering	\$2,242.50	\$1,860.00
Entertainment	\$300.00	\$200.00
Security	\$100.00	\$100.00
Supplies (flowers, table cloths, etc)	\$195.13	\$104.04


Total Expenses	\$3,434.61	\$3,032.68
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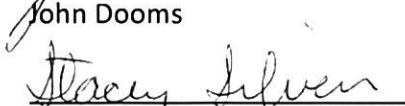
Net Total	\$19.39	-\$752.68
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St. Joseph County SWCD District Policy: Purchasing Meals for Activities

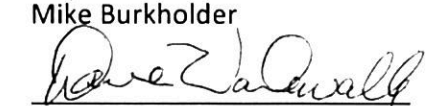
1. The District has the discretion to purchase meals for activities ONLY in instances where the activity/activities further the mission of the SWCD.
2. The District will adhere to statutory and prescribed procedures for the receipt and disbursement of funds.
3. District funds cannot be used for personal expenditures. So, for example, two employees cannot use District funds to pay for their personal lunches using the explanation of "discussing district business."
4. Meal costs, and what activities are eligible for the SWCD to purchase meals, will be approved in advance. Eligible activities might include the District's Annual Meeting, field days, workshops and other similar events geared to the general public. When approved, the District will clearly state in the minutes that the activity furthers the mission of the District, and state how it does so.
5. If feasible, the District may charge a registration fee to events, and/or utilize sponsors/donations (obtained without exactions or persuasions) to help defray meal costs.
6. Expenditures will be reasonable.
7. If the District provides meals at no cost to certain participants, or if different rates are charged to different classes of participants, the District will develop a written policy that includes the methodology used to determine which participants are provided meals at no cost, or are charged different rates for meals.
8. This policy will be reviewed annually during the January SWCD board meeting.

This policy was adopted on April 19th, 2016 by the St. Joseph County SWCD.

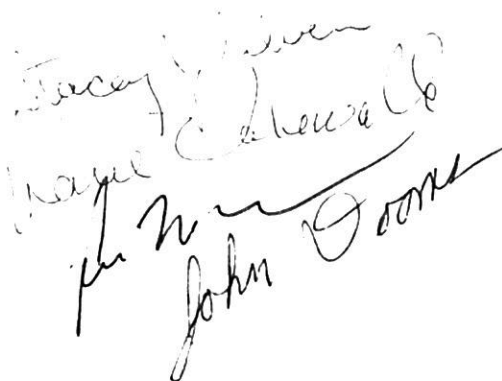

John Dooms


Stacey Silvers


Mike Burkholder


Dave Vandewalle

It was reviewed in subsequent years on the following dates: 2-21-2017


Stacey Silvers
Mike Burkholder
John Dooms

Save the Date



NNE SWCD Staff/Supervisor Region Meeting

Date: 03/22/2017

Time: 5:00pm - 8:00pm

Location: Whitley County 4-H Fairgrounds

**680 W Squawbuck Rd, Columbia City, IN 46725
Community Center**

Cost: \$20.00

Tentative Agenda

5:00pm- Registration

5:30pm - Welcome and ICP updates

5:40pm - Keynote address - IDNR

6:20pm- Dinner

7:00pm - Breakout sessions

- New Staff/Supervisor Training
- Supervisor Recruitment Panel
- Educational topic by CCSI

8:00pm - Adjourn

3:00pm - Adjourn

Section 2: Variances, Losses and Shortages under \$500.00

Any variances, losses or shortages of cash under \$100.00 will be researched by the SWCD. It will be the SWCD's responsibility to adequately reconcile and correct the discrepancy. Any missing funds will be reimbursed by the responsible party;

Section 3: Thefts under \$500

Should there be a theft of cash less than \$500.00; the SWCD will make unanimous decision as to the course of action.

Should there be a theft of office equipment less than \$500.00, the SWCD will make a unanimous decision as to the course of action.

Section 4: Variances, Losses and Shortages over \$500.00

Any variances, losses, shortages or theft of cash ⁵⁰⁰ ~~\$250~~.00 or over, will be immediately reported to the State Board of Accounts via website, e-mail, telephone or in person.

Any losses of office equipment ⁵⁰⁰ ~~\$250~~.00 or over, will be immediately reported to the State Board of Accounts via website, e-mail, telephone or in person.

Section 5: Review of Policy

This policy shall be annual reviewed during a board meeting, and the review will shall be documented in the minutes.

This policy was adopted on _____, 2017 by the St Joseph County SWCD.

SWCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ST JOSEPH COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT (SWCD)
MATERIALITY POLICY

ESTABLISHING MATERIALITY POLICY AS TO REPORTING TO INDIANA
STATE BOARD OF ACCOUNTS AS TO ERRONEOUS OR IRREGULAR
MATERIAL VARIANCES, LOSSES, SHORTAGES OR THEFTS

WHEREAS, Indiana Code § 5-11-1-27(j) states:

"All erroneous or irregular material variances, losses, shortages, or thefts of political subdivision funds or property shall be reported immediately to the state board of accounts. For all material variances, losses, shortages, or thefts, the state board of accounts shall:

- (1) Determine the amount of funds involved and report the amount to the appropriate government and law enforcement officials;
- (2) Determine the internal control weakness that contributed to or caused the condition; and
- (3) Make written recommendations to the appropriate legislative body or appropriate official overseeing the internal control system addressing:
 - (A) the method of correcting the condition; and
 - (B) the necessary internal control policies and internal control procedures that must be modified to prevent a recurrence of the condition";

WHEREAS the Indiana State Board of Accounts has ruled that in general, each political subdivision must develop its own policy on materiality because the causes of irregular variances, losses, shortages, and thefts are as broad and varied as the political subdivisions in which the incidents occur.

WHEREAS the St Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) recognizes that variances, losses, shortages, and thefts may occur. If such an incident occurs, it is the St Joseph County SWCD policy for the Administrative Assistant or such other employee as becomes aware of the variance, loss, shortage or theft to report the same to the SWCD Board Chairman and Treasurer, to be placed on the agenda for resolution at the next board meeting.

Section 1: Purpose

The SWCD recognizes that they may be required to deal with irregular variances, losses, shortages, and/or thefts of funds or property. This policy will outline the procedure for handling such incidents according to IC 5-11-1-27(j).



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Indiana State Office
6013 Lakeside Boulevard
Indianapolis, Indiana 46278
317-290-3200

January 26, 2017

Dear Indiana SWCD Supervisors:

I wanted to follow up with you on the opportunity SWCDs have to be a part of helping NRCS carry out our responsibilities for implementing the Farm Bill and becoming more engaged in serving the landowners in your county. In October, we held a webinar for SWCDs and partners about two major needs we have –

- 1) Providing program support and administrative services such as data entry, contract management, preparing files and reports, gathering data, mailing follow up letters, etc.
- 2) Providing technical assistance on CRP contracts to help with practice inspections and documentation.

NRCS simply does not have the staff or time to keep up with the growing requests for technical assistance and our desire is to offer SWCDs the chance to come alongside and help serve our shared customers while increasing your capacity by building a stronger partnership in the field office.

We are all facing huge challenges in continuing to put conservation on the ground. We know that high-quality conservation planning on private lands can transform our future by giving landowners and operators step-by-step recommendations they can use to voluntarily improve soil health, pest management, wildlife habitat, and yields, while simultaneously reducing their energy and input costs.

Additionally, conservation planning has also evolved to include a larger, more diverse customer base. Gone are the days when most people farmed their own land and conservation planners worked mainly with one person on that farm. Today, many of our planners work with a wide variety of customers – absentee landowners, farm management companies, non-profit organizations, universities, community co-ops, and others. Farm operations range from traditional row crop and livestock farms to organic crop, urban growers, and forestry operations. We conservatively estimate as a partnership we are currently working with only 25% of Indiana's private landowners.

Keeping up with the Farm Bill workload has been a challenge as we have faced decreases in budget and staff, significant increases in requests for highly erodible land and wetland determinations, and the additional responsibilities requiring our NRCS planners to administer contracts.

There are many actions underway by the National Conservation Planning Partnership and also here in Indiana aimed at training additional partnership staff as planners, hiring additional staff, improving technology, using off-site methods for determinations, etc.

Helping People Help the Land.



USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

I want Indiana to be proactive and make the best use of our time, resources, and dollars. Working with you as our key partner is an obvious fit for helping us provide these services to our current customers and new producers who want a conservation plan, and follow up with landowners who have a plan and are implementing practices.

To address this need, I have entered into a contribution agreement with the Indiana Association of Conservation Districts (IASWCD) to work with individual SWCDs that are willing to collaborate with us. The IASWCD has hired a coordinator who is responsible for training and ensuring all the deliverables are met.

I hope you will consider this opportunity and join with us to take Indiana to the next level of customer service and quality conservation planning and implementation. If you have any questions, please feel free to talk with me or Jennifer Boyle Warner.

Sincerely,

/s/

JANE E. HARDISTY
State Conservationist

cc: Robert Woodling, Chair, State Soil Conservation Board
Jennifer Boyle Warner, Executive Director, IASWCD
Jordan Seger, Director, Soil Conservation Division, ISDA
Whitney McGrew, Executive Director SWCD, Warrick County, Indiana
Susan Meadows, CTA Program Specialist, NRCS, Indianapolis, Indiana
Indiana NRCS Leadership Team