



**St. Joseph County
Soil & Water Conservation District**

Plymouth USDA Service Center • 2903 Gary Dr, Ste 1 • Plymouth, IN 46563 •
Phone: 574-936-2024x4
Fax: 855-496-7861 • Email: info@stjosephswcd.org • Website:
www.stjosephswcd.org

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 17, 2015

- I. CALL TO ORDER - On Tuesday March 17, 2015, at 6:31 pm a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the St Joseph County SWCD at the Centre Township Branch of the St. Joseph County Public Library was called to order by John Dooms, Chairman.**

PRESENT – SWCD/NRCS

John Dooms, Chair/Supervisor
Jeremy Cooper, Vice-Chair/Supervisor
Mike Burkholder, Supervisor
Arlene Schuchman, Supervisor
Sandra Hoffarth, SWCD Admin Assistant
Sarah Harville, SWCD CC
Rick Glassman, SWCD EEC
Debbie Knepp, NRCS DC

PRESENT – SWCD/NRCS

James Rodriguez, NRCS
Dave Craft
Jim LaFree
Randy Matthys
Carole Riewe
Richard Schmidt
Dale Stoner
Dave Vandewalle

ABSENT – SWCD/NRCS

Stacey Silvers, Supervisor
Jan Ivkovich
Melvin Kulwicki
Paul Williams, III
Joe Long
Dru Wrasse
Chuck Lehman

PRESENT – HONORARY MEMBERS

n/a

EX-OFFICIO

n/a

PRESENT – PUBLIC

n/a

- II. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA -**

- III. REGULAR BUSINESS**

A. Legislative Updates – N/A.

B. Indiana Conservation Partnership Updates – Rick Glassman discussed how the partnership is at a crossroads. (See attached for full details)

C. Minutes: February 26, 2015 board meeting– The minutes were reviewed and approved as submitted.

D. Treasurer’s Report: (2/26/15-3/17/15) – The treasurer’s reports were both reviewed and approved as submitted.

E. Approval of Claims (2/26/15-3/17/15) – A recommendation (Schmidt, Riewe) & motion (Burkholder, Schuchman) was made to approve Claim Nos. 10971-10987 for a total of \$7,108.50 as presented. Both carried.

- IV. OLD BUSINESS**

A. St. Joseph Co. Soil & Water Conservation Partnership Staff Written Reports – The field office report was presented to the board (attached) and reviewed. James Rodriguez went over the NRCS talking points covering a few Farm Bill program updates from both February & March. All EQIP apps were approved! Currently have 17 apps waiting for a 2nd round of funding if possible. NRCS has opened a public comment period for the ACEP interim final rule. Deadline for producers with expiring CSP contracts has been extended to March 31st to re-enroll. NRCS is accepting applications for CIG with emphasis placed on facilitating the creation of new, innovative markets for carbon credits. Resource Conservation Partnership Project (RCPP) is the Michigan/Indiana St Joseph River Conservation Partnership led by MDAR. Office is currently scouting the watershed area for potential applicants.

B. Committee Reports

a. **Annual Meeting Recap** – Schuchman informed the board that for the first time in our history we made a profit of \$85.92! The silent auction was a huge success at \$1,285 which is more than double our usual amount. She thanked everyone for our hard work getting items and tickets sold.

b. **Forestry Committee** – Tree Sales are at 167 pre-orders for a total of \$14,151. Total number of trees for Saturday sales has been decreased based on previous year’s sales. Committee recommended that the board release funds in the amount of \$6,050 for the balances due for trees and wildflowers. Motion (Cooper, Schuchman) was made and carried to approve recommendation. Wildflower seed mixes this year are species that are native to Indiana which will help wildlife and pollinators. There will not be any extra rain barrels for sale at the Saturday sales and this year will be the last year to sell them with the tree sales. The district can still promote these items but will refer people to local sources for purchase. A signup sheet was passed around for volunteers during Tree Week.

c. **Rural Committee** – Producers’ Breakfast was March 11 with 38 producers, 5 supervisors/associate supervisors, 5 staff, 4 speakers (extension, Purdue, NRCS), and 1 legislative representative in attendance. Overall felt the panel discussion was a great success and was a great resource to connect other producers to no till and cover crops. Further discussion will be made in committee whether to continue offering PARP credits or to do something different next year.

d. **Marketing** – changeable signs & magnets – magnets was tabled to next month due to time constraints. Hoffarth researched and found banners through Staples would be the most economical choice for getting “Tree Sale” & “Field Day” changeable signs. Committee recommends the board to release no more than \$237.00 to purchase these signs. A motion (Burkholder, Cooper) was made and carried to approve recommendation.

C. **Pay Pal** – Hoffarth was able to come up with a working Donation button for our website. Pay Pal charges 2.9% plus \$0.30/transaction. For example a \$5.00 donation comes through but the SWCD will receive \$4.55 with no way to increase the amount to cover the fees since they can donate any amount they want. Next year’s tree sale will also be able to be put on the website to collect pre-orders using credit cards but there will be a 3% upcharge per item to cover the charge. This year’s Saturday sale will be able to collect using credit cards with the PayPal Here card reader with the use of Cooper’s phone & data usage with a 3% increase to cover fees. A recommendation (Schuchman, Schmidt) & motion (Cooper, Burkholder) was made to put the donation button on the website despite the fees since it is income regardless of the fees. Both carried. **(Button is on the website and active as of 3/18/15.)**

V. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Schedules/ Upcoming Events / Any Related Claims** - calendars were handed out explaining upcoming special events & holiday schedules.

a. **Tri-State Conservation Expo – March 24th** – Any board member who would like to attend still can at \$25 at the door.

b. **Regional Mtg – March 25 Columbia City, IN** – A recommendation (Cooper, Riewe) & motion (Cooper, Burkholder) was made to release funds to cover the \$10 registration for staff and supervisors who would like to attend. Deadline is March 18, so those wanting to attend had to let Hoffarth know tonight.

c. **WRE/WRP Workshop – April 2 – Toto, IN** – sponsored by LaPorte/St. Joseph/Starke County SWCD’s, NRCS & US Fish & Wildlife Service. RSVP by March 30 to the office.

d. **Advanced Cover Crops – April 19th** – Free workshop

B. **Standing Committees** – Signups for committees was passed around during the meeting. Those not at the meeting will be sent via e-mail and/or mail to sign up for committees. There are a few changes and a new Grant Committee to help expand our reach.

C. **Election of officers** – written ballots were passed out, collected & counted for 2015 Chairman and it was decided by unanimous decision that John Dooms will remain as our chairman. Ballots were then passed out, collected and counted and it was decided by majority vote that Jeremy Cooper will remain at the 2015 Vice-Chairman. Thank you gentlemen for your continued support and work for our board.

D. **Headwaters Yellow River Watershed Project** – Glassman announced that there is a new Steering Committee being led by Matthew Linn of Cardno who was hired by the Marshall County SWCD to conduct and administer the study and be the project manager for this project. Cooper & Riewe (if meetings are during the day) have volunteered to serve on this committee.

VI. **PRIVILEGE OF FLOOR** - ran out of time

VII. **ADJOURNMENT** – The board meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Hoffarth

Administrative Assistant

St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District

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2903 Gary Drive, Ste. 1

Plymouth, IN 46563

Email: info@stjosephswcd.org

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Approved by:

Supervisor

Supervisor

Supervisor