

MINUTES
STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING
January 14, 2025

8425 Keystone Xing Ste 200, Indianapolis, IN 46240
Microsoft Teams

Present:

Gene Schmidt (Chair)
Jane Hardisty (Vice-Chair)
Kenny Cain (Member)
Brad Dawson (Member)
Jewel Wise (Member)
Jennifer Thum
Sandra Hoffarth
Nathan Stoelting
Tara Wesseler-Henry
Others to be added...

Virtual

Holden Abrell
Amy Work
Lindsey Bluhm
Bradley Dawson
Brandi Frazier
Laura Fribley
Fulton Co SWCD
Chris Gardner
Andrea Gogel
Leah Harmon

Sandra Hoffarth
Tracey Johnson
Katharina
Kevin Boyce
Rebecca McClellan
Courtney McFall
Allison McKain
Julie Morris
Nellie Peffley
Randy

George Reger
Megan Ritterskamp
Don Ryan
Modou Lamin Saidy
Toby Days
Nevada Wagers
Mary Lou Watson
Matthew Williams

Gene called the meeting to order at 9:30am.

JT explained what documents were included for board meetings.

Minutes were reviewed from the previous meeting. Kenny made a motion to approve minutes. Brad seconded; motion carried.

Clean Water Indiana

Tara provided a written report regarding CWI grants. She also touched on some of the reports' highlights and answered some questions from the board. Ben Wicker also helped answer some of the questions regarding the TNC program. Also reviewed CWI grant with association. Review showed no issues, and report has been given to association. Tara also provided a timeline for

CWI competitive grants for 2025 to approve 2026 grants. Discussion was held regarding reviewing and approving CWI guidance for 2025. Approval process was discussed. Tara explained that districts who are “not in compliance” with a CWI grant, cannot receive additional CWI payments including training dollars and capacity payments. Tara asked the board for a motion to allow districts who are not in compliance to receive these payments anyway. This topic led to a lot of discussion and questions from the board regarding the consequences of this motion. Board discussed the importance of making this motion as a “by case” motion, rather than a blanket motion that would allow all districts who are not in compliance, to continue to receive CWI payments. Tara explained the process for how they will be accountable for the additional CWI payments they will receive if they are approved to receive CWI payments while out of compliance. There was a lot of discussion regarding this decision. Jewel made a motion to release Fulton County capacity and training dollars as a one-time payment, despite being out of compliance at this time. Kenny seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Tara also gave an update regarding the “RITA” CWI grant which is requesting a modification. The modification would take mileage and supplies budget and move all of those funds to salary. Brad made a motion to approve the modification as presented. Jewel seconded. Motion carried.

Jennifer gave the report on CWI budget review. This report included funds that are still available through the CWI program. Three suggestions were given on how these funds could possibly be utilized. One possible idea is for a CWI program director. Details for this position were passed out to the board. Another idea to utilize these funds was to provide additional CREP support. The final suggestion included using some of these dollars towards board development for districts. Discussion was held regarding these proposals. Brad made a motion to approve CWI expenditures as follows; \$500,000 for Support to statewide CREP, \$149,000 for Clean Water Indiana Program director including salary, fringe, and vehicle, and \$250,000 for SWCD Board Development. Jane seconded. Motion approved.

State Soil Conservation Board Business

Gene then gave his chairman’s report.

Conflict of interest forms were passed out and signed by board. These will be on file for 2025.

Katie then provided a legislative update. Things are busier than usual at the state house with multiple bills that impact ISDA and Indiana agriculture in just one week. This led to a lot of discussion regarding some of these bills and what the next steps will be as this process continues.

Breegan then introduced Modou Saidy to speak on updating a business plan for the SSCB. The meeting date of February 26th was discussed.

Officer elections were held.

Brad made a motion to have Gene serve as chair. Kenny seconded. Motion carried.

Brad moved to make Jane vice chair, Kenny seconded, motion carried.

Jewell moved to have Brad serve as grant committee lead. Jane seconded. Motion carried.

Brad made a motion for Kenny Cain and Amy Burris to fulfill the commitments to CCSI oversight committee.

Brad made a motion for chair and vice-chair to serve as ICP representatives alternating. Kenny seconded. Motion carried.

Kenny made a motion for Jewel to serve as representative for PWQ board. Brad seconded. Motion carried.

Jennifer then provided a director's report. Detailed report was passed out. She provided highlights including an update on new SSCB member. That will likely not be completed until February. Also new staff updates.

Gene then led a discussion on the round table discussion that the SSCB will lead at annual conference.

The board discussed ideas and thoughts on what topics need to be discussed at upcoming business plan meeting(s).

Public Comment

Gene then asked for public comments. Ray Chatten spoke on an update from his meeting at the statehouse this week. He shared his comments from the state house. No other public comment was made. Board took a break at 12:04

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Jennifer provided the board with supervisor appointments. She made note of some concerns regarding an issue with dual office holding in Starke County. Jennifer is looking for these appointments to be reviewed more thoroughly possibly in the future. Concerns about boards not meeting regularly around the state and not recognizing the importance of meeting is a concern. Kenny made a motion to remove Starke County from the list of available appointments due to more information needed regarding a concern with dual office holding and approve the remaining recommended appointments. Jane seconded. Motion carried.

Laura provided details on Brown County, Washington County regarding resignations and the need for temporary appointments.

Nathan provided details for Fountain County, Putnam County, and two separate resignations in Vigo County and the temporary appointments to replace those resignations.

Kylie provided the details regarding the need of temporary appointments in Ripley and Fayette counties.

Kenny made a motion to approve the recommendations for temporary appointments. Jewel seconded. Motion carried.

ICP Reports

All ICP reports were provided with written reports

Public comment was offered one more time. Brandi gave an update regarding IDEA and thanked everyone for their support that has helped them now have the largest membership in their history. No other comments were made.

Kenny made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:45. Jewel seconded. Motion carried.