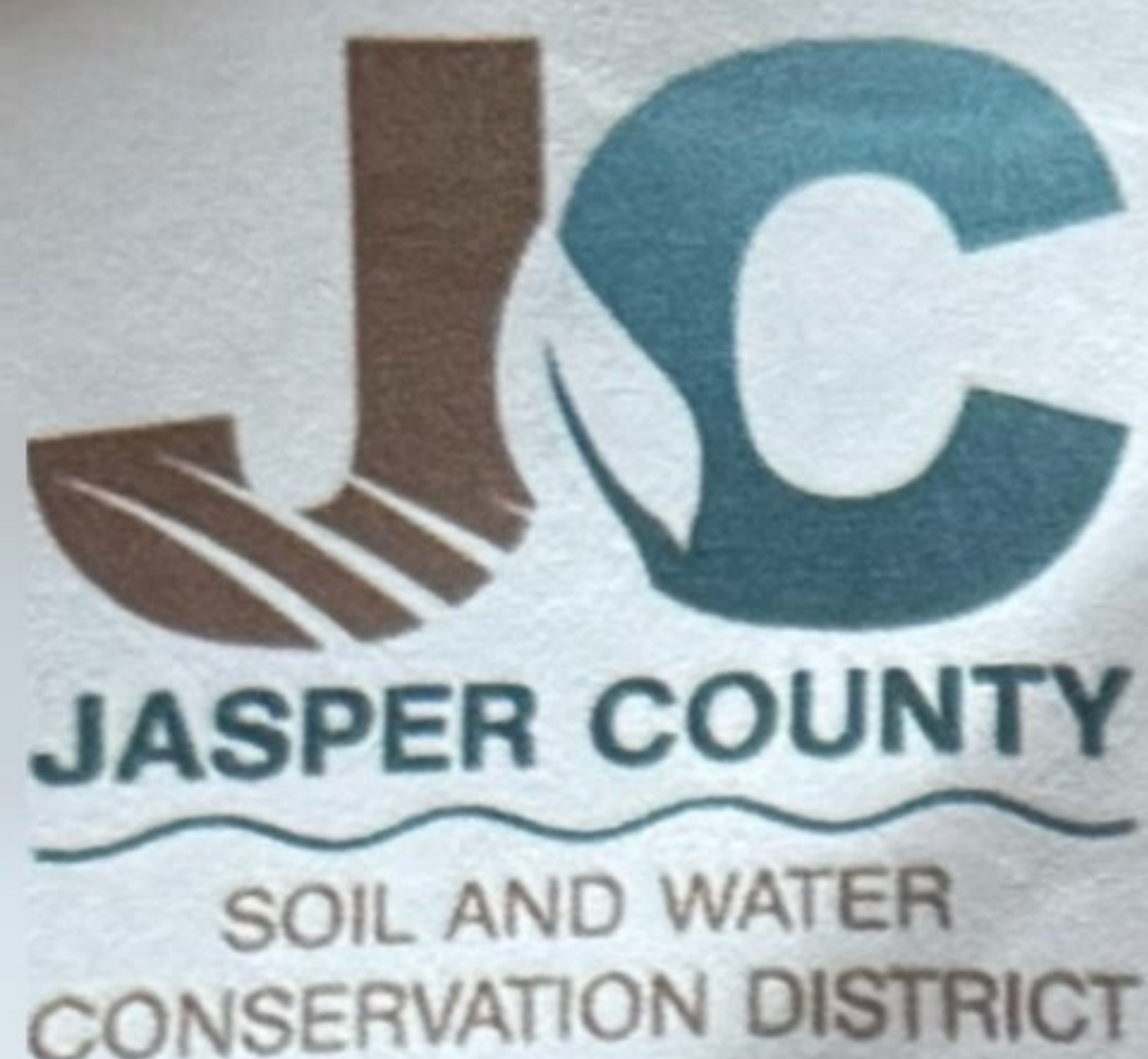




Jasper County Soil and Water Conservation District

211 E. Drexel Parkway

Rensselaer, IN 47978

(219) 866-8008 x3

jaspercountysoilandwater@gmail.com

September 23, 2025 – 3:00 PM CDT

Jasper County SWCD Education Center – Fairgrounds

Supervisors Present: Lana Zimmer, Jim Martin, Mark Kingma, Stuart Orr

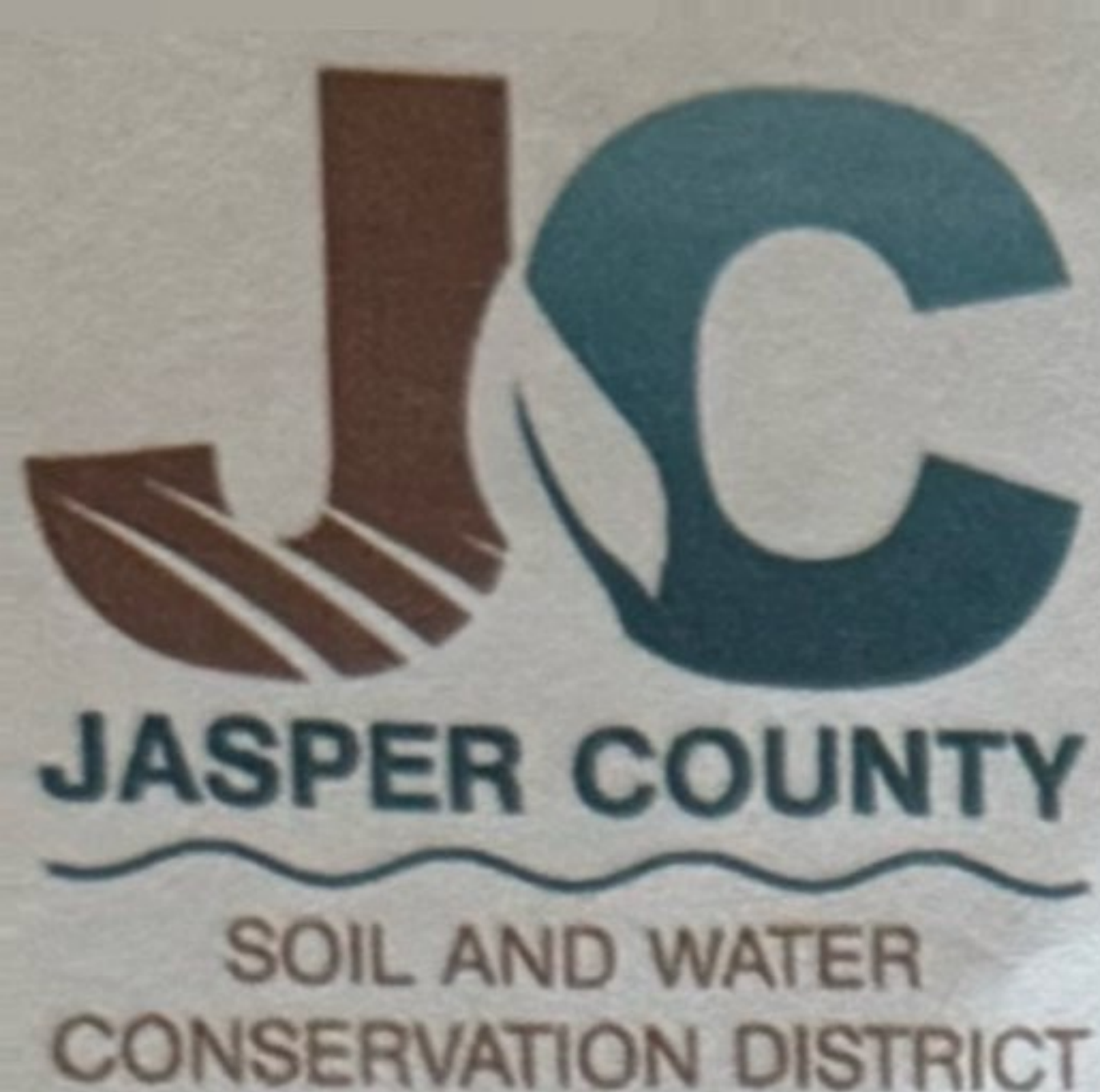
Supervisors Absent: Scott Bahler

Staff Present: Cayci Lane and Joshua Kesling

Partners Present: Dieter Markland and Courtney McFall

Public Attendees: Cheryl Fugate

1. **Call to Order** – Called to Order at 3:03pm by Lana Zimmer, Chair
2. **Partner Agencies and Public Comment**
 - a. **NRCS** – Dieter Markland – Dieter reaffirmed his role as acting District Conservationist for Jasper County. Dieter then provided a program update for Jasper and Newton Counties. This fiscal year, eight CSP contracts were approved – six in Jasper County and two in Newton County – supporting a range of conservation practices such as nutrient and pest management, cover crops, reduced tillage, pollinator habitats and brush management. In addition, one EQIP contract was approved in Newton County for brush management. Dieter also reported that 90 CRP contracts were processed ahead of the September 19th deadline, with 55 in Jasper County and 35 in Newton County. He concluded by alerting the board to the possibility of a federal government shutdown on October 1st, which could affect program operations.
 - b. **ISDA** – Courtney McFall – Courtney informed the board that the soil sampling program is now open to agricultural properties under 100 acres. She will personally collect the samples, and once testing is complete, she will provide tailored nutrient management recommendations based on the results.
 - c. **RC&D** – Jim Martin – Jim shared that he and Lana Zimmer attended the Arrow Head RC&D Annual Meeting in Winamac, where meteorologist Chad Evans served as the guest speaker. The meeting covered several key topics, including upcoming grant opportunities set to begin in January.
 - d. **Weed Control Board** - Jim Martin – Jim shared that the last meeting was held on September 11th. During the meeting, Joshua Kesling presented information about the CWI grant supporting an invasive species specialist. Board positions were elected; Jim Martin was elected Chair and Scott Bahler was elected Vice Chair. Members agreed to finalize program decisions once the budget is released. Summer Brinkman is currently developing an invasive species list specific to Jasper County, and Cayci Lane will serve as board secretary, dedicating a few hours each week to support administrative tasks. The next meeting is scheduled for October 9th.
 - e. **Kankakee River Basin & Yellow River Basin Development** - Mark Kingma – Mark informed the board of a couple of project updates. Phase III of the Yellow River Project is nearing completion. It is expected to be finished by the end of the month. The KRB/YRB are still awaiting one remaining permit to proceed with the removal of the State Line Bridge. On the Kankakee River, work is progressing on the Jasper County bank, with hydroseeding scheduled once weather conditions allow. The next Technical Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for September 25th.
3. **Correspondence** – Joshua Kesling informed the board that a couple nonprofit organizations have recently submitted requests for subscriptions or donations. In response, Mark Kingma made a motion to contribute \$75 to Pheasants Forever. Stuart Orr seconded the motion, motion carried. The board chose to table the decision regarding a potential donation to Soil and Water Conservation Society until next month's meeting.
4. **Minutes from Previous Meeting**
 - a. August minutes – Mark Kingma made the motion to approve last month's minutes. Jim Martin seconded, motion carried.



5. Treasurer's Report

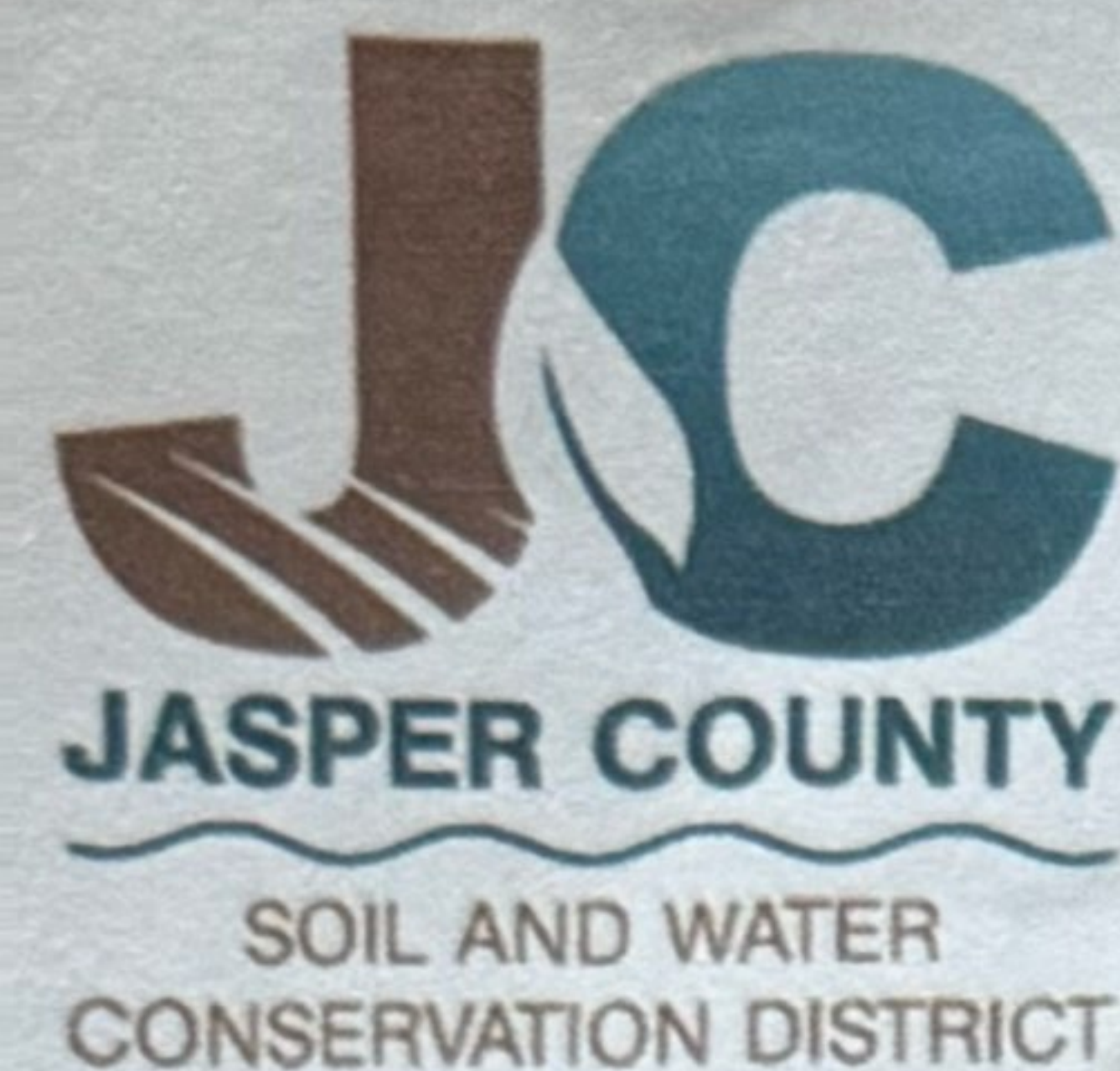
- a. Monthly and YTD Financial Reports – Cayci Lane provided the month of August treasurer's report. The board agreed that extremely old, uncleared checks should be removed and reentered into the balance sheet to reflect accurate financial records. Jim Martin made the motion, which was seconded by Stuart Orr. Motion carried. The board also discussed the remaining balance of the invasive species buy-back program and considered options for reallocating those funds. Courtney McFall proposed expanding the program to include woody areas, not just lawns. Mark Kingma made a motion to approve the treasurer's report, with Jim Martin seconding. The motion carried.

6. Old Business - Current Grant/Deliverables Updates

- a. **LKWI 319 Implementation grant application 2027-2030** – The grant was successfully submitted on September 2nd and is now under review.
- b. **Update on social media and website development** – Cori Lane has contributed a total of six hours managing the SWCD's Facebook page. The board discussed strategies to increase engagement across the SWCD online presence. Meanwhile, Joshua Kesling is currently working on updates to the website.
- c. **Update on CWI Invasives grant application** – The grant was successfully submitted on September 4th and is now under review. The results are expected to be announced in late November.
- d. **Evaluation and discussion of Drop Your Crop event** – To date, only one cost-share participant has submitted their paperwork. In light of this, the board discussed the possibility of reallocating the remaining funds to support soil pit events planned for this fall and the upcoming spring. Mark Kingma offered his property for a November soil pit demonstration. For comparative purposes, Mark Jordan volunteered his property for a spring soil pit demonstration, tentatively scheduled for March or April – prior to cover crop termination. This allows participants to observe the differences between the two fields. The goal is to engage a small group of farmers this season and build momentum for the 2026 "Drop Your Crop" event.

7. New Business

- a. **Annual Plan of Work** – The board discussed the Annual Plan of Work (APoW) which will be focusing on increasing the SWCD's visibility and strengthening its connection with the community. Key efforts will include hosting outreach events that engage the local community and raise awareness about conservation practices. The first planning session was held on September 16, 2025.
- b. **Mary Sholey Rain Barrel** – Courtney reported that she attempted to contact Mary Sholey regarding reimbursement but has received no response. The board recommended sending a formal letter with a clear deadline for action. Additionally, Joshua Kesling will follow up with a phone call from the office to reinforce the request.
- c. **Education Center Renovations** – The board agreed to table the discussion until next month.
- d. **Tree Sales/Deadlines** – Joshua Kesling designed a survey to gauge interest in native tree orders for spring planting. The spring sale will be timed around Earth Week and the board is considering a plant giveaway for kids during Earth Day celebrations. These efforts aim to promote native species while streamlining the program for broader community engagement. The board discussed having native species in general, not just Indiana specific native species available for sale.



Jasper County Soil and Water Conservation District

211 E. Drexel Parkway

Rensselaer, IN 47978

(219) 866-8008 x3

jaspercountysoilandwater@gmail.com

- e. **Rule 5, stormwater disturbance permitting discussion from Josh and comments from NRCS on this matter** – Joshua Kesling informed the board that Kevin Shide advised against the SWCD signing off on the matter, noting that IDEM should be taking over responsibility. Deiter Markland agreed with this recommendation.

8. Staff Update

- a. **Invasives Species Conference in Hammond, Indiana** – The board noted the acquisition of a battery powered backpack sprayer from the silent auction, which will support future outreach and invasive species efforts. Additionally, Joshua Kesling gave the board a recap of the trip to the Grand Calumet River that he and Cayci recently attended. Jim Martin and Lana Zimmer also attended the conference.
- b. **River Rafting** – Cayci and Joshua recently participated in the Arrow Head RC&D river rafting expedition for two days, where they engaged with youth on topics including watershed education and environmental stewardship. They provided the board with a recap of the event, highlighting their learning experiences. Jim Martin assisted in raft clean-up on the final day.
- c. **Request for business cards** – The board agreed that business cards should be ordered as soon as possible for all staff and board members.
- d. **Update on office purchases (software, etc.)** – Joshua provided the board with a recap of recent software app purchases, highlighting tools that support office efficiency. During the discussion, Lana noted that Habitat for Humanity Restore may have office equipment available, should any additional items be needed.

Jim Martin made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Stuart Orr. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 4:52 PM CST.

Lana Zimmer

Mark Orr

Jim Martin

Jim Martin
Respectfully Submitted: Cayci Lane

Next Meeting October 28, 2025 at Education Center