



**Jasper County Soil and Water Conservation District**

211 E. Drexel Parkway

Rensselaer, IN 47978

(219) 866-8008 x3

[jaspercountysoilandwater@gmail.com](mailto:jaspercountysoilandwater@gmail.com)

**January 20, 2026 – 3:00 PM CDT**

USDA Office - 211 E Drexel Parkway, Rensselaer, IN

**Supervisors Present** – Lana Zimmer, Jim Martin, Stuart Orr, Scott Bahler, Mark Kingma

**Staff Present** – Cayci Lane and Joshua Kesling

**Partners Present** – Sandra Hoffarth and AJ Popovic

1. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 3:00pm by Board Chair Lana Zimmer.

2. **Partner Agencies and Public Comment**

a. **NRCS - progress on federal clearances for employees** – Lana Zimmer informed the board that she spoke with Danielle Waldschmidt regarding the federal clearances for Cayci Lane and Joshua Kesling. Joshua reported that he has received the email to begin his federal clearance process; however, completing the required steps will take several hours.

b. **RC&D – Jim Martin** – Jim Martin announced that Lois Mann has been selected as the new president of Arrowhead RC&D.

c. **Weed Control Board - Jim Martin** – Jim Martin informed the board that the next Weed Control Board (WCB) meeting will be held on January 8<sup>th</sup> at the Purdue Extension office. He also reported that the WCB will have a county vehicle designated for weed control use only. The commissioners approved an hourly rate of \$21.95 for the future WCB employee. The SWCD will need to develop an MOU outlining the support it will provide to the WCB. Additionally, Purdue Extension is hosting a PARP session, during which the WCB will present a 30-45 minute invasives species management program.

d. **Kankakee River Basin & Yellow River Basin Development - Mark Kingma** – Mark Kingma reported that he did not have an update at this time.

e. **ISDA District Support Specialist** – Sandra Hoffarth informed the board that she is arranging a meeting with Cayci Lane to discuss AFR, board leadership programs, and the Conservation Link informational session.

f. **SICIM** – AJ Popovic officially introduced himself to the board as the Northwest Indiana Regional Specialist. He informed the board that SICIM will hold its annual meeting on March 30<sup>th</sup> in Noblesville and that there will be annual training scheduled for July 10<sup>th</sup>.

3. **Minutes from Previous Meeting**

a. **December Minutes** - The board reviewed the December meeting minutes. Mark Kingma made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, and Scott Bahler seconded the motion. The motion carried.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

a. **Monthly and YTD Financial Reports** - Cayci Lane presented the financial reports for December, and the board reviewed the information provided. Jim Martin made the motion to approve the financial reports, and Mark Kingma seconded. The motion carried.

b. **Update on 2025 appropriations/considerations for 2026 budget**

i. **Invasives resources for libraries** – Joshua Kesling presented a list of all the books purchased for the SWCD library. The board discussed the possibility of purchasing additional copies to donate to the local libraries.

ii. **Travel for 2026** – Lana Zimmer informed the board that there is \$624.07 remaining in county appropriations for travel due to a spreadsheet miscalculation. She requested that the board members submit their mileage to Cayci Lane by January 23<sup>rd</sup> so the remaining funds can be used.



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## 5. Old Business - Current Grant Deliverables Updates

- a. **Approval of 2026 meeting dates** – Lana Zimmer asked the board whether they wished to continue holding board meetings on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 3:00pm. The board agreed that this schedule still works for them. Mark Kingma made the motion to approve the 2026 meeting dates, and Stuart Orr seconded. Motion carried.
- b. **2025 Business meeting report** – Lana Zimmer reported to the board on the IASWCD Business meeting she attended on December 19<sup>th</sup>. She provided an update on the resolutions that were presented, noting that all of them were denied. She also reminded the board that Soil and Water Advocacy Day will take place on January 27<sup>th</sup> at the Statehouse.
- c. **Education Center Renovations update – Scott** – Scott Bahler provided the board with an update on the Education Center. He reported that all windows have been installed, though additional work remains. The board will need to determine the placement of the new TV, with the interior wall being a likely option. The Education Center still requires drywall, trim, blinds, electrical work, and repairs to the closet lighting. Scott will look for a local contractor to install gutters.
- d. **Tree Sale update – Josh** – Joshua Kesling informed the board that the tree sale form is now live and that orders have already begun coming in. Customers will be required to prepay, and Earth Week will serve as the pickup period.
- e. **LKWI Quarter 8 report- Cayci** – Cayci Lane reported to the board that the LKWI Quarter 8 report is being prepared for submission to IDEM. She also reminded the board that the district was awarded an additional \$41,000 in cost-share funding from IDEM.
- f. **Annual meeting update - (status, set-up, program, sponsorships, staff needs)** – Cayci Lane and Joshua Kesling presented the official annual meeting flyer to the board, noting that it has been distributed throughout Jasper County along with the list of sponsorships. The board discussed allocating funds for promotional materials, such as rain gauges. Mark Kingma made the motion to allocate \$2,500 toward promotional items, and Stuart Orr seconded the motion. Motion carried.

## 6. New Business

- a. **New grant submissions – Josh** – Joshua Kesling provided the board with a list of the grants he is currently working on and the organizations to which they would be awarded to if selected. The list includes: The Jasper Newton Foundation for the Weed Control Board salary, NIPSCO for the SWCD, REMC for the WCB salary, and Arrowhead RC&D for the WCB salary. Joshua also had the board sign a form for the Jasper Newton Foundation acknowledging the grant submission.
- b. **Education Center Mural Legend** – Joshua Kesling presented the board with two options for the Education Center Mural Legend. One option features smaller print on a single sign, while the other uses larger print but would require a two-part sign. The board discussed the options and agreed that they simply want a permanent, professional-looking sign, and they trust Joshua's judgement on whether it should be a one or two-part design.
- c. **2026 Initiatives (Board discussion and approvals, set dates and budgets)** – The board tabled discussion of the 2026 Initiatives for a future executive session. The date and time will be set later.

Revised 7/17/2025

Next Meeting February 24th @ Embers Venue 4pm



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- i. Agrivoltaics tour
  - ii. Soil pit program
  - iii. Cover Crops cost-share
  - iv. Staff tracking system for APoW and Business Plan
  - v. Invasives Partnership
- d. Board's position advising - on resource-related county projects-** The board discussed recent events in Jasper County, including questions from the public related to the possible data center. The board agreed that the SWCD must remain neutral on this matter but can direct the public to research articles and factual resources.
- e. Other –** The board made an official motion to approve the JCII books purchased by the SWCD for \$500. Mark Kingma made the motion to approve, and Stuart Orr seconded. Motion carried.

**7. Staff Update**

- a. Josh - Conservation and Coffee –** Joshua Kesling asked the board to approve holding another Conservation and Coffee event at Cup of Joy Too in Rensselaer. He noted that the previous event was successful and that he and Cayci Lane would like to host another in January. Mark Kingma made a motion to approve allocating \$50 for the event, and Scott Bahler seconded. Motion carried.

Mark Kingma made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:37pm, and Jim Martin seconded the motion. The motion carried

Lana Zimmer

Stuart Orr

Mark Kingma

Jim Martin

Scott Bahler