

**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)

**October 28, 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** – Summer Brinkman and Courtney McFall

**Public Attendees** – Cheryl Fugate

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. **ISDA** – Courtney McFall reiterated to the board and staff that she has ample availability and is willing to provide technical assistance as needed.
- b. **RC&D – Jim Martin** – Jim Martin informed the board that RC&D has a grant opportunity opening in January, in previous years JCSWCD received \$5,000. The board agreed to begin brainstorming potential project ideas to pursue this grant. Jim Martin made the motion to pursue this grant, and Stuart Orr seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- c. **Weed Control Board - Jim Martin** – Jim Martin informed the board that the next Weed Control Board (WCB) meeting is scheduled for November 13<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm. Following the meeting, the WCB plans to host an invasive species tour in Rensselaer to highlight several local problem areas for board members and public attendees.
- d. **Jasper County Invasive Initiative (JCII)** – Summer Brinkman informed the board that she and other members are interested in revamping the Jasper County Invasive Initiative (JCII), now that the SWCD is fully staffed. The goal is to begin planning programs and coordinate with the Weed Control Board (WCB) to ensure efforts are aligned and not duplicated. Summer emphasized the importance of collaboration between JCII and WCB moving forward. JCII also plans to partner with the Rensselaer Parks Department to support outreach and education initiatives. The next JCII meeting is scheduled for December 8<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am.
- e. **Purdue Extension** – Summer Brinkman informed the board that she is planning PARP (Private Applicator Recertification Program) events for November and December. A soil health workshop is scheduled for November 11<sup>th</sup> at the Jasper County Fairgrounds. At this event, Joshua Kesling noted that the SWCD will deliver a 25-minute presentation to showcase its programs and promote conservation efforts. Additionally, Summer is planning to teach soil health at the Indiana Agriculture and Technology school, located at St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer.
- f. **Kankakee River Basin & Yellow River Basin Development - Mark Kingma** – Mark Kingma informed the board that there were no new updates since last month's meeting.

3. **Minutes from Previous Meeting**

- a. **September minutes** – The board reviewed the minutes from the September meeting. Mark Kingma made the motion to approve the minutes. Jim Martin seconded the motion. Motion carried.

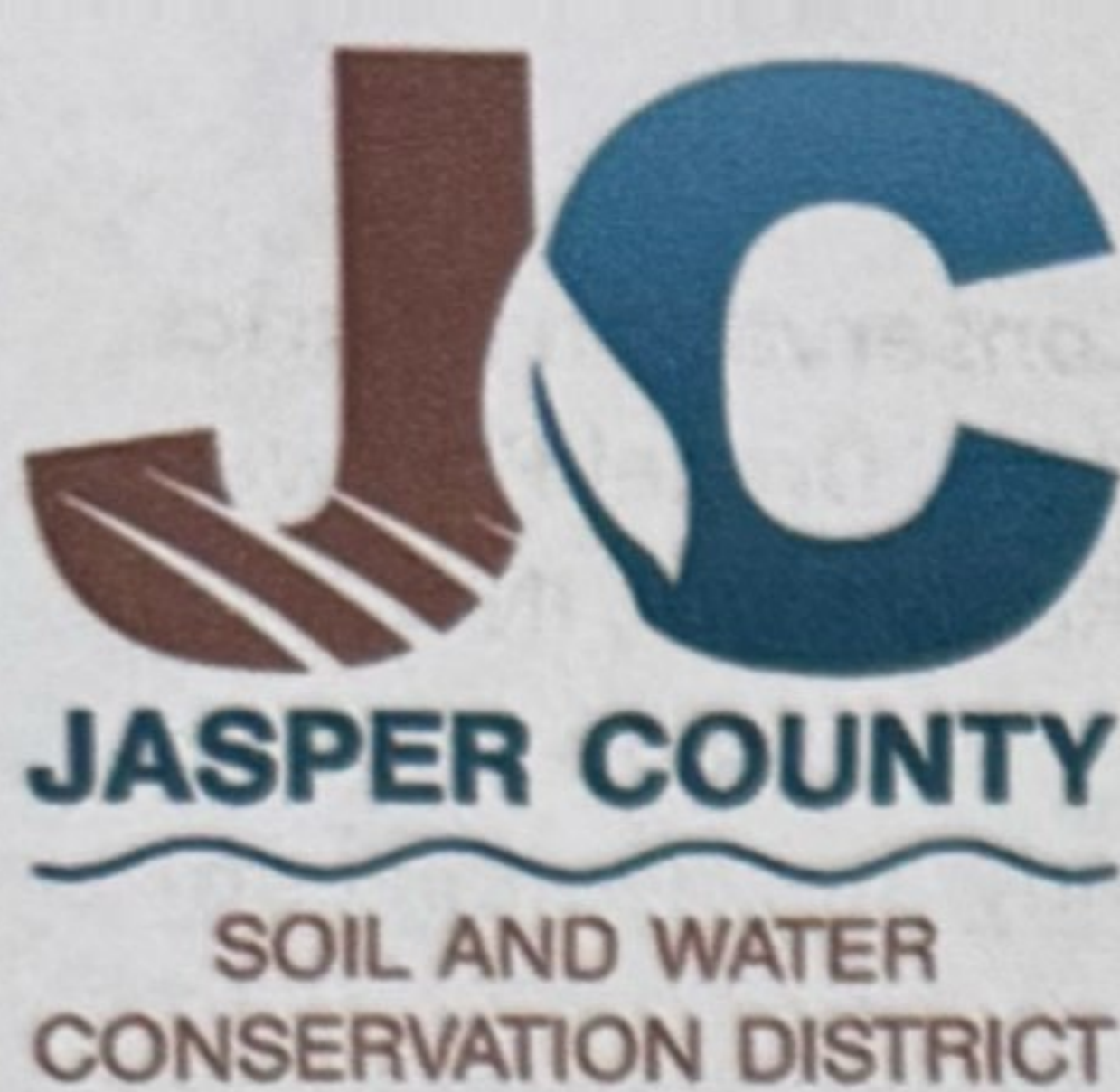
4. **Treasurer's Report**

- a. **Monthly and YTD Financial Reports** – Cayci Lane presented the September financial reports. Stuart Orr made the motion to approve. Mark Kingma seconded the motion. Motion carried.

5. **Old Business - Current Grant/Deliverables Updates**

- a. **Education Center Renovations** – Due to the absence of Scott Bahler, the board agreed to table the education center renovations update until the November meeting.



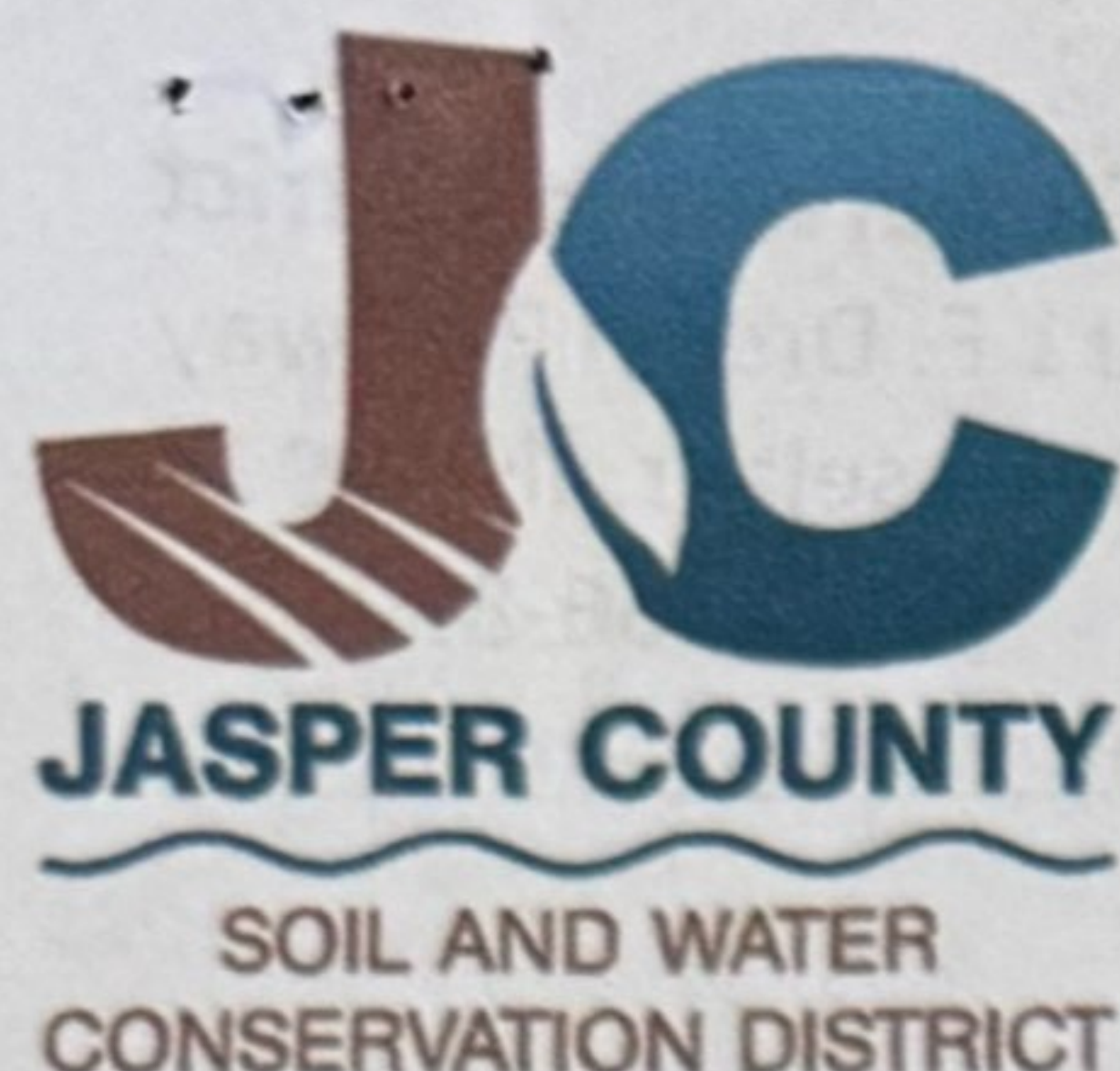


- b. **Soil Pit for Fall/Spring** – Due to limited coordination time and scheduling constraints, the board decided to forgo the fall soil pit demonstration and proceed with a single event in the spring.
- c. **Native Plant/Tree Sales** – Joshua provided an update on the native tree interest survey, reporting that 10 individuals have expressed interest so far. Based on this response, the board agreed to proceed with organizing a tree sale. They noted that trees are typically ordered in the fall and sold in the spring, with any unsold trees donated. Joshua will develop an order form and prepare a plant care guide to accompany the distribution.
- d. **Annual Meeting** – The board discussed preparations for the upcoming annual meeting. They suggested inviting Scott Pelath as a potential speaker. Staff were directed to proceed with planning the event, targeting any date between the third week of February to the third week of March.
- e. **Signing Bonuses** – Lana Zimmer informed the board that Joshua Kesling and Cayci Lane received \$2,000 signing bonuses. Mark Kingma made the motion to approve the bonuses; Stuart Orr seconded the motion. Motion carried.

#### 6. New Business

- a. **Zippel and Fritts LKWI cost-share applications ready for board approval and signatures** – Joshua Kesling informed the board that the LKWI cost-share applications will require board approval and signatures during the November meeting.
- b. **Expiring Supervisor, Appointment recommendation, Election Committee** – Cayci Lane informed the board that Stuart Orr is up for re-election. The election committee form is due on November 1<sup>st</sup>. The board noted that the committee must include one SWCD supervisor and two interested citizens. The board appointed Jim Martin, Cheryl Fugate, and Summer Brinkman to serve on the election committee.
- c. **Indiana DNR, Adopt-a-Ramp program volunteer opportunities at Laird's Landing** – Joshua Kesling presented a proposal for the SWCD to participate in the Indiana DNR's Adopt-a-Ramp program. The initiative would involve the SWCD adopting Laird's Landing public access site, with responsibilities including seasonal trash pickup and general site care. In return, the DNR will promote the SWCD's involvement on their social media platforms and install signage at the site recognizing Jasper County SWCD as the adopting organization. The board expressed interest and discussed the potential to expand the partnership by hosting Hoosier Riverwatch water quality monitoring at the site. Jim Martin made the motion to approve this program; Stuart Orr seconded it. Motion carried.
- d. **Creative writing/poetry contest about natural resources conservation for late 2025 and early 2026** – Joshua Kesling proposed a creative writing and poetry contest focused on natural resources conservation, targeting youth engagement in late 2025 early 2026. He shared examples of past successes with similar contests, highlighting strong participation and impactful submissions. The board supported the initiative and recommended partnering with our local 4-H to promote the contest, aligning the contest themes and guidelines with state-level contests. Jim Martin made the motion to support the writing contest; Mark Kingma seconded it. Motion carried.
- e. **CUA for JCII** – Cayci Lane informed the board that JCII has requested a Cooperative Use Agreement (CUA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formally document the existing fiscal arrangement





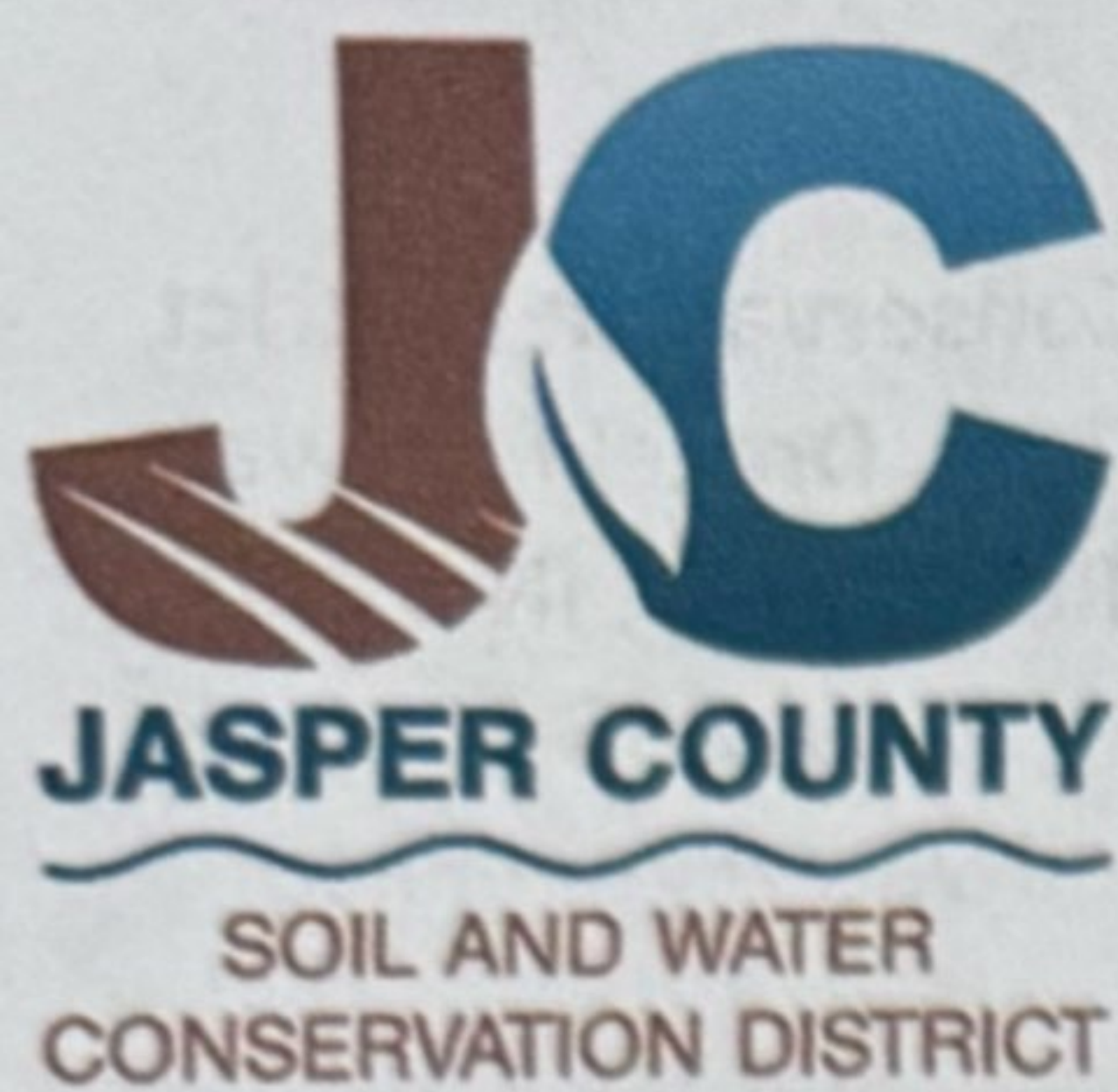
between JCII and the SWCD. The agreement would clarify that JCSWCD holds JCII's funds, JCII may request disbursement of its funds at any time, individual disbursements do not require SWCD Board of Supervisors approval. Lana Zimmer directed Cayci to proceed with drafting a MOU for the board to review and sign, formalizing the arrangement.

- f. **LKWI/CWI Grants Outcome** – The board discussed the outcome of recent grant applications. Neither LKWI Phase II nor CWI grant proposals submitted by the SWCD were selected for funding. Lindsay Hylton Adams from IDEM provided a feedback report outlining the reasons the LKWI proposal was not funded. This report will guide revisions, allowing the SWCD to make necessary corrections and resubmit within the next year. The SWCD is still awaiting reviewer comments on the CWI grant proposal and will revisit next steps once that feedback is received.
- g. **Other** – Courtney McFall informed the board that repeated attempts to contact Mary Sholey regarding her LKWI rain barrel reimbursement have been unsuccessful. She asked how the board wanted to proceed due to Bri Styck from Newton County SWCD asking for an update. The board agreed to send a certified letter to Mary Sholey as a final attempt to reach her. The letter will include a firm deadline by which she must contact the SWCD.

## 7. Staff Update

- a. **IDEA Conference** – Cayci Lane and Joshua Kesling presented a recap of their recent attendance at the IDEA Fall Conference held in Bloomington. The event provided valuable networking opportunities with SWCD staff from across the state. Cayci gained insights into administrative responsibilities and best practices relevant to her role. Joshua explored technical programs and implementation strategies that could benefit Jasper County's conservation efforts. The staff collectively agreed that attending the conference was a worthwhile investment of time and resources, contributing to professional development and program enrichment.
- b. **AI Training session with Lindsey Schanbacher (Canva and Google Suites focused)** – Cayci Lane and Joshua Kesling recently participated in an AI focused training session led by Lindsey Schanbacher. The session covered practical application of AI tools, with an emphasis on Canva and Google Suites for outreach and administrative efficiency. The staff agreed that the training was educational and a worthwhile investment, reinforcing the value of future professional development opportunities in digital tools and collaborative platforms.
- c. **RCHS Trunk or Treat** – Cayci Lane and Joshua Kesling informed the board of their intent to participate in Rensselaer Central High School's Trunk or Treat event on Thursday October 30<sup>th</sup>, from 5:00 to 6:30pm. This outreach event opportunity will allow SWCD staff to engage with local youth and families while promoting conservation awareness in a fun, community-centered setting. The board approved a budget of \$125 for candy and supplies to support the event. Jim Martin made the motion to approve; Stuart Orr seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- d. **Other** – Jim Martin proposed that Cayci Lane and Joshua Kesling purchase matching winter coats for field and outreach work, with the JCSWCD logo embroidered for visibility and professionalism. The board discussed the proposal and agreed to allocate a budget of \$100 per coat. Staff will proceed with selecting appropriate outerwear and coordinating logo embroidery. Stuart Orr made the motion to approve; Mark Kingma seconded the motion. Motion carried.





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

Meeting adjourned at 4:54 PM CST.

Stuart Orr

Mark Kern

Lana Zimmer

Jim Martin

Respectfully Submitted: Cayci Lane

**Next Meeting November 25, 2025 at Education Center**