

## MINUTES: IASWCD Board Meeting

*June 20, 2025*

*Morgan-Monroe State Forest Training Center, Martinsville, IN*



### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 am.

#### Board Member & Staff Present:

Troy Hattery, Jordan Gillenwater, Steve Crowe, Mark Kingma, Marc Roberts, Kenny Cain, Ray Chattin, Kim Peterson, Ethan Truax, Whitney McGrew, Jeff Baker, John Kruse, Amy Work, Liz Rice, and John Newby

#### Guests:

Ken Gunkel

Morgan County SWCD: David Mow, Stan Diamond, John Phillips, Lisa MacPhee, Bailey Russell

### Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Liz Rice presented the previous meeting minutes via screen.

Motion: John Kruse moved to approve the minutes. Mark Kingma seconded.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

### Treasurer's Report

Ethan Truax provided a summary of the balance sheet included in the board packet. Whitney McGrew clarified several items.

Motion: Troy Hattery moved to accept the treasurer's report. Jordan Gillenwater seconded.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

### Finance Committee Update

- Ethan discussed transitioning staff from quarterly bonuses to a **SIMPLE IRA** retirement plan.
- The **USH** grant ends August 31, 2025, with no renewal from NRCS.
- Marc Roberts asked for clarification on USH.
- Liz Rice explained the expiration of the grant and potential use of a **Clean Water Indiana (CWI) grant** to retain Elli to support local working groups.
- Kim Peterson inquired about funding levels with USH; Liz stated the previous NRCS grant was \$1.5 million with a \$0.5 million match (75/25 split).

- Praise from Lisa MacPhee for the work done by the USH staff in Morgan County.

Motion: Jeff Baker moved to proceed with a CWI grant application to retain Elli. John Kruse seconded.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

- Whitney mentioned that the amount for the **CWI grant** would be around \$100K annually to cover salary, taxes, fringe, and basic operating supplies, but will be better established over the next few weeks as they work on the budget.
- Liz noted that Elli's job description would change.
- Ethan mentioned the idea of using the **10% Gold Member overage** dues to establish an Emergency Fund for districts in financial crisis (e.g., office rent issues). He mentioned that some SWCDs are struggling with financial issues and perhaps this overage could be used as an emergency fund for districts.
- Whitney stated that seven districts are Gold Members this year, totaling ~\$4K.
- Discussion was held around the idea of having this fund to help support districts, maybe something like a "recallable grant" in hopes the funds could be used and then returned for others to use.
- Mark Kingma mentioned that the original idea of the Gold member option was to have additional funds that would cover the shortfall from other districts.
- Marc mentioned that the group also needs to remember that IASWCD needs to build up **reserve funds**.
- Whitney stated that the reserve goal is 3 months of operating funds and 3 months of programs funds. The actual number will be better decided by the beginning of the fiscal year.
- Ray Chattin noted that **SICIM's** NRCS funding ends in August 2027 and they will seek \$1.5 million via CWI funds. He encouraged IASWCD support.
- Discussion emphasized developing a legislative strategy and identifying collaborative funding opportunities.
- Troy briefed everyone on the **Cass Co SWCD relocation** situation.

## Governance Committee Update

- Mark Kingma reported that Roger W. is stepping down as **NACD representative**. Roger will attend the summer meeting. Ken Gunkel will be the new Indiana representative.
- NACD is considering Indiana as the host for their **summer meeting** in 2026 or 2027.

## Legislative Committee Update

- Marc Roberts shared that **Les Zimmerman and Cress Hizer are retiring**. Options include hiring a new legislative coordinator or expanding Liz's role.
- **SSCB has an open board seat**. ISDA, IASWCD, and Purdue can submit nominations.

## Communications Report

- Amy Work presented her **communications update** in person.
- Three [Clean Water Indiana - District Success Stories](#) were recently consolidated into a document to be shared and viewed online.

## Upcoming Events

- **Conservation Farm Tour**, September 18 in Jackson County at Hackman Family Farms - 2024 Conservation Farmer of the Year Award recipient. This event will provide an overview of the farm, hands-on tour of various conservation practices, lunch and time to network.
- Jordan Gillenwater reviewed plans for the August 21 **S-NW region event** at McKain's Family Farm. The event will be family-friendly and feature a panel discussion.
- **NACD North Central Region Winter Meeting** in Carmel, Indiana January 13-14, 2026.

## Strategic Planning Meeting Follow-Up

- Liz Rice recapped the **March 7 meeting** and committee goal discussions.
- Marc asked if we possibly missed anything at this strategic planning meeting on March 7.
- Board members discussed district preparedness for potential NRCS office closures and emphasized collaboration.
- Consensus was strong for using Gold Member funds to support other districts, reinforcing the message of mutual aid. Suggestions included stronger regional leadership and communication.

## NACD Update

- Ethan Truax reported there has been no NACD board meeting since the last IASWCD meeting. The next NACD board meeting is scheduled via Zoom in four days.

## **Program Updates**

- Program updates (RITA, CCSI, USH) were provided in the online board packet.

Meeting adjourned at 11:42 am.