



**STEELE COUNTY**  
Soil and Water Conservation District

235 Cedardale Drive SE  
Owatonna MN 55060  
507-451-6730 Ext. 3  
www.steeleswcd.org

The regular monthly meeting of the Steele County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors was called to order by Mark Ditlevson at 5:00 PM on Wednesday September 11, 2024 at the Steele County SWCD Office, 235 Cedardale Drive SE, Owatonna MN, 55060.

<u>SWCD Supervisors Present:</u>	<u>SWCD Staff Present:</u>	<u>Others Present:</u>	<u>Absent:</u>
Mark Ihlenfeld, Treasurer	Eric Gulbransen	Jim Smith, NRCS	
Dan Hansen, Secretary	Ian Pringle	Alan Kraus, Soil Health Outreach	
Dave Melby, Vice Chair	Adrienne Gransee		
Mark Ditlevson, Chairman	Adam Arndt		
Brad Hagen, PR&I			

The September agenda was reviewed, no changes were made.

The August minutes were distributed to the Supervisors prior to the meeting. Motion was made by Melby, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried by voice vote.

The August Treasurer’s Report was read by Ihlenfeld. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Hagen, to approve the August Treasurer’s Report. Motion was carried by voice vote.

Bills: (See attached) Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve paying the bills. Motion was carried by voice vote.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Meeting Reports – Cannon 1W1P Bus Tour – August 7 – This tour was attended by Eric Gulbransen, Ian Pringle, Mark Ihlenfeld, and Dave Melby. They reported that the turn out was good with a mix of local producers and agency people. It was good to see completed projects in areas of the watershed that they spend less time in.
2. Fair Recap – The Board spoke about their evenings in the fair booth. There were lots of questions about emerald ash bore. The two main topics were treatment and options for replacing the trees. The traffic was good and the feedback from those who visited was positive.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Cost Share Payments – Ian Pringle presented the cost share contracts listed below for payment. He gave the board a summary of each project. Motion was made by Melby, seconded by Hagen, to approve paying the contracts. Motion carried by voice vote.
  - WS-1, Well Sealing, \$2000.00, Cannon 1W1P
  - 24-3, Waterway, \$222.86, FY24 State Cost Share
  - 23-1, Waterway, \$3,707.25, Partial Payment, FY24 State Cost Share
2. 2025 Meeting Date and Time – The Board had a brief discussion and decided to keep the monthly board meetings on the second Wednesday of the month at 5pm. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Melby, to approve the meeting date and time as discussed. Motion passed by voice vote.
3. Cover Crop and No-till/Strip till policies – Eric Gulbransen presented the proposed cover crop program policy first. There was discussion about allowing 1 year contracts as well as if producers needed to keep the covers on the same field for multi-year contracts. They also discussed how to verify the funding source for producers with contracts from multiple places. Gulbransen presented the No-till/Strip till program policy next. Similar changes were made in this and the maximum number of acres were lowered to allow for more individual contracts with the available funds. After discussion it was decided, due to when funding would be available, to hold off taking applications and plan on launching the new version of the program in 2025. Motion was made by Melby, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to move forward with the new policies and the 2025 timeline. Motion carried by voice vote.
4. FY25 Soil Health Delivery Work Plan - \$60,000 – After a short discussion about the process of getting this grant approved for use a motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Hagen, to set the total amount aside for the cover crop and no-till/strip till programs. Motion carried by voice vote.
5. BWSR Academy Registration and Hotel – Oct 29-31, Cragun’s Resort – Registration opens Sept. 16 – Gulbransen requested Board approval for interested staff to attend and approval to book hotel rooms for those interested. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Hagen, to approve staff attending and booking the needed hotel rooms. Motion passed by voice vote.
6. Fall Area Meeting – October 22, 9:00am-3:00pm – Hormel Nature Center – Gransee requested that those interested in attending let her know so that she can RSVP and register for the event.
7. Strategic Plan – The strategic plan was distributed to the Board prior to the meeting. The Board talked about broad areas of the plan and any that have been already addressed. They decided they would like to discuss specific goals in more detail at the November meeting.

**Agency Reports**

Jim Smith Stated that he has been conducting CRP status review for a group of 30 year contracts. He also gave the Board an update on EQIP, there are currently 70 applications for the multi county area. He also informed the Board that the soil conservationist position is currently open for applications.

Alan Kraus updated the Board on his recent activities including assisting writing an equipment grant and looking for soil health outreach opportunities. He also spoke about a possible nitrogen trial that could be run in the county.

**Staff Reports**

Eric Gulbransen has been spending a significant amount of time attending to ditch work. They recently replace a large section of county tile and have been doing damage assessments for FEMA. He has also been getting Kraus caught up on the various programs that the District offers.

Ian Pringle has been going out with Adam Arndt to complete CRP inspections as well as oversee the construction of a waterway. He has also has continued his training. Pringle informed the Board that due to expected increases from the suppliers the prices for trees was going to be raised by 10 percent this year.

Adam Arndt reported on the waterway construction that he was overseeing. He has also been completing CRP inspections. He updated the Board on the field day that the soil health team has been involved with. Arndt stated that he will be completing annual buffer checks in the near future.

Adrienne Gransee told the Board about a meeting that she attended at the Steele Co Historical society. They are beginning planning for a Conservation exhibit that will be installed for 2026. Gransee has also been getting initial work done on the 2025 calendar.

Motion to Adjourn: Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried by voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted by,



Adrienne Gransee,  
Administrative Assistant

Spetember Bills

<b>Cedardale Dev. Co</b>	<b>September Rent</b>		<b>\$792.00</b>
<b>Cedardale Dev. Co</b>	<b>Garage Rent</b>		<b>\$600.00</b>
<b>Spectrum</b>	<b>Internet</b>		<b>\$89.99</b>
<b>Elan</b>	<b>Fair Posters</b>	<b>\$312.32</b>	
	<b>Gas</b>	<b>\$235.54</b>	
	<b>Hotel</b>	<b>\$470.28</b>	
	<b>Phone</b>	<b>\$87.24</b>	
	<b>Monthly Payroll</b>	<b>\$57.98</b>	
	<b>Fair Supplies</b>	<b>\$120.19</b>	
	<b>Event Banner</b>	<b>\$204.01</b>	
	<b>Truck Magnets</b>	<b>\$206.16</b>	
	<b>Meals</b>	<b>\$100.95</b>	
	<b>Credit</b>	<b>-\$1.44</b>	<b>\$1,793.23</b>
<b>Freeborn SWCD</b>	<b>CREP Assistance</b>		<b>\$2,628.99</b>
			<b>\$5,904.21</b>