



STEELE COUNTY
Soil and Water Conservation District

235 Cedardale Drive SE
Owatonna MN 55060
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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 November 8, 2023 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	Teddy Moreno-Santos, NRCS	Mike Klecker, Vice Chair
Dan Hansen, PR&I	Adrienne Gransee	Rick Gnemi, County Commissioner	
Dave Melby, Secretary	Ian Pringle	Beth Hanggi	
Mark Ditlevson, Chairman	Adam Arndt		

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The November agenda was reviewed, Ag Water Quality Program Discussion was added to the agenda.

The October minutes were distributed to the Supervisors prior to the meeting. No changes were noted. Motion was made by Melby, seconded by Hansen, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried by voice vote.

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

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

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Meeting Reports – Canon River JPB – November 1st – Dan Hansen reported that they reviewed the budget and there were no significant changes. They also had a discussion about a project focused on Circle Lake.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. 2022 Audit – Adrienne Gransee presented an overview of the draft audit to the Board. She highlighted the areas of concern laid out by the auditors, most of which were related to a lack of separation of duties common to organizations as small as the District.

NEW BUSINESS:

2. 2024 Medical Insurance Options – Beth Hanggi presented the options for medical insurance for the District staff for 2024. The current plan was still available with a slight increase in premium and deductible. She also presented 2 alternative plans that were similar in cost with some variation on coverage and deductible. The Board discussed the three options and the differences between them. A motion was made by Melby, seconded by Hansen to renew the current plan. Motion passed by voice vote.
 - Ian Pringle made a request to have his waiting period for insurance cover reduced by 10 days. This reduction in time means that he would begin his coverage at the first of the year with the rest of the District staff. Motion was made by Melby, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve the request for a reduced waiting period. Motion passed by voice vote.
3. Annual Convention – December 11-13 – Gransee collected names of who was planning to attend as well as how many hotel rooms would be needed so that she can make reservations and register those interested in attending the convention.
4. Sick Leave Policy Update – Gransee presented the updates that will need to be made to the District sick leave policy. The updates are in response to the Earned Sick and Safe Time law that will go into effect on January 1, 2024. Update to District policy that were made include when sick leave can be used, who qualifies as an employee’s family member, and the removal of a waiting period before leave can be used by new employees. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Melby, to approve the changes as presented. Motion passed by voice vote.
5. December Meeting Date – The Board discussed changing the meeting date for the December Board since it falls on the same day as the end of Convention. After discussion it was decided that the meeting should be moved to December 14th at 5pm. The Personnel Committee would meet at 2pm to conduct personnel reviews prior to the meeting. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Melby, to approve the changes as discussed. Motion passed by voice vote.
6. Cost Share Contract Payment – 2-22, Basins, \$3,052.50, FY22 State Cost Share – Arndt presented the information about the project that had been completed. The basins were installed to add storage and repair a gully erosion problem. Motion was made by Melby, seconded by Hansen, to approve paying the contract. Motion carried by voice vote.
7. 2024 Conty Ditch Contract – Gulbransen reviewed the County Ditch contract with the Board. They discussed the current work load and the billable rate. It was decided that there was no need to request any changes for the 2024 contract. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to keep the contract as it was in 2023. Motion passed by voice vote.
8. Cover Crop Contract Cancellation – Adam Arndt presented the contract listed below. The landowner was not going to be able to fulfil the terms of the contract and had requested cancellation. Motion was made by Melby, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve the cancellation of the contract. Motion carried by voice vote.
 - 5-21-CC, \$1710.00, FY21 Local Capacity Grant

NEW BUSINESS:

9. Other – Ag Water Quality Certification meeting – Gulbransen presented information about an upcoming meeting being held by the Clean River Partners. They are looking for financial support to help cover the cost of breakfast for the attendees. There was a discussion about the purpose of the meeting and how CRP is planning to get more people to engage with the Ag Water Quality program. A motion was made by Melby, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve spending up to \$300 to provide breakfasts for those that attended the meeting. Motion passed by voice vote with Hansen voting against.

Agency Reports

Teddy Moreno-Santos gave the Board an update on NRCS. He reported that they are beginning the new fiscal year and payments for FY23 are being sent out. There are currently 14 applications for the FY24 EQIP program.

Rick Gnemi informed the Board of upcoming staff changes at the county and gave an update about the current state of the round-a-bout.

Staff Reports

Adrienne Gransee gave an update on the 2024 calendar as well as the tree program. She also spoke about her time spent at the BWSR Academy training.

Eric Gulbransen has been focused on WCA and ditches as well as getting Ian Pringle out in the field.

Ian Pringle has been getting settled in to the office. His time has been spent working with the Drainage DB program as well as being introduced to field and survey work. Pringle also attended BWSR Academy.

Adam Arndt has been working with Pringle and has completing the cover crop field certifications for the year.

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

Respectfully Submitted by,



Adrienne Gransee,
Administrative Assistant

November Bills

Cedardale Development Co.	November Rent		\$792.00
Spectrum	November Internet		\$89.99
Tree World	Plantskydd		\$272.64
Steele Co. Times	Governor's opener ad		\$226.00
Elan	Gas	\$272.75	
	Field Supplies	\$6.42	
	Meals	\$105.69	
	Truck - Tires	\$1,097.10	
	Hotel Refund	-\$227.50	
	Office Supplies	\$199.56	
	Postage	\$13.86	
	Phone	\$87.24	\$1,555.12
		TOTAL	\$2,935.75