



**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 5:05 PM on Wednesday October 16, 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	Brad Hagen, PR&I
Dan Hansen, Secretary	Ian Pringle	Alan Kraus, Soil Health Outreach	Adam Arndt
Dave Melby, Vice Chair	Adrienne Gransee		
Mark Ditlevson, Chairman			

The October agenda was reviewed, no changes were made.

The September minutes were distributed to the Supervisors prior to the meeting. A correction was noted by Hansen. His attendance had not been recorded for the Cannon bus tour. Motion was made by Melby, seconded by Hansen, to approve the minutes with the correction. Motion carried by voice vote.

The September Treasurer’s Report was read by Ihlenfeld. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Melby, 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. There was no old business to discuss.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Resolution Packet – Gransee distributed the packets to the Board members. She discussed that the votes will all be submitted electronically this year and requested that board members get their votes returned to her by October 28<sup>th</sup> if they would like her to submit them on their behalf.
2. Draft Audit – Gransee presented the draft audit to the Board. There were a few minor adjustments that the auditor requested and they noted a couple points that could be of concern. These are directly related to the small staff size which leads to a lack of separation of duties and a limited number of staff familiar with accounting procedures. The auditor made recommendations about how to accommodate for these, including having expenses pre-approved by the Board and regularly having an outside party review the District financials; both of which are already District policy.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

3. Soil Health Training event – Nov 13-14 – Jackson MN – Pringle gave the Board details about what was going to be covered at the training, which included job approval authority topics and a field day with exposure to various types of equipment. He requested approval for the time away from the office as well as lodging and meals. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Melby, to approve Ian Pringle attending the training and to cover the associated costs, Motion passed by voice vote.
4. Cover Crop and No-till/Strip till Cost Share Policy Update – Alan Kraus informed the Board that he had learned through sources at BWSR that there is nothing in policy that prevents the District from matching State funding sources with additional State funding. The only way that it become an issue is if local policy restricts that type of match. The current cost share policy states that the District will match with other “non-state” funding sources. The update presented was to eliminate “non-state” and replace it with “eligible”. This opens up additional matching options for the District programs. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve this update. Motion passed by voice vote.
5. Cover Crop Contract – 24-1-CC, \$12,000 – Cannon 1W1P – Pringle presented the details for this contract. It will be 100 acres at \$40 per acre for a 3 year period. Motion was made by Melby, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve the contract. Motion carried by voice vote.
6. Fall Area 7 Meeting – October 22, 9:00AM – 3:00PM – Hormel Nature Center – The Board was reminded about the upcoming meeting and the agenda was reviewed. Those wishing to car pool should plan to be at the office before 8am.

**Agency Reports**

Jim Smith reported that throughout the state 94 million dollars has been dedicated to EQIP contracts and 47 million to CSP contracts. They are anticipating having the same amount of funding available nor FY25. NRCS is planning to add more staff to the area including a Soil Conservationist in Steele county. Smith reported that due to the Farm Bill having expired new CRP sign-ups are currently on hold. In addition to the program updates he reported on his activities which include checking cover crops, completing construction projects, and meeting with wetland banking consultants.

Alan Kraus reported on an Extension meeting that he attended focused on the return on investments seen with conservation practices. He has been spending time out of the office meeting the local landowners and becoming more familiar with the county. He also spoke about a nitrogen rate trial that he is interested in organizing. Krause also reported that there is currently a plan to run a Hailey test on Brad Hagen’s farm.

**Staff Reports**

Eric Gulbransen continues to do evaluations for possible FEMA project sites. He reported that 3 of the open WCA cases that he has been involved with have been completed, and there has also been a lot of activity on the county ditch systems.

Ian Pringle stated that he has completed the CRP status reviews as well as contacting those who are eligible for a CRP incentive payment. He also reported on the presentation that he gave to the BeeFriendly group regarding invasive species.

Adrienne Gransee gave a status update on the 2025 calendar as well as a brief review of what the Envirothon committee is currently working on in preparation for the 2025 event. She reminded the Board that she needs a final count for convention so that she can get everyone interested in attending registered.

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

Respectfully Submitted by,



Adrienne Gransee,  
Administrative Assistant

October Bills

<b>Cedardale Dev. Co</b>	<b>October Rent</b>		<b>\$792.00</b>
<b>Spectrum</b>	<b>Internet</b>		<b>\$89.99</b>
<b>Elan</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>87.40</b>	
	<b>Gas</b>	<b>130.29</b>	
	<b>Postage</b>	<b>12.95</b>	
	<b>Monthyl Payroll</b>	<b>25.77</b>	
	<b>Field Day Supplies</b>	<b>256.07</b>	
	<b>Truck Maintenance</b>	<b>56.76</b>	
	<b>Tree Puller Repair</b>	<b>245.3</b>	
	<b>Office Supplies</b>	<b>279.62</b>	<b>\$1,094.16</b>
<b>Freeborn SWCD</b>	<b>Easement Specialist - Q3</b>		<b>\$606.69</b>
<b>Eric Gulbransen</b>	<b>Mileage 28@0.68</b>		<b>\$19.04</b>
			<b>\$2,601.88</b>