



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 April 10, 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	Adam Arndt	Rick Gnemi, County Commissioner	
Dave Melby, Vice Chair	Adrienne Gransee	Roger Wacek	
Brad Hagen, PR&I	Ian Pringle		
Mark Ditlevson, Chairman			

The April agenda was reviewed, no changes were made.

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

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

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Meeting Reports – JPB – Mark Ihlenfeld gave an update of the most recent JPB meeting. They interviewed for the open Technician position and made an offer to one applicant, but the applicant decided to withdraw from consideration. The decision was made to hold off reopening the position for applications for the time being.

Brad Hagen gave the board the most current information regarding the oat plant that is planned to be built in Albert Lea. They have found the support that the needed to move forward. The plan is to have 20,000 acres of food grade oats grown in southern Minnesota and northern Iowa processed annual at this facility beginning in 2025.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Tree Week Assistance & Meals – 1-2 additional people and lunches – Ian Pringle and Adam Arndt have arranged to have students assist with unloading a preparations on Monday and Tuesday. In addition to that they requested approval for 1-2 additional people to assist with pick-up days; these people would be compensated \$15 per hour. They also requested approval to provide lunches for those who are working for both unloading days and during pick-up. Motion was made by Melby, seconded by Hansen, to approve these requests. Motion carried by voice vote.
2. Cannon 1W1P Cost Share Contract Approval – Arndt presented 2 basin projects, listed below, to the Board for approval. These projects will be funded through the Cannon 1W1P and fall into priority areas qualifying them for increased percentages of cost share assistance. Motion was made Ihlenfeld, seconded by Melby, to approve the contracts. Motion carried by voice vote.
 - 24-ST-001, Basin, \$6,855.20
 - 24-ST-002, Basins, \$20,010.70
3. Supervisor travel expenses and meals – extended travel – Since the Board has members that are doing more extensive traveling than in past years Gransee reviewed what expenses could be covered when a Board member is traveling and acting as a representative for the SWCD. It was decided that extended travel costs such as meals, hotel, mileage and per diem would be covered as long as the Board member had prior approval for the expenses. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Hansen, to approve the expenses as discussed. Motion carried by voice vote.
4. Shared Soil Health Position – Eric Gulbransen gave the Board an update on this position that will be shared between Steele and Rice SWCDs. This position will be full time for the lifespan of the grant that is funding it. Gulbransen informed the Board that it will be posited soon and the Steele Board will have the opportunity to be involved in the review of candidates and the interview process.
5. Ian Pringle Probationary Period Review – The Personnel committee met with Pringle prior to the Board meeting to conduct his review. Their recommendation to the Board was to remove his probationary status and grant him a 1 step increase on the pay scale. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Melby, to approve the changes recommended by the personnel committee. Motion carried by voice vote.
6. Credit Card for Ian Pringle – With Pringle no longer on probation it was requested that he be given permission to have a District credit card to use for incidental expenses such as filling up the trucks. Motion was made by Melby, seconded by Hansen, to approve this request. Motion carried by voice vote.

Public Comments

Roger Wacek spoke about a book that has recently made an impact on him call Dirt to Soil. He also spoke about the method and history of the Haney Soil test.

Agency Reports

Jim Smith told the Board that Nathan Bird, the Soil Conservationist in the Dodge Center office, will be assisting with the work in Steele county. Smith said that they are working on finalizing CSP and EQIP applications. He also spoke about some recent training and gave the Board a reminder about the local workgroup meeting that will be taking place.

Rick Gnemi let the Board know that they are having trouble finding a qualified replacement for Scott Goldberg who will be retiring shortly. He also let the Board know that James Brady is not planning to run again after his current term as commissioner is finished.

Staff Reports

Eric Gulbransen reported that WCA activity has been increasing. He also spoke about the MN Association of Drainage Inspectors meeting that he attended in St Cloud.

Adam Arndt told the Board that he has been working on completing buffer inspections as well as site visits for projects. He also spoke about the Area 7 spring meeting at Oxbow park.

Adrienne Gransee gave the Board a brief update on the current status of Envirothon and ensured the interested Board members that she would contact them regarding judging as soon as she had spoken with Angela White who is coordinating the event this year.

Ian Pringle reported that he has been working with Arndt to gain more field experience, as well as completing a variety of trainings. He has been making contact with landowners who are interested in cost share projects. And he also sent out information to a selected group of landowners regarding the possibility of shore projects around Beaver Lake.

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

Respectfully Submitted by,



Adrienne Gransee,
Administrative Assistant

March Bills

Cedardale Dev. Co	April Rent		\$792.00
Spectrum	Internet		\$89.99
Cedardale Dev. Co	Garage		\$600.00
Elan	Legislative Registration	625.00	
	Hotel Rooms	796.7	
	Gas	144.58	
	Phone	87.25	
	March Payroll Fee	25.77	
	Wix Email	29.00	\$1,708.30
DeWitt	Matting		\$1,909.08
		Total	\$5,099.37