



**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 Thursday February 15, 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		
Brad Hagen, PR&I	Ian Pringle		
Mark Ditlevson, Chairman			

The February agenda was reviewed, no changes were made.

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

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

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Meeting Reports – Dan Hansen attended the 1W1P JPB meeting on February 7. They elected new officers, reviewed the budget and the completed projects. They also discussed well sealing.

Brad Hagen reported on the event that he attended in Florida. The focus of the event was to promote more collaboration between public and private entities. They discussed offering higher prices per bushel on crops grown by producers who use conservation practices and the desire for more transparency about the practices used. There was also discussion about the MPCA requiring that cover crops be grown on areas where manure is going to be applied. They discussed cover crop programs being implemented in various states and the drive to reduce carbon emissions.

Mark Ditlevson reported on the NACD National meeting that he attended. He was pleased with the meeting overall and there were a few awards given out to MN Districts.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Steele-Freeborn Easement Services Agreement – Eric Gulbransen presented the updated service agreement to the Board. The most significant change to the agreement is that rather than paying a flat quarterly rate we will be charged billable and mileage for actual hours worked. Motion was made by Melby, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve the agreement with the new method of billing. Motion passed by voice vote.
2. 2023 Financial Audit – Peterson Company - \$5,550 – Adrienne Gransee presented the quote from Peterson Company for completing the 2023 Financial Audit. She reviewed the reasons for the increase in cost from previous years, and there was discussion about past experiences with them and the possibility of finding another company to complete the audit. After discussion motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Hagen, to accept the quote and have the audit completed by Peterson Company. Motion passed by voice vote.
3. State Cost Share Contract – Contract 23-1, Grass Waterway, \$7,800 – Adam Arndt presented the contract for a set of 3 grass waterways. He reviewed the details of the project with the Board. Motion was made by Melby, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve the contract. Motion carried by voice vote.
4. Day at the Capital – March 12-13 – Adrienne Gransee got a count of who plans to attend and how many hotel rooms will be needed. She will be making reservations and contacting legislators to schedule meetings.
5. March Meeting Date – The original planned date for the March meeting was the 12<sup>th</sup>, but that conflicts with the MASWCD Day at the Capital. After discussion it was decided to move the meeting to March 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 PM.
6. Winter Workshop – February 22, 2024, Torey’s Restaurant – Adam Arndt reminded the Board about the upcoming event. He also informed them of a similar event that will be taking place in Owatonna in March.

**Agency Reports**

Rick Gnemi spoke about a project going on at FarmAmerica involving a series of test plots. He also gave updates on ongoing ditch projects and informed the Board that they are moving forward with the process of finding a new County Administrator.

Jim Smith gave the Board an update about the status of the CSP applications. There were 14 received, several of those being for forestry practices. They have been completing site visits for those in order to begin plans. He also reported that EQIP applications are beginning to be funded. Smith informed the Board that Teddy Moreno-Santos will be taking a 120 day detail with the State Office to help cover an open position.

**Staff Reports**

Eric Gulbransen told the Board about the drainage conference that he attended. The information was very useful and should help him with ongoing drainage projects.

Adam Arndt gave the Board a summary of the BeeFriendly event that he and Ian Pringle spoke at. One point that a member had made to him was that the spray that the city uses is having a negative effect on the pollinators; after spraying was done she saw a dramatic decrease in the number and variety in her garden and noticed a significant number that were lying dead. Arndt also gave a brief summary of the Cannon 1W1P annual report.

Adrienne Gransee reported on the eLink reporting that has been completed, on annual trainings that have been finished and gave a brief update on the tree program.

Ian Pringle spoke about a meeting with the Owatonna Ag teacher Liz Tinaglia about the possibility of having students assist with tree week, primarily unloading the trucks. He also told them about a plan to offer nitrate testing in conjunction with out pickup event. Samples would be dropped off during pick up and results would be sent out to landowners at a later date.

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

February Bills

<b>Spectrum</b>		<b>Internet</b>		<b>\$89.99</b>
<b>Cedardale Development Co.</b>		<b>February Rent</b>		<b>\$792.00</b>
<b>Steele Co Free Fair</b>		<b>Fair Booth &amp; Parking</b>		<b>\$250.00</b>
<b>Association of MN Counties</b>		<b>Drainage Conference</b>		<b>\$195.00</b>
<b>Elan</b>		<b>Gas</b>	<b>\$53.12</b>	
		<b>Phone</b>	<b>\$87.25</b>	
		<b>Quickbooks</b>	<b>\$696.86</b>	
		<b>Wix Email</b>	<b>\$29.00</b>	<b>\$866.23</b>
<b>Court Sports</b>		<b>Clothing</b>		<b>\$162.00</b>
			<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,355.22</b>