



**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 Dave Melby at 5:00 PM on Wednesday February 12, 2025 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, Secretary	Eric Gulbransen	Jim Smith, NRCS	
Dan Hansen, Vice Chair	Adam Arndt	Lezlie Sorensen, NRCS	
Dave Melby, Chairman	Adrienne Gransee	Annie Gunness, BWSR	
Brad Hagen, Treasurer	Ian Pringle		
Mark Ditlevson, PR&I	Alan Krause		

The February agenda was reviewed, no changes were made.

The January minutes were distributed to the Supervisors prior to the meeting. Dan Hansen noted three places where corrections were needed. Motion was made by Hagen, seconded by Hanen, to approve the minutes with the noted corrections. Motion carried by voice vote.

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

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

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Meeting Reports – Dan Hansen attended the Canon 1W1P JPB meeting on February 5. There was a discussion regarding funding for an algae bloom study. Hansen spoke against the project but it did pass when put to a vote. Hansen told the Board about a Lidar presentation that was done during the meeting. He was impressed with information and how well it was prepared.

Brad Hagen reported on a soil Health meeting that he attended in Mankato. He was unimpressed with the agenda and the information presented was outdated. He didn’t really feel that the meeting was worth attending.

Hagen also reported on the Tru-Terra meeting that he attended in Florida. This was large meeting with a variety of speakers and groups attending. The main focus was on food producers wanting to promote healthier land and food without having to increase their base costs. Hagen also told the Board about a company from Brazil that is planning to produce plastic from corn rather than oil.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Meeting Reports Continued – Mark Ihlenfeld reported on the JPB meeting that he attended. They completed their annual audit review and the 2024 project reports. Ihlenfeld reviewed who the new Board members were as well.

Mark Ihlenfeld and Dave Melby participated in the Zoom meeting focused on the information to discuss at the Day at the Capital. Both reported that the meeting was lacking in useful information. They did say that the new building is open and the process for attending meetings has been changed slightly. Those attending scheduled meetings will be escorted to and from rather than having free access to the building.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Day at the Capital – March 4-5 – Adrienne Gransee requested a final count of who planned to attend so that she could get everyone registered and hotel rooms finalized. Adam Arndt, Dan Hansen, Dave Melby and Mark Ihlenfeld will be attending this year.
2. 2024 Financial Audit Quote – Peterson Company - \$5,900 – Adrienne Gransee presented the quote from Peterson Company for the Board to consider. The cost is slightly higher than what was charged for the 2024 audit. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve the quote and move forward with Peterson for the 2024 financial audit. Motion passed by voice vote.
3. Winter Workshop – February 18 – Torey’s Restaurant – Adam Arndt gave the Board an update on the upcoming winter workshop. He reported that plans were moving along smoothly and there were currently 120 people registered to attend the event.
4. RCPP Update – Gulbransen, Pringle, and Gransee attended a meeting covering the RCPP program. Each of the eligible District’s that choose to participate will receive \$180,000 for their first installment and they will have the option of requesting an additional \$120,000 once 80% of the original grant is allocated. An additional \$120,000 can be requested monthly if the previous funds have been properly allocated. The covered practices were discussed as well as the standards to follow and the process for batching and ranking applications.
5. Canon 1W1P annual report – Gulbransen distributed the annual report to the Board.
6. Other – The Board requested an update on the contract that has been in place with Freeborn SWCD regarding the processing of our RIM and CREP easements. They would like to have a semi-annual report made at the Board meetings so that they can be kept up to date on what is happening within the county. Gulbransen stated that it could be discussed at the meeting planned to cover the terms of the next contract.

**Public Comment**

Roger Wacek spoke to the Board again about Haney testing and asked if there had been any side by side comparisons of the Haney test and other commonly used tests. He also inquired if there were plans for this type of comparison testing to be done at a local level.

**Agency Reports**

Anne Gunness introduced herself to the Board. She is the new BC from BWSR who will be working with the Steele SWCD to manage our grants. She gave the Board a brief overview of her education and employment history, which included time working at the U of M Landscape Arboretum. She also provided an update of the competitive grants that are currently accepting applications.

Jim Smith reported on the current status of the Federal hiring freeze and the funding that is currently under review. There will be someone starting a 120 day detail beginning March 10. They have been instructed to keep working on contracts but final signatures need to wait until the funding has been resolved.

**Staff Reports**

Eric Gulbransen spoke about the 3 day drainage conference that he attended and the one that he is planning to attend in the beginning of March. He gave an update on JD6 and the repair that is planned for this summer.

Adam Arndt has been spending his time surveying projects for the upcoming year. He has been working to help finalize the details for the winter workshop and looking at options for future program funding.

Adrienne Gransee has been assisting with tree sales and working on a variety of website updates. The annual eLink reporting is complete and no adjustments have been requested yet. She also informed the Board that she will be unable to attend the March board meeting.

Ian Pringle has been working with Arndt on the project surveying. He has also been working on setting up the pick up dates for trees and trying to coordinate having local students participate in the preparation leading up to tree distribution.

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

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>Association of MN Counties</b>		<b>Drainage Conference</b>		<b>\$295.00</b>
<b>Elan</b>		<b>Meals</b>	<b>\$16.00</b>	
		<b>Cell Phone</b>	<b>\$87.44</b>	
		<b>Postage</b>	<b>\$158.66</b>	
		<b>QuikBooks Annual Subscription</b>	<b>\$1,072.68</b>	
		<b>QuickBooks Payroll</b>	<b>\$30.07</b>	
		<b>Wix Extended Email</b>	<b>\$29.00</b>	
		<b>Supplies</b>	<b>\$21.46</b>	
		<b>Gas</b>	<b>\$23.93</b>	<b>\$1,439.24</b>
<b>Goodhue SWCD</b>		<b>Envirothon Dues</b>		<b>\$175.00</b>
			<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,791.23</b>