STEELE COUNTY
Soil and Water Conservation District

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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, 2026 at the Steele County Historical Society, 1700 Austin Rd, Owatonna MN 55060.

SWCD Supervisors Present:	**SWCD Staff Present:**	**Others Present:**	**Absent:**
Mark Ihlenfeld, Secretary	Eric Gulbransen	Jim Smith, NRCS	Brad Hagen, Treasurer
Dan Hansen, Vice Chair	Adam Arndt	Lezlie Sorensen, NRCS	Alan Krause
Dave Melby, Chairman	Adrienne Gransee	Leanna Smeby, NRCS	
Mark Ditlevson, PR&I	Ian Pringle	Roger Wacek	

The February agenda was reviewed, no changes were made.

The January minutes were distributed to the Supervisors prior to the meeting. Dan Hansen noted a chance was needed to who called the meeting to order. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Ditlevson, to approve the minutes with the noted corrections. Motion carried by voice vote.

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

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

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Meeting Reports – Dan Hansen reported on the Cannon 1W1P meeting that he attended. They discussed the officer positions and made no changes for 2026. They approved the company to perform the 2025 financial audit and approved a CD renewal. They also drafted a letter of support for Pheasants Forever and reviewed the results of lake water testing from 2025.

   Mark Ihlenfeld attended the JOB meeting with Ian Pringle. They discussed the organization of the Board and decided to make no changes. They reviewed the 2026 budget and discussed the new employee that was brought on to fill the vacant position.

   Mark Ditlevson reported on the BeeFriendly meeting that he attended at the Owatonna library. The primary focus of the meeting was on how to get good photographs of local pollinators.

OLD BUSINESS Cont.:

1. Meeting Reports – Mark Ditlevson, Dave Melby, Dan Hansen, Eric Gulbransen, Ian Pringle and Adam Arndt attended a meeting focused on the effects of neonicotinoids. The meetings discussed it's effects on local wildlife, specifically mammals and birds. When tested there were detectible amounts in deer populations. Another take away that was brought up was the nearly 80% of what is applied remains in the ground.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Day at the Capital – March 17-18 – Gransee got a head count of those planning to attend the Day at the Capital so that she can complete registration and reserve hotel rooms.

2. Winter Workshop – Torey's Restaurant – February 17, 8:30-2:00 – Arndt reminded those in attendance of the soil health event being held. He reported that they had approximately 115 people registered and encouraged those in at the meeting to attend.

3. 2026 SE JPB Dues - $4000 – Motion was made by Ditlevson, seconded by Hansen, to approve paying the dues for 2026. Motion passed by voice vote.

4. BWSR Report – Eric Gulbransen presented the update sent over from Annie Gunness. It included updates on the RCPP grant and the Soil Health Delivery grant, as well as the competitive Clean Water grants. IT also included information about BWSR's Spring Training series.

Public Comment

Roger Wacek spoke about the benefits that could be gained by converting the water retention areas by the library into rain gardens and the benefit of natural fiber weed barrier over synthetic.

Agency Reports

Leanna Smeby spoke about the expected timeline for EQIP application and projects. She also informed the Board of new maximum cost share amounts for practices. She also said that updated engineering standards had been released. Smeby stated that there is the possibility for a CRP contribution agreement again this year.

Staff Reports

Eric Gulbransen has been working with the County to complete the FEMA related ditch work. He also reported on the MN Drainage Conference that he attended. In addition he has been involved with the planning for the winter workshop and the strip-till bus tour.

Staff Reports

Adam Arndt has been assisting with getting eLink reporting completed. He is also involved with the planning and preparations for the winter workshop and the bus tour.

Adrienne Gransee has been assisting with trees, in addition to completing year end and eLink reporting. She was involved with finalizing the 2026 installation at the Steele County Historical Society. It will be on display for the entirety of 2026. She has also started to pick up some of the Waseca administrative duties.

Ian Pringle gave the Board an update on tree sales so far. Sales are slightly lower that previous years, with approximately 8,000 trees sold so far. Pots have been less in demand that in previous years. RCPP continues to keep Pringle busy and the request for the next allocation will be ready soon.

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

Respectfully Submitted by,

Adrienne Gransee

Adrienne Gransee,
Administrative Assistant

February Bills

Spectrum		**Internet**		**$89.99**
Cedardale Development Co.		**February Rent**		**$792.00**
Elan		**Phone**	**$89.66**	
		Wix Extended Email	**$29.00**	
		QuickBooks Payroll	**$30.07**	
		QuickBooks Annual Subscription	**$1,126.36**	
		Handbook Training	**$179.00**	
		Gas	**$58.28**	**$1,512.37**
Chad Bilat		**Easement Services**		**$1,085.00**
AgriDrain		**Bar Guard - Easement Outlet**		**$45.18**
			Total	**$3,524.54**