



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 December 11, 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	Vern Wilker	
Dave Melby, Vice Chair	Adrienne Gransee		
Mark Ditlevson, Chairman	Ian Pringle		
Brad Hagen, PR&I			

The December agenda was reviewed, two items were added.

The November minutes were distributed to the Supervisors prior to the meeting. Motion was made by Melby, seconded by Hansen, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried by voice vote.

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

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

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Meeting Reports – Dan Hansen, Dave Melby, Mark Ihlenfeld and Eric Gulbransen attended the annual MASWCD convention in Minneapolis December 2-4. Ihlenfeld reported on the Resolution meeting. Of the eight that were presented, ones was approved. He also informed the Board of a by-law change that will allow the State Board Chairman to serve 2 consecutive 2 year terms of office.

Hansen and Melby reported on breakout sessions that they attended including one presented by Lisa Hinz on developing trust among board members and staff and keeping an open mind when listening to new ideas. They said that it was a well done presentation.

There was a legislative update from Goff Public. It is not looking positive for receiving an increase to the SWCD Aid due to the divided House and Senate and the reduced surplus that is being forecasted.

Troy Daniels gave a brief update for NRCS. The increased funding level they received in 2024 allowed them to fund more contracts but there were still a significant number that were not funded.

OLD BUSINESS:

Meeting Reports – Brad Hagen reported on the soil health meeting that he attended in Mankato. Ray Archuleta was one of the speakers as well as Lance Gunderson. Hagen commented on Gunderson being a good presenter and providing interesting information. He also stated that the breakout sessions that he attended were well worth the time.

Brad Hagen spoke about the meeting that he attended in Iowa December 9-11. There were a variety of speakers and topics addressed during the meeting including an in depth discussion about the Haney test presented by Liz Haney. Hagen stated that the event was very informative and well worth attending.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. 2025 Ditch Inspector Contract – Eric Gulbransen presented the new contract to the Board. The County Board agreed to the increased hourly rate of \$50 as had been requested. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Melby, to approve the contract. Motion carried by voice vote.
2. Cover Crop Payment Approval – Adam Arndt presented the cover crop contract listed below for payment. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Hagen, to approve payment. Motion carried by voice vote.
 - 6-21-CC, \$3,200
 - 1-22-CC, \$3,200
 - 2-22-CC, \$6,400
 - 3-22-CC, \$3,200
 - 1-23-CC, \$4,800
 - 2-23-CC, \$9,600
3. IntraFi Network – FDIC Bank Insurance – Adrienne Gransee presented the information about the new system that United Prairie is going to be using to ensure that funds over \$250,000 remain covered by FDIC insurance. It was requested that Eric Gulbransen be granted the authority to sign the needed forms and communicate with the bank to get the new system in place before the end of the year. Motion was made by Hagen, seconded by Melby, to approve the request. Motion passed by voice vote.
4. Straight River Marsh Replacement Sign Estimate – Sign Pro, \$200-\$375 – Gulbransen presented the estimate from Sing Pro for the replacement of the Straight River Marsh sign. They sent estimates for replacement of the sign only and for the sign and stand since the condition of the stand is unknown. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve moving forward with the estimates provided. Motion carried by voice vote.
5. Cost Share Payment Approval – 24-ST-001, \$6,265.12, Basins, 1W1P – Ian Pringle presented the contract to the Board. Motion was made by Melby, seconded by Hansen, to approve the payment. Motion carried by voice vote.
6. Cover Crop Contract Default – 2-21-CC, \$7,200 Total \$2,400 Annually – This contract was presented to the Board. The contract holder was paid for the second and third year at the same time due to the grant expiring. They have failed to complete the terms of the contract over the course of the last 2 years. The Board has the option of requesting up to 150% of the payments to be returned. There was discussion about what caused the failure to follow through with the planting and it was decided that the District would request repayment for only the final payment, \$2,400. Motion was made by Melby, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to request repayment of only the final payment. Motion carried by voice vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

7. Annual Staff Reviews – The Personnel Committee met with staff prior to the Board meeting to conduct annual reviews. They met with the Board and made their recommendations regarding step increases and a cost of living adjustment. The Board decided that each staff member would receive a one step increase and a 3% cost of living adjustment. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Hagen, to approve these changes. Motion carried by voice vote.

Agency Reports

Jim Smith gave the Board an update regarding NRCS staffing. The DC position is still open and accepting applications. He also let the Board know that Lezlie Sorensen has officially started her new position in the Steele office. Smith stated CRP is still on hold due to the expired farm bill. Smith has been working on site visits and surveying for future projects, as well as working to assess and rank more of the EQIP applications.

Staff Reports

Eric Gulbransen stated that many of the ongoing ditch projects are nearing completion, but there will still be work that needs to be done on other systems. He also stated that he continues to be busy with WCA.

Adam Arndt has been verifying the cover crop seedings and completing the seed calculations needed for reposting to BWSR. He has also been working on gathering information for potential projects for next year.

Ian Pringle has continued to train with Arndt and Smith. He also attended an extensive training on the use of the Russel program. He reported that the training was quite well done and will be beneficial in the future.

Adrienne Gransee has been preparing the website for the start of the annual tree sale as well as finalizing the 2025 calendar. In addition she has begun to complete some of the year end activities such as grant reporting.

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

December Bills

Cedardale Dev Co		December Rent		\$792.00
Spectrum		Internet		\$89.99
Cedardale Dev Co		Garage Rent		\$600.00
Tree World		Plantskydd		\$503.28
Elan		Gas	\$184.17	
		Registration	\$1,773.09	
		Supplies	\$28.18	
		Cell Phone	\$87.43	
		Monthly Payroll	\$67.65	
		Postage	\$118.55	
		WIX Email	\$29.00	
		Hotel	\$127.46	
		Meals	\$127.95	\$2,543.48
Ian Pringle		300 miles @ 0.67		\$201.00
			TOTAL	\$4,729.75