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 4:00 PM on Wednesday September 9, 2026 at the Steele County Soil and Water Conservation District, 235 Cedardale Drive SE, Owatonna MN 55060.

SWCD Supervisors Present:	**SWCD Staff Present:**	**Others Present:**	**Absent:**
Mark Ihlenfeld, Secretary	Eric Gulbransen	Jim Smith, NRCS	
Mark Ditlevson, PR&I	Adrienne Gransee	Lezlie Sorensen, NRCS	
Dave Melby, Chairman	Ian Pringle	Shane Bugeja, BWSR	
Dan Hansen, Vice Chair	Adam Arndt		
Dennis Deml	Alan Krause		

The September agenda was reviewed, no changes were made.

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

The August Treasurer's Report was read by Ihlenfeld. Motion was made by Ditlevson, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve the August 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 – Ag Luncheon at Owatonna Eagles – August 14 – Dave Melby, Mark Ihlenfeld and Mark Ditlevson attended this event. Glen Thompson spoke about the updates to the proposed Federal farm bill. He addressed the highlights but didn't speak about any conservation related items. He did express support for including ag programs in school and for FFA.

   Farm Progress Show – Boone, IA – September 1 – Mark Ditlevson attended this event. He reported that the event had problems because of the weather but was still well attended by both domestic and international producers.

   County Budget Meeting – September 8 – Mark Ditlevson, Dave Melby, Mark Ihlenfeld, Dan Hansen, Eric Gulbransen, Ian Pringle and Adrienne Gransee all attended this meeting with the County Budget Committee. The District was given nearly an hour to present information regarding to the reason for the increased allocation request and to answer questions presented by the committee.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Board Treasurer – The Board discussed plans for the Treasurer position moving forward. It was proposed that Mark Ditlevson take over the role as he would be next in line for the position in 2027. It was also discussed that having Mark Ihlenfeld on the account as an additional signer would help to ensure that checks could be signed in a timely manner. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Deml, to approve removing Brad Hagen from all of the United Prairie accounts and adding both Mark Ditlevson and Mark Ihlenfeld. Motion passed by voice vote.

2. 2027 Board Meeting Day and Time – The Board discussed if they were content with the current schedule and if any adjustments were desired. It was decided that the 2nd Wednesday at 4pm would be the schedule for 2027, with adjustments made for Lent and any conflicting holidays. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve the day and time as discussed. Motion carried by voice vote.

3. MASWCD Annual Convention – Dec 1-2 – DoubleTree Hotel Bloomington, MN – Gransee presented the Board with the dates for the convention and informed them that there is a pre-convention event taking place on November 30th as well. She got a tentative head count of those interested in attending so that she can book rooms at the hotel.

4. BWSR Academy – October 20-22 – Cragun's Resort – Gransee presented the dates and location for the 2026 BWSR Academy and requested Board approval for the registration, hotel and meal expenses for staff interested in attending this year. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve the expenses related to attending BWSR Academy. Motion passed by voice vote.

5. Other – Eric Gulbransen informed the Board that Noel Frank has agreed to speak about the Armstrong Easement during the SE Area 7 employee and supervisor meeting on September 23.

6. Other – Dan Hansen brought up the increased workload for Adam Arndt due to him taking over responsibility for the easements. He feels that there should be an adjustment to Arndt's compensation to correspond to the increased responsibility. It was discussed and decided to make that evaluation as part of the year end review.

Agency Reports

Jim Smith and Lezlie Sorensen provided an update for NRCS. They gave an update on the deadline to apply for EQIP in the 2026 fiscal year. They also updated the Board on CRP. They are continuing to complete status reviews and the open CREP contracts are nearly complete.

Shane Bugeja informed the Board that this will be his last meeting as Annie will soon be back from her maternity leave. He reviewed what grants are available and reminded everyone that there will be an RFI for 2027 grants available soon.

Staff Reports

Eric Gulbransen reported on the WCA activity, which has included an application for wetland bank credits. He also spoke about the status of the ongoing and upcoming ditch projects.

Alan Kraus has continued to keep inContact with those from the bus tour who were interested. He has also been involved in planning the Polacek field day schedule for September 16.

Adam Arndt has been focused primarily on learning about the RIM and CREP program. He is working through the process with those whose contracts are already in progress. In addition, he has been working with Pringle to complete the annual easement inspections.

Ian Pringle has been answering a fair number of questions regarding cover crop seedings for those who have active contracts. He has also been completing easement checks with Arndt.

Adrienne Gransee has been focused on finalizing the materials for the budget presentation to the county. She reported that the 2025 draft audit is complete.

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

September Bills

Cedardale Dev. Co	**September Rent**			**$836.64**
Cedardale Dev. Co	**Garage Rent**			**$600.00**
Spectrum	**Internet**			**$89.99**
Adrienne Gransee	**388 miles @ $0.76**			**$294.88**
Elan	**Gas**		**$102.71**	
	Hotel		**$43.90**	
	Meal		**$28.31**	
	Vehicle Maintenance		**$166.72**	
	Phone		**$89.67**	
	Bus Tour Food		**$732.02**	
	Field Supplies		**$25.76**	
	Postage		**$248.85**	
	QuickBooks Payroll Fee		**$30.07**	
	Fair Booth Materials		**$268.51**	**$1,736.52**
Chad Billat	**Easement Services**			**$279.00**
				$3,837.03