STEELE COUNTY
Soil and Water Conservation District

235 Cedardale Drive SE
Owatonna MN 55060
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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 August 12, 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	Leanna Smeby, NRCS	
Dan Hansen, Vice Chair	Adam Arndt		
Dennis Deml	Alan Krause		

The August agenda was reviewed, no changes were made.

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

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

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

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Meeting Reports – Cannon 1W1P Meeting and Bus Tour – Dave Melby and Dan Hansen attended this meeting and the tour. They reported that dues for 2027 were going to remain the same and a high percentage of those funds will be directed toward lake water quality sampling. They both stated that they enjoyed the bus tour that followed the meeting. Two stops that they spoke about were a restored wetland and the Lake Volney shore restoration/stabilization project.

   Farm Fest – Mark Ditlevson reported on the Farm Fest event. There were a large number of politicians in attendance at the event. He stated that strip till and drone usage for farming were significant topics at the event.

OLD BUSINESS:

2. Strip Till Bus Tour – Eric Gulbransen, Ian Pringle, Alan Krause participated in this event. Of the approximately 40 people that participated in this event the majority were local landowners. They attended a pre-conference event that was limited to 100 people as well as the main event. It was reported that the pre-conference event felt more sales focused. The main event consisted of over 400 attendees. There was a lot of engagement and conversation. The feedback from the attendees was primarily positive with some stating that they would be interested in participating in this type of event again.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Board Treasurer – With Brad Hagen resigning the Board Treasurer position is open. Mark Ihlenfeld volunteered to resume the position until a more permanent solution was decided.

2. Fair Schedule – The Board discussed Supervisor duties in regard to the fair booth and each selected an evening to be responsible for attending to the booth.

3. Conservation Farmer Sign – The District is currently out of the Conservation Farmer Award signs that are presented to the winners each year. Staff have gotten price quotes and the signs are currently running $80/each from Sign Pro. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve the purchase of 10 signs from Sign Pro. Motion carried by voice vote.

4. Non-Structural Contract Approval Authority – The staff approached the Board requesting that Eric Gulbransen be given authority to approve non-structural contracts such as cover crops and no-till/strip till. This would allow landowners/operators to move forward with the practice more quickly since they will not have to wait until the next Board meeting for contract approval. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, and seconded by Ditlevson, to grant Gulbransen signing authority for non-structural contracts. Morion carried by voice vote.

5. Cannon 1W1P Payment Vouchers – Ian Pringle presented the contract listed below for payment. He reviewed the details of each with the Board. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve the payments. Motion carried by voice vote.
    - 26-ST-001-Brown, Waterway, $6,750.00
    - 26-ST-003-Ahrens, Waterway, $7,170.00

NEW BUSINESS:

6. FY26 Soil Health Delivery Contract Approval – Ian Pringle presented the contract listed below for approval. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Deml, to approve the contracts as presented. Motion carried by voice vote.
    - Cover Crops
        - **i.** 26-CC-01, 33 Acres, 3 years, $6,435
        - **ii.** 26-CC-03, 70 Acres, 3 years, $10,500
    - Strip Till/No-till
        - **i.** 26-ST-02, 80 Acres, 3 years, $9,600
        - **ii.** 26-ST-03, 33 Acres, 1 year, $825

Agency Reports

Jim Smith, Leanna Smeby and Lezlie Sorensen provided an update for NRCS. They reported on Troy Daniels and Luther Newton visiting the office. They also provided an update on the status of the EQIP and CSP programs, as well as upcoming trainings regarding the local work group meetings. At the local level, the waterways that have been under construction are finished. CRP status reviews for those eligible for re-enroll in 2027 have begun, and 58 CRP contracts for 2026 have been completed. There are 8 more that need to be finished.

Staff Reports

Eric Gulbransen reported that WCA activity has slowed in the last month. He also provided an update about the CD22 clean out which is currently accepting bids. He updated the Board on the ditch systems that were sprayed this year as well. Finally, he informed the Board that the County Auditor will be leaving her position effective Friday, Aug 14. It is unknown a this time who will be filling the position.

Adam Arndt has been focused on learning about the RIM and CREP easement programs. The process is slow and there is a steep learning curve so it is taking a fair amount of his time currently. In addition to that he reported on the Pogones project that has begun construction.

Adrienne Gransee has been focused on finalizing plans and materials for the fair booth. She has also been compiling information to present to the County Board for the budget presentation.

Staff Reports

Ian Pringle has been monitoring construction of the waterways and participated in the strip till bus tour. In addition, he has had some time off in the last month.

Alan Krause gave a brief recap of the bus tour and an update on the status of the Olmsted cover crop program. Currently the program is not taking applications but they anticipate that sub-contracts and program specific trainings will be coming in the near future.

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

August Bills

Cedardale Dev. Co.		**August Rent**		**$836.64**
Spectrum		**Internet**		**$89.99**
NACD		**FY26 Contribution**		**$775.00**
Chad Billat		**Easement Services**		**$682.00**
Elan		**Gas**	**$171.19**	
		Meals	**$71.81**	
		Phone	**$89.67**	
		Supplies	**$56.00**	
		QuickBooks Payroll Fee	**$30.07**	
		MCIT Payroll Adjustment	**$90.00**	**$508.74**
			Total	**$2,892.37**