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 Tuesday March 10, 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	
Dan Hansen, Vice Chair	Adam Arndt	Lezlie Sorensen, NRCS	
Dave Melby, Chairman	Adrienne Gransee	Leanna Smeby, NRCS	
Mark Ditlevson, PR&I	Ian Pringle	Roger Wacek	
Brad Hagen, Treasurer	Alan Krause	James Brady, County Commissioner	

The March agenda was reviewed, no changes were made.

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

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

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

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Meeting Reports – Winter Workshop – February 18 – This meeting was attended by all Board members and the District staff. The speakers were interesting and the information was presented in a way that was easy to understand. The portion about the economics of strip/no-till was of particular interest. The event was well attended by local landowners who reported that they would like more of the in-depth information rather than beginner level.

   Commodity Classic – Brad Hagen attended this event in San Antonio. He reported that the event was very well attended, and he wished that he had been able to spend more time at the event. This year the primary message encouraged less use of fertilizer and instead focused on building systems that don't require so many additions.

   Brad Hagen also gave an update on the progress of the Oat Mill. Construction continues and they are on track to be fully operational as planned.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Enviro Show Booth - $100 – Eric Gulbransen presented the information to the Board. The event will be held May 9 from 9 AM to 3 PM. The District participated in this event last year and thought that it was a good avenue to connect with a different audience. There is the possibility of the boot fee being reduced to $50, Gulbransen is still looking into the details on that. Motion was made by Ditlevson, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve participation and the rental of a booth for the Enviro Show event. Motion carried by voice vote.

2. Area 7 Employee Meeting – March 24, Red Wing, $20 registration – Adrienne Gransee reviewed the basic information about the meeting with the Board. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Ditlevson, to approve paying the registration fee. Motion carried by voice vote.

3. CRP Incentive Payment - $500 – Ian Pringle presented the contract to the Board. Motion was made by Ditlevson, seconded by Hansen, to approve the contract. Motion carried by voice vote.

4. Easement Services Agreement – Eric Gulbransen reviewed the easement services contract with the Board. There were no changes, just renewal for another year. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Ditlevson, to approve the agreement for 2026. Motion carried by voice vote.

5. Other – Legislative Meeting Schedule – Adrienne Gransee walked through the schedule for the event as well as the schedule for the individual meetings on Wednesday.

Public Comment

Roger Wacek spoke about a YouTube video he watched addressing the economic impact difference between fossil fuel powered vehicles and electric vehicles.

Agency Reports

Leanna Smeby recounted her recent activities including a meeting in Baxter MN focused primarily on staff retention and workload distribution. She informed the Board that there is currently a 12 month wait time for wetland determination to be completed. Smeby updated the Board on upcoming EQIP and CSP deadlines. She also stated that there may be the opportunity for a CRP contribution agreement with the SWCD again for 2026.

Jim Brady reported on the County's activities. The new surveyor will be appointed shortly. There is a public meeting planned to discuss rife vs shotgun for deer season for 2026. Brady also gave an update on bridge and road repair projects.

Staff Reports

Eric Gulbransen has been working on 6 new WCA applications, as well as attending meetings for county ditch redeterminations. He updated the Board on the progress with FEMA on the repairs for PT 19. Gulbransen has also been working with Chad Billat on easements in Steele county.

Adam Arndt has been focused on finalizing details for the Winter Workshop as well as assisting with plans for the Strip Till Bus Tour. In addition he has been completing CRP status reviews with NRCS.

Adrienne Gransee has continued to assist Waseca SWCD with some of their administrative duties. She has also been working with the planning committee to get the MACDE Admin Training session ready. It is going to be held June 17-18 in Walker MN. In addition she has been working on website updates and is in the early stages of planning for the Steele County Fair booth.

Ian Pringle gave the Board an update on the tree sale and the cuts that were made at the end of February. He also gave them the dates that have been planned for pick up. Pringle has been continuing to work on RCPP and has been doing some windbreak site visits with Adam Arndt for potential projects.

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

March Bills

Cedardale Dev. Co	**March Rent**		**$836.64**
Spectrum	**Internet**		**$89.99**
Elan	**Hotel**	**315.08**	
	Gas	**111.70**	
	Vehicle Repair	**196.32**	
	Wix Extended Email	**29.00**	
	Domain Name Hosting	**27.85**	
	2026 QuickBook Payroll	**932.02**	
	PFMLA Equivalent Plan Fee	**255.38**	
	Phone	**89.66**	**$1,957.01**
Adrienne Gransee	**96 miles @ .725**		**$69.60**
Chad Billat	**Easement Services**		**$1,798.00**
		Total	**$4,751.24**