



STEELE COUNTY
Soil and Water Conservation District

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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 5:00 PM on Wednesday September 9, 2025 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, Secretary	Eric Gulbransen	Jim Smith, NRCS	
Dave Melby, Chairman	Ian Pringle	Leslie Sorensen, NRCS	
Mark Ditlevson, PR&I	Adrienne Gransee	Roger Wacek	
Brad Hagen, Treasurer	Adam Arndt		
Dan Hansen, Vice Chair	Alan Krause		

The September agenda was reviewed and no changes were made.

The August minutes were distributed to the Supervisors prior to the meeting. An addition to the list of those who attended the NRCS event was noted. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Ditlevson, to approve the minutes with the noted correction. Motion carried by voice vote.

The August Treasurer’s Report was read by Hagen. 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 Hagen, seconded by Ditlevson, to approve paying the bills. Motion was carried by voice vote.

RCPP Ranking: Ian explained the process of ranking and how the applications were scored. Cover Crop contract applications were prioritized for August to allow producers whose applications were approved to apply the practice this fall. Two contracts were funded with the current grant allocation. The new allocation will be requested for October and reduced tillage applications will be the priority. There was discussion about moving the batching and ranking to the first business day of the month. They also discussed giving Eric Gulbransen authority to sign the contracts. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Hagen, to approve the change to the batch and ranking date and to give Gulbransen signing authority for the RCPP grant contracts. Motion carried by voice vote.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Meeting Reports – Soil Health and Clean Water Event – Steele County Fair Grounds – August 13 – This event was attended by Dave Melby, Mark Ihlenfeld, Mark Ditlevson, Eric Gulbransen, Adam Arndt, Ian Pringle, Alan Krause, Leslie Sorensen, Jim Smith and Adrienne Gransee. Brad Hagen was one of the presenters. The overall attendance for the event was quite poor, with agency personnel making up the vast majority of those in attendance. The presenters did a good job and had interesting material to talk about. The Board discussed what could be done differently if the event was scheduled again for next year.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Haney Workshop – August 21 & 22 – Brad Hagen attended the first day of this event along with Adam Arndt, Ian Pringle, Alan Krause, Eric Gulbransen and Adrienne Gransee. Day one was focused on a an in-depth discussion about the Haney test. The landowners who attended were engaged and participated in the discussion. Adam Arndt, Eric Gulbransen, Ian Pringle, Alan Krause and Adrienne Gransee were joined by Dave Melby for the second day of the event. This was a field day consisting of several different site visits and demonstrations. Both days were well attended by local land operators.

Resolutions Meeting – August 21 – Mark Ihlenfeld participated in this state wide Zoom meeting. A representative from the Districts that submitted resolutions spoke about what they had submitted.

JPB – August 11 and 14 – Ihlenfeld reported on these Zoom meetings. They conducted interviews for the open engineer position. It was decided that neither candidate was going to adequately fill the role so the position will be opened again. It will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.

County and Township meeting – Brad Hagen and Dan Hansen attended this meeting. They gave the Board an update on the new Public Director that has been hired. The Director is already moving forward with a plan to address the invasives that are becoming a problem in the county road ditches. The County Board has approved funding and plans are being made for the most efficient way to slow the spread.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Cannon1W1P Cost Share Contract Payment – 25-ST-002-Wayne, \$10,092.35 – Ian Pringle presented the contract to the Board for payment approval. The contract was for 75% of the cost of the project. Motion was made by Ditlevson, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve the payment. Motion passed by voice vote.
2. 2026 Meeting Day and Time – The Board had a brief discussion and decided to keep the meeting date set for the second Wednesday of the month at 5pm, with adjustments made for Lent and the SCFF if there are conflicts.
3. RCPP Ranking Sheet and Policy – Staff discussed the proposed changes to the RCPP ranking sheet and the policy. It was proposed to add points to the ranking sheet for fields with a HEL designation and to offer additional points to producers who are Ag Water Certified. The proposed change would apply to both the cover crop and the no-till/strip till policies. It states that the practice must be implemented on sensitive groundwater areas, drinking water management areas and HEL ground on at least half of the contracted years if those fields were submitted during ranking. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Hagen, to approve the changes as presented. Motion carried by voice vote.
4. MASWCD Annual Convention – Dec. 1-3, 2025 – Double Tree Hotel, Bloomington, MN – Adrienne Gransee informed the Board that she has reserved rooms at the hotel for the dates and requested that those interested in attending let her know so that she can get them registered. Four of the supervisors expressed interest.

NEW BUSINESS:

5. BWSR Academy Registration and Hotel – October 21-23 – Cragun’s Resort – Gulbransen and Gransee are interested in attending BWSR Academy this year. They requested authorization to attend and for the District to cover the related expenses. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Hagen, to approve their attendance and to cover the related costs. Motion carried by voice vote.
6. Fall Area Meeting – October 2, 2025, 9:00AM-3:00PM – Grand Meadow, MN - \$20 registration – Gransee requested a list of those interested in attending this event. Ihlenfeld, Hansen, and Ditlevson all stated they intended to be at the event.
7. Lease 2025 through 2030 - \$836.64/month – Back owed rent \$267.84 – Gransee presented the Board with the new lease for the office and the building. The lease went into effect in April, but the District was notified in September so there is a back owed amount due for the increased amounts for those months. The rent for the garage did not increase and will still be due quarterly.
8. Cover Crop Cost Share Contract – 25-1-CC, 80 acres, \$12,000 – Pringle presented the contract for approval. It will be funded through the Soil Health Delivery grant. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Hagen, to approve the contract. Motion passed by voice vote.
9. Soil Health Bus Tours – MN Extension – The Board was provided with the flyer containing the information for three upcoming bus tours that are being sponsored by the MN Extension.

Agency Reports

Jim Smith informed the Board that Leanna Smeby, the new NRCS District Conservationist, started this week. She is currently planning to split time between the Steele and Albert Lea offices. He also reported that CRP plans are getting close to being finished. Leslie Sorensen has been handling contacting landowners to set up times to review and sign finished contracts. They expect to have them all completed by September 17.

Staff Reports

Ian Pringle continues to assist with writing CRP plans. He has also been the primary contact for landowners interested in putting in applications for the RCPP grant. In addition, he has been working with a couple of area landowners to develop windbreak plans.

Adam Arndt has been completing CRP plans and easement checks. He has been processing the paperwork needed for landowner changes on the easements. He plans to complete the annual buffer checks after the crops have been harvested.

Staff Reports

Alan Krause has been helping to coordinate interviews for an outreach project. He has also been assisting Pringle with RCPP contacts and doing follow-up with MDA.

Adrienne Gransee gave the Board an update on her activities. She has completed the panels for the SCHS exhibit and will continue to meet with them regularly as the installation date approaches. She also reported on an Outreach training event that she attended and informed the Board that work on the 2026 Calendar has begun.

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,
Administrative Assistant

September Bills

Cedardale Dev. Co	September Rent			\$836.64
Cedardale Dev. Co	Garage Rent			\$600.00
Spectrum	Internet			\$89.99
Adrienne Gransee	140 miles @ 0.70			\$98.00
Elan	Phone		\$89.27	
	Fair Booth Materials		\$356.96	
	Quickbooks Monthly Payroll		\$67.65	
	1W1P Event Supplies		\$19.16	
	Gas		\$98.95	\$631.99
Chad Billat	Easement Services			\$1,240.00
NACD	2025 Dues			\$775.00
				\$4,271.62