



STEELE COUNTY
Soil and Water Conservation District

235 Cedardale Drive SE
Owatonna MN 55060
507-451-6730 Ext. 3
www.steeleswcd.org

January 6, 2026

The next monthly meeting of the Steele County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors will be held on **Thursday January 14 at 5:00 p.m.** at the Steele SWCD Office; 235 Cedardale Drive SE, Owatonna, MN 55060.

Hope to have you join us for the meeting.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Gransee
Administrative Assistant
Enclosures

(All programs and services of the Steele County Soil and Water Conservation District are offered on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, or handicap)



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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 Wednesday November 12, 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	Leanna Smeby, NRCS	
Dave Melby, Chairman	Adrienne Gransee	Lezlie Sorensen, NRCS	
Brad Hagen, Treasurer	Adam Arndt	Jim Smith, NRCS	
Dan Hansen, Vice Chair	Alan Krause	Roger Wacek	
Mark Ditlevson, PR&I	Ian Pringle	Vern Wilker	
		James Brady, County Commissioner	

The December agenda was reviewed and no changes were made.

The November minutes were distributed to the Supervisors prior to the meeting. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve the minutes with the correction. Motion carried by voice vote.

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

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

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Meeting Reports – MASWCD Annual Convention – Dan Hansen, Mark Ihlenfeld, Dave Melby and Eric Gulbransen attended the annual Convention. The main speaker was interesting but those who attended reported that the breakout sessions were rather disappointing. They were not particularly useful and poorly planned. The Steele Conservation Farmer winner attended with is family on Tuesday and enjoyed the programs and lunch.

JPB – Mark Ihlenfeld gave a brief update on the JPB Personnel meeting that he attended.

Brad Hagen had 3 separate meetings that he attended in the last month. The first that he reported on was held in Mankato. It was not as well attended as expected but the speakers did a good job with their presentations. The second meeting was focused on oat production. Hagen was a presenter for this meeting. The final meeting was a 2 day event held in Iowa. Hagen was impressed with the speakers at this meeting focusing on soil health and the Haney test. He reported that there was a lot to learn at this event.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. RCPP Update – Ian Pringle reported that we were able to fund 3 contracts and the request for the next allocation has been submitted to BWSR.
2. Cover Crop Contract Payments – Pringle presented the cover crop contracts listed below for payment. Motion was Made by Hagen, seconded by Ihlenfeld to approve the payments. Motion passed by voice vote.
 - FY23 – Local Capacity
 - 1-23-CC, \$4,800, Final Payment
 - 2-23-CC, \$9,600, Final Payment
 - Cannon 1W1P
 - 24-ST-004, \$8,000, 2nd and 3rd Payment
 - 25-ST-001, \$4,500, 1st Payment
 - 25-ST-002, \$1,278.75, Final Payment
 - 25-ST-003, \$4,680, 1st Payment
 - 25-ST-004, \$8,000, Final Payment
 - 25-ST-005, \$4,000, 1st Payment
 - Soil Health Delivery
 - 25-1-CC, \$4,000, 1st Payment
3. CRP Incentive Payments – Cannon 1W1P Grant Funding – \$12,880, 32 Contracts – Pringle presented the contracts for payment approval. The contracts consisted of 153 re-enrolled acres and 41.5 new CRP acres. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Ditlevson, to approve payment of the incentive payments. Motion passed by voice vote.
4. 2026 County Ditch Contract – Gulbransen reviewed the 2025 ditch contract with the Board. The current hourly rate is \$50 with an annual cap of \$25,000. The Board was happy with those numbers and did not see a reason to request any changes.
5. 1W1P \$3,000 Groundwater fund – Gulbransen provided some details about the Cannon 1W1P groundwater testing allocation that is available for the District.
6. MN Paid Leave (PFML) – Handbook update, ShelterPoint Insurance and Contribution – Gransee presented the proposed handbook updates to the Board. After discussion the Board decided to allow employees to use accrued leave on top of the State program to bring them up to a normal pay level during their leave. There was also an update proposed to the Family leave section needed to bring it line with State policy. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Hagen, to approve the policies as discussed. Motion carried by voice vote.

Gransee then presented the information from ShelterPoint about their private coverage for the state-mandated PFML. ShelterPoint was offering a discounted rate and helps to streamline the process when an employee uses leave through the policy. They offer the option for the District to cover up to 100% of the premium or split it as is done when going through the State. After discussion and questions the Board decided to move forward with insurance through ShelterPoint and to cover 100% of the premium. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Hansen, to proceed as discussed above. Motion carried by voice vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

7. 2026 Medical Coverage – Gransee reviewed the medical coverage that as discussed at the November meeting. The Board discussed the advantages or disadvantages of the various plans. Motion was made by Ditlevson, seconded by Hansen, to continue with the same plan as 2025. Motion passed by voice vote.

Agency Reports

Annie Gunness informed the Board that there is currently 11.4 million remaining to fund future RCPP grants. She also reported on the RFI for the Soil Health Delivery grant and the upcoming application period for the clean water grants.

James Brady spoke about the truth and taxation meeting that he attended. It went fairly smoothly with those in attendance getting the opportunity to have their concerns and questions addressed.

Leanna Smeby updated the Board on the EQIP and CSP programs. Steele county has had 1 EQIP application and 4 CSP applications approved. She also spoke about the Regenerative Ag Initiative that is going to be receiving \$750 million to be distributed nationally.

Jim Smith reported on the results of the local work group meeting. He reviewed what was discussed and how that information was going to be applied to local programing.

Staff Reports

Adam Arndt gave the Board an update on his current activities that have included gathering documentation for the cover crop contracts that are being paid out and working on the paperwork for the CRP incentives. He also gave the Board the save the date information for the upcoming soil health event.

Eric Gulbransen reported that the project on CD5 has been completed. He continues to be kept busy with WCA and has become involved as a mediator in a dispute between neighbors over water and a potential WCA issue.

Ian Pringle has been focused on RCPP in addition to working with Arndt on the cover crop and CRP paperwork and documentation. He has also been accompanying Gulbransen on county ditch visits.

Adrienne Gransee gave the Board an update on the 2026 calendar, which is currently in print and will be mailed shortly. She gave the Board a brief update on the planning process and new current event for the 2026 Envirothon. She also updated them on the continued progress of the SCHS display that will begin installation in January for opening in February.

Annual Reviews

The personnel committee met with staff prior to the Board meeting to conduct annual reviews. They reported to the Board about how those went and made recommendations for step increases. The Board as a whole discussed what they felt would be an appropriate cost-of-living adjustment. Motion was made by Ditlevson, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve a 3% COLA and a step increase for all staff. Motion passed by voice vote.

Motion to Adjourn: Motion was made by Ditlevson, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried by voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted by,



Adrienne Gransee,
Administrative Assistant

December Bills

Cedardale Dev Co	December Rent		\$836.64
Spectrum	Internet		\$89.99
Cedardale Dev Co	Garage Rent		\$600.00
MCIT	Workers Comp Audit 2024		\$570.00
Elan	Gas	\$144.86	
	Meals	\$16.80	
	Convention Registration	\$1,704.74	
	Cell Phone	\$89.68	
	QuickBooks Monthly Payroll	\$67.65	
	Vehicle Maintenance	\$100.08	\$2,123.81
Tri-M Graphics	2026 Calendar		\$2,039.92
		TOTAL	\$6,260.36