



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 5:00 PM on Wednesday August 6, 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		
Mark Ditlevson, PR&I	Adrienne Gransee		
Brad Hagen, Treasurer	Adam Arndt		
Dan Hansen, Vice Chair	Alan Krause		

The August agenda was reviewed and no changes were made.

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

The July Treasurer’s Report was read by Hagen. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Ditlevson, to approve the July 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 – Cannon 1W1P – August 8 – Dan Hansen attended this meeting. He reported that the meeting was focused primarily on financial concerns. The Board approved the dues for 2026 at an amount of \$3,750. They also approved the renewal of the CD for 6 months. There was discussion about the possibility of a partnership with DNR to complete a wetland restoration meant to slow the flow of water moving downstream to better control flooding issues. The topic was table for the time being so that more information can be gathered regarding the project.

Freeborn Area Soil Health Team – Mark Ditlevson reported on this meeting. They are currently finalizing plans for the August 13 event at the Steele County Free Fair.

NRCS Event – Owatonna – This event was attended by Adam Arndt, Mark Ihlenfeld, Eric Gulbransen, Jim Smith, and Alan Krause. The event was focused on public outreach and letting people know that NRCS has more to offer than just the well known agriculture practices. They ran it as a question and answer session with agency staff and local producers. Those who attended reported that there were about 50 people in attendance, consisting primarily of urban residents and small farmers.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Meeting Reports Cont. – Joint Powers Board – July 17 – Mark Ihlenfeld attended this meeting. They held their annual review of finances and projects that had been completed.

Joint Powers Board – August 6 – Mark Ihlenfeld attended this meeting to review the applications that were received for their open engineer position. They offered interviews to 3 applicants and will hold in person interviews on August 11.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. MASWCD Annual Convention – December 1-3, 2025 – DoubleTree Hotel, Bloomington MN – Gransee let the Board know about the dates for the meeting in December. She will be reserving rooms at the hotel for those interested in attending once they become available.
2. Fair Schedule – The Board discussed who was available to be at the booth during the evenings the week of the fair. They also reviewed the schedule for the awards ceremony on Tuesday and the Soil Health Team event on Wednesday.
3. PRAP Report – Gulbransen informed the Board that the draft of this report is available. He gave a brief overview of what the report covered and how the District has performed overall. There will be a zoom call during the October board meeting to go over the report in more detail with BWSR.
4. RCPP Policies – The proposed policies for cover crop and no-till/strip till were presented to the Board, as well as the Financial Assistance Policy. The Board didn't need to make any adjustments to the Financial Assistance policy. After discussion of the cover crop policy it was decided to change some of the language regarding the pre approval of the species, to adjust the eligibility requirements, and to eliminate the stacked contract options. In the no till/strip till policy they made a similar change to the eligibility requirements and eliminated the stacked contract option. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve the policies with the changes that were discussed. Motion passed by voice vote.
5. Soil Health Coalition Membership – This discussion was tabled at the July meeting. The Board discussed some concerns about past events that made them feel unsupported by the coalition. Alan Krause was able to offer another viewpoint and assured the Board that the coalition is working toward the same goals and there would be benefit to working with them. A motion was made by Hagen, seconded by Ihlenfeld, to approve the \$25 dues payment for the year of 2025. Motion carried by voice vote.

Agency Reports

Jim Smith updated the Board on the EQIP sign up that is still in progress. Applications received prior to August 1 are in the process of being reviewed and ranked. CSP letter regarding certification and timing of payments are going to be mailed in the near future. Smith has been working on completing CRP plans and doing site visits for potential projects.

Staff Reports

Eric Gulbransen has been working to get prepared for the RCPP grant. He updated the Board on the progress of the CD5 ditch cleanout and the work being done by the new spraying company that was hired. They have been doing excellent work and have made the process a good experience.

Ian Pringle and Adam Arndt have been spending much of their time completing the 2025 CRP plans and performing on site status reviews for those contracts that will be expiring in 2027. They have also been completing annual RIM easement checks.

Adrienne Gransee gave the Board an update on the progress of the installation that is going to be at the Steele County Historical Society for 2026. She also updated them on the fair booth preparations.

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

Respectfully Submitted by,



Adrienne Gransee,
Administrative Assistant

August Bills

Cedardale Dev. Co.	August Rent		\$792.00
Spectrum	Internet		\$89.99
Eric Gulbransen	53 miles @ 0.70		\$37.10
Chad Billat	Easement Services		\$1,054.00
CRWJPB	Grant Refund		\$8,000.00
Elan	Statement Coming		
		Total	\$9,973.09