



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 Dan Hansen at 5:05 PM on Thursday December 15, 2022 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, Reporter	Eric Gulbransen	Vern Wilker	Mike Klecker
Dan Hansen, Chairman	Adam Arndt		
Dave Melby, Treasurer	Adrienne Gransee		
Mark Ditlevson, Vice Chair			

The December agenda was reviewed no changes were made.

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

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

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

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Meeting Reports – MASWCD Annual Convention – Dave Melby, Dan Hansen, Mark Ihlenfeld, Mark Ditlevson, Adam Arndt, Eric Gulbransen, and Adrienne Gransee all attended the annual convention in Bloomington. All reported that it was well attended despite the less than favorable weather. There was discussion about the focus of the sessions offered to supervisors and staff. They seemed to focus more on office administration, staff recruitment and retention and general practices for running a successful office rather than having a conservation focus. Gulbransen reported a similar focus at his managers training on Monday.
2. Soil Health Team Meeting - Adam Arndt reported on this meeting. He provided an update about the February 21 soil health meeting that will be held at Torey’s. They have 2 speakers committed and are working on developing the flyers and agenda.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Local Workgroup Results – The Board was provided with the packet that gave an overview of the statewide results. The Board did a brief review of the results and the NRCS responses.
2. Oath of Office – Jan. 3 – 8:30am – This information was passed along to the Supervisors elected in the November 2022 election.
3. Laura Ihrke Retirement – Open house Dec. 29 2-4 PM – Gulbransen informed the Board of Ihrke’s retirement and that Brenda Blood will be acting until a permanent replacement is in place.
4. Vern Wilker Hotel Stay – After a brief discussion motion was made by Melby, seconded by Ditlevson, to not request reimbursement for the cost of Vern Wilker’s hotel stay during the convention. Motion passed by voice vote.
5. Buffer/RIM Violation – Adam Arndt presented the information regarding this violation. The easement, a 65’ buffer, was enrolled in CREP. At the end of the CRP term the buffer was tilled under and returned to cropland, violating the RIM permanent easement contract. The property has been sold a few times since the beginning of the CREP contract and that has complicated the matter. A corrective action letter will be sent to the current letter and needs to have approval and signature from the District Board. Motion was made by Melby, seconded by Ditlevaon, to approve signing and sending the corrective action letter. Motion carried by voice vote.
6. Freeborn/Steele Agreement for Services 2023 – Eric Gulbransen presented the agreement for services. There were no significant changes for 2023. The District will be billed \$470 per quarter for the easement services that are provided through Freeborn SWCD. Motion was made by Ditlevson, seconded by Melby, to approve the contract. Motion carried by voice vote.
7. Cover Crop Payments – Adam Arndt presented the cover crop contracts that are eligible for payment, listed below. He informed the Board that there were 3 operators who were unable to plant this year their contracts will be extended for an additional year. Motion made by Ditlevson, seconded by Melby, to approve the contracts for payment. Motion carried by voice vote.
 - 5-20-CC, \$2,400
 - 6-20-CC, \$2,400
 - 7-20-CC, \$2,400
 - 8-20-CC, \$2,400
 - 9-20-CC, \$4,800
 - 10-20-CC, \$4,800
 - 1-21-CC, \$2,400
 - 3-21-CC, \$2,400
 - 4-21-CC, \$2,340
 - 6-21-CC, \$3,200
 - 1-22-CC, \$3,200
 - 2-22-CC, \$3,200
 - 3-22-CC, \$3,200
8. Annual Staff Reviews – The Personnel Committee met privately with the Board to report about the staff reviews that had been conducted earlier in the day. They also made their recommendations for step increases and the Board as a whole discussed the annual COLA. After discussion motion was made by Melby, seconded by Ditlevson, to approve a 3% COLA and a step increase for all staff members. Motion carried by voice vote.

Staff Reports

Eric Gulbransen reported that WCA has continued to be a primary focus. One violation has been resolved; there are three that are on notice and one more that still needs more information before it can be moved forward. He also reported that he has been assisting with arranging beaver removal from several of the county ditches.

Adam Arndt reported on the status of the buffer violations in the county; there is one that is new and a second that is going to proceed to the penalty phase. He also reported that he spent his time gathering documentation and completing site checks for the cover crop contracts. The tree program has taken up a portion of his time as well.

Adrienne Gransee informed the Board about the planning meeting for the 2023 Envirothon event. There are 2 possible weeks that are being considered, the final decision will be made after the Byron Sportsman Club has the opportunity to discuss at their next Board meeting. She has also been assisting with the flyers for the upcoming soil health event and with getting tree sales up and running through the website.

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

Respectfully Submitted by,



Adrienne Gransee,
Administrative Assistant

December Bills

Cedardale Dev Co	December Rent		\$792.00
Spectrum	Internet		\$64.99
Freeborn SWCD	Easement Specialist 3rd & 4th Qtr		\$940.00
SE SWCD JPB	Tech Hours - C. Nelson		\$2,879.24
MCIT	WC Audit Adjustment		\$105.00
Pererson Company	2021 Audit		\$3,350.00
Elan	Gas	\$237.83	
	Phone	\$84.17	
	Vehicle	\$139.98	
	Postage	\$7.68	\$469.66
Tri-M Graphics	2023 Calendar Postage		\$1,397.51
		TOTAL	\$9,998.40