



**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 June 11, 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        | Adrienne Gransee      |
| Dan Hansen, Vice Chair           | Ian Pringle                | Lezlie Sorensen, NRCS  | Alan Krause           |
| Dave Melby, Chairman             | Adam Arndt                 | Anne Gunness, BWSR     | Brad Hagen, Treasurer |
| Mark Ditlevson, PR&I             |                            |                        |                       |
|                                  |                            |                        |                       |

The June agenda was reviewed and no changes were made.

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

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

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

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Meeting Reports – Soil Health Team Meeting – Mark Ditlevson attended this meeting. He reported that the teams has decided not to do a fall event but rather to participate in and endorse other events around the area. They also discussed the possibility of holding a round table discussion at the Steele County Free Fair.

There was discussion about the Nitrogen Rate Trial that Al Krause has been involved with. Questions regarding the N recommendations among others were discussed and resolved.

Dan Hansen inquired about the status of the SWCD Aid bill that passed. He was wondering if there was going to be an increase in future funding.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. 2026 Proposed Budget – Gulbransen presented the proposed budget and explained both the areas of increase and decrease in expenses and revenue. He also let the Board know that there may be a need to use District reserve funds in the upcoming year. After discussion it was decided to set the income from the County Ditch position at the maximum level of \$25,000 for 2026. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Ditlevson, to approve the budget with the discussed change. Motion passed by voice vote.
2. Conservation Award Winners – The Board reviewed the candidates and selected those listed below for the 2025 conservation awards. Motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Ditlevson, to approve the selections. Motion carried by voice vote.
  - Outstanding Conservationist – Shane Wagner
  - Outstanding Windbreak – Bill Hartle
  - Outstanding Wildlife Conservationist – Pat Blaha
3. 2025 Tree Program Results – Pringle presented the results of the 2025 tree program. The total numbers were slightly higher than the previous year, a single large bareroot order contributed to that increase.
4. Strip till/No-till Contract Payments – Ian presented 2 contracts, listed below, for payment. Both will be receiving double payments since the grant will be expiring at the end of the year. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Ditlevson, to approve the payments. Motion carried by voice vote.
  - 1-23, Strip Till, 160 acres, \$12,000
  - 2-23-NTST, No-till, 100 acres, \$10,000
5. Cost Share Contracts – 21-ST-002-Armstrong – Basins – \$1,023.71 – Ian Pringle presented this contract to the Board for payment. The project was funded through the Cannon 1W1P at a 85% cost share rate. This project was also partially funded through EQIP, but total cost share did not exceed 85%.  
  
25-ST-002-Wayne – Grassed Waterway - \$15,435 – Pringle presented this contract to the Board for approval. It will be funded through the Cannon 1W1P at a 75% cost share rate. The waterway will serve a 300 acre watershed and be adjoining to a neighbors existing waterway.  
  
Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Ditlevson, to approve both the payment and the contract. Motion carried by voice vote
6. Resolution Meeting – Gulbransen informed the Board that the meeting was being held from 9am-1pm in Stewartville on June 23. Supervisors and staff who wish to carpool to the meeting should meet at the office at 7:30.
7. Soil Health Funding – Gulbransen presented on the current soil health funding based on the information provided in the Board in the Board packet.

**Agency Reports**

Annie Gunness gave the Board an update on the upcoming grants. The FY26/27 WBIF grants will be increasing due to the consolidation from multiple grants to a single one. Other programs will see reductions due to this consolidation though. She stated that there will be training for the new grant streamlining process coming in July.

Jim Smith has been working on CRP status reviews since the deadline to enroll for the first batch was closed on June 6. He reported that there were 50 re-enrollments and 8 new contracts. The second batch runs through the end of July. He reported that the FSA CED is currently out on paternal leave and there will be someone else filling the position until their return. Smith also spoke about an outreach event and panel discussion that will be held on Aug 5 with Renewing the Countryside. The event will take place at Owatonna Public Utilities.

**Staff Reports**

Eric Gulbransen reported that ditch work has kept him busy lately along with WCA and his office duties. He also is working on the CRP contribution agreement.

Ian Pringle has been working with Smith surveying projects and potential project sites. He has also been moving the drills between landowners and working on completing CRP status reviews. In addition he assisted with the 4H Agronomy night event.

Adam Arndt has also been working on CRP status reviews. He attended the soil health team meeting and reported on the potential plan to hold a round table event at the fair. Arndt also attended the 4H agronomy night. He reported that 20 kids attended and they distributed 50-60 project kits.

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

Respectfully Submitted by,



Adrienne Gransee,  
Administrative Assistant

June Bills

|                          |                                    |                 |                    |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| <b>Cedardale Dev. Co</b> | <b>June Rent</b>                   |                 | <b>\$792.00</b>    |
| <b>Spectrum</b>          | <b>Internet</b>                    |                 | <b>\$89.99</b>     |
| <b>Cedardale Dev. Co</b> | <b>Garage Rent</b>                 |                 | <b>\$600.00</b>    |
| <b>MNL</b>               | <b>Native Plants &amp; Seeds</b>   |                 | <b>\$2,109.92</b>  |
| <b>Chad Billat</b>       | <b>Contract Easement Services</b>  |                 | <b>\$1,116.00</b>  |
| <b>SE SWCD JPB</b>       | <b>Annual Dues</b>                 |                 | <b>\$4,000.00</b>  |
| <b>Tree Pro</b>          | <b>Tree Tubes</b>                  |                 | <b>\$717.50</b>    |
| <b>Souba Greenhouse</b>  | <b>4H Pots</b>                     |                 | <b>\$70.00</b>     |
| <b>Court Sports</b>      | <b>District Shirts - Al Krause</b> |                 | <b>\$110.00</b>    |
| <b>Mike's Repair</b>     | <b>Truax Tires</b>                 |                 | <b>\$362.58</b>    |
| <b>Elan</b>              | <b>Gas</b>                         | <b>\$215.33</b> |                    |
|                          | <b>Phone</b>                       | <b>\$89.28</b>  |                    |
|                          | <b>Office Supplies</b>             | <b>\$81.54</b>  |                    |
|                          | <b>Wix Annual Pan Renewal</b>      | <b>\$348.00</b> |                    |
|                          | <b>QuickBooks Monthly Payroll</b>  | <b>\$67.65</b>  | <b>\$801.80</b>    |
|                          |                                    |                 |                    |
|                          |                                    |                 |                    |
|                          |                                    |                 |                    |
|                          |                                    | <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>\$10,769.79</b> |