



STEELE COUNTY
Soil and Water Conservation District

235 Cedardale Drive SE
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 July 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	Adam Arndt
Dave Melby, Chairman	Ian Pringle	Lezlie Sorensen, NRCS	Dan Hansen, Vice Chair
Mark Ditlevson, PR&I	Adrienne Gransee	Chad Billat	
Brad Hagen, Treasurer		Roger Wacek	
		Nicki Miranowski, FSA	

The July agenda was reviewed and no changes were made.

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

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

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

Nicki Miranowski is acting as the temporary FSA CED while Emily Johnson is on leave. She spoke to the Board about her history with NRCS which included serving for 16 years in North Dakota and another 16 years in Minnesota. She gave the board an update about the status of the FSA board and the 2 areas that are up for election this year. Miranowski also provided an update on the CRP approvals for the area.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Meeting Reports – The Area 7 Resolution meeting was held in Stewartville on June 23. Ihlenfeld, Melby, Hansen, Gulbransen and Gransee attended. There were no resolutions presented for the area this year. The status of the SWCD Aid granted through the State was reviewed. The decrease that was initially planned still stands in the legislation. There was also a round table discussion about the best ways to promote District activities and goals. The main theme was the need for timely and accurate communication between partners and the public.

Brad Hagen gave the Board an update on the ongoing nitrogen trial, the testing process and the zoom meeting that he attended with Ditlevson on June 6. He also talked about the process for establishing the rate needed for side dressing nitrogen.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Education Displays – Artificial Trees and Root Banner – Gransee presented the Board with her request to purchase artificial trees to be used in the windbreak display when it is at the Steele County Historical Society. She also requested approval to purchase a root banner showing the actual size of Big Bluestem grass and Leadplant including both the roots and the plant above the ground. This banner will also be used for the Historical display and potentially in the fair booth. Motion was made Ditlevson, seconded by Hagen, to approve the purchases. Motion carried by voice vote.
2. RCPP Ranking Sheet & Final Practice List – Gulbransen presented the ranking sheet for feedback from the Board. They agreed that it seemed complete and recommended submitting it for review with the State. They also reviewed the practices that the District plans to offer funding for.
3. Cover Crop Biomass Sampling Results – Gulbransen gave a brief overview of the sampling results that were included in the packet for the Board to review.
4. Well Monitoring Contract – The details of the annual DNR well monitoring contract was discussed. I was proposed that Eric Gulbransen be given the authority to sign the agreement. Motion was made by Ihlenfeld, seconded by Hagen, to approve Gulbransen signing the contract. Motion carried by voice vote.
5. Soil Health Coalition Membership – Gulbransen informed the Board that the Coalition was expressing some displeasure about the fact that the SWCD is not currently a member, but have utilized shared resources such as presenters. There was discussion about the cost of the annual membership and if it was really needed. It was decided to table the matter until the August meeting.
6. Other – There was discussion about the event that the area soil health team is planning to host at the Steele County Fair on August 13 from 10am to 12pm. The event will involve a presentation on the Rice Creek study that was completed as well as open discussions about other water quality and soil health related issues.

Agency Reports

Chad Billat gave the board an update on his RIM and CREP work. Final plans have been completed for one easement and restoration is beginning. He also stated that a peatland application is in progress. Billat stated that there is interest in CREP when there is funding for wetland restoration acres in the future.

Jim Smith informed the Board that the next EQIP cut-off date is set for the 1st of August. Smith has been working with the local forester to complete assessments for CSP, as well as completing CRP status reviews. He stated that CRP is nearing the National acre cap so new applications should be submitted in a timely fashion. He also informed the Board about an outreach event being held on August 5 at Owatonna Public Utilities.

Staff Reports

Eric Gulbransen let the Board know that the conservation award winners have been contacted and meetings are being scheduled. He reported favorably on the new ditch sprayer that has been contracted to work on the County ditch system, describing him as efficient and reliable. Gulbransen also reported on a joint raingarden project with the city of Owatonna and Cannon River Partnership to help raise awareness of the benefits that raingardens offer.

Ian Pringle has been completing CRP status reviews, as well as reviewing how to use the conservation desktop program. It is anticipated that work on CRP plans will begin shortly. Pringle also reported that he has still be regularly moving the seeders throughout the county.

Adrienne Gransee reported on her ongoing project with the Steele County Historical Society as well as the continuing progress on the website rebuild. She also has been completing grant reporting for the first half of the year and getting ready for the fair in August.

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

July Bills

Cedardale Dev. Co	July Rent		\$792.00
Spectrum	Internet		\$89.99
Chad Billat	Easement Specialist Hours		\$868.00
Elan	Field Supplies	\$87.37	
	Gas	\$202.45	
	QuickBooks Monthly Payroll	\$30.07	
	Office Supplies	\$15.98	
	Postage	\$292.00	
	Phone	\$89.28	\$717.15
		TOTAL	\$2,467.14