



STEELE COUNTY STEELE COUNTY BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

Steele County Board Room - 630 Florence Avenue -
Owatonna, MN 55060

Steele County's Mission:
Driven to deliver quality services in a respectful and fiscally responsible way.

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2026 at 4:00 PM - County Boardroom, Steele County
Administration Center**

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Business
 - a. Update from Allina Regarding Owatonna Birth Center

In September 2025, Mayo Clinic Health System informed Allina Health of its decision to discontinue on-call labor and delivery services at Owatonna Hospital. In response, Allina Health advanced its regional care model to ensure continuity of obstetric services for the community. On November 17, 2025, Allina Health announced that it would assume responsibility for OB/GYN physician staffing at Owatonna Hospital, supporting the ongoing delivery of labor and delivery services in Owatonna. As part of this regional alignment, Allina Health elected to maintain services in Steele County while consolidating labor and delivery operations. On December 1, 2025, labor and delivery services at Faribault were formally closed, and those services were transitioned to Owatonna Hospital. Several outpatient services continued in Faribault to preserve local access to essential care. The transition culminated with an open house for the newly updated Birth Center on February 15, 2026. All services are now fully operational, and the regional model is functioning smoothly.

- b. 2025 Steele County Opioid Response Initiative Award Report

Over the past year, program partners utilized their allocations effectively, with all unused funds returned for future use. SPERO expended \$24,000 of the \$32,000 awarded, delivering prevention and education programming to middle and high school students. As part of their incentive model, students established year-end goals, and the program reported zero overdoses, with outcomes shared with Steele County Community Corrections. All training provided continues to be applied throughout the community. For 2025, allocations include up to \$32,000 for SPERO, up to \$6,500 for the Steele County Sheriff's Office, and up to \$29,000 for United Way of Steele County. The Sheriff's Office advanced its drug-disposal initiative by updating its process and installing a third disposal box, resulting in a 45% increase in collected medications. United Way utilized \$24,500 to support mental health paraprofessional training and Teen Mental Health First Aid in both Owatonna and Medford schools, strengthening early intervention and youth mental health support across the county.

c. 2025 Steele County Non-Profit Community Partner Award Report

The Steele County Board transitioned the former Human Services Appropriation Fund into the Steele County Non-Profit Community Partner Awards program to strengthen fiscal accountability and ensure county dollars support measurable outcomes that improve resident health and well-being. In 2025, the County allocated \$50,000 through this program, generating significant impact across health, nutrition, recovery, and stability services. Healthy Seniors of Steele County used its \$10,000 award to provide 267 senior companion visits and 266 strength and balance visits to 82 older adults, enhancing safety and independence. Let's Smile, Inc. applied its \$5,500 award to deliver 899 preventive dental encounters—356 for uninsured patients and 543 for Medicaid recipients—serving 453 unduplicated clients, including 268 new patients and 81 visits requiring a Spanish interpreter. Semcac used its \$10,000 award to provide 7,965 congregate meals to 70 seniors and 25,517 home-delivered and mobile meals to 181 individuals, reducing food insecurity. Spero utilized its \$9,500 award to support a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, community outreach, and the first “Breaking the Stigma” event, advancing recovery support and reducing stigma around substance use disorders. United Way of Steele County used its \$5,000 award to sustain the UPLIFT Truancy Prevention Program, improving school attendance and addressing barriers for youth and families. The Lighthouse Men’s Program applied its \$10,000 award to expand peer recovery services, serving 37 men and supporting 31 successful exits to permanent housing, demonstrating strong outcomes in promoting long-term stability

d. 2026 Steele County Non-Profit Community Partner Award RFP

The Board has included \$50,000 in the 2026 budget to be distributed through Steele County Public Health’s competitive Non-Profit Community Partner Award process, with several updates designed to strengthen accountability and align with other county funding programs. Beginning in 2026, awards will shift from an upfront allocation to a reimbursement-based model, with funds issued only for actual costs incurred after recipients submit reimbursement requests and proof of expenses, consistent with the Opioid Response Initiative and Local Homeless Prevention Aid processes. To ensure timely year-end processing, funded programs will operate on a shortened June 1–November 30, 2026 timeline. Application questions have been refined to reduce redundancy and better align with other county award applications, and the RFP now incorporates updated priorities from the 2025–2029 Dodge-Steele Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). It was the consensus of the Board to formally consider the 2026 RFP as part of their regular board meeting later that night.

e. Owatonna Community Center Taskforce Presentation

The June 2024 City of Owatonna Community Center Task Force materials are available on HyTec, and additional project information and updates can be found on the “Our Community, Our Center” website.

3. Other Business

None.

Adjourn

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST: _____
ADMINISTRATOR