

**Minutes**  
**Minnesota Sunflower Council**  
**Wednesday, March 18, 2026**  
**8:00 A.M. Zoom Meeting**

Members Present: John Swanson, Kevin Capistran, Greg Hilgeman, and Tom Dowdle. Members Absent: Tom Smude

Others Present: Tina Mittelsteadt, John Sandbakken, Chuck Todd, NSA Board President

The meeting was called to order by John Swanson at 8:12 a.m.

The minutes of the January 6, 2026, were reviewed – **a motion to approve the minutes was made Greg Hilgeman and seconded by Tom Dowdle. Motion passed.**

Tina Mittelsteadt provided the financial report for February 2026. The Council collected \$7,015.28 in check-off funds and \$3.46 in interest. We paid out \$327.09 in expenses in February. The MSC has a cash fund balance of \$34,384.31 as of February 28, 2026. We have paid out the full NSA contract and the full administration fee for MN Department of Ag. They have switched over to annual billing instead of quarterly as per the request of the commodity groups.

Tina Mittelsteadt brought to the board's attention that Cargill has been paying their Minnesota check-off to the ND Oilseed Council. Tina can pinpoint this starting back to November 2024. Consensus from the Council is to let ND Oilseed retain the funds that have been remitted and have Cargill begin reporting the check-off correctly. They do want to know the amount of check-off that was remitted to ND Oilseed Council that should have been remitted to MN Sunflower Council.

**Kevin Capistran made a motion to approve the financial report, and it was seconded by Greg Hilgeman. Motion passed.**

**DC Update:**

Tom Dowdle provided the council with an update on the NSA's DC Trip. Five NSA board members and John Sandbakken made the trip to DC. They had extensive meetings with various state representatives where they shared the NSA's policies and priorities. They thanked them for their part in the Big Beautiful Bill. They did ask for funds for the Breeding Initiative; however, John's concern is USDA ARS is still not hiring. Hiring and filling the vacant positions was one of their focus points. They were able to meet with Michelle Fishbach and Tina Smith while there.

**NSA Research Grant Update:**

Tom Dowdle reported that the NSA funded eight of the eleven research projects they received with the amount around \$112,143. The NSA Confection Committee and Manitoba Crop Alliance contributed funding towards projects.

**Crop Reports:**

Kevin Capistran reported prices need to come up to get in line with crop insurance. Kevin suggested putting in one yield trial plot for this year since MN acres are up and there are not any planned. Kevin has the land and is willing to help with weed control, if the University does have the space for the plot. John Swanson will check with Megan and see if she is interested in overseeing the trial.

Tom Dowdle reported if they had seed acres would be up.

Greg Hilgeman reported he believes acres will be up in MN. Greg feels the Mentor plant offers a competitive price and not a lot of discounts there will be more interest.

**Check-Off Dollar Report – From Farm to First Purchaser:**

Tina Mittelsteadt received a phone call from a company requesting the Council's check-off weights and dollar amounts. Tina checked with the MN Department of Agriculture (MDA) and was informed that State Statute addresses this issue.

**17.62 COUNCIL RECORDS.**

All of the records of a council, except as otherwise provided in this section, shall be open to the public and shall be available for inspection by any person for any lawful purpose, provided, however, that the council shall be empowered to make reasonable rules concerning the inspection of the records, the time or place of inspection, or the manner in which the information shall be made available. Financial information pertaining to individual participating producers shall not be open to the public.

Consensus of the Council was to receive a written request from anyone wanting this information, the reason they want the information, and double check with MDA to make sure the information we are providing is not violating any rules, regulations, or statutes.

Chuck Todd, NSA Board President and President of the SD Oilseed Council stated he also received the same request. They are waiting to hear from the SD Ag about what they are required to do.

The Council instructed Tina to stay in contact with SDOC and NDOC and see how they are handling the request. Tina should follow up with the Council prior to releasing any requested information.

**Other Business:**

MN Department of Agriculture wants to attend an in-person meeting and is planning on attending our September meeting. John Swanson will follow up with Megan to see if there would be a way to have a meeting in Crookston. He will get back to us as soon as he has an

answer from her. Second option would be to have MDA attend the January 12, 2027, dinner meeting in Fargo, prior to the NSA Research Forum.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup> 7:30 a.m. via Zoom.

**Motion to adjourn by Greg Hilgeman and seconded by Tom Dowdle. Motion Carries.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

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Chairman: John Swanson  
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Signed by:  
Secretary: Tom Dowdle  
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