

**Minutes
Minnesota Sunflower Council
Tuesday, September 9, 2025; 7:30 A.M.
Zoom Meeting**

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

Others Present: Morgan Wrich, Coalition and Outreach Program Manager with Rural Investment to Protect our Environment (RIPE); Tina Mittelsteadt and John Sandbakken, NSA Staff

The meeting was called to order by John Swanson at 7:30 a.m.

Rural Investment to Protect Our Environment (RIPE):

Morgan Wrich with RIPE shared with the council what RIPE is and does. RIPE is a farmer and rancher led non-profit organization whose mission is to advance a fair value for voluntary agricultural stewardship. We work to do that through partnerships with organizations like the Minnesota Sunflower Council. We want to ensure that producers and the communities where they live benefit from a system that aligns economic incentives with conservation practices which in turn enhance our soil, water and environment. There is no cost to join RIPE.

Morgan has offered an opportunity for the MN Sunflower Council to join their Steering Committee meeting in quarter 4 if there would be interest. This meeting will be via Zoom.

Kevin Capistran's recommendation would be to have Tom Dowdle and John Sandbakken bring it up at the next NSA board meeting and get their feedback.

The minutes of the May 20, 2025, were reviewed – **a motion to approve the minutes was made by Tom Dowdle and seconded by Kevin Capistran. Motion passed.**

Tina Mittelsteadt provided the financial report for August 2025. The Council collected \$1,348.24 in check-off funds and \$6.56 in interest. We paid \$500.00 in expenses in August. The MSC has a cash fund balance of \$55,529.04 as of August 31, 2025.

Greg Hilgeman made a motion to approve the financial report; it was seconded by Tom Dowdle. Motion passed.

Audit Report:

Haga Kommer, Ltd. finished the 2024-25 audit. A copy was emailed to all council members along with the board communication letter. Tina has sent the audit to the MN Department of Agriculture along with the checklist and signed management letter.

Election of Officers:

Motion by Greg Hilgeman to keep the Vice-chair, Kevin Capistran; Chairman, John Swanson, and Tom Dowdle as Secretary/Treasurer and seconded by Tom Dowdle. Motion Carried.

Other Business:

Tom Dowdle and Tom Smude will be up for re-election in 2026. Both are willing to run for re-election.

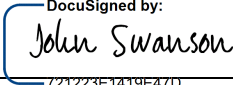
John Swanson will be working with a group of teachers and students through Ag in the Classroom showing them sunflower fields and where sunflower oil comes from.

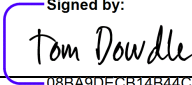
Next Meeting:

Tuesday, January 6, 2026 – Dinner Meeting – 6:00 p.m.

Motion to adjourn by Tom Smude and seconded by Kevin Capistran. Motion Carries.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

Chairman: 
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Secretary: 
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