**R**ange **A**ssociationof **M**unicipalitiesand **S**chools

Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 30, 2017 -6:00 P.M.

Northeast Service Cooperative Building

President Paul Kess called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**Roll Call of Board:**

Present: Paul Kess (City of Ely); Jim Fisher (McDavitt Township); Pat Medure (ISD 318-Grand Rapids); Gregg Allen (Supts Assn); Glenn Anderson (City of Babbitt); Charlie Baribeau (City of Virginia); Bob Berrini (Morse Township); Ben DeNucci (City of Nashwauk); Pat Garrity (City of Hibbing); Cyndi Worshek (ISD 2711-Mesabi East); Stuart Lehman (City of Buhl); Ray Marsnik (ISD 696-Ely); Carlene Perfetto (City of Silver Bay); Kevin Scaia (City of Chisholm); Al Stanaway (City of Mt. Iron); Stacey Sundquist (ISD 706-Virginia); Ione Tomasetti (ISD 695 Chisholm); Milan Luzaich (Great Scott Township); Dave Worshek (City of Aurora); Dale Christy (ISD 318 Grand Rapids)

Absent: City of Hoyt Lakes; Hibbing School ISD 701; One rep of Superintendent’s Association; Nashwauk Township

Also Present: Steve Giorgi, Executive Director; Jennifer Sterbenz; Jim Varda; Barb Kalmi; Cari Alleman, Representative Sandy Layman, Gary Cerkvenik

**Review and Approve Agenda:**

**Moved by Fisher and supported by Marsnik to approve the agenda. Motion carried.**

**Review and Approve Minutes:  
 Moved by Fisher and supported by Marsnik to approve the agenda. Motion carried.**

**Appearance:**

Director Giorgi introduced Representative Sandy Layman, District 5B. Representative Layman spoke about the 2017 legislative session and highlighted the accomplishments from the session. Representative Layman was appointed as the Vice Chair of the Legacy Funding Finance Committee, a rare occurrence for a first year legislator. She also served on the Environment and Natural Resources Policy & Finance Committee, Job Growth & Energy Policy & Finance and the Sub-Committee on Mining, Forestry & Tourism. She is also a member of the IRRRB board, having served on their board in the past as a community member and served a term as the Commissioner of the IRRRB. She was also appointed as a member of the Permanent School Trust Fund Committee. The Legacy Committee deals with the dedicated sales tax in the state that is for arts and the outdoors, so giving away money for worthy causes was a nice committee to serve on.

Legislation was passed that provided for lower health insurance premiums via the rebates and re-insurance program. Increased funding for education, roads & bridges, significant tax relief for Minnesotans and especially small businesses by eliminating the first $100,000 of real estate valuation. Worked on streamlining permitting procedures for new mining projects and other industrial developments. $26 million for early childhood grants, eliminated the “last in; first out” for school teachers by requiring it be a subject of negotiations in school districts, and restructured the teacher licensure system, as recommended by legislative auditor. $16 million in small city relief. Sustainable Forest Act passed that provided relief for a number of counties who were facing huge tax burdens from Blandin Paper Company lawsuit over land valuations. Modified the governance of the IRRRB as per recommendations from the legislative audit to make the board advisory and give the Commissioner ultimate financial authority. Just under a billion dollar bonding bill was approved enabling a number of projects on the Range. Representative Layman supports statewide broadband funding and introduced a bill for $35 million, ultimately the state approved $20 million.

Representative Layman stated that she supports the Enbridge Line 3 replacement project that will bring thousands of jobs to our region, along with over $2 billion in investment. She has concerns over the MPCA’s wild rice sulfate standard, the USFS land withdrawal and supports the Emmer bill HR 3905. She also supports the Nolan/Emmer bill for the PolyMet land exchange. Representative Layman announced that the session begins on February 20, 2018 and it is supposed to be a bonding year, and she hopes for another great session working with RAMS and the region.

**Director’s Report:** Abbreviated report by Director Giorgi, who first thanked Representative Layman for taking the time out of her busy schedule to appear at the RAMS meeting and also thanked her for her cooperation during the last session on numerous projects for Range communities.

Director Giorgi reported that he had attended the Grand Rapids City Council meeting for a RAMS update and stated that the city was beginning the discussion on legislative priorities and reminded the board members to send in their priorities as they are approved at their board level.

The deadline for comments on the wild rice sulfate standard and the Enbridge Line 3 Replacement project had both passed on Nov. 22. All the Enbridge cards signed at the last meeting were mailed in, along with a letter from the director, the same for the MPCA. Letters had also been sent in support of Emmer bill 3905 and Nolan’s land exchange 3115. Both bills passed through the House and will now move to the Senate. Reports from Dave Lislegard, who was in DC for the votes, indicate that the land exchange has the support of Senator Klobuchar and will hopefully move through the Senate, with the Emmer bill likely to be buried in the Senate.

**Old Business:** Updates on the wild rice sulfate issue and the Enbridge issue were covered in the Director’s report.

**New Business:** The Director reported that the RAMS Annual Meeting and Dinner has been tentatively scheduled for either January 10 or 11, 2018, at the Mt. Iron Community Center. These dates were chosen based on facility availability and the special invited keynote speaker would be Governor Mark Dayton. After selection of these dates, Pat Medure informed Steve that the MSBA annual convention begins on January 11th, so Steve is encouraging the Governor to select January 10th as the date for his appearance. Once confirmation from the Governor’s office is in hand, formal invitations will be sent out.  
 Steve conducted a survey of sitting board members to help determine who will be seeking nomination for office, if their term is up this year. After the survey, it was noted that Walt Hautala and Kevin Scaia will not be seeking re-election. To date, four nominations have been submitted for the 12 open seats. Of the remaining officers, the survey resulted in all willing to stay on to complete their term, exception being Mark Skelton and Warren Stolp who were not present. Steve will follow up to confirm their willingness to serve out their term.  
 Board members at the meeting were asked to provide two names for potential new membership in RAMS. Either a corporate member or another municipality or township.

Legislative priorities. Steve and Gary Cerkvenik went over a list of five potential items for consideration and discussion. Since the session does not start until February 20th, the board does have time but Gary recommended since the Governor is coming up in January, we should be prepared to have some issues for his consideration.

**Moved by and seconded by Garrity to have the Executive Committee meet and determine the legislative priorities and bring those back to the board for consideration. Motion carried.**

**Finance Committee Report:** The Finance Committee met on November 16th to consider the 2018 budget proposal. Present were Pat Medure, Paul Kess, Steve Giorgi and Lois Roskoski. Due to a loss of Taconite Tax Revenue of $6,000, the 2018 budget will reflect deficit spending, in the amount of $6003.00. To continue with the efforts and operation of RAMS, as has been established, the committee recommends acceptance of the 2018 budget as submitted, with the knowledge that a transfer from our general fund will occur at year end to cover the deficit.

**Moved by Medure and supported by Fisher to approve the proposed 2018 budget, with the understanding that $6,003 will be utilized from reserves to cover the deficit spending at year end. Motion carried.  
 Moved by Scaia and supported by Perfetto to renew the agreement with Gary Cerkvenik for professional services for the period of December 1, 2017 through November 30, 2018, with no increase in cost. Motion carried.  
 Moved by Baribeau and supported by Perfetto to approve the expenditures for the period October 26 – November 22, 2017, in the total amount of $12,890.80. Motion carried.  
 Motion by Baribeau and supported by Tomasetti to approve the Profit and Loss/Budget Vs. Actual Report as of November 22, 2017. Motion carried.**

**Other Business:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm.