

Range Association of Municipalities & Schools

Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 28, 2021 – 6:00 P.M.

Northeast Service Cooperative Building

President Charlie Baribeau called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

Roll Call of Board:

Present: Charlie Baribeau (City of Virginia); Barb Kalmi (ISD 319-Nashwauk/Keewatin); Dale Adams (City of Grand Rapids); Glenn Anderson (City of Babbitt); Bob Berrini (Morse Township); Jim Fisher, (McDavitt Township); Jennifer Hoffman-Saccoman (City of Hibbing); Paul Kess, (City of Ely); **Stuart Lehman (City of Buhl); Philip Medure (Great Scott Township);** Kim McLaughlin (ISD 701-Hibbing); **Pat Medure (ISD 318-Grand Rapids); Ron Pittman (Cherry Township); Cal Saari (City of Nashwauk);** Warren Stolp (Nashwauk Township); Dave Worshek (City of Aurora); David Zins (City of Hoyt Lakes)

Absent: Cyndi Worshek (ISD 2711-Mesabi East); Richard Aldrich (ISD 701-Hibbing, Supt Assn); City of Chisholm; Shane Hoff (City of Silver Bay); City of Tower; ISD 2909 Rock Ridge (Supt Assn); ISD 2909 Rock Ridge

Also Present: **Ida Rukavina, Executive Director; Kristen Kranz, RAMS Adm Assistant; Julia Padilla, Twin Metals; Nick Dragisich, Baker Tilly; Tim Korby, HR Green; Ken Demlou, HR Green**
(Persons highlighted were present in person; others were via Zoom.)

Review and Approve Agenda:

A motion to remove 8.h. from the agenda was moved by Anderson and supported by Adams. Motion carried.

Approve Meeting Minutes:

Moved by Secretary/Treasurer Kalmi and supported by Lehman to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting held September 23, 2021. Motion carried.

Appearances:

Nick Dragisich, Tim Korby, and Ken Demlou gave a presentation about the support their companies give with grant writing and about the importance of reliable broadband. They are a local firm, and they give guidance on what to use funds for. There has not been this amount of funds (grants) available in the last 30 years and they have a near 100% success with grant writing.

Julie Padilla thanked RAMS for the support and spoke about Twin Metals, the largest known, undeveloped, copper-nickel deposit in the world. There is a large need for cobalt, nickel, and copper for the green energy transformation (Build Back Better). The recent decision by the Biden Administration to repeat the 2-year study, has been frustrating. The 90-day public comment started on October 21. Pat Medure asked what RAMS can do. She recommended commenting during the public commenting period, asking Senator Klobuchar to take a stance on this issue, continue outreach with the Administration, and continue educating the community about the importance of this project.

Director's Report:

Director Rukavina highlighted her activities for the month of October 2021.

- A. It was a busy month of meetings!
- B. Build Back Better grant for federal EDA grant- RAMS included in the "coalition" and sent a letter of support. Some of the projects included are a regional innovation center, building and site readiness program, broadband, and an asset study for Taconite Harbor.
- C. Participated in the Itasca Inspiring Innovation Summit for 2 days.
- D. With the news of the BWCAW withdrawal, work began on writing new letters to the administration.

- E. Flew to DC to meet with Representatives, Senators and Committees regarding the decisions on the Twin Metals study. Business, community, and labor were all involved in the meetings.

Old Business:

The League of Minnesota Cities Regional Meeting has been cancelled.

New Business:

- A. Legislative update from Jeff Anderson:
Jeff had a conflict and will send a report.
- B. A motion to combine November /December meeting on December 2 was made by Secretary/Treasurer Kalmi and supported by Pat Medure. Motion carried.
- C. A motion to approve the 2022 budget was made by Secretary/Treasurer Kalmi and supported by Lehman. The motion carried.
- D. A motion to allow mail-in voting for the election was made by Secretary/Treasurer Kalmi and supported by McLaughlin. Discussion was held and the motion passed.
- E. The Annual Meeting will be on December 29, 2021.
- F. The Discovery Center requested funding for community development. Discussion was held. Secretary/Treasurer Kalmi made a motion that RAMS takes no action at this time it was supported by Berrini. Motion carried.
- G. Director Rukavina will notify everyone if awards are received from the Build Back Better program.

Board Member Updates:

Dale Adams, Grand Rapids presented tonight on housing, business, and government.

Many housing projects have started/finished, including Pillars Project (118 senior housing), Aurora Heights Project (56 units income based), Best Western Plus (80 units motel/hotel), a 3-story building on the old VFW land with first floor shopping area and top 2 floors for VRBO, Old Kmart property will soon be rental property.

New businesses in the area include T Mobile/Starbucks, Woodland Bank is building a new hub, new orthodontist building, Hawkinson property will become a convenience store with car wash, and a new credit union.

On the Government side, Grand Rapids is building a new jail and has a new Fire Hall. The arena needs a new roof that \$5.5 M in bonding money will be used for, along with possible local sales tax. A \$3.9 M sewer and water extension at the Ainsworth property with 3 tenants interested in developing there as well. ASV is expanding and bringing 400 new jobs. ICC is finalizing a \$4.5M project of a student center. The public utilities is building a 2.5 megawatt solar garden.

Like everywhere else, Grand Rapids is short of workers.

Finance Committee Report:

- A. Secretary/Treasurer Barb Kalmi reported on the Finance Committee Meeting held October 28, 2021:
 - 1. Expenditures for the period of September 23-October 27, in the total amount of \$12,311.77.
 - 2. Profit and Loss Budget vs Actual is 78.4%.
 - 3. Balance Sheet - \$373,239.66

Moved by Lehman and supported by Adams to accept the financial reports. Motion carried.

Other:

- A. Director Rukavina discussed the broadband speed test that could be hosted on the RAMS broadband website. A motion to approve hosting the speed test was moved by Berrini and supported by Pittman. Motion carried.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the RAMS Board will be held at 6:00 P.M. on December 2, 2021.

Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 P.M.