

Range Association of Municipalities & Schools
Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 29, 2023 – 6:00 P.M.
Northeast Service Cooperative Building

President Pat Medure called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Roll Call of Board:

Present: **Pat Medure (ISD 318-Grand Rapids); Glenn Anderson (City of Babbitt); Barb Kalmi (ISD 319-Nashwauk/Keewatin); Dale Adams (City of Grand Rapids); Bob Berrini (Morse Township); Jim Fisher (McDavitt Township); Gary Friedlieb (City of Virginia); Norma Jean Jofs (City of Aurora); Paul Kess (City of Ely); Julie Lucas (French Township); Philip Medure (Great Scott Township); Ron Pittman (Cherry Township); Cal Saari (City of Nashwauk); John Tuorila (City of Calumet); Catherine Niemi (City of Biwabik); David Zins (City of Hoyt Lakes)**

Absent: ISD 701-Hibbing, Supt Assn; City of Silver Bay; City of Hibbing; ISD 2711-Mesabi East; Nashwauk Township; City of Chisholm; ISD 319-Nashwauk/Keewatin Supt Assn; Clinton Township;

Also Present: **Steve Giorgi, Interim Executive Director; Kristen Kranz, RAMS Admin Assistant; Paul Peltier; Christy Kearney, NewRange Copper Nickel**

(Persons highlighted were present in person; others were via Zoom.)

Review and Approve Agenda:

The agenda was reviewed. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Fisher and supported by Adams. Motion carried.

Approve Meeting Minutes:

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from May 31, 2023, was made by Kalmi and supported by Pittman. Motion carried.

Appearances:

The Board was joined by Christy Kearney from NewRange Copper Nickel (Formerly Polymet). Christy oversees the communities work and environmental permitting work, starting with the company just before the permitting process started, 7 years ago. The company was first issued their key permit in

2019 after a long stretch of environmental review and studies, which was certified by both state and federal regulators. In 2023, the permit was revoked and challenged at the federal level. This is the first time a permit has been revoked without a non-compliance issue. The EPA said there was uncertainty if the Fond Du Lac's water quality standards would be met. In trying to get the permit back, NewRange is looking for solutions based on regulatory, political, legal, and tribal engagement. Options include reapplying and/or appealing the decision.

NewRange is committed to seeing this project through. \$18M was just committed to cleaning out the concentrator which will bring out about 130 union contractors. The company is still hiring, with 14 open positions right now.

Director's Report:

Interim Executive Director Giorgi discussed his activities for the month of June.

- A. RAMS, along with Laurentian Chamber and IRRR Commissioner Rukavina, hosted a meeting with Steve Simon, MN Secretary of State.
- B. Attended the 25th Anniversary meeting at the Discovery Center for the Laurentian Vision Partnership.
- C. CD investment rates have dropped.
- D. Praise was given to Senator Hauschild for all he accomplished in his first year.

Old Business:

- A. Friendly reminder that dues must increase in 2024.

New Business:

- A. RAMS signed on to an amicus brief along with US Steel and Cliffs while Rukavina was the Executive Director. Steve signed off on a release so the attorneys could have an attorney only meeting to strategize. RAMS has no financial obligation to this.
- B. Talon Metals is in a place to start securing permits. They have been doing core sampling for 15-20 years and believe they have found very rich nickel deposits. Talon has an agreement with Elon Musk and they got \$114M from Biden's programs to start and develop this. Mille Lacs is in opposition to Talon's underground mine.
- C. Steve thanked all the Board Members for their commitment to RAMS, and thanked President Medure for his leadership and availability. President Medure thanked Steve for coming back to fill in and doing a great job.
- D. Treasurer Kalmi gave a report on the 2022 Audit. It was good! RAMS is on solid financial footing. There are not enough employees for checks and balances, but the Finance committee will continue to oversee the finances. A motion to accept the 2022 Audit was made by Fisher and supported by Zins. Motion passed.

Board Member Updates:

- A. Phil Medure (Great Scott Township): Kinney Pit put up solar lights.
- B. Paul Kess (Ely): Ely had a ribbon cutting for Midco as they are close to completion of the fiber installation.

- C. Clinton township did not get the Last Mile funding grant that they applied for. Balkan and Angora townships did get grants.
- D. MN was awarded \$651M from NTI (Federal) for Broadband.

Finance Committee Report:

Kalmi reported on the Finance Committee Meeting held June 29, 2023:

- 1. Expenditures for the period of May 31 – June 28, 2023, in the total amount of \$12,195.86.
- 2. Profit and Loss Budget vs Actual is on track.
- 3. Balance Sheet as of June 28, 2023 is \$414,474.18.

A motion to accept the financial reports was made by Fisher and supported by Pittman. Motion carried.

Other:

Member Floor Privileges:

Next Meeting:

A motion to suspend the July and August meetings was made by Kalmi and supported by Fisher. Motion carried. Next meeting will be held on September 28, 2023, at 6pm.

Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.