

Range Association of Municipalities & Schools
Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 23, 2024 – 6:10 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); Barb Kalmi (ISD 319-Nashwauk/Keewatin); Glenn Anderson (City of Babbitt); Dale Adams (City of Grand Rapids); Bob Berrini (Morse Township); Jim Fisher (McDavitt Township); Larry Cuffe (City of Virginia); Dan Goette (City of Aurora); ; Paul Kess (City of Ely); Lisa Kvas (ISD 712 Mt Iron); Julie Lucas (French Township); Phil Medure (Great Scott Township); Cal Saari (City of Nashwauk); Dr Rae Villebrun (ISD 319 Nashwauk/Keewatin Supt Assn); Jim Weikum (City of Biwabik)**

Absent: Harris Township; City of Two Harbors; ISD 318 Grand Rapids (Supt); City of Silver Bay; ISD 2412 St Louis County Schools; ISD 2711 Mesabi East; City of Chisholm; Cherry Township; Nashwauk Township

Also Present: **Paul Peltier, Executive Director; Kristen Kranz, RAMS Admin Assistant; Jeff Anderson; Malissa Bahr; Carly Melin; Dean DeBeltz; James Devine; Lisa Weidemann**

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

Call to Order:

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

Review and Approve Agenda:

The agenda was reviewed. A motion to amend the agenda to remove item 9E was made by Kalmi. A motion to approve the amended agenda was made by Saari and supported by Berrini. Motion carried.

Approve Consent Agenda:

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from September 26, 2024, was made by Kalmi and supported by Fisher. Motion carried.

Finance Committee Report:

Kalmi reported on the Finance Committee Meeting held on October 23, 2024.

1. Expenditures for September 25 – October 22, 2024, totaling \$15,667.39.
2. Profit and Loss Budget vs Actual is 85.9%.
3. Balance Sheet as of October 22, 2024, is \$ 516,882.96.

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

Appearance:

The Board was joined by Dean DeBeltz (VP of External Affairs) and James Devine (Operations) from Twin Metals. DeBeltz discussed some of the legal challenges Twin Metals is facing on the Federal and State levels. In 2020, The Minnesota Environmental Rights Act (MERA) was challenged by opponents to Twin Metals, which sought to ban copper-nickel mining in the BWCAW watershed and prevent mining projects from being reviewed until the lawsuit is settled. In 2023, the DNR said that the rules are adequate for water but will review noise and light regulations. The public hearing starts November 4, 2024.

The Board was also joined by Lisa Weidemann (Community Affairs Specialist) from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Part of her role is to connect people; she will try to get you connected to the person who can answer your questions about permitting. She has been working in the Western Range, as well as in Ely and Virginia.

The Board was also joined by Carly Melin from Essentia Health. She came to advocate for the new medical school in Duluth. 80% of Essentia's patients are rural. Essentia helps to train doctors to work in rural clinics and hospitals. A motion to send a letter of support and a new resolution supporting the project was made by Kess and supported by Fisher. Motion carried.

Director's Report:

Executive Director Peltier gave an update on his activities in October. Peltier discussed his commitment to creating connections by attending Member's meetings. He also highlighted his work on housing with his weekly housing zoom meetings and delivering opening remarks at the Minnesota Housing Partnership Emerging Developers Conference. He has also been working on Annual Meeting prep work.

Old Business:

- No old business.

New Business:

- A letter of support for NRRI Phase One was discussed. A motion to approve sending a letter of support was made by Kalmi and supported by Kvas. Motion carried.
- Discussion was held on sending a letter to Commissioner Kessler supporting a 2025 Environmental Congress site on the Iron Range. A motion to authorize a letter to Commissioner Kessler was made by Anderson and supported by Berrini. Motion carried.
- The customized Executive Director training contract between MN North College and RAMS was discussed. A motion to approve the contract was made by Kess and supported by Adams. Motion carried.

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Minnesota Housing Partnership and RAMS was discussed. A motion to approve the MOU was made by Anderson and supported by Kalmi. Motion carried.
- The performance review of the Administrative Assistant, Kranz, was discussed. A motion to accept the performance review was made by Fisher and supported by Goette. Motion carried.
- Peltier sent a Legislative Priorities survey to all Members of RAMS. Peltier went over the results and Jeff Anderson gave his thoughts on the results.
- Broadband Mapping and Advocacy was discussed. RAMS, IRRR, and St Louis County are working together to help connect broadband providers to groups in need.

Board Member Updates:

- Kess (Ely) - new trailhead is attracting attention; still struggling with EMS
- Goette (Aurora) - working on the spec building in the Industrial Park; public informational meetings about the main street project that will start in 2026; water plant project has started
- Adams (Grand Rapids) - Grand Rapids has changed from assessing for road improvements to taxing a different way which will reduce overall tax each year going forward; received an \$8M grant for housing project with 132 units.
- Lucas (French) - Thanks to the small communities for welcoming out of towners

Other:

Member Floor Privileges:

Next Meeting:

A motion to hold the November RAMS Board Meeting at the MN Discovery Center was made by Kess and supported by Lucas. Motion carried.

The next RAMS Board Meeting will be held on November 21, 2024, at 5:30pm, at the MN Discovery Center, Chisholm.

Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35PM.