# Range Association of Municipalities & Schools Board Meeting Minutes Thursday, October 25, 2018 – 6:00 P.M. Northeast Service Cooperative Building

**Call to Order**

Vice President Charlie Baribeau called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

**Roll Call of Board:**

Present: Charlie Baribeau (City of Virginia); Pat Medure (ISD 318-Grand Rapids); Glenn Anderson (City of Babbitt); Bob Berrini (Morse Township); Jim Fisher (McDavitt Township); Pat Garrity (City of Hibbing); Barb Kalmi (ISD 319-Nashwauk/Keewatin); Stu Lehman (City of Buhl); Ray Marsnik (ISD 696-Ely); Carlene Perfetto (City of Silver Bay); Warren Stolp (Nashwauk Township); Ione Tomasetti (ISD 695-Chisholm); Jim Varda (City of Chisholm); David Pace (Supts Assn); Al Stanaway (City of Mt. Iron)

Absent: City of Aurora; City of Ely; Great Scott Township; ISD 706-Virginia; 1 rep Supt Assn; City of Grand Rapids, ISD 701-Hibbing; City of Hoyt Lakes; ISD 2711-Mesabi East

Also Present: Steve Giorgi, Executive Director; Lois Roskoski, Administrative Assistant; Gary Cerkvenik, Lobbyist

**Review and Approve Agenda:**

Moved by Fisher and supported by Varda to approve the agenda, as presented. Motion carried.

**Approve Meeting Minutes:**

Moved by Varda and supported by Fisher to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting held September 27, 2018. Motion carried.

**Appearance:**

a. Jeff Hansen – ClearWater Biologics – Babbitt, MN (Biological treatment of sulfates)

Jeff Hansen, ClearWater Biologics, gave a presentation on their system that removes sulfate from water. Their process using bioreactor rafts that are placed 12 feet under the water surface and operate year round. The rafts are filled with a fiber that comes from recycled carpet. Water containing sulfate flows through the raft and feeds the bacteria in the fiber. In the first stage, hydrogen sulfate is converted to sulfide. During the second stage, the water is treated with iron and peroxide to change sulfide to sulfur. When it settles, the solid material is pumped out and the water is sulfur and sulfide free water, which will not harm wild rice. Clearwater Biologics received grants from various agencies to test their system. Their testing process lasted for four years and regularly achieved over 90 percent sulfate reduction to sulfide and up to 100 percent during the winter months. The final report was published last year and is included on their website. Because their modular system uses inexpensive recycled material, their process has an excellent cost benefit that can help ensure that water discharged from mining lands does not harm wild rice and meets the sulfate standards in Minnesota. Mr. Hansen is willing to meet individually with cities to discuss their system to remove sulfate from water.

**Director’s Report:**

Director Giorgi provided an update on activities he worked on during the month of October:

October 4th Lunch & Learn with DEED. Eighteen participants attended and it was a good learning experience for community leaders.

October 9th Participated in Rural Broadband Coalition conference call.

October 10th Made a presentation at the League of Cities meetings held in Mt. Iron on the broadband community efforts.

October 11th Traveled with President Lislegard to Anoka to testify in front of the Wild Rice Sulfate Task Force.

October 15th Held a RAMS Special Finance Committee meeting to review 2019 budget and negotiate new labor agreements for Administrative Assistant and Executive Director.

October 16th Conference call with allies on situation brewing at Fond du Lac reservation regarding water quality standards. If Fond du Lac follows EPA guidelines and adopts new standards, the EPA would accept them.

October 17th Conference call with Congressman Nolan’s office on water quality standards on the Fond du Lac issue. Also conference call with Blandin Broadband Board.

October 18th Conference call on PolyMet Land Exchange with Congressman Nolan, Senators Smith and Klobuchar.

October 23rd Attended the West Range Community Advisory Panel in Grand Rapids and Mining Conference hosted by American Experiment in Hibbing.

October 24th Attended Laurentian Visioning Meeting at the Discovery Center. Mining companies attend and provide a lot of interesting information. Will try to set up a lunch and learn with the mining companies and MN Dept of Revenue in December. Held conference call with Region 5 EPA on the Fond Du Lac situation.

October 25th Attended a conference on child care concerns in Northeast Minnesota at Giants Ridge.

**Old Business:**

a. Mesabi Metallics/PolyMet updates.

Director Giorgi stated he reached out to the DNR, who recommended continuing the conference calls with the Governor’s office regarding the Mesabi Metallics project.

Magnetation/ERP Iron Ore was back in bankruptcy court and their assets were auctioned off last week. The top bidder was from Chicago, with the second high bidder from the Iron Range. Five objections have been filed. The assets for the Minnesota site are on hold until November 2nd.

**New Business:**

Vice President Baribeau stated the RAMS Finance Committee negotiated new labor contracts for the Executive Director and Administrative Assistant for the period January 1 through December 31, 2019.

1. New Labor agreement for Executive Director.

**Moved by Fisher and supported by Tomasetti to approve the employment agreement with Steve Giorgi for the Executive Director position for the period January 1 to December 31, 2019, as presented. Motion carried.**

1. New labor agreement for Administrative Assistant.

**Moved by Kalmi and supported by Varda to approve the employment agreement with Lois Roskoski for the Administrative Assistant position for the period January 1 to December 31, 2019, as presented. Motion carried.**

1. New labor agreement for Lobbying Consultant

**Moved by Pace and supported by Fisher to approve the contract with The Costin Group for the lobbyist services for the period December 1, 2018, through November 30, 2019, for an annual cost of $31,500. Motion carried.**

1. 2019 Budget proposal.

Pat Medure reviewed the proposed budget for 2019 and noted the Legal Expense/Miscellaneous Account was separated. The new Miscellaneous Account will include Lunch and Learns, Mayors Meetings and the purchase of promotional items. It was also noted that RAMS will be deficit spending in the amount of $2,966 for the year 2019.

**Moved by Medure to adopt the budget for 2019, as presented, noting funds will be transferred from reserves at the year of 2019 if there is a deficit.**

1. Broadband Resolution.

Director Giorgi reviewed the proposed resolution regarding Iron Range Broadband:

* Supports all efforts to spur the deployment of broadband networks and services that will immediately meet the 2026 State broadband goal of 100 Mb/20 Mb.
* Will support using local financial resources as part of a broadband deployment plan, in conjunction with other funding sources.
* Requests St. Louis County to take the lead in developing and finalizing a regional, multi community approach to spurring broadband deployment and direct staff to support small cities and townships and actively participate in potential grant funding applications.

**Moved by Medure and supported by Anderson to adopt Resolution 003-2018, regarding Iron Range Broadband. Resolution adopted unanimously.**

Director Giorgi stated he will request the townships to adopt a similar resolution and submit to St. Louis County to request resources to help move the broadband issue along.

**Board Member Updates:**

1. Warren Stolp provided an update on Nashwauk Township:

* As of this Fall, Nashwauk Township is fully broadband connected, with 70-80 percent of people to purchase the Paul Bunyan service.
* Formed a Citizens Committee to expand playground equipment.

1. Stu Lehman provided an update on the City of Buhl:

* School is still for sale. New Mayor is committed to get the building repurposed.
* Sold their EMS ambulance equipment to Med One, who took over in September. 24 hour coverage will be provided.
* City will apply for a Federal grant for water plant.

**Finance Committee Report:**

1. Pat Medure reported on the Finance Committee Meeting held October 25, 2018:
2. Expenditures (September 27 - October 24, 2018) –

**Moved by Medure and supported by Fisher to approve the expenditures in the total amount of $14,175.63. Motion carried.**

1. Profit & Loss Budget vs Actual.
2. Balance Sheet.

**Moved by Medure and supported by Perfetto to approve the financial reports. Motion carried.**

1. Discussion on another CD investment.

Director Giorgi will obtain rates from local banks to purchase and additional CD in the amount of $50,000.

**Other:**

Director Giorgi reviewed upcoming events, as follows:

* Community Vision Session, October 31st, Mt. Iron Community Center.
* Lunch & Learn, November 15th, MN Housing Finance Authority, hosted by RAMs at NESC.

Gary Cerkvenik provided an update:

* Working on the use of the former Buhl school building as a treatment facility.
* Provided a brief report on the political election races.

Director Giorgi stated notices will be sent out soon for nominations for the RAMS Board. The RAMS Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, January 10, 2019, at the Mt. Iron Community Center.

**Next Meeting:**

The next RAMS Board Meeting will be held at 6:00 P.M. on Thursday, November 29, 2018.

**Adjournment:**

Meeting adjourned at 7:52 P.M.