

Range Association of Municipalities & Schools
Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 25, 2023 – 6:00 P.M.
Northeast Service Cooperative Building

President Pat Medure called the meeting to order at 6:15 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); Gary Friedlieb (City of Virginia); Shane Hoff (City of Silver Bay);** Jennifer Hoffman-Saccoman (City of Hibbing); Pamela LaFrenier (ISD 2711-Mesabi East); Julie Lucas (French Township); **Philip Medure (Great Scott Township); Ron Pittman (Cherry Township); Cal Saari (City of Nashwauk); Warren Stolp (Nashwauk Township); John Tourila (City of Calumet); Bob Butler (Clinton Township);** Catherine Niemi (City of Biwabik);

Absent: ISD 701-Hibbing, Supt Assn; McDavitt Township; City of Aurora; City of Ely; City of Chisholm; ISD 319-Nashwauk/Keewatin Supt Assn; City of Hoyt Lakes

Also Present: **Paul Peltier, Executive Director; Kristen Kranz, RAMS Admin Assistant; Julie Marinucci, Land and Minerals Director;** Harold Langowski, Ely Economic Development Authority

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

Review and Approve Agenda:

The agenda was reviewed and amended to add 9.e. Hwy 35 Letter of Support. A motion to approve the amended agenda was made by Kalmi and supported by Adams. Motion carried.

Approve Meeting Minutes:

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from September 28, 2023, was made by Anderson and supported by Stolp. Motion carried.

Finance Committee Report:

Kalmi reported on the Finance Committee Meeting held on October 25, 2023.

1. Expenditures for September 28, 2023-October 24, 2023, totaling \$14,861.51.
2. Profit and Loss Budget vs Actual is on track.

3. Balance Sheet as of October 24, 2023, is \$ 407,154.93.

A motion to accept the financial reports was made by Friedlieb and supported by Berrini. Motion carried.

Appearances:

The Board was joined by Julie Marinucci to discuss the Tyler v Hennepin County decision that states upon seizure of their real property for unpaid property taxes, the Takings Clause of the Fifth Amendment of the US Constitution does not allow Minnesota to appropriate more than it is owed. The Federal Supreme Court unanimously upheld the decision. Due to this decision, tax forfeiture sales are paused. This case uniquely impacts NE MN due to our land base and the complexity of all of the different aspects that are managed by the DNR.

The Board was also joined by Harold Langowski of the Ely Economic Development Authority to discuss the MN Public Facility Authority and funding for water, sewer, storm sewer infrastructure. In the last year, PFA has received requests for \$585M. The annual give in low interest loans and grants is about \$58M. Langowski has been talking with Legislators to ensure that all our communities are advocated for and to ensure that additional money is continually put into these funds.

Director's Report:

Executive Director Peltier discussed his activities for October.

1. Executive Director Peltier stated that the speakers that he is bringing in for the meetings are often people that he has talked with during his time traveling around the TAA for meetings.
2. He had attended the Laurentian Chamber dinner, had a meeting with the Duluth Chamber President regarding the Apex letter, attending the NorthSpan Equity Summit, the Grand Rapids Chamber dinner, attending weekly zoom meetings regarding the housing situation, presenting at the Nashwauk City Council, the Hibbing Foundation event, among many other events.

Old Business:

New Business:

1. A motion to hold November's regular board meeting on November 30th, at 6pm, was made by Kalmi and supported by Pittman. Motion carried.
2. Executive Director Peltier went over the annual review for the Administrative Assistant Kranz. The offer of employment will take place at the November meeting.
3. Executive Director Peltier presented a draft of the 2024 RAMS budget.
4. Discussion was held on the upcoming election of Board Members. An Election Committee was formed and includes Phil Medure, Ron Pittman, and Cal Saari.

5. Adams discussed the HWY 35 project in Grand Rapids. He stated that the project has support from the police and sheriffs as well as the City of Grand Rapids. A motion to send a letter of support from RAMS was made by Butler and supported by Friedlieb. Motion carried.

Board Member Updates: (Around the Table)

1. Pat Medure: operating referendum on Nov 7; vacating administration building and moving to Southwest School; GR Football team is moving on to section semis
2. Anderson: Campground 1st season- 49 sites with electric, sewer, water, wi-fi; Cost of sewer plant increased from \$4M to \$17M; Babbitt now has paramedics
3. Phil Medure: US Steel is buying out houses in Kinney
4. Pittman: Blacktopping the West parking lot; enlarge Little League field to high school size field at a cost of about \$40K; CTC gave out backpacks with school supplies to people signing up
5. Friedlieb: Rep Lislegard met with the City Council regarding EMS; the mall will be building and adding on; MN DOT is working on Rock Ridge entrances and exits, including a roundabout on Hwy 53
6. Stolp: Nashwauk Township is in support of Mesabi Metallica; 32 miles of road for grading and snowplowing, grader is up and running
7. Tuorila: Working on the waste treatment project with Nashwauk; Paul Bunyan is bringing fiber optic to town; full size pickle ball court upstairs of Village Hall
8. Hoff: streets and infrastructure in Silver Bay are 70 years old, time to replace and hoping for bonding; working on an outdoor recreation project
9. Butler: blacktop Clinton Community Center parking lot; hoping for money for broadband in the next round of funding
10. Adams: Senior housing; 60 affordable single-family homes (2024), 22 lots to be built on
11. Kalmi: Mesabi Metallica community engagement (Build Mesabi, Build Itasca); Footings were poured at the new school
12. Saari: Mesabi Metallica is moving forward and investing in communities; N-K sewer project entering phase two
13. Berrini: working on getting roads blacktopped; purchased a building for the ambulance with Ely, Fall Lake, and Morse
14. Niemi: Main Street in Biwabik is getting fixed and flowers and bushes have been planted; strategic plans have been set in place
15. Lucas: pickle ball courts; Fall Festival; Winter Festival
16. LaFrenier: pickleball courts; repaved and moved ATV trail in Aurora; Oktoberfest; fall sports have wrapped up the season; farm to school in the cafeteria, grown by students and local farmers
17. Hoffman-Sacoman: Public Utilities Water Treatment Plant is the number one priority, requesting \$12M; K9 Chace has a new home with Itasca County Sheriff Dept

Other:

Member Floor Privileges:

Next Meeting:

The next RAMS Board Meeting will be held on November 30, 2023, at 6pm, and the NESC Building.

Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.