

Range Association of Municipalities & Schools
Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 24, 2022 – 6:00 P.M.
Northeast Service Cooperative Building

President Cyndi Worshek called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Roll Call of Board:

Present: Cyndi Worshek (ISD 2711-Mesabi East); Pat Medure (ISD 318-Grand Rapids); Barb Kalmi (ISD 319-Nashwauk/Keewatin); Dale Adams (City of Grand Rapids); Charlie Baribeau (City of Virginia); Bob Berrini (Morse Township); Jim Fisher, (McDavitt Township); Shane Hoff (City of Silver Bay); Paul Kess (City of Ely); Stuart Lehman (City of Buhl); Philip Medure (Great Scott Township); Kim McLaughlin (ISD 701-Hibbing); Cal Saari (City of Nashwauk); Noel Schmidt (ISD 2909 Rock Ridge (Supt Assn); Warren Stolp (Nashwauk Township); Travis Vake (City of Chisholm); David Zins (City of Hoyt Lakes)

Absent: ISD 701-Hibbing, Supt Assn; City of Babbitt; City of Hibbing; City of Aurora; Cherry Township; City of Calumet; ISD 2909 Rock Ridge

Also Present: Ida Rukavina, Executive Director; Kristen Kranz, RAMS Adm Assistant; Aaron Vande Linde (MN Office of School Trust Lands); Allen Lewis (VFD); Gary Friedlieb
(Persons highlighted were present in person; others were via Zoom.)

Review and Approve Agenda:

The agenda was amended to include Allen Lewis from the Virginia Fire Department as a speaker. Moved by Lehman and supported by Kalmi to approve the amended agenda. Motion carried.

Approve Meeting Minutes:

Moved by McLaughlin and supported by Zins to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting held January 27, 2022. Motion carried.

Appearances:

The Board was joined by Aaron Vande Linde, Director of MN Office of School Trust Lands. Vande Linde was appointed to the position in 2015 by Governor Dayton and reappointed in 2021 By Governor Walz. He spoke on the history of the School Trust Lands, as well as the structure/role, strategic plan, asset management, and the BWCAW Project.

Vande Linde stated that the appraisals on the BWCAW land is very low compared to other land appraisals in other counties in the BWCAW done about 5 years ago. This is an appraisal on 83,000 acres of land.

He also explained how to find the amount of money your school received from this trust:

<https://mn.gov/school-trust-lands/beneficiaries/revenue-distribution/>

Virginia Fire Chief Allen Lewis also spoke to the Board today about the state of EMS in MN. "We are in a crisis situation with Emergency Medical Services right now." This is due to decreasing volunteers, increasing calls, rising costs associated with providing emergency medical services, and rising costs of keeping personnel trained and engaged. The current structure does not support the EMTs and First Responders. Rukavina raised the possibility of RAMS hosting a broader information meeting on this topic and having the Legislative Policy Committee review legislation that would be helpful.

Director's Report:

Director Rukavina highlighted her activities for the month of February 2022.

A. Cliffs Northshore/Babbitt temporary shutdown will impact Two Harbors and Babbitt.

- B. Redistricting was interesting, there were a lot of changes, but could have been worse. State Rep Sandstede and State Rep Igo are now in the same district, and State Sen Eichorn and State Sen Ruud are in the same district. State Rep Lueck and State Sen Tomassoni are both retiring.
- C. Attending Ranger Party hosted by our local legislation that will be in honor of David Tomassoni and also a fundraiser for ALS.
- D. Hosting and attending broadband meetings with several communities including Crane Lake, Balkan Township, McDavitt Township, Clinton Township, Lavelle Township, White Township, and Aurora.
- E. Attended a meeting about the LGA formula and what the changes could look like.
- F. Prove it First legislation about mining.
- G. The State DNR halted the study of the mine plan at the request of Twin Metals. The DNR letter did raise concerns about the proposed location for the tailings facility due to the school trust mineral resources.
- H. The State Legislature is working on the bonus pay for first responders and educators. No agreement has been made yet.
- I. The demographer's video has been uploaded to the RAMS website.
- J. New Member Pike Township has paid dues and Cohasset has voted to join as well. We still have a few unpaid dues.

Old Business:

RAMS has signed the agreement with the same Auditor as previously used. A motion to approve the Audit contract was made by Baribeau and supported by Fisher. Motion carried.

New Business:

- A. Jeff Anderson was unavailable to give the Legislative report.
- B. The Legislative Dinner was held in spite of the weather. Rukavina was joined by members Schulz, Worshek, Engebritson, and Kess. The Legislators enjoyed it. Discussions were held on mental health services , ALS research, and other topics.

Board Member Updates:

Kim McLaughlin, ISD 701-Hibbing, gave an update of the Hibbing schools. The Hibbing hockey team defeated Rock Ridge in the quarterfinals. The mask mandate was lifted in the school today. The Early Learning Center is on target and hoping to take occupancy in early May. It will include 11 new birth-5 classrooms and will partner with Head Start. Targeted for a Fall 2022 opening. The field remodel is ready for track season with 8 new lanes and a turf field lined for football, soccer, and softball. Career academies is in their third year of partnerships with business and industry to promote work experiences and career exploration for the students.

Shane Hoff, City of Silver Bay, gave an update on the Cleveland Cliffs situation. Northshore Mining will be idled starting May 1st. About 100 people will be kept on at the plant in Silver Bay to do some minor repairs, and the others will be laid off. Cliffs is offering sub-pay to those who are laid off, which will keep their salaries close to normal. The main reason for the idle is that they needed to take some pellet demand out, and they are taking form the highest cost producer. The royalty cost with Mesabi Trust has made the Silver Bay plant the highest cost producer right now.

Finance Committee Report:

- A. Kalmi reported on the Finance Committee Meeting held February 24, 2022:
 - 1. Expenditures for the period of January 27-February 23, in the total amount of \$16,952.04 (which includes the Annual Dinner).
 - 2. Profit and Loss Budget vs Actual is on track (15.1%).
 - 3. Balance Sheet as of February 27, is \$378,430.92.

Moved by Fisher and supported by Lehman to accept the financial reports for February 2022. Motion carried.

Other:

Photos are still needed for Hoff, Pitts, and Vake for the website. Some Conflict of Interest forms and Code of Ethics forms are still needed.

Member Floor Privileges:

Kalmi stated that the Nashwauk/Keewatin school referendum for a new pre-K – 12 building and a new wellness center passed with 78% in favor.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the RAMS Board will be held at 6:00 P.M. on March 24, 2022 at the Northeast Service Cooperative office.

Adjournment.

A motion to adjourn was made by Worshek and supported by Lehman. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:47.