

Range Association of Municipalities & Schools
Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 22, 2022 – 6:00 P.M.
Northeast Service Cooperative Building

Vice-President Stacey Scholz called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Roll Call of Board:

Present: Stacey Scholz (ISD 2909 Rock Ridge); 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); Jennifer Hoffman-Saccoman (City of Hibbing); Norma Jean Jofs (City of Aurora); Paul Kess (City of Ely); Philip Medure (Great Scott Township); Kim McLaughlin (ISD 701-Hibbing); Ron Pittman (Cherry Township); Cal Saari (City of Nashwauk); Reggie Engrebritson (ISD 712 MIB (Supt Assn)); Warren Stolp (Nashwauk Township); Cal Warwas (Clinton Township); David Zins (City of Hoyt Lakes)

Absent: ISD 318-Grand Rapids; ISD 701-Hibbing, Supt Assn; City of Babbitt; City of Buhl; French Township; City of Chisholm

Also Present: Ida Rukavina, Executive Director; Kristen Kranz, RAMS Admin Assistant; Jeff Anderson; Vicki Hagberg and Katherine Lahti (SBDC); Maria Warwas
(Persons highlighted were present in person; others were via Zoom.)

Review and Approve Agenda:

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Kalmi and supported by Baribeau. Motion carried.

Approve Meeting Minutes:

Moved by Zins and supported by Adams to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting held June 23, 2022. Motion carried.

Appearances:

The Board was joined by Vicki Hagberg and Katherine Lahti from Northland Foundation/Northland Small Business Development Center.

The Northland Foundation services 7 counties in northeast Minnesota and 5 Tribal Nations. It operates in four ways: grant making, business services, programming, and convening, training, and special initiatives. Since 1986, the Northland Foundation has awarded over 6,500 grants equaling \$52M (\$1.5-2M/year), invested over \$73M and leveraged over \$400M in capital to help small businesses start and grow (supporting over 8,600 jobs), generated more that \$30M to provide programming and technical assistance to support Kids Plus, secured \$152M in resources from mostly outside our region, and created a permanent endowment so that the Foundation is sustainable for years to come.

The Northland Small Business Development Center helps businesses start, grow, and succeed. They offer business consulting at no cost (due to federal, state, and local funding, along with direct support from local communities). This includes understanding finances, describing customers, identifying competition, developing a business plan, financing a business, and buying or selling a business. They have experts in marketing, HR, website design/e-commerce, and QuickBooks/housekeeping. SBDC also offers workshops and seminars, both in person and pre-recorded on YouTube (search for Northland Small Business Development Center). SBDC connects people with resources: in 2021, 951 clients were served, helped start 46 new businesses, and helped raise \$19.9M in capital.

To connect with SBDC, you must “request for services” online at northlandsbdc.org.

Director’s Report:

Director Rukavina highlighted her activities for the months of July, August, and September 2022.

1. A lot of meetings about mining and a special session., along with letters from RAMS, mayors, superintendents.
2. Attending broadband meetings with IRRR and St Louis County, townships, and providers.
3. Working with IRRR, Chambers of Commerce, and St Louis County to plan a Housing Summit in Northern St Louis County.
4. Planning the Candidate Forum.
5. See the Directors' Report in packet

Old Business:

Annual Dinner update:

1. Save the Date was finished by WA Fisher
2. Rukavina sent out letters asking corporate members for sponsorship of the Annual Dinner. So far have received over \$7,000 in sponsorships!
 - a. 3 presenting sponsors at \$1,000. Essentia, Kraus-Anderson, and Northeast Service Cooperative
 - b. In-kind sponsors have donated for a silent auction

New Business:

1. Jeff Anderson:
 - a. No special session yet. Possibility after the election.
 - b. MN House has 69 DFL seats and 63 GOP seats. MN Senate has 33 DFL seats and 34 GOP seats. Both houses are up for grabs with this coming election.
 - c. The Candidate Forum is a good thing for the Iron Range. The moderator, Blois Olson, is a neutral voice.
 - d. The Federal earmark window will likely open in January, possibly December. Submit your request to your congressman and both Senators. Ask RAMS for a letter of support.
 - e. State Bonding will start next spring: May/June.
 - f. After the election, reach out to newly elected officials and tell them your needs.
2. The audit was reviewed: same report as years past. A motion to approve the audit was made by Fisher and supported by Warwas. The motion carried.
3. A motion to have the November meeting on November 17 due to the Thanksgiving holiday was made by Berrini and supported by Fisher. The motion carried.
4. An election committee was discussed and Fisher, Kess, Scholz, and Pittman volunteered to be members of the committee.
5. RAMS was asked to sign on to a lawsuit as a signatory with US Steel regarding MN Class 3 & 4 Water Standards. A motion to approve this was made by Fisher and supported by Warwas. The motion carried.
6. A motion to approve \$500 towards the Housing Summit costs was made by Fisher and supported by Pittman. The motion carried.
7. The Candidate Forum hosted by RAMS, Mesabi Tribune, and Grand Rapids Herald will be held at the Hibbing High School and broadcasted live by Hibbing Public Access. A motion to approve RAMS hosting the forum was made by Kalmi and supported by Warwas. The motion carried.

Board Member Updates:

Warren Stolp, Nashwauk Township, gave an update to the Board. Nashwauk Township has 32 miles of roads and two full-time employees. The highlight of the township would be the new town hall that was made 5 years ago, a new playground 2 years ago, a volleyball court, 2 baseball fields, a basketball court, and a new pavilion that should be finished next week. The hope is to make Nashwauk Township a destination for weddings or other events.

Finance Committee Report:

Kalmi reported on the Finance Committee Meeting held July 28, 2022:

1. Expenditures for the period of June 23-July 27,2022, in the total amount of \$19,327.58.
2. Profit and Loss Budget vs Actual is on track (57.6%).

3. Balance Sheet as of July 22, is \$362,821.30.

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

Kalmi reported on the Finance Committee Meeting held August 24, 2022:

1. Expenditures for the period of July 28-August 23, 2022, in the total amount of \$13,398.84.
2. Profit and Loss Budget vs Actual is on track (64.9%).
3. Balance Sheet as of August 23, is \$349,379.92.

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

Kalmi reported on the Finance Committee Meeting held September 22, 2022:

1. Expenditures for the period of August 24-September 21, 2022, in the total amount of \$10,344.46.
2. Profit and Loss Budget vs Actual is on track (71.9%).
3. Balance Sheet as of September 21, is \$405,795.15.

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

Other:

Member Floor Privileges:

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the RAMS Board will be held at 6:00 P.M. on October 27, 2022, at Northeast Service Cooperative Building.

Adjournment.

A motion to adjourn was made by Fisher and supported by Stolp. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:25.