

**Range Association of Municipalities & Schools**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, September 23, 2021 – 6:00 P.M.**  
**Northeast Service Cooperative Building**

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

**Roll Call of Board:**

Present: **Charlie Baribeau (City of Virginia)**; Cyndi Worshek (ISD 2711-Mesabi East); **Barb Kalmi (ISD 319-Nashwauk/Keewatin)**; Richard Aldrich (ISD 701-Hibbing, Supt Assn) **Glenn Anderson (City of Babbitt)**; Bob Berrini (Morse Township); Shane Hoff (City of Silver Bay); Jennifer Hoffman-Saccoman (City of Hibbing); **Stuart Lehman (City of Buhl)**; **Milan Luzaich (Great Scott Township)**; Kim McLaughlin (ISD 701-Hibbing); Warren Stolp (Nashwauk Township); **Dave Worshek (City of Aurora)**; David Zins (City of Hoyt Lakes)

Absent: City of Grand Rapids; City of Chisholm; McDavitt Township; City of Ely; City of Tower; ISD 318-Grand Rapids; Cherry Township; City of Nashwauk; SID 2909 Rock Ridge (Supt Assn); ISD 2909 Rock Ridge

Also Present: **Ida Rukavina, Executive Director**; Costin Group-Jeff Anderson; **Kristen Kranz, RAMS Adm Assistant**; **Jim Kochevar, Cleveland Cliffs**; **Sandy Karnowski, Cleveland Cliffs**  
**(Persons highlighted were present in person; others were via Zoom.)**

**Review and Approve Agenda:**

Moved by Lehman and supported by Worshek to approve the agenda, as presented. Motion carried.

**Approve Meeting Minutes:**

Moved by Secretary/Treasurer Kalmi and supported by Lehman to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting held August 26, 2021. Motion carried.

**Appearances:**

Jim Kochevar and Sandy Karnowski presented on behalf of Cleveland Cliffs. They discussed what the company looks like today, how it's changed from where it was, and where they hope to be going. The presentation included estimates, current expectations, and future projections. Also included in the presentation was Cleveland Cliffs plan of attack on climate change.

**Director's Report:**

Director Rukavina highlighted her activities for the month of September 2021.

- A. September 1: Went to Toledo, Ohio to tour Cleveland Cliffs DR plant. She met with CEO Lourenco Goncalves for about an hour, toured the outside facility, and inside operations room. Questions were asked about the future of HibTac, but there were no direct answers.
- B. September 9: Tour of MinnTac and Helienne solar expansion groundbreaking ceremony.
- C. Attended the 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional House Redistricting Committee meeting. A lot of people from Duluth testified to what redistricting should look like. Steve Giorgi will submit his testimony in writing. Cindy Martin from Itasca also testified. The district will have to grow in size geographically. Senate districts 3 and 6 will also have to grow in size geographically. It may go to the courts.
- D. Not all townships have applied for the American Rescue Plan. Director Rukavina will send the info out to the townships so that they are aware that it is available.
- E. Plan to work on Legislative priorities and will be pulling together the Legislative Committee.
- F. Infrastructure bill is still up in the air. Deadline for the vote in September 27. This bill includes the funding for broadband and roads/bridges.

### **Old Business:**

- A. Review the letter to Rep. Stauber in support of the higher broadband speed. This letter was also copied to both Senators.

### **New Business:**

- A. Legislative update from Jeff Anderson:

The Legislature is not in session until January 31, 2022. The Senate and House are doing their bonding tours around the state. The Senate bonding tour just wrapped up in NE MN, including stops in Hibbing, Buhl, Chisholm, Mt Iron, Two Harbors, and Duluth. The House is expected to meet with even more communities than the Senate did (Oct 5-6). The Costin Group is available to help with preparing for those meetings.

There have been some leadership changes in the Senate:

Susan Kent (DFL Minority Leader) stepped down and was replaced by Melisa Franzen.

Paul Gazelka (R Majority Leader) stepped down and was replaced by Jeremy Miller.

There was a meeting of the Legislative Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources. This commission awards around \$70M yearly with the approval of the Legislature. There are projects for St. Louis County, Mesabi Trail, Silver Bay, MIB school, Floodwood, Virginia, Biwabik, Brookston, Redhead Mountain Bike Park, and Prospector ATV. These are all within the RAMS service area. No decisions were made today. It may come down to the Legislature to make the decision, which could be good for NE MN.

Thanks to Ida for spending time with the Legislators and forging those relationships.

### **Board Member Updates:**

- A. Secretary/Treasurer Barb Kalmi (Nashwauk/Keewatin School Board):

The district has gained some students back that were homeschooling last year. They are actively working on the new school project on land that US Steel donated to them. Looking toward a referendum in February to the taxpayers. The school is compromised by Covid-19, trying to do the best to keep the kids in school.

Discussion was held regarding school boards and masking.

Richard Aldrich:

Will RAMS send a letter to the local Legislatures asking for them to weigh in and give some guidance to the school boards regarding Covid-19? (Something more than a recommendation.)

### **Finance Committee Report:**

- A. Secretary/Treasurer Barb Kalmi reported on the Finance Committee Meeting held September 23, 2021:
  1. Expenditures for the period of August 26-September 22, in the total amount of \$14,609.20.
  2. Profit and Loss Budget vs Actual is 69.5%, on target.
  3. Balance Sheet - \$391,945.27

Moved by Vice President Worshek and supported by Lehman to accept the financial reports. Motion carried.

### **Member Floor Privileges:**

- A. Stuart Lehman: The Senate Bonding Committee was in Buhl yesterday. The city is trying to get funding for a new water tower. Met with 17 Senators along with Dave Tomassoni. It was a good experience. The city is also wrapping up a big construction project.
- B. President Charlie Baribeau: Iron Trail Event Convention Center (ITECC) is having events going on all week. There are a few things still needing to be finished on the building, but nothing that will stop the events from happening. The League of Minnesota Cities will be at the ITECC November 10. Ida will send out registration info.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the RAMS Board will be held at 6:00 P.M. on October 28, 2021.

**Adjournment.**

A motion to adjourn was made by Lehman and supported by VP Worchek. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:53 P.M.