

Range Association of Municipalities & Schools
Special Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 14, 2025 – 6:00 P.M.
Northeast Service Cooperative Building, Mt Iron, MN

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

Roll Call of Board:

Present: **Barb Kalmi (ISD 319 Nashwauk/Keewatin); Jim Fisher (Town of McDavitt); Shane Hoff (City of Sliver Bay); Bob Berrini (Town of Morse); Steve Biondich (City of Biwabik);** Angela Campbell (City of Ely); **Ryan Davies (Town of Harris); Dirk Davis (Town of Morcom);** Cathy Erickson (City of Two Harbors); **Justin Fosso (City of Hibbing); Gary Friedlieb (City of Virginia); Jed Holewa (City of Chisholm); Chris Koivisto (ISD 2412 St Louis County); Lisa Kvas (ISD 712 Mt Iron/Buhl); Phil Medure (Town of Great Scott);** Tom Omerza (ISD 696 Ely); **Ron Pittman (Town of Cherry); John Rauzi (City of Eveleth);** Kathleen Undeland (ISD 2711 Mesabi East)

Absent: ISD 318 – Supt; City of Buhl; ISD 695 Chisholm; ISD 2909 Rock Ridge – Supt; Town of Nashwauk

Also Present: **Paul Peltier, Executive Director; Kristen Kranz, RAMS Admin Assistant; Rick Blake (Grand Rapids); Lisa Weidemann (MPCA); John Arbogast (USW); Jason Janisch (IRRR); Dave Buhr (MP); Casey Venema (Itasca Co); Chrissy Bartovich (US Steel); D Learmont (WMMPB); Nicole Everson (US Steel); Eric Williams (US Steel); Rita Gabrielson (NSM); Candice Maxwell (Cliffs); Andrea Hayden (Cliffs Northshore); Emily Roose (City of Ely); Brett Skyles (Itasca Co); Wade Klingsporn (Cliffs); Tom Moe (US Steel); Aaron Kania (Tower); Tom Johnson (MPCA); Theresa Haugen (MPCA); Rachel Ganani (MPCA); Katrina Kessler (MPCA); Sen. Grant Hauschild; Rep. Spencer Igo; Rep. Roger Skraba; Sen. Rob Farnsworth**

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

Appearance:

The Board was joined by Katrina Kessler, Theresa Haugen, Tom Johnson, and Rachel Ganani from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Commissioner Kessler thanked RAMS for the invitation and stressed the importance of the discussion regarding the US Steel Keetac wastewater permits and sulfate variance request. Theresa Haugen's presentation included information on the facility background, permit overview, sulfate and variance request, compliance schedule, functional equivalency, and the public comment period. The public comment period will end on September 8, 2025. Keetac must comply

with final sulfate limits as soon as possible and no later than April 30, 2030. Tom Johnson fielded questions from the group.

The Board was also joined by Chrissy Bartovich, Environmental Director, from US Steel. Bartovich's presentation included a brief history of the Wild Rice Standard, explaining the modification request and variance request, how they used crowdsourcing to help find a solution, and the issues US Steel has with the permits. She reminded the Board of a public meeting at ITMEC, 6PM on September 3, 2025, regarding this issue.

The Board was also joined by John Arbogast from United Steelworkers District 11. Arbogast gave updates on the local mines and how the Wild Rice Standard could potentially affect them all.

New Business:

A motion to approve a letter of support and Board Resolution #25-01 for Keetac variance and site-specific standard request was made by Holewa and supported by Pittman. Motion carried with Koivitso abstaining due to a conflict of interest.

Board Member Updates/Member Floor Privileges:

Holewa noted that he thinks the permitting process is not good.

Next Meeting:

The next regular Board meeting will be at the Northeast Service Cooperative Building on September 25, 2025.

Other:

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20PM.