

Range Association of Municipalities & Schools
Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 28, 2026 – 6:00 P.M.
Northeast Service Cooperative Building, Mt Iron, MN

President Kalmi called the Meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Roll Call of Board:

Present: **Barb Kalmi (ISD 319 Nashwauk/Keewatin); Steve Biondich (City of Biwabik); Shane Hoff (City of Sliver Bay); Bob Berrini (Town of Morse); Rick Blake (City of Grand Rapids); Angela Campbell (City of Ely); Ryan Davies (Harris Township); Cathy Erickson (City of Two Harbors); Jim Fisher (Town of McDavitt); Justin Fosso (City of Hibbing); Matt Grose (ISD 318 Grand Rapids Supt); Chris Koivisto (ISD 2412 St Louis County); Lisa Kvas (ISD 712 Mt Iron/Buhl); Renee Loeffler (City of Buhl); Dan Manick (City of Cook); Ron Pittman (Town of Cherry); John Rauzi (City of Eveleth); Noel Schmidt (ISD 2909 Rock Ridge Supt); Kathleen Undeland (ISD 2711 Mesabi East)**

Absent: Morcom Township;; City of Chisholm; City of Nashwauk; Great Scott Township; Town of Nashwauk

Also Present: **Paul Peltier, Executive Director; Kristen Kranz, RAMS Admin Assistant; Denise Dittrich, MN School Boards Association; Tim Rordan. MN School Boards Association;; Beth Caple (Ellsburg Township); Loren Mesedahl, Ellsburg Township; Kim McLaughlin, Hibbing School Board; Doug Gregor, City of Aurora; Jeff Anderson, Costin Group**

(Names in bold were present in person; others were via Zoom.)

Review and Approve Agenda:

President Kalmi amended the agenda to move item 9.3 RAMS Legislative Update to item 6.2. A motion to approve the amended agenda was made by Grose and supported by Fisher. Motion passed unanimously.

Approve Consent Agenda:

A motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from April 23, 2026, and the letter of support– Seasonal Rec SF 1197/HF 1161, was made by Biondich and supported by Loeffler. Motion passed unanimously.

Finance Committee Report:

Hoff reported on the Finance Committee Meeting held on May 28, 2026.

1. Expenditures for April 23 – May 27, 2026, totaling \$23,817.81.

2. Profit and Loss Budget vs Actual is 46.7%.
3. Balance Sheet as of May 27, 2026, is \$656,537.24.

A motion to approve the Finance Committee Report was made by Pittman and supported by Kvas. Motion passed unanimously.

Appearance:

The Board was joined by Tim Riordan, Rock Ridge School Board and President-Elect of the MN School Boards Association, who introduced Denise Dittrich, Director of Government Relations for the MN School Boards Association. Dittrich started her career as a teacher for 13 years, then becoming a school board director for eight years, a Member of the House of Representatives for eight years, and presently at the MN School Boards Association. Dittrich explained how the Permanent School Fund was created and how it is distributed to support public education. She explained the proposed constitutional amendment that would modernize the system: the current method (yield only) distributes interest and dividends only (historically roughly 2.5% of average market value) while the proposed method distributes exactly 4.5% based on a rolling three-year average of the fund's total market value. Dittrich pointed out that the fund currently shows an average of 8% gains over the last ten years. The proposal comes with zero taxpayer cost (no new individual or property taxes) and would go into effect on July 1, 2027.

The Board was also joined by Jeff Anderson, Costin Group, who gave an after-session update. With the most evenly divided legislature in the country (tied House and one vote DFL lead in the Senate), the session ended successful for RAMS overall.

Some of the highlights include:

- A statewide bonding bill passed with investments in local infrastructure
- Seasonal Recreation tax base replacement aid
- Mining related school and local government funding reforms (Minerals Article)
- Protection of the Doug Johnson Economic Protection Trust Fund
- Support for economic development policies
- Constitutional Amendment for the Permanent School Fund
- Regulatory rules framework for helium

Director's Report:

Executive Director Peltier gave an update on some of his activities over the month of May:

- Summer Member Meeting has been moved to June 25 due to Legislator availability
- Three major comment periods are open right now: draft impaired waters list, cumulative impacts (air permits), gas rule making
- Permanent School Fund
- Range Mayors had an informational meeting about data centers
- Thank you notes from Commissioner Rukavina and Senator Klobuchar
- Public meetings in the fall and winter on new permits for sulfate
- Hill Annex Mine is no longer a state park

Old Business:

- None.

New Business:

- About 100 people total showed up to the three Budget Impact Meetings held around the Range on three different dates. The meetings went well.
- Discussion was held on the Permanent School Fund Amendment campaign and what a donation to that campaign would look like for RAMS.

Board Member Updates/Member Floor Privileges:**Next Meeting:**

- The Summer Member Meeting and meal with Legislators will be held on June 25, 2026. The meal will be served at 4:45 and discussion with the Legislators will begin at 5:30.

Other:**Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.