Range Association of Municipalities & Schools
Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 22, 2026 – 6:00 P.M.
Northeast Service Cooperative Building, Mt Iron, MN

President Kalmi called the Meeting to order at 6:01pm.

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)**; Dirk Davis (Morcom Township);** Cathy Erickson (City of Two Harbors); **Jim Fisher (Town of McDavitt); Justin Fosso (City of Hibbing); Sheila Jensen (City of Nashwauk); Lynn Hilde (ISD 2412 St Louis County); Lisa Kvas (ISD 712 Mt Iron/Buhl); Dan Manick (City of Cook); John Rauzi (City of Eveleth); Noel Schmidt (ISD 2909 Rock Ridge Supt); Warren Stolp (Nashwauk Township)**

Absent: ISD 318 Grand Rapids (Supt); City of Chisholm; Great Scott Township; City of Buhl; Cherry Township; ISD 2711 Mesabi East

Also Present: **Paul Peltier, Executive Director; Kristen Kranz, RAMS Admin Assistant; Don Warwas (ISD 319 Nashwauk/Keewatin); Ben DeNucci (Mesabi Metallics); Charles Sutton (Mesabi Metallics);** Sandy Karnowski (Cleveland Cliffs); Jeff Anderson (Costin Group); **Brent Malvick (Hanft Fride Law Firm)**

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

Review and Approve Agenda:

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Biondich and supported by Campbell. Motion passed unanimously.

Approve Consent Agenda:

A motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from September 24, 2026, was made by Kvas and supported by Fisher. Motion passed unanimously.

Finance Committee Report:

Hoff reported on the Finance Committee Meeting held on October 22, 2026.

1. Expenditures for September 24 - October 21, 2026, totaling $20,211.68
2. Profit and Loss Budget vs Actual is 100.6%.
3. Balance Sheet as of October 21, 2026, is $643,840.05.

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

Appearance:

The Board was joined by Ben DeNucci and Charles Sutton from Mesabi Metallics to give an update on the progress of the mine. They have about 1,500 contractors on site daily as well as a 24/7 mining team at the mine. They recently produced the first concentrate and expect to produce the first pellet in a few weeks. Mesabi Metallics has hired 250 full-time employees and are still looking to hire 100 more.

The new Mesabi Metallic steel plant is moving forward in Iowa, but DeNucci and Sutton are excited about a few expansions that are being planned for this area: a Vertimill investment ($220M), expanding capacity to double the mine ($3.1B), and a Hot Briquetted Iron (HBI) facility ($1.9B).

Director's Report:

Executive Director Peltier gave an update on some of his activities from October: see directors report

- Annual Meeting: sponsorships equaling $13,500; 120 people registered to date
- Legislative priorities planning meeting with a draft to be available at the November meeting
- Housing Forum October 27 at the Discovery Center
- Brownfields regional grant application
- Presentations about the Constitutional Amendment; state-wide, targeted, digital campaign; $7K in newspaper ads in the TAA

Old Business:

- None.

New Business:

- A motion to approve a RAMS Comment Letter regarding the MinnTac Tailings Basin was made by Biondich and supported by Davis. Motion passed unanimously.
- Executive Director Peltier gave a quick update on the 2027 Budget discussions as well as the Legislative Priorities feedback from Membership.
- A motion to approve the RAMS Legislative Consultant Agreement with Costin Group for 2027 was made by Fisher and supported by Fosso. Motion passed unanimously.
- A motion to close the session pursuant to MN Statute 13D.03; 13D.05, subd. 3 Attorney Client Privilege – Personnel Matter was made by Fosso and supported by Fisher. Motion carried unanimously.
- A motion to open the session was made by Fisher and supported by Davis. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Member Updates/Member Floor Privileges:

- Fosso: Good luck to those who are on the ballot in November!

- Erickson: Two Harbors City Council passed a purchase agreement that establishes framework for a 62-acre site within city limits in the industrial district. The $85M facility would process helium and other rare gasses.

Next Meeting:

- The next meeting will be on November 19, 2026, at the Northeast Service Cooperative Building
- Annual Meeting on December 3, 2026, at the ITMEC, Virginia

Other:

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.