

Meeting Minutes MN Rural Counties Board of Directors

Monday, January 9

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Douglas County Courthouse

Alexandria, Minnesota

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.; members recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Chairman Johnson took the roll, and a quorum was confirmed.

Attendees: Luke Johnson, MRC Chairman, Pipestone County; Jerry Rapp, MRC Vice-Chairman, Douglas County; Sharon Bring, MRC Secretary/Treasurer; Marshall County; Laurie Westerlund, Aitkin County; Barry Nelson, Becker County; Wade Athey, Big Stone County; Frank Gross, Clay County; Larry Anderson, Cottonwood County; Tim Kalina, Douglas County; Troy Johnson, Grant County; Tom Krueger, Hubbard County; Dean Nielsen, Lincoln County; David Geray, Mahnomon County; Doug Krueger, McLeod County; Steve Schmitt, Meeker County; Dan Sparks, Mower County; Gene Metz, Nobles County; Neil Peterson, Pennington County; Paul Gerde, Pope County; Chuck Flage, Red Lake County; Tim Denny, Todd County; Chad Metz, Traverse County; Bill Stearns, Wadena County; Mike Weyer, Wadena County; Murlyn Kreklau, Wadena County; Jim Branstad, Watonwan County; Dennis Larson, Wilkin County; Mike Kaczmarek, Wright County

Staff: Anne Kilzer, Britta Torkelson, Rob Vanasek, Sam Walseth

Guests: Garry Johansen, Norman County Environmental Services Director

3. Approve Agenda

Commissioner Gerde moved approval of the agenda. Second by Commissioner Rapp. Motion adopted.

4. Approve Minutes

Commissioner Peterson moved approval of the December 4, 2022 meeting minutes with corrections outlined by Chair Johnson. Second by Commissioner Schmitt. Motion adopted.

5. Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement

Secretary/Treasurer Bring provided a report on the current MRC financials, including final expenses for Dan Larson and new information for Capitol Hill Associates. Capitol Hill Associates will submit quarterly invoices to MRC for payment. Commissioner Anderson made a motion to file the Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement. Second by Commissioner Flage. Motion adopted.

6. EMS Grants/Solid Waste Issues

Garry Johnanson, Norman County Environmental Service Director, gave an overview of Local Government Emergency Management Planning and Preparedness Activities. He provided the legislative platform and discussed strategies at the Capitol. Garry specifically discussed the Emergency Management Readiness Proposal. Anne Kilzer will distribute the handout provided as a follow-up to the meeting. Discussion ensued, including how this funding could be helpful and utilized. Garry requested support and assistance with testifying if necessary.

Commissioner Schmitt moved the continued listing of MRC as a supporter of the Emergency Management Readiness Proposal. Second by Commissioner Metz. Motion adopted.

Garry gave an overview of solid waste management issues being discussed with state agencies and potential solutions; there is a nine-county group working on this. Garry is also involved with MACPZA, AMEM and offered to assist in getting more Counties involved in MRC.

7. DNR Drainage Work Group Discussion

Britta Torkelson outlined conversations with the DNR regarding this issue, and concerns brought up from the work group. DNR has indicated that they will not bring forward a bill this session, although others could do so. Britta outlined the coalition strategy moving forward.

Since the proposal has not been officially pulled, Britta asked for feedback on the proposal. Likely a subcommittee will be formed to work on this between now and the June Work Group meeting. Discussion ensued. An event

cosponsored by AMC will be held in February; information will be sent to all of the MRC delegates. Sam Walseth provided additional perspective regarding legislative strategy. AMC has drafted a one-pager that includes MRC as a signer of support, should it be needed.

8. Legislative Session Updates and Discussion

Britta Torkelson gave an update on the first week of session and issues that are already moving forward, including policy items, fiscal items, discussion regarding the inclusion of inflation in budget forecasting, and bonding bill (cash and borrowing).

Britta walked members through the MRC Legislative Priority Issues. Anne and Britta will send Broadband Funding Report, Transportation Alliance document, and a Legislative Summary to MRC members as a follow up.

9. Other

Blue Earth and Brown County filing with state regarding inmates being kept after sentence with no placement. Members discussed concerns about mental health and costs to the County to maintain.

10. Adjourn

Commissioner Krueger made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Second by Commissioner Schmitt. Meeting adjourned at 12:54 p.m.

Minutes Approved

Feb. 24, 2023

Sec/Treasurer

Sharon Brung