

## **MN Rural Counties Caucus**

Monday, March 15, 2021

10:00 a.m. – 1 p.m.

This meeting took place on the Zoom Virtual Platform

### **Minutes of Meeting:**

Attendees: Luke Johnson, MRC Chairman, Pipestone Co.; Jerry Rapp, MRC Vice-Chair, Douglas Co; Sharon Bring, MRC Sec/Treas., Marshall Co; Laurie Westerlun, Aitkin Co; Frank Gross and Jenny Mongeau, Clay Co; Larry Anderson, Cottonwood Co; Jerry Rapp, Keith Englund and Heather Larson, Douglas Co; Troy Johnson, Grant Co; Dave De La Hunt and Char Christenson, Hubbard Co; Leon Olson, Kittson Co; Wayne Skoe, Koochiching Co; David Geray, Mahnomen Co; Doug Krueger, McLeod Co; Jeff Baldus, Mower Co; Dennis Welgraven, Molly Malone, Murray Co; Gene Metz, Nobles Co; Neil Peterson, Pennington Co; Paul Gerde, Pope Co; Chuck Flage and Tony Gerardy, Red Lake Co; Russ Walker and John Horner, Roseau Co; Bob Kopitzke and Neil Wiese, Stevens Co; Dave Salberg, Traverse Co; Bill Stearns, Wadena Co; Mike Kaczmarek, Wright Co; Dan Larson, MRC Executive Director.

### **MRC Board Meeting Agenda:**

1) Approve Agenda; 2) Approve Minutes (Feb. 8, 2021); 3) Treasurers Report and Reimbursements; 4) Rep. John Burkel; 5) MRC Draft Clean Car MN Policy Discussion and Action; 6) Discuss MRC Legislative Priorities; 7) Other Business; 8) Adjourn

Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 10 a.m., and directed Dan Larson to take the roll. The roll was taken and a quorum confirmed.

**1) Approve Agenda:** Doug Kruger made a motion to adopt the agenda. Second by Neil Peterson. Motion adopted.

**2) Approve Minutes:** Russ Walker made a motion to adopt the February 8, 2021 minutes. Second by Larry Anderson. Motion adopted.

**3) Treasurers Report:** Dan Larson gave the financial report. He reported all dues invoices for 2021 had been paid, totaling \$83,400.00 in revenues. There was one invoice from AMC for \$75.00 for the executive director participation in the Legislative Conference. Larry Anderson made a motion to accept the report and pay the invoice. Second by Dave Salberg. Motion adopted.

### **4) Rep. John Burkel, DFL-East Grand Forks:**

Rep. Burkel introduced himself to the board and urged members to take positive action on his bill, HF1058 / SF1491, eliminating residency requirements for county highway engineers, and heard county board concerns about other issues.

### **5) MRC Draft Clean Car MN Policy Discussion and Action:**

Dan Larson presented the following draft policy position to the board:

*MRC supports legislative review of any and all issues of consequence that would bring harm to the culture and / or economy of rural counties. Further, MRC opposes the attempt by the MPCA to adopt the MN Clean Car rule without consulting the legislature and encourages the Walz administration to withdraw the proposed rule and submit the issue to legislative review.*

Neil Peterson made a motion to adopt the policy as presented. Second by Russ Walker. Motion adopted. Dan Larson was directed to craft a letter of opposition for signature by Chairman Johnson and submit as MRC comments to MPCA in opposition to the Clean Car MN proposed rules.

**6) Discuss MRC Legislative Priorities:**

Dan Larson walked the board through the status of 2021 MRC priority issues with specific focus on Emergency Readiness Grants, Rural Broadband Funding and Energy for Greater MN Manufacturing and Residential Needs. He raised a new issue related to telehealth to the board, and suggested support for the following draft policy:

*MRC supports modification of telehealth coverage service to address critical health care access needs.*

Luke Johnson made a motion to adopt. Second by Larry Anderson. Motion adopted.

**7) Other Business:** Next meeting is April 12, 2021

**8) Adjourn:** Dave Salberg made a motion to adjourn. Second by David Geray. Motion adopted.

Minutes Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Sec / Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_