

## **Meeting Minutes MN Rural Counties Board of Directors**

Tuesday, February 21

5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

ZOOM

### **1. Call to Order**

Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

### **2. Roll Call**

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

*Delegates:* Laurie Westerlund, Aitkin County; Wade Athey, Big Stone County; Frank Gross, Clay County; Larry Anderson, Cottonwood County; Troy Johnson, Grant County; Ted Van Kempen, Hubbard County; Dan Nielsen, Lincoln County; David Geray, Mahnomen County; Sharon Bring, Marshall County; Doug Krueger McLeod County; Steve Schmitt, Meeker County; Dan Sparks, Mower County; Steve Bommersbach, Norman County; Neil Peterson, Pennington County; Luke Johnson, Pipestone County; Paul Gerde, Pope County; Chuck Flage, Red Lake County; Randy Kramer, Renville County; Bill Stearns, Wadena County; Jim Branstad, Watonwan County; Dennis Larson, Wilkin County; Mike Kaczmarek, Wright County.

*Alternates:* Tim Kalina, Douglas County; Doyle Sperr, Grant County; David De La Hunt, Hubbard County; Teresia Gille, Kittson County; Jason Sjoblum, Koochiching County; Bruce Lawrence, Pennington County; Gary Willhite, Polk County; Larry Lindor, Pope County; Gordy Wagner, Pope County; David Hamre, Renville County; Daryl Wicklund, Roseau County; Jeanne Ennen, Stevens County; Ron Staples, Stevens County; Murlyn Kreklau, Wadena County; Bill Miller, Watonwan County.

*Guests:* Lisa Herges, Renville County Administrator, Scott Johnson, Benton County; Kevin Paap, Blue Earth County; Vance Stuehrenberg, Blue Earth County; Anton Berg, Brown County; Dave Borchert, Brown County; Sam Hansen, Brown County Administrator; Scott Windschitl, Brown County; Nicole Eckstrom, Freeborn County; Candace Pesch, Freeborn County Administrator; Christopher Schoff, Freeborn County; Phil Nasby, Jackson County; Molly Malone, Murray County; Robert Lahman, Otter Tail County; Raeanne Danielowski, Sherburne County; Joe Perske, Stearns County; Doug Christopherson, Waseca County; Representative Matt Norris; Representative Paul Torkelson, Representative Frank Hornstein.

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

### **3. Approve Agenda**

Commissioner Schmitt moved approval of the agenda. Second by Commissioner Kaczmarek. Motion adopted.

### **4. Approve Minutes**

Commissioner Krueger moved approval of the January 9, 2023 meeting minutes with the correction noted by Chair Johnson. Second by Commissioner Flage. Motion adopted.

### **5. Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement**

Secretary/Treasurer Bring provided a report on the current MRC financials. Commissioner Schmitt made a motion to file the Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement. Second by Commissioner Flage. Discussion regarding dues paid to date. Motion adopted.

### **6. Legislative Update**

Britta Torkelson walked through a PowerPoint giving a legislative overview and status update on MRC's Legislative Priorities. She noted that the Bonding Bill spreadsheet has been released. Britta discussed potential legislation around the drainage registry portal and the legislative coalition working on this issue.

Construction materials tax exemption has a wide variety of supporters including local government and nonprofits and was also included in Governor's budget. Child Care is a topic being addressed. Sherry Munyon is taking the lead on AMER; Britta has reached out and offered to support as helpful/needed. Rob Vanasek and Sam Walseth provided additional insights.

Follow up: Legislative Update PowerPoint, Bonding Bill spreadsheet, and Broadband Line Extension information will be emailed to members.

#### **7. Drainage Registry Portal Discussion**

Britta gave an overview of drainage issue, activity to date and proposed legislation (language included in meeting packet). Discussion ensued. MRC will continue to monitor this closely and engage in work group discussions.

#### **8. Legislative Guests**

Chair Johnson welcomed our guest speakers.

Representative Norris spoke with the group about some of the work being done by the House of Representatives, including several bills passed that affect greater Minnesota. Construction materials tax exemption, CPA and other issues relevant to MRC are moving forward.

Representative Hornstein thanked counties for being strong and steady partners who have taken courageous positions in regard to raising revenue. Transportation committee working well on a bipartisan basis. Dedicated funds have not kept up with need and the committee is facing that challenge. Encouraging local government, County engineers on front lines for advocating for unmet needs.

Representative Torkelson noted work being done to address workforce shortage in nursing homes. Trying to reach agreement behind the scenes to gain solutions on a bipartisan basis. This and many issues fall differently on Greater Minnesota; i.e. energy issues. Bonding bill for local road and bridge issues not moving as quickly as some would like, he encouraged MRC members to put pressure on his GOP colleagues to get something moving more quickly.

Corridors of Commerce, solar energy, tab fees, were also discussed. All three Representatives encouraged further engagement and advocacy efforts.

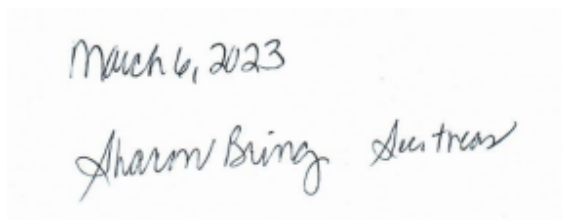
#### **9. Other**

Discussion on the Drainage Registry Portal resumed. Sam Walseth noted that MRC's focused legislative agenda has allowed the lobbying team to engage with legislators around top priorities, including metro area legislators. Members discussed strategy around this issue.

Members noted that several guests from non-member counties attended tonight's meeting, and thanked them for attending. MRC welcomes additional members to join in our efforts.

#### **10. Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.



March 6, 2023  
Sharon Biring, Sec. Treas.