

MN Rural Counties Board of Directors – APPROVED**Wednesday, September 11, 2024****2:30 PM**

Arrowwood Resort, Alexandria MN

Attendance

Position	County	First Name	Last Name
Delegate	Aitkin County	Laurie	Westerlund
Delegate	Becker County	Barry	Nelson
Alternate	Beltrami County	John	Carlson
Alternate	Beltrami County	Craig	Gaasvig
Delegate	Brown County	Jeffrey	Veerkamp
Alternate	Brown County	Brian	Braun
Alternate	Clay County	Paul	Krabbenhof
Delegate	Cottonwood County	Larry	Anderson
Delegate	Douglas County	Jerry	Rapp
Alternate	Douglas County	Keith	Englund
Alternate	Douglas County	Tim	Kalina
Alternate	Grant County	Karl	Lindquist
Delegate	Hubbard County	Charlene	Christenson
Delegate	Kittson County	Leon	Olson
Alternate	Kittson County	Theresa	Gillie
Delegate	Lincoln County	Dean	Nielsen
Delegate	Lyon County	Thomas	Andries
Alternate	Lyon County	Rick	Anderson
Alternate	Lyon County	Gary	Crowley
Alternate	Lyon County	Todd	Draper
Alternate	Mahnomen County	David	Geray
Delegate	Marshall County	Sharon	Bring
Alternate	Martin County	Steven	Flohrs
Delegate	McLeod County	Doug	Krueger
Alternate	McLeod County	Nathan	Schmalz
Delegate	Meeker County	Steve	Schmitt
Delegate	Olmsted County	Brian	Mueller
Delegate	Pennington County	Neil	Peterson
Delegate	Pipestone County	Luke	Johnson
Alternate	Polk County	Joan	Lee
Delegate	Pope County	Paul	Gerde
Delegate	Red Lake County	Chuck	Flage
Alternate	Redwood County	Bob	Van Hee
Alternate	Renville County	Randy	Kramer
Delegate	Roseau County	Kermit	Jensen
Alternate	Roseau County	Glenda	Phillipe
Delegate	Saint Louis County	Paul	McDonald
Delegate	Sibley County	Peter	Koch
Delegate	Stearns County	Steve	Notch
Alternate	Stearns County	Jeff	Bertram
Delegate	Stevens County	Bob	Kopitzke

Alternate	Stevens County	Patricia	Lesmeister-Nelson
Alternate	Todd County	Lew	Noska
Delegate	Wadena County	Bill	Stearns
Alternate	Wadena County	Ron	Noon
Alternate	Wright County	Tina	Diedrick

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

Guests: Brian Martinson, Aimee Snyder, Nicole Bjerke, Katie Albu, Lisa Herges, Beth Schlangen, John Johnson, Kersten Kappmeyer, Dennis Genereau, Susan Betcher, Kevin Paap, Barb Weckman Brekke

Speakers: Representative Jim Joy, Senator Torrey Westrom

1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Luke Johnson called the meeting to order at 2:30 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was said, and a moment of silence in remembrance of the victims of 9/11 was held.

2. Roll Call

Chairman Johnson took the roll, and a quorum was confirmed. During the roll call, members shared 1-2 top of mind issues for their county.

3. Approve Agenda

Commissioner Peterson moved approval of the September, 2024 agenda. Second by Commissioner Gerde. Motion adopted.

4. Approve Minutes

Commissioner Kopitzke moved approval of the May 20, 2024 meeting minutes. Second by Commissioner Schmitt. Motion adopted.

5. Financial Report.

Secretary/Treasurer Sharon Bring provided the financial report, including a request for approval for payment of the AMC invoice. Commissioner Anderson moved approval of the financial report. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Motion adopted.

6. Membership Dues for Potential New Members in 2024

Chairman Johnson noted that MRC continues to recruit additional rural counties as members. He suggested that dues payments between now and the end of the year be credited to 2025. This would technically be a change to the existing dues structure. It was suggested instead that dues payments be suspended for new members for the remainder of 2024 and paid in 2025 alongside current members. Commissioner Stearns moved that new members in 2024 have dues suspended for the remainder of the year. Commissioner Christenson seconded. Motion adopted.

7. 2025 Staffing Recommendation

Chairman Johnson outlined the Executive Committee's recommendation for staffing of MRC for 2025 and 2026. The recommendation was to extend the contract with Capitol Hill Associates, with an increase in funding to \$84,000 in 2025 and \$88,000 in 2026. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Peterson moved that the recommendation of extending Capitol Hill Associates contract for two years with pay of \$84,000 and \$88,000 be enacted. Commissioner Kopitzke seconded. Motion adopted.

8. Representative Jim Joy

Sam Walseth and Rob Vanasek introduced Representative Jim Joy (R, District 04B) spoke with members. Topics raised included rural emergency management services, land transfers, energy issues, SCORE, child care regulations and landfill issues. Representative Joy noted the importance of local control and the need for balance between rural and metro interests at the Legislature.

9. Platform Discussion

Britta Torkelson noted that work groups met over the summer to update the MRC Legislative Platform. Britta walked through the new platform and asked for input. Suggestions were tracked. Because some new language was

proposed, approval will not be requested until the October 7 Business Meeting. Britta will make changes and work with members on suggested language in the meantime. A new draft will be sent with meeting materials for review prior to the meeting. Britta noted we will also identify MRC Legislative Priorities at the October meeting.

10. Senator Torrey Westrom

Sam Walseth and Rob Vanasek introduced Senator Torrey Westrom (R, District 12) spoke with members. He discussed the importance of the role of LEOs in strong and fair elections. Other topics raised included rural broadband, LCCMR reauthorization, land loss, and rural wastewater. He noted that a rural transportation pilot will be forthcoming, looking for 5-10 Counties to participate. AI was also discussed.

11. Announcements/Other

The next MRC meeting will be on Monday, October 7 at the Douglas County Board Room in Alexandria.

12. Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.