

## **MN Rural Counties Board of Directors – ANNUAL MEETING**

### **Meeting Minutes APPROVED**

October 9, 2023

10:00 am

Alexandria, MN

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

Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

#### **2. Roll Call**

Chairman Johnson took the roll. A quorum was confirmed.

*Delegates:* Laurie Westerlund, Aitkin County; Barry Nelson, Becker County; Larry Anderson, Cottonwood County; Jerry Rapp, Douglas County; Troy Johnson, Grant County; Dean Nielsen, Lincoln County; Sharon Bring, Marshall County; Doug Krueger, McLeod County; Steve Schmitt, Meeker County; Luke Johnson, Pipestone County; Paul Gerde, Pope County; Chuck Flage, Red Lake County; Bob Kopitzke, Stevens County; Bill Stearns, Wadena County; Jim Branstad, Watonwan County; Dennis Larson, Wilkin County.

*Alternates:* Keith Englund, Douglas County; Tim Kalina, Douglas County; Tom Krueger, Hubbard County; Leon Olson, Kittson County; Anthony Gerardy, Red Lake County; Bob Van Hee, Redwood County; John Robinson, Renville County; Pat Lesmeister Nelson, Stevens County; Merlyn Kreklau, Wadena County; Tina Diedrick, Wright County.

*Guests:* Richard Anderson; Heather Schlangen, Douglas County.

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

#### **3. Discussion: Trespassing; Richard Anderson, Winona County Resident**

Richard Anderson introduced himself and described changes he is seeking regarding Outdoor Recreation Trespass law/Permission Standards and Penalties. Documents were shared prior to the meeting (draft legislative language and an FAQ) and discussed. Richard asked for support of these changes; MRC agreed to generally support but will not actively lobby on this issue.

#### **4. Approve Agenda**

Chair Johnson asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Paul Gerde moved the agenda; Bob Van Hee seconded. Motion passes.

#### **5. Approve Minutes of September 13, 2023 Meeting**

Larry Anderson moved the minutes of the September 13, 2023 meeting; Jerry Rapp seconded. Motion passes.

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

Secretary/Treasurer Sharon Bring provided an overview of the Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement. Chuck Flage moved approval of the Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement as presented; Dennis Larson seconded. Motion passes.

#### **7. MRC Annual Business Meeting**

##### *Elections*

Laurie Westerlund nominated Luke Johnson as the 2024 Chair of MRC; Doug Kruger seconded. Chuck Flage moved the call for nominations to cease; Dean Nielsen seconded. Motion to cease nominations passes. Nomination of Luke Johnson as MRC Chair passes.

Laurie Westerlund nominated Neil Peterson as the 2024 Vice Chair of MRC; Dean Nielsen seconded. Nomination of Neil Peterson as MRC Vice Chair passes.

Paul Gerde nominated Sharon Bring as the 2024 Secretary/Treasurer of MRC; Luke Johnson seconded. Nomination of Sharon Bring as MRC Secretary/Treasurer passes.

##### *Naming of MRC Delegates and Alternates*

Currently appointed Delegates and Alternates will remain as listed for 2023 unless there is a change by the Member County. Changes should be sent to Anne Kilzer.

##### *Budget*

Secretary/Treasurer Sharon Bring presented a draft budget for 2024. Jim Branstad moved to approve the 2024 budget

as presented, Steve Schmitt seconded. Motion passes.

#### *2024 Contract with AMC*

Chair Johnson presented the 2024 contract between MRC and AMC. Larry Anderson moved approval of the contract with AMC, Chuck Flage seconded. Motion passes.

#### *2024 Meeting Dates*

Anne Kilzer presented the proposed 2024 meeting dates. Steve Schmitt moved to approve the meeting dates; Doug Krueger seconded. A correction was noted: the January 2024 meeting will be held on the 8<sup>th</sup> rather than the 9<sup>th</sup> as listed. Jerry Rapp requests a friendly amendment to include this correction, Doug Krueger seconded. Friendly amendment accepted by Steve Schmitt. Amendment to the motion passes. Motion to adopt 2024 meeting dates passes.

### **8. 2024 Legislative Platform**

Rob Vanasek and Sam Walseth gave a brief preview of the upcoming 2024 Legislative Session. Rob Vanasek outlined proposed principles for the identification of 2024 Legislative Priorities:

1. Is this item actionable? (Can we introduce a bill to address the issue?)
2. Does the issue impact the majority of MRC counties?
3. Does this issue have a sizeable fiscal impact on counties?

Discussion ensued; agreement that MRC legislative efforts should be targeted and focused on rural issues. As an affiliate of AMC, MRC cannot take a position in opposition to AMC. Steve Schmitt moved approval of the principle statements as a framework for identification of the MRC Legislative Priorities; Bob Kopitzke seconded. Motion passes.

Sam went over legislative context and reminded members of the “top of mind” items mentioned at the September meeting. Members agreed that MRC should follow AMC’s lead on Student Resource Officers. Discussion ensued regarding potential priority items, including childcare, infrastructure, housing, drainage, solid waste, landfills, County Program Aid, roads and bridges, broadband.

MRC agreed on potential priorities with “infrastructure” as the umbrella theme and voted to identify the top three priorities. The tally was as follows:

18	Solid Waste/Landfills
17	Drainage
6	Roads/Bridges
6	Housing
5	CPA
4	Broadband
2	Childcare

Members agreed to further discuss Roads and Bridges and Housing as they tied for the third highest vote recipient. Need to better identify what the issue or “ask” would be for each. Staff will bring forward proposed language for priorities if not already covered in the MRC Platform.

### **9. Adjourn**

Jim Branstad moved the meeting adjourn; Bob Kopitzke seconded. The Annual Meeting adjourned at 12:39 pm.