

**MN Rural Counties Board of
Directors Meeting Minutes -
APPROVED**

December 12, 2023

6:00 pm

Minneapolis, MN

1. Call to Order

Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and asked members to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Chairman Johnson took the roll. A quorum was confirmed.

Delegates: Barry Nelson, Becker County; Wade Athey, Big Stone County; Larry Anderson, Cottonwood County; Frank Gross, Clay County; Jerry Rapp, Douglas County; Troy Johnson, Grant County; Leon Olson, Kittson County; Dean Nielsen, Lincoln County; Sharon Bring, Marshall County; Steve Schmitt, Meeker County; Neil Peterson, Pennington County; Luke Johnson, Pipestone County; Gary Willhite, Polk County; Paul Gerde, Pope County; Randy Kramer, Renville County; Peter Koch, Sibley County; Bob Kopitzke, Stevens County; Bill Stearns, Wadena County; Jim Branstad, Watonwan County; Dennis Larson, Wilkin County; Mike Kaczmarek, Wright County.

Alternates: Brent Olson, Big Stone County; Keith Englund, Douglas County; Tim Kalina, Douglas County; Shane Schmidt, Douglas County; Charlene Christenson, Hubbard County; Tom Krueger, Hubbard County; Edward Arnesen, Lake of the Woods County; Michael VanDeVere, Lincoln County; Nathan Schmalz, McLeod County; Bruce Lawrence, Pennington County; Bob Van Hee, Redwood County; John Robinson, Renville County; Jack Swanson, Roseau County; Pat Lesmeister Nelson, Stevens County; Ron Noon, Wadena County; Tina Diedrick, Wright County.

Guests: Lisa Herges, Renville County; Jeff Bertram, Stearns County

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

3. Approve Agenda

Commissioner Olson moved approval of the agenda; Commissioner Kopitzke seconded. Motion carried.

4. Approve Minutes of October 9, 2023 Annual Meeting

Commissioner Anderson moved approval of the October 9, 2023 Annual Meeting minutes; Commissioner Branstad seconded. Motion carried.

5. Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement

Secretary/Treasurer Sharon Bring provided an overview of the Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement. Commissioner Peterson moved approval of the financial statement, Commissioner Kramer seconded. Motion carried.

6. Drainage Work Group Updates

Sam Walseth provided an update on the Drainage Work Group meetings and discussions. He noted that discussions are ongoing with a report anticipated in the new year. MRC has been working in alignment with AMC on this issue. Additional perspective added by Drainage Work Group members.

7. 2024 Legislative Preview

Britta Torkelson walked through a presentation regarding the upcoming 2024 Legislative Session, which will be provided to members after the meeting. Information included key dates, potential priorities of Legislators, and a recap of the MRC discussion regarding Legislative Priorities held at the October Annual Meeting. A draft document was included in the meeting packets regarding the top identified priorities (Solid Waste/Landfills). More discussion to come at the January meeting to review the MRC platform and finalize priorities.

8. Guest Speaker: Representative Matt Norris

Representative Matt Norris noted that there are more issues that bring us together than separate us. He provided some of his personal background and gave his perspective on the upcoming Legislative session. MRC members engaged in discussion regarding issues of importance to rural areas.

9. Guest Speaker: Dan Kitzberger, Legislative Director, Minnesota Housing

Dan Kitzberger, Legislative Director for Minnesota Housing gave an overview of programs and funding resulting from the 2023 Legislative Session, and how they complement other existing programs and services. Particular interest regarding programs focused on rural development. MRC members noted that housing continues to be a

priority/concern, and MRC is willing to help advocate for investments. MRC staff will follow up with Dan to identify what opportunities may exist in the 2024 Legislative Session. Presentation will be made available to members after the meeting.

10. Announcements/Other

Chair Johnson noted that AMC leadership elections will be held on the last day of the Annual Conference, and encouraged MRC members to participate to ensure there is rural representation in that process. Correction to the 2024 Meeting Dates handout; the date for the January meeting should be Monday, January 8 (handout says the 9th).

11. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm.