

MN Rural Counties Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes

May 1, 2023

10 am – 1 pm

ZOOM

1. Call to Order

Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.

2. Roll Call

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

Delegates: Laurie Westerlund, Aitkin County; Frank Gross, Clay County; Larry Anderson, Cottonwood County; Jerry Rapp, Douglas County; Troy Johnson, Grant County; Leon Olson, Kittson County; Dean Nielsen, Lincoln County; Sharon Bring, Marshall County; Doug Krueger, McLeod County; Steve Schmitt, Meeker 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; Peter Koch, Sibley County; Tim Denny, Todd County; Jim Branstad, Watonwan County; Dennis Larson, Wilkin County.

Alternates: Jenny Mongeau, Clay County; Keith Englund, Douglas County; Tim Kalina, Douglas County; Charlie Meyer, Douglas County; Charlene Christenson, Hubbard County; Tom Krueger, Hubbard County; Daryl Luthens, McLeod County; Bruce Lawrence, Pennington County; Bob Van Hee, Redwood County; John Robinson, Renville County; Glenda Phillipe, Roseau County; Kayla Schmidt, Traverse County; Murlyn Kreklau, Wadena County; Bill Miller, Watonwan County.

Guests: Heather Schlangen, Lisa Herges, Kersten Kappmeyer, Andrew Letson.

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

3. Approve Agenda

Commissioner Van Hee moved approval of the agenda. Second by Commissioner Krueger. Motion adopted.

4. Approve Minutes

Commissioner Gerde moved approval of the April 3, 2023 meeting minutes with the correction suggested by Chair Johnson. Second by Commissioner Larson. Motion adopted.

5. Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement

Secretary/Treasurer Bring provided a report on the current MRC financials. Commissioner Anderson made a motion to file the May Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement. Second by Commissioner Flage. Motion adopted.

6. Legislative Update

Britta Torkelson provided a Legislative update including information on potential end of session date, House and Senate Tax proposals/County Program Aid, Transportation, Broadband, Drainage Authority/Work Group, CentraCare Medical School, Local Emergency Management Grants, Center for Rural Policy and Development Funding, Gun Legislation. The presentation will be distributed to members as a follow-up to this meeting, as well as a summary on the Senate Tax proposal.

7. Commissioner Paul Marquart, MN Department of Revenue

After being welcomed by Sam Walseth, Commissioner Marquart thanked the group for inviting him here. Commissioner Marquart gave an overview of where the House/Senate tax proposals are in the Legislative process. Both include County Program Aid; Public Safety Aid in the Senate Bill (was included in the Governor's budget). Discussed implications of one-time funding. Mentioned Ag2School tax credit; increase included in the Governor's budget but not picked up by the House or the Senate. The Department of Revenue/Governor Walz have an overall focus on kids and families- child tax credit, investment in childcare credit. One time construction materials sales tax refund. Noted how unusual it is to have global budget targets as of March, rather than in the last few days of Session. Question as to whether emergency funding goes to cities or counties; 30% goes to Counties (based on population minus any cities that would receive funding). Question regarding bonding bill; unclear as of yet whether it will be a mix or all cash. Does require 60% vote to pass; funding is available in the global budget targets. Homestead credit discussed. SCORE funding: community gardens/solar production tax also mentioned. Commissioner Marquart invited further discussion and questions and provided his contact information.

8. Other discussion

Various topics were discussed including transportation funding and the use of proceeds from lottery sales.

9. Association of Minnesota Counties Updates

Matt Hilgart expanded on details regarding CPA proposals in the House and Senate, public safety funding, Paid Family Medical Leave, Cannabis legislation. Emily Murray discussed greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation and noted that AMC and the County Engineers will submit Conference Committee letters and a coalition letter may be submitted as well. Emily gave an overview on the status of the bonding bill. Brian Martinson said he and Britta are working on SCORE funding. Matt also noted the County Probation formula and corresponding funding is still being negotiated; the group discussed impact on rural counties.

9. Adjourn

Commissioner Branstad moved the meeting adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 12:58 pm.