

**Range Association of Municipalities & Schools**  
**Board Meeting - Minutes**  
**Thursday, August 27, 2020 – 6:00 P.M.**  
**Northeast Service Cooperative Building**

**Call to Order**

President Pat Medure called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**Roll Call of Board**

Present: **Pat Medure (ISD 318-Grand Rapids); Charlie Baribeau (City of Virginia);** Cyndi Worshek (ISD 2711-Mesabi East); Glenn Allen (Supt Assn); **Glenn Anderson (City of Babbitt);** Bob Berrini (Morse Township); Dale Christy (City of Grand Rapids); Jennifer Saccoman-Hoffman (City of Hibbing); **Barb Kalmi (ISD 319-Nashwauk/Keewatin); Paul Kess (City of Ely); Stu Lehman (City of Buhl); Milan Luzaich (Great Scott Township);** Kim McLaughlin (ISD 701-Hibbing); **Ron Pittman (Cherry Township); Cal Saari (City of Nashwauk);** Alan Stanaway (City of Mt. Iron); **Gail Baribeau (ISD 706-Virginia);** Warren Stolp (Nashwauk Township); Dave Worshek (City of Aurora); David Zins (City of Hoyt Lakes)

Absent: Supts Assn – 1 member; City of Chisholm; McDavitt Township; City of Silver Bay

Also Present: **Steve Giorgi, Executive Director; Lois Roskoski, Administrative Assistant;** Costin Group-Jeff Anderson; Latisha Geitzen, PolyMet  
**(Persons highlighted were present in person; others were via Zoom.)**

**Review and Approve Agenda**

Moved by Kalmi and supported by Lehman to approve the agenda, with the following additions under New Business:

- e. Request from Enbridge.
- f. Letter to US Senators.

Motion carried.

**Approve Meeting Minutes:**

Moved by Saari and supported by Baribeau to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting held June 25, 2020. Motion carried.

**Appearance:**

LaTisha Geitzen, PolyMet, appeared to give an update on their project. She stated PolyMet has gone through a lengthy environmental and permit process since 2004, with the final permits issued in 2019. Since then, several permits have been tied up in litigation, as follows:

**Federal Lawsuits:**

**Land Exchange (four cases).** The cases were dismissed and no appeal was filed on this issue.

**Two US Army Corps of Engineers challenges to ROD (wetlands) and 404 (water) permit.** They are waiting for a briefing and anticipate it happening in 2021.

**State Lawsuits (were consolidated into 5 cases):**

**SEIS.** Anti- mining group challenged supplemental EIS. DNR and PolyMet fought the case and won. No supplemental EIS was ordered. Judgement is final.

**Nonferrous rules.** PolyMet was the first to go through this process. DNR and Polymet defended the rules. Judgement was awarded by PolyMet and was challenged by anti-mining. DNR declared valid. Judgement is final.

**Permit to Mine and Dam Safety.** Contested case hearing was ordered, which was appealed by DNR and PolyMet to Supreme Court. Supreme Court granted reviewed and a decision is expected in late 2020.

**NPDES (Water Permit):** Permit process remanded to district court for January 21, 2020 hearing. All briefings complete. Decision expected by September 3, 2020.

**Air Permit.** Permit was challenged and remanded back to MPCA. Both MPCA and PolyMet challenged to Supreme Court. Hoping for a hearing late this fall, with a decision made in the first quarter of 2021.

Ms. Geitzen also stated PolyMet has invested over \$450 million in the project since 2006 in wages, consulting, environmental permitting, mine plan and mineral rights. Overall economic benefits are estimated over \$515 million, with 1,000 direct and spinoff jobs and over two million hours of construction labor .

### **Director's Report:**

Director Giorgi highlighted his report since the last board meeting:

- Range Mayors meeting was held on July 29<sup>th</sup>. A letter was sent to the US Senators regarding the proposed legislation by Congresswoman Betty McCollum that prevents mining in the Rainy River Watershed. The letter was also sent to the media for release as a Letter to the Editor. McCollum provided a response in the Timber Jay newspaper.
- The community broadband group continues to meet. Diane Kruse, Consultant, will be obtaining prices for a couple of projects that will come out of the group effort.
- Last Monday, a Rally the Range event was held to support to Togo corrections facility. It was well attended and we hope our message to save the facility will be carried back to the legislators.
- A lot of Zoom meeting were held, including a regular meeting of the Central Range School Collaboration on August 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **Old Business:**

#### a. Membership Update

Director Giorgi stated Carlton County and Bois Forte have joined RAMS as corporate members. Corporate membership revenues are up \$1,500 for 2020. GEO Partners has also committed to join RAMS. Crane Lake Township also joined RAMS as a member.

#### b. Broadband Update

Director Giorgi provided an update on broadband. Out of this community project, Paul Bullyan will be submitting a grant to install fiber in Wuori, Sandy and Pike Townships. Nearly 18,000 speed tests have been taken to date. School administration and County Boards have been contacted and asked to reach out to employees and students to take the speed test. Everything was mapped out for the Northwood Schools project, but they cannot find a wireless provider. The group is trying to obtain a reduced rate for school districts, as rural schools will have to use personal hotspots for students. The Governor's Task Force has met and is engaging people to start writing a report that will be submitted to the legislature by the end of the year. Multiple bills have been introduced by the House. Representative Stauber is providing

clarification that the CARES funding can be used for broadband, as Minnesota has not allowed it, but other States do.

c. Central Range School Collaboration

The collaboration has been expanded to Hibbing, Chisholm, Nashwauk/Keewatin, Floodwood, Mt. Iron/Buhl and St. Louis County. Superintendents have been meeting with consultants and had their first face to face meeting with school board members. Their vision statement is “Through deep and meaningful partnerships, the Central Range Schools will deliver an unmatched educational experience empowering students to become next generation leaders.” Their mission statement is “Central Range Schools ensure educational equity and enhanced student achievement by eliminating boundaries and working collaboratively.”

The collaboration still has a lot of unknowns and will face a lot of challenges. The School Boards want their Superintendents to continue working on the project. They are hoping for an initial report on the efforts by the end of September. Phase 2 would involve more community engagement.

**New Business:**

a. Legislative report

Jeff Anderson, Costin Group, provided a legislative update. The legislature convened in August for one day and announced there was a window when they had to be quiet with spending, so they could not consider a bonding bill. That time period will expire in September. A lot of politics went on during that one day in session, including the Senate voting to end the Governor’s emergency powers, but the House did not. The Senate voted not to confirm the Governor’s Commissioner of Labor and Industry, which caused a lot of friction. Since then, the Senate has held informational hearings on the MPCA and Commerce Commissioners. The legislature will decide on whether or not they will go back into session in September. Governor Walz has been investigating if they need to call the legislature back once the Governor’s emergency powers are extended. There is a 50/50 chance that the legislature will meet in September and take up a bonding bill. On a good note, there are a lot of projects in Northeastern Minnesota may be receiving money from the LCCMR funds in 2021.

b. Project to collect information on state funded positions/agencies in TAA

Director Giorgi suggested that the RAMS membership put together a list of State operated/owned entities in greater Minnesota, so a list is available when conversations on cutting departments take place. Representative Sandstede introduced a bill stating reductions must be done on equity, based on geographic areas, but it did not pass. Director Giorgi will work with our lobbyists and RAMS membership to begin collecting that information. President Medure suggested that we provide a list of the agencies when asking the membership for the information.

c. Letter on Line 3 to Governor Walz

Director Giorgi reviewed a draft letter to Governor Walz expressing disappointment in his support to appeal by the Department of Commerce on the certificate of need for the Enbridge Line 3 pipeline project in Minnesota.

Moved by Anderson and supported by Lehman to approve sending the letter to Governor Walz expressing disappointment on his support of the appeal of the Enbridge Line 3 project. Motion carried.

d. Letter regarding Mesabi Metallics project

Director Giorgi stated there has been no communication between Mesabi Metallics and Nashwauk. Mesabi Metallics is delinquent in their first half 2020 property taxes, which amount to \$1.4 million to Itasca County and \$140,000 due the City of Nashwauk. If the second half payment is not made, Nashwauk's debt will rise to \$212,000, which is nearly one half of their annual levy. Mesabi Metallics also owes the State of Minnesota nearly \$12 million in unpaid royalties that were due on January 20, 2020. Director Giorgi drafted a letter to Governor Walz on the issue. Nashwauk Mayor Saari stated it appears negotiations are going on regarding the delinquent taxes and recommended that Mesabi Metallics be given an opportunity to respond to the issue.

Moved by Kess and supported by Kalmi to approve the letter to Governor Walz regarding the Mesabi Metallics unpaid royalties due the State of Minnesota and unpaid property taxes due Itasca County and City of Nashwauk, contingent upon receiving confirmation from the City of Nashwauk and Itasca County that the issue remains unresolved. Motion carried.

Director Giorgi will notify the RAMS Board if the letter is sent to Governor Walz, with updated dollar amounts. Director Giorgi will notify the RAMS Board if a conference call is held with the Governor/staff next week on this issue.

e. Request from Enbridge.

Director Giorgi stated Enbridge is asking entities to file an amicus brief in the lawsuit involving the State of Minnesota and Enbridge over the Line 3 pipeline project. The brief is due by next Tuesday and the Enbridge attorney would fill in most information, with RAMS/entities writing a narrative on the issue. An attorney may be required to help assist with the amicus brief.

Moved by Baribeau and supported by Anderson to approve filing an amicus brief for the Enbridge lawsuit and authorize Director Giorgi to contact an attorney, if necessary, with a limit of \$3,000 for attorney fees. If the attorney fees are higher than \$3,000, Director Giorgi would engage the Executive Board for additional approval. Motion carried.

f. Letters to US Senators on mining in Rainy River Watershed.

Director Giorgi reviewed the draft letter to Senator Klobuchar and Senator Smith to oppose the efforts by Congresswoman Betty McCollum's provision in the \$37 billion appropriations bill, Section 435, Rainy River Watershed: "None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made by this Act may be used to review or approve a mine plan proposed within the Rainy River Watershed of the Superior National Forest." This provision has passed the House and is sitting in the Senate. Director Giorgi stated we need to make sure our Senators will not support the inclusion of this language in the appropriations bill.

Moved by Kalmi and supported by G. Baribeau to approve sending a letter to Senator Klobuchar and Senator Smith opposing Congresswoman Betty McCollum's provision in the \$37 billion appropriations bill, Section 435, Rainy River Watershed. Motion carried.

**Board Member Updates:**

a. Paul Kess provided an update on the City of Ely:

- Despite a slow start to summer, things picked up and tourism operators are pleased. They have seen an uptick in lodging fees.
- A rebranding project is underway with the Ely Chamber of Commerce, The Ely Area Tourism Bureau and Visit Ely, MN.
- City of Ely acquired land for a trailhead at the 169 entrance into Ely. The facility will serve as the trailhead for the Taconite Snowmobile Trail, Prospector's ATV Trail and Mesabi Trail. The Prospector Trail is new in Ely for ATV's and a rally will be held on September 18<sup>th</sup>.

- The Hidden Valley Ski Club operates a cross country trail and is looking for financial help to build a mountain bike trail.
  - An investor is renovating some old buildings in Ely and leasing them out, including the former Ely Theatre.
  - Ely is moving forward with the broadband project throughout the downtown business area.
  - A large school bond referendum passed in August for a \$20 million project including a new building, connecting some buildings on the school campus, new classrooms, cafeteria and additional gym space.
  - The Shopko and Dollar General stores have closed in Ely.
- b.** Pat Medure provided an update on ISD #318-Grand Rapids;
- Ribbon cutting ceremonies will be held for the three new elementary schools in Grand Rapids.
  - The Grand Rapids Schools created three models for the school year due to the Covid-19 virus. There is a plan for face to face learning in place. Covid cases per 10,000 continue to jump in the school district. Extra janitorial staff will be hired. Fifteen percent of the students will do distance learning and the district will have separate teachers for that teaching model. Some students will do home schooling, which means the school district won't receive state aid.
  - New superintendent, Matt Grose, began on July 1, 2020.

**Finance Committee Report:**

Cyndi Worshek reported on the following Finance Committee meetings:

Finance Committee Meeting held July 23, 2020:

1. Expenditures (June 25-July 22, 2020). - \$19,592.62
2. Profit & Loss Budget vs Actual.
3. Balance Sheet.

Moved by Saari and supported by Lehman to approve the financial reports for the Finance Committee meeting held July 23, 2020. Motion carried.

Finance Committee Meeting held August 27, 2020:

1. Expenditures (July 23–August 26, 2020). - \$14,070.37.
2. Profit & Loss Budget vs Actual.
3. Balance Sheet.

Moved by Anderson and supported by Luziach to approve financial reports for the Finance Committee meeting held August 27, 2020. Motion carried. **Other:**

Director Giorgi stated the Northeast Service Coop has developed a comprehensive Covid plan, with meeting rooms have been marked with maximum capacity. The largest room allows for 12 people. Director Giorgi suggested that attendance at the RAMS Board meetings be rotated, to allow all board members the chance to attend in person.

**Next Meeting:**

The next RAMS Board meeting will be held at 6:00 P.M. on Thursday, September 24, 2020, with a maximum of 12 people in person or via Zoom. Board members must let Director Giorgi know if they are interested in attending in person.

**Adjournment:**

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 P.M.



# Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board

P.O. Box 166  
Bovey, MN 55709



## Advisory Committee

### Meeting Notice and Agenda

DATE: September 24, 2020

MEMO TO: Members of the Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board Advisory Committee

FROM: R. D. Learmont, Chair

SUBJECT: October 1, 2020, WMMPB Advisory Committee Meeting  
6:00 PM, Nyberg Center, Coleraine, Minnesota (note: health protocols will be observed)

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of agenda
3. Approval of June 4, 2020 Advisory Committee meeting minutes
4. Unfinished business:
  - A. Board priorities and committees:  
Hill Annex Mine State Park  
Rising pit water: Canisteo/Hill Annex  
Highway 169 improvements and support  
Identify and recommend other priorities
  - B. Strategic and critical minerals designation and building on mineral resources
  - C. Educational/informational presentations for Board, schools, community
  - D. Project or permitting participation by Board, local government units
  - E. Project news or updates: pumped storage, other
  - F. Advisory Committee member retention and recruitment
  - G. Other unfinished business
5. New business
6. Adjourn

RECEIVED  
OCT 02 2020  
CITY OF COLERAINE

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**A Joint Powers Board****Officers:****Staff:**

Arbo Township  
City of Bovey  
City of Calumet  
City of Cohasset  
City of Coleraine

City of Grand Rapids  
Greenway Township  
Itasca County  
City of Keewatin  
City of LaPrairie

Lone Pine Township  
City of Marble  
City of Nashwauk  
Trout Lake Township

Leo Trunt, Chair  
Greg Tuttle, Vice Chair  
Joe Abeyta,  
Secretary/Treasurer

R.D. Learmont, Coordinator  
Deborah Rantala,,  
Recording Secy/Treasurer  
e-mail to: dlearmon@2z.net

**WESTERN MESABI MINE PLANNING BOARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES – June 4, 2020**  
**6:00 PM, LONGYEAR PARK, COLERAINE, MN**

**ATTENDEES:** Doug Learmont, Chair; Tim Sullivan, Vice Chair; Kyle Bariholomew, Member; Melody Garza, Recording Secretary

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:11 PM.
2. The Chair called for approval of the June 4, 2020 meeting agenda. The chairman requested adding a Pumped Storage Project to New Business. There being no further discussion, the meeting agenda was approved by consensus.
3. The Chair called for corrections to or approval of minutes from the February 6, 2020 Advisory Committee meeting. Sullivan moved to approve the minutes and Learmont seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, members approved the meeting minutes as submitted.

4. Unfinished business:

- A) Board priorities and committees: Learmont stated that bills for the Hill Annex Mine State Park, rising pit waters in the Canisteo and Hill Annex, and Highway 169 improvements Board priority items have all been introduced to the State Legislature and referred to committees. However, because of focus on the Covid-19 issue, there has been no further action on these items. The pit water issue is considered the highest priority of the three issues. Sullivan inquired whether Advisory Committee members should make contact with legislators on any of these priorities, indicating that he would do so. He also suggested sending the list of bill numbers to Advisory Committee members so that they could make contacts.

As for other priority items, Sullivan mentioned the vitality of broadband high speed internet access for residents, business, and students especially with regards to the Covid-10 virus and people sheltering at home and depending on outside help. He distributed a map of local broadband availability and service providers, and also informed of the availability of a self-performed broadband speed test that allows knowing the download/upload speed in specific areas. Inside Grand Rapids, broadband access is about 70% of locations but outside of that area the access percentage is much lower. Broadband is needed to help in county growth, including new and existing businesses. Learmont inquired if this subject should be brought again to the next Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board meeting, Sullivan stated that he will bring it up at that meeting.

- B) Strategic and critical minerals designation: Sullivan suggested that the Board consider sending a follow-up letter about the critical importance of strategic and critical minerals to state and federal legislators and emphasizing the importance of robust supply sources and the global supply chain.
- C) Education presentations for Board, schools, and the community: There was continuing discussion on the need for this, but with school and government offices closed due to the pandemic this is on hold. More active involvement by Advisory Committee members would also be helpful for preparing and doing presentations. An idea discussed was using one of the process equipment demonstration items made by the local Society of Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration as a

functioning presentation prop. Other ideas discussed included arranging an event at the Macrostie art center, a Board field trip modified to include proper distancing or outdoors, or to have mining representatives make presentations open to the public.

- D) Project or permitting participation by Board, local government units: This was tabled until the Board resumes having meetings.
- E) Project news or updates: No news or updates were presented or discussed.
- F) Advisory Committee member retention and recruitment: Learmont spoke to a person previously suggested about becoming an Advisory Committee Member to fill an open position but he indicated prohibitive time limitations. Refreshment on WMMPB objectives is needed by Advisory Committee and Board members.
- G) Other unfinished business: no other unfinished business was presented or discussed.

5. New Business:

- A) Assistance to businesses in dealing with COVID-19 impacts: Discussion resulted in no specific actions.
- B) Pumped storage project: Learmont stated becoming aware of a permit application for a pumped storage project to be located just north of Marble and well inside the mine overlay area. The project would use gravity flow, pumped water, deep shaft, large underground water reservoir, and large surface storage impoundment for electric energy generation. He did not yet have details but was interested in what this project could mean for iron ore mining in the western Mesabi corridor, a primary Board objective. He indicated that he would offer to send an informational e-file to all Advisory Committee members who wish to have it and to the Board executive committee for review.
- C) Members discussed whether Advisory Committee minutes are being received by Board members so they have information about Advisory Committee discussions and recommendations for use at Board meetings. Learmont indicated that he would seek information from Board members.

6. With the agenda having been completed, there was consensus to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 PM.

The next WMMPB Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for 6:00 PM on Thursday, February 6, 2020 at a site to be determined.

From the Third Amended Joint Powers Agreement of the Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board:



## **SECTION II – PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board shall be to formulate a management plan and develop strategies for environmental protection and orderly development of public and private lands; to protect said lands from uncontrolled and unplanned development, pollution or degradation through the preparation and adoption of comprehensive local plans and ordinances; to provide for the recreational use of said lands; and to identify areas of high future mining potential and to preserve these lands for future mining opportunities. This management responsibility is shared by the county, cities and townships through the exercise of land use control and jurisdiction over certain public and private lands within this corridor as identified on attached Exhibit “A”.



# Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board

P.O. Box 166  
Bovey, MN 55709



DATE: October 1, 2020  
TO: Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board Members  
FROM: Leo Trunt, Chair  
SUBJECT: October 8, 2020, 2020 meeting, Marble Community Center at 6:00 PM  
(health protection protocols are to be followed)

## MEETING NOTICE AND AGENDA

1. Call to order
2. Agenda approval
3. Approval of September 10, 2020 meeting minutes
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Bills
6. Correspondence
7. Speaker: Mike Liljegren, DNR, mine pit water
8. Unfinished Business:
  - A) Priority items: status, planning, testimony preparations
    1. Hill Annex Mine State Park, rising pit water, highway 169 improvement
    2. Priority item planning for 2021
  - B) Critical and Strategic Minerals
  - C) Pumped Storage application
  - D) Budget and member contributions for 2021
  - E) Other unfinished business
9. New Business
  - A) Updates about minerals/mining industry, projects or new developments, issues
  - B) Member reports and updates
  - C) Community input
  - D) Other new business
10. Adjourn

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<b>A Joint Powers Board</b>			<b>Officers:</b>	<b>Staff:</b>
Arbo Township City of Bovey City of Calumet City of Cohasset City of Coleraine	City of Grand Rapids Greenway Township Itasca County City of Keewatin City of LaPrairie	Lone Pine Township City of Marble City of Nashwauk Trout Lake Township	Leo Trunt, Chair Greg Tuttle, Vice Chair Joe Abeyta, Secretary/Treasurer	R.D. Learmont, Coordinator Deborah Rantala,, Recording Secy/Treasurer e-mail to: dlearmon@2z.net

**WESTERN MESABI MINE PLANNING BOARD**  
**Financial Report**  
**September 30, 2020**

Checking account balance on September 1, 2020: **\$ 13,945.80**

<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	YTD	2020 Budget
<b>Income:</b>														
Member contributions		2800.00	1600.00				400.00	400.00	400.00				5600.00	5600.00
Interest on checking	<u>1.75</u>	<u>1.58</u>	<u>1.58</u>	<u>1.93</u>	<u>.12</u>	<u>.13</u>	<u>.12</u>	<u>.13</u>	<u>.13</u>				<u>7.47</u>	<u>25.00</u>
	1.75	2801.58	1601.58	1.93	.12	.13	400.12	400.13	400.13					
<b>Expenses:</b>														
														<b>TOTAL RECEIVED: 5607.47</b>
Coordinator fees	560.00	300.00	400.00				650.00	360.00	240.00				2510.00	3000.00
Rec. Sec/Treas. fees	165.00	195.00	135.00				120.00	120.00	135.00				870.00	1600.00
Adv. Com. Rec. Sec. fees														350.00
Office supplies	82.26	27.71	105.60	2.00	2.00	2.00	42.02	29.89	101.96				395.44	1200.00
Mileage	61.48	10.35	8.05				8.05	16.10	16.10				120.13	400.00
Legal notice fees	92.81						125.26	67.13					285.20	200.00
Post office box fee								56.00					56.00	50.00
Treasurer's bond														300.00
Contract payments														
Field trip (Reimbursement)	<u>961.55</u>	<u>533.06</u>	<u>648.65</u>	<u>2.00</u>	<u>2.00</u>	<u>2.00</u>	<u>945.33</u>	<u>649.12</u>	<u>493.06</u>					<u>900.00</u>
	961.55	533.06	648.65	2.00	2.00	2.00	945.33	649.12	493.06					
														<b>TOTAL EXPENDED: 4236.77</b>
														<b>NET CASH INCOME: 1370.70 (2375.00)</b>

Checking account balance on September 30, 2020: **\$ 13,852.87**

Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board  
Marble Community Center  
September 10, 2020  
Meeting Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Leo Trunt called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. AGENDA APPROVAL: Motion by Al Guddeck, seconded by Jim Sellner and carried to approve the meeting agenda.
3. APPROVAL OF AUGUST 13, 2020 MEETING MINUTES: Motion by Merry Lee, seconded by Mike Foss and carried to approve the meeting minutes as submitted.
4. TREASURER'S REPORT: The August financial report was sent to Board members prior to the meeting. A member contribution check was received; all member entities have now paid their 2020 contribution. Motion by Foss, seconded by Guddeck and carried to approve the Treasurer's Report.
5. BILLS: The following invoices were received and submitted for payment approval:
  - Solutions and Strategies Group-Coordinator fees and expenses for August 2020 - \$273.23
  - Deb Rantala-Recording Secretary/Treasurer fees and expenses for August 2020 - \$217.83Motion by Foss, seconded by Lee and carried to approve payment of the bills.
6. CORRESPONDENCE: A letter was received from Itasca County Land Department informing of the Tax-forfeited Land Sale to be held on October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at the Itasca County boardroom.
7. SPEAKER: Prairie River Minerals requested to defer its update to the Board until possibly the October meeting.
8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
  - A. **Priority items: status, planning, testimony preparations:** 1) Legislative action was requested for Hill Annex Mine State Park, rising pit water and Highway 169 improvement priorities at the state legislature regular session earlier this year. The rising pit water program funding was included in the state capital spending bill in the House; however, the regular legislative session concluded and three subsequent special sessions were held without approving the capital spending bill or either of the other priority items. Mr. Pellinen of DNR informed that some Hill Annex artifacts and archives are being moved to Minnesota Discovery Center for cataloging and security purposes as a substantial amount of vandalism continue to happen at the park even with security cameras in place. 2) Priority item planning for 2021: The Coordinator advised that Board priorities for 2021 will need to be identified and discussed soon so that timely planning can begin. He distributed a copy of Section II of the WMMPB Joint Powers Agreement which states the purposes of the WMMPB and suggested that members may wish to use this as they develop and decide on priority issues

and needs and that they discuss with their respective boards and councils prior to the next WMMPB meeting.

**B. Critical and Strategic Minerals:** This item was deferred at a recent meeting until after the upcoming major elections.

**C. Pumped storage application:** The project proponent's response to the WMMPB letter sent to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) failed to answer most of WMMPB's questions, and with regard to a response from WMMPB, FERC stated that at this time it will only take comments from the City of Taconite, Greenway Township, Lawrence Lake Township, Nashwauk Township and the City of Hibbing. However, the proposed project affects many other areas. There was discussion regarding the reasons or entities that are driving this permit priority request. The closing date for this round of comments is mid to late October. The Coordinator is looking at the federal regulations to determine what actions might be taken at this time to clarify the FERC public record.

**D. Budget and member contributions for 2021:** The Coordinator distributed a chart and graph of WMMPB income and expenditures for the past nine years. The annual cash shortfall between income and expenditures averaged \$2,640. An additional contribution of \$175 to \$200 per member per year is needed to stabilize the account, while even this amount would not provide for any Board activity beyond the present level. Without an increase, in three years or less WMMPB will be nearing a situation in which available cash amounts may be inadequate to cover its basic operating costs; increased board activity to pursue its priority issues would require more funding. Some concerns and suggestions were expressed by board members and a number of options, such as tiering or prorating by population, were identified. Member representatives will discuss the need for increased annual contribution rates with their boards and councils and bring suggestions/options to the next meeting, The Coordinator was requested to assemble information for discussion regarding some of the options identified.

**E. Other unfinished business:** No other unfinished business was brought forward.

## 9. NEW BUSINESS:

**A. Updates about minerals/mining industry, projects or new developments, issues:** Mike Liljegren with the DNR would like to speak at the October meeting about mine pit water.

The Coordinator distributed a copy of the notification by the Department of Natural Resources of a public comment period regarding issuance of a Permit to Mine to Prairie River Minerals. The comment period closes on October 14, 2020. Individual WMMPB member entities may respond to DNR, which also has the permit application available for public review.

The Coordinator participated in a teleconference this afternoon with state officials and several local legislators and mayors regarding the status of and plans for Mesabi Metallics. The Governor's office and DNR are working on issues, problems, and options involving issues such as transfer or termination of the state permits, state assets versus private assets

such as land surface, minerals, tailings storage facility ownership, and others. It was reported that a very low level of construction activity continues on the site. With regard to Essar and the project site, property taxes due to local government units were recently paid millions of dollars in royalties and fees due have not been paid. The state is looking at other firms that they consider credible to become involved in the project. The teleconference group suggested that the Governor put together a working group to guide and drive a solution, such as was done with the Evtac bankruptcy, so the project could again become active. There is Board interest in having the project be completed and begin operation; Board consensus was to send to DNR another copy of the WMMPB resolution passed June 13, 2019 requesting that WMMPB be kept better informed and more involved with mining-related issues affecting the western Mesabi corridor.

**B. Member reports and updates:** The City of LaPrairie is pursuing creation of a fishing pier at the highway wayside rest.

**C. Community input:** Mike Andrews requested to address the meeting. He is consulting with the City of Coleraine and Eagle Ridge Golf Course on a matching grant proposal to fund mitigation of physical problems when it rains in the golf course area. The golf course was initially built on a mine stockpile and 70 homes were subsequently built around the golf course. The group requested a WMMPB letter of support for their grant application to the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation. Motion by Joe Abeyta, seconded by John Tuorila and carried to send a letter of support.

**D. Other new business:** No additional new business was reported.

**10. ADJOURN:** Chair Trunt adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

The next regular WMMPB meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at the Marble Community Center.

#### ATTENDEES

BOARD MEMBERS:	Leo Trunt	Itasca County
	Al Guddeck	Marble
	Joe Abeyta	LaPrairie
	Jim Sellner	Greenway Township
	Rick Blake	Grand Rapids
	Ryan Stish	Coleraine
	Merry Lee	Marble
	Greg Tuttle	Cohasset
	John Tuorila	Calumet
	Nancilyn Meyer-Nail	Bovey
	Jon Korpi	Lone Pine Township
	Dwight Kessler	Trout Lake Township
	Mike Foss	Bovey
	Kory Cease	Itasca County

OTHERS PRESENT: Doug Learmont  
Deb Rantala  
Mike Andrews  
Jack C. Pellinen

Coordinator  
Recording Secretary/Treasurer  
Coleraine  
MN DNR Parks and Trails

## **Networking Opportunities Team Meeting**

Networking to improve efficiency, maintain service levels and save money  
while preserving our individual community identities

**September 23, 2020**

**The next meeting will be October 28, 2020 at the Timberlake Lodge. Lucas Thompson, Itasca County Jail Administrator will be speaking. 11-1, lunch included.**

**Present:** Peggy Clayton (Harris), Lilah Crowe (Historical Society), Lisa Mrnak (LaPrairie), Greg Tuttle (Cohasset), Burl Ives (Itasca County), Matt Grose (ISD 318) and Mary Jo Wimmer, Coordinator.

Matt Grose addressed the group regarding ISD318 and building updates, Covid, extra-curricular programs and guidelines.

### **Open Market**

#### **LaPrairie**

- Crack sealing
- Sewer lines cleaned
- Developing a resident survey on desired projects
- Working with CEEDA on Rainbow building
- Has grant applications for businesses

#### **Harris Township**

- 2020 road projects completed
- Paved the cemetery
- Scheduling a fall road tour
- A new caretaker and sexton will start Nov. 2

#### **Arbo Township**

- Possible relocation of new town hall
- This last board meeting was well attended as road changes were discussed



## **Itasca County**

- Levy set at 0% increase
- Jail in downtown location will cost \$65M without courthouse renovations  
3 buildings need to be purchased. There will be a jail bond of \$50M.  
Construction will begin no sooner than June of 2021

*Mary Jo Wimmer, Trillium Leadership Development, mjwimmer80@gmail.com*