MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:
James Brady, Steele County
Richard Brenner, Carlton County
Spencer Buerkle, Benton County
Jim Butterfield, Kandiyohi County
Thomas Egan, Dakota County
Bruce Messelt, Chisago County
Jim Hofer, Wadena County
Mike Housman, Meeker County
Neal Gaalwyk, Cass County
Jim Kochmann, Mahnomen County
Larry Lindor, Pope County
Tom Mahoney, Martin County
Anne Marcotte, Aitkin County
DeWayne Mareck, Stearns County
Gene Metz, Nobles County
Owen Miller, Douglas County
Les Nath, Pipestone County
Michael Plante, Wabasha County
Jody James Reisch, Rock County
Felix Schmiesing, Sherburne County
Timothy Sumner, Beltrami County
Jack Swanson, Roseau County
Dave Thiner, Murray County
Darryl Tveitbakk, Pennington County
Marcia Ward, Winona County
Tom Warmka, Faribault Count

GUESTS:
Sara Folsted, Renville County
Peg Heglund, Yellow Medicine County
Scott Higgins, Martin County
John Kluever, Freeborn County
Don Niemi, Aitkin County
Pat Oman, Mille Lacs County
Mike Pogge-Weaver, Swift County
Nick Riley, Ramsey County
Bobbie Vickerman, Fillmore County
Robert Yochum, Cass County
Rebecca Young, Stevens County

September 17, 2015

I. CALL TO ORDER
Chair Warmka called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm. Members recited the Pledge of Allegiance, introduced themselves and provided updates on their certified levies.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Commissioner Jack Swanson moved approval of the March 4, 2015 minutes; Commissioner Marcia Ward seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.
III. **LEGISLATIVE REVIEW**  
Matt Hilgart provided a 2015 legislative review (PowerPoint available upon request). Matt noted that Anne Kilzer will staff the General Government policy committee the following day due to his absence. Matt updated members on a series of tax issues, namely: assessor accreditation, SWDC levy authority, tax abatement and unified referendum date generated discussion. Matt also provided an update on the outstanding issue of the appointment of county row officers. Members requested that Matt send out information on how to advocate for appointment of county row officers and target legislators.

IV. **ISSUE UPDATES**  
Robert Yochum, Cass County Administrator, gave a report on utility assessments and the increasing number of tax court petitions. Mr. Yochum outlined rationale for asking that AMC request that the State cover projected refunds. Discussion ensued.

Gene Metz, Nobles County Commissioner, gave an update on Wind Production Tax. Mr. Metz also provided language to be included in the AMC 2016 platform. Discussion ensued.

Matt Hilgart provided an update on County Program Aid highlighting the recent achievements by the AMC County Program Aid Working Group. Matt informed members that AMC will be asking for all counties’ support and that this will be a topic at District Meetings.

Anne Marcott announced a meeting on County Program Aid, Friday September 18 at 7:30 a.m. Nate Burkett will facilitate the meeting.

Matt Hilgart provided an update on the recent law change governing counties’ ability to contract with a CPA firm for their annual audits, starting in 2016. Matt also gave an update on the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) and their recent communication between counties. AMC will continue to remain engaged on this issue and will keep county administrators informed moving forward; a draft resolution will be provided.

Final discussion ensued regarding the topics covered. Matt Hilgart and Chair Warmka gave an overview of the process moving forward.

V. **ADJOURN-DAY 1**  
Chair Warmka adjourned the meeting at 4:12 PM.
September 18, 2015

I. CALL TO ORDER
Chair Warmka called the meeting to order at 8:37 AM. Members recited the pledge of allegiance.

II. GENERAL GOVERNMENT PLATFORM REVIEW
Commissioner Mike Housman moved that language on Page 5, Assessment, bullet 3 be strengthened to ensure cost burden on the state; Commissioner Don Niemi seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion ensued regarding agriculture containment facilities and whether they should continue to be exempted. A member suggested that this be a discussion item at the December meeting.

Commissioner Spencer Buerkle moved that language on Page 2, Prevailing Wage, bullet 1 be amended to include any project that is funded by local dollars. Commissioner Jim Butterfield seconded. Commissioner Marcia Ward suggested research be done to assess impact and draft specific language. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Jack Swanson moved that language on Page 6, State Aids, bullet 3 be adjusted to reflect recommendations of the AMC County Program Aid Work Group; Commissioner Anne Marcotte seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Committee recommends that research be done to determine what each County plans to do moving forward in regard to state audits (OSA versus private audit).

DeWayne Mareck moved a new platform position, stating that AMC supports current law allowing for selection by counties of private auditing firms; Owen Miller seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Gene Metz moved new platform position regarding the state production tax, stating: “AMC opposes changes to the wind and solar production tax which would negatively affect a county’s tax base, create confusion in the assessment process, or place undue burdens on host communities and supports efforts to remove these production taxes from the levy limit base calculation.” Commissioner Dave Thiner seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Committee recommends that Bob Yoakum attend the December meeting to answer further questions regarding utility assessments and draft language for a platform item in regard to this issue.

Committee members recommend that the General Government Policy Committee discuss SWCDs and their efforts to attain levying authority at the December meeting after reviewing AMC Board recommendation in regard to this issue.
Committee recommends that Veterans Property Tax equalization be discussed further at the December meeting.

Commissioner Jack Swanson moved the following language “AMC Supports efforts to assist counties in funding and operating facilities for District Courts, court administration and court security”; Commissioner Marcia Ward seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Anne Marcotte moved that staff work on language regarding felony voting rights, as recommended by the board; motion was seconded by?? Motion passed unanimously.

DeWayne Marek moved that staff work on language regarding reimbursement of costs for paid leave to those who have been convicted of a felony; Commissioner Felix Schmiesing seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Anne Marcotte moved that staff develop language regarding the veterans preference act; Commissioner Don Niemi seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Committee recommends that research be done on the platform priorities brought forward by MCHRMA for further discussion at the December Policy Committee meeting.

III. POLICY PRIORITIES
Commissioner Jack Swanson moved that the recommendation from the County Program Aid work group be a priority item moved forward by the General Government Policy Committee; Commissioner Larry Lindor seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner DeWayne Marek moved that a statewide system for counties to choose to appoint row officers be a priority item moved forward by the General Government Policy Committee; Commissioner Owen Miller seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Anne Marcotte moved that the following plans be moved forward as the list of priority items moved forward by the General Government Policy Committee:
- County Program Aid (based on working group recommendations)
- Reviewing the state general tax
- Providing a statewide process for county boards to appoint auditors, treasurers and recorders
- Repeal of assessor accreditation requirements
- Creating a more sustainable funding mechanism for Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)

Commissioner Don Niemi seconded. Committee asked Commissioner Don Niemi to work with staff on specific language regarding state general tax repeal. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. ADJOURN
Chair Warmka adjourned the meeting at 11:18 AM.