

RURAL MN ENERGY BOARD MEETING
MONDAY January 26, 2015, 1:00 p.m.
CRD Office, Slayton, MN

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Blue Earth County	Will Purvis	Mower County	Tim Gabrielson
Brown County	Dennis Potter	Murray County	Gerald Magnus
Cottonwood County...	Tom Appel	Nobles County.....	Gene Metz
Faribault County	Tom Warmka	Pipestone County	Dan Wildermuth
Freeborn County	Glen Mathiason	Redwood County	Sharon Hollatz
Jackson County.....	Don Wachal	Renville County	Bob Fox
Lincoln County	Absent	Rock County.....	excused
Lyon County	Charlie Sanow	Sibley County.....	Gary Kruggel
Martin County	Steve Flohrs	Watsonwan County ...	Scott Sanders

ALSO PRESENT: Robin Weis (SRDC), Paul Pierson (USDA – RD), Nan Larson (AURI), Lisa Daniels (Windustry), Caroline Daniels (Windustry), Annette Fiedler (SRDC)

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m by Chairman Purvis

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chairman Purvis asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None

INTRODUCTIONS: Chairman Purvis asked everyone present to introduce themselves.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: Windustry legislative topic was added to the legislative committee discussion.

M/S/P Gabrielson, Mathiason to approve the amended agenda.

MINUTES:

M/S/P Sanders, Potter to approve the Minutes of November 24, 2014 as written.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Fiedler reviewed the financial report, bills for payment, and payment in advance of the meeting of the MCIT bill.

M/S/P Fox, Gabrielson to ratify the payment of the MCIT bill reviewed at the November meeting in the amount of \$2434.

M/S/P Warmka, Potter to approve the financial report and payment of the following bills to Fryberger: \$1402.90 for December; SRDC General and Finance: \$602.52 Nov and \$2166.87 Dec; SRDC PACE \$1301.90 Nov and \$ 2081.26 Dec.

HISTORY of the RMEB. Fiedler covered the history, beginning in 1996 with the four Ridge Counties who dealt with equity in the disparity of wind taxation, the Lincoln county Lawsuit, and Murray County tax court case. The expanded focus and geographic area of the SW Minnesota Energy Task Force and Rural Minnesota Energy Task force and the work they did such as working as a whole when approached by developers regarding PILT, the production tax legislation, Intervenor status in the Xcel 47 high transmission lines. The 2005 JP of the RMEB and activities of the RMEB, including follow up with the Intervenor status, the Community Wind North and South; legislation impacts, Development agreement involvement, overseeing SW CERT, Joint RMEB and Metro project and tours.

Member Wildermuth shared information about his work and experience with renewable energy to avoid any potential conflicts of interest.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS. Nominating committee of Warmka, Fox and Sanders reported that they have spoken with the current officers who agreed to continue terms, thus the nominating committee recommends the following for RMEB officers: Purvis as Chair, Mathiason as Vice chair, Hoime as Secretary, and Henkels as Treasurer.

M/S/P Warmka, Metz to approve the RMEB Officers as recommended.

SUBCOMMITTEE & RMEB BUSINESS

PACE: Property Assessed Clean Energy) discussion and update. Robin Weis was introduced and reviewed the PACE program as well as provided an overview of the first two loans. PACE works real well with the USDA REAP Program. A PACE brochure and application was also distributed. Names of people and businesses to outreach were requested to assist in outreach for the PACE project. Generally, city and county EDAs, chambers, and DEED were suggested. The <http://www.dsireusa.org/> website was also identified as a source of funding comparisons. Two areas where the PACE program is working out the kinks is the County Assessment process and the Davis Bacon piece.

Tour Committee. Tour locations for 2015 were discussed (POET in Iowa, dairy farm, buffalo ridge tour of wind farms) as well as past tours. Board members were asked to provide suggestions by the March meeting for the summer tour locations and a location would be identified at the March meeting.

Legislative Committee - Metz discussed the levy limits and goal to the legislation. Senators are needed for the bill; suggested was Dahms and Sparks. As soon as there are numbers for the bill, members should be in contact with their legislators to support the bill(s). Also discussed was working with the SRDC to meet with the legislators. Staff will bring that to the attention of the SRDC.

Lisa Daniels from Windustry asked the RMEB to consider supporting adding wind gardens to the solar garden language which is mandated in the Xcel Energy territory. RMEB members indicated that they support the rural electric cooperatives. After much discussion, the Legislative Committee was asked to look into it. It was too much information to make a decision. Comments are requested.

Member Updates on Energy Projects and Issues:

- Lyon Co. A large proposed solar farm covers 500 acres of ag land is working its way through the state permitting process. There is some opposition to it, especially from the adjacent properties. County is also working with their ordinance and how to address future solar installations. There are two other smaller solar farms moving forward. These solar farms appear to be locating along the CAPX 2020 line near substations.
- Sibley Co – Wind is on hold. Townships are concerned about loads and damage to roads. Also, a recent local solar farm was installed and that property is now self-sufficient and off the grid.
- Redwood – GESP assistance with insulation
- Cottonwood GESP presentation soon.
- Mower County – converting all lights in the Justice center with LED.
- Martin County – ITC powerline
- Jackson County- Odell, 50 towers
- Faribault County – ITC powerline 161 to Freeborn co, and change to 345.
- Pipestone County – small solar project is moving forward.

SW CERT: Fiedler reviewed the campaign and initiatives. Those being the gas station canopy being paired up with PACE and moving forward asking gas station owners to consider putting in LED lights in their canopies, as well as Toasty Turkey which is placing LED lights in turkey barns. Fiedler reported that Hage plans to contact Turkey Valley Farms in Marshall to do some outreach for the Toasty Turkey campaign

Projects moving forward include PACE, solar thermal for pools, education of youth, Energy Efficiency on the farm (looking to hold a workshop in March in Martin County regarding hog facility energy efficiency), and energy efficiency for outdoor pools (pool covers do help, but there are also liability issues).

Seed grants and their status. The church in Slayton has installed their windows the project is completed. Slayton completed their LED Street light install and had funds remaining. They asked if they could be used toward labor of the retrofit to LED lights in the city shop (CERT said yes). Lyon, Lincoln Electric completed the grant related LED Streetlight installations in Lynd and Arco.

A reminder that the CERT conference is going to be held on March 10, & 11, 2015 in St. Cloud.
<http://www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org/events/certs2015>

OTHER UPDATES:

Paul Pierson with USDA –RD provided an update on the REAP (Renewable Energy for America Program). He indicated that past projects funded were grain dryers, bio-stoves, turbines, and solar. The process has changed to a self-certification process and the RMEB will no longer be asked to write letter of support or the projects. The REAP projects align well with PACE

projects. Last round there was \$12 million nationwide, this round there is \$60 million. So far there have been 127 applications submitted. Pierson also identified other projects USDA has funded through the various grants and loans.

Nan Larson from AURI introduced herself and indicated that Dennis Timmerman used to come to the RMEB meetings and AUI has in the past worked with the RMEB on biomass projects. There is a spring International Biomass conference this spring. Also AURI works with the Renewable Energy Round Table.

Lisa Daniels apprised the board of the past involvement Windustry has had in SW Minnesota and the early days of wind projects. Currently she is working with the US Department of Energy regarding the Midwest Wind Energy Center.

FUTURE MEETING DATES – 2015 meeting dates: March 23, May 25 is Memorial Day (May 18 or June 1?- possible tour), July 27, September 28, November 23. By consensus, the Executive committee was given the authority to move the meeting time to 1:15 or 1:30 depending on if subcommittees are meeting prior to the meeting.

ADJOURN:

M/S/P Warmka, Sanders to adjourn the meeting at 3:10 p.m.

Minutes Prepared By Annette Fiedler, Staff.

Minutes Reviewed By:
Energy Board Secretary



Minutes Approved By:
Energy Board Chairperson