

**MINUTES**  
**RURAL MN ENERGY BOARD MEETING**  
**MONDAY March 28, 2011, 9:30 A.M.**  
**CRD, SLAYTON, MN**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Blue Earth County.....	Will Purvis	Murray County.....	Absent
Cottonwood County.....	John Oletjenbruns	Nobles County .....	David Benson
Faribault County .....	Tom Warmka	Pipestone County .....	Excused
Jackson County.....	Roger Ringkob	Redwood County.....	John Schueller
Lincoln County .....	Larry Hansen	Renville County .....	Excused
Lyon .....	Steve Ritter	Rock County .....	Ken Hoime
Martin County.....	Jack Potter	Watsonwan County .....	Scott Sanders
Mower County .....	Absent	Yellow Medicine Co ...	Absent

**ALSO PRESENT:** Yvonne Simon (Center for Rural Policy & Development), Arlene Vee (MPCA), Paul Pierson (USDA), Vince Robinson (LCEDC), Bob Isaacson (DEED) and Annette Bair (staff).

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** There were no announcements.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Everyone present was asked to introduce themselves.

**AGENDA:**

**M/S/P** Oletjenbruns, Ritter to approve the agenda.

**MINUTES**

**M/S/P** Oletjenbruns, Benson to approve the minutes of January 24, 2011 as written.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Treasurer Hansen reviewed the RMEB general operating financial report and the 3 bills submitted for payment. Bills are: SRDC for January staff time, \$925; SRDC February staff time, \$1,460; and AMC website maintenance and storage at \$500.

**M/S/P** Hoime, Ritter to approve the financial report and payment of bills identified above.

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Legislative Committee:** Benson indicated that as the Chair of the SRDC he has been involved with the RDC Legislative activity. He has requested that the RMEB consider co-sponsoring the Energy Legislative Issue regarding the Production Tax. At this time, it appears the Governor is supportive of the Production Tax language recommended by the Regional Development Commission. Benson distributed a handout that identified the levy ability lost by county. There will be an April 28th Legislative Meeting at 7:30 a.m. at the Kelly Inn that the SRDC is sponsoring. Benson asked if any of the RMEB members would like to join that meeting to talk about the legislative activity.

**M/S/P** Hansen, Schueller for the RMEB to join with the SRDC for the Energy Legislative Initiative and expend funds towards the breakfast.

Ryan O'Connor from AMC was on the phone during the Legislative discussion. He indicated that the Production Tax Plan of Action should be two fold. First, the need for the Production Tax outside of the levy and second, if or when the levy limit language is introduced, our legislators need to be able to remove that part from legislation.

Robinson indicated that the Minnesota County Economic Development Professionals will be having a Legislative luncheon on Thursday, March 31<sup>st</sup> and they should be taking the perspective from the local Economic Development to the legislators in regards to the Production Tax.

**Legislative Committee Leadership:** Chairman Warmka appointed David Benson as Chair and Scott Sanders as Vice-Chair to the Legislative Committee. The Legislative Committee consists of Benson, Hansen, Sanders, Vickerman, Fox and Warmka.

**CERT Funding:** Bair requested the RMEB to support CERT funding, SF- 915 (authors Magnus, Howe, Metzen, Stumpf and Jungbaur), HF-1247 (authors Beard, Hilty, Falk).

**M/S/P** Benson, Ritter to approve RMEB support of continued CERT funding.

O'Connor provided an update on events of what is happening at the Legislature and what he anticipates to happen at the Legislature over the next couple of weeks. Bills will be on the floor the entire rest of this week. Conference Committees are anticipated to begin work early next week sending legislation to the Governor.

**Tour Information and Dates:** Commissioners at the meeting were asked to complete the survey that was being distributed to identify potential tour dates for a one day tour at Emmetsburg, IA for the Poet's Liberty Plant. Bair is looking into a second tour in Emmetsburg at the Easy Energy System. It is anticipated that the bus would begin in Marshall, travel down to Worthington and over towards the Sherburn area as stopping points before going to Emmetsburg. Bair will contact a couple of the bus companies to get quotes. The two dates identified by the Commissioners with the most number of people able to attend were Monday, May 23rd, which is scheduled for the next Energy Board Meeting and Monday, June 6th as an alternated date. Bair will check again with the Poet's Liberty Facility to ensure those dates are still available and get back to Commissioners.

**Angel Credits. Bob Isaacson - DEED Presentation:** Isaacson identified a summary of the Angel Tax Credit which is a 25% tax credit for investments in qualified small emerging businesses in the high tech field or using new proprietary technology. The purpose is to encourage growth of and or foster job creation by small emerging high tech Minnesota Businesses by providing incentives for making capital investments in these businesses. The presentation covered the Minnesota Statute, Small Business Investment Tax Credit 116J.8737, who the qualifying investors are, what are qualifying businesses, businesses that are excluded, the reporting requirements, procedures as well as the 2010 results. A copy of the presentation will be posted on the RMEB website.

**Community Wind South Request:** A request by Community Wind South is in relation to the 30MW of the 60MW of small locally owned wind projects. A condition placed on the Certificate of Need granted by order of Minnesota Public Utilities Commission under docket

number EW-002/CN-01-1958. This request is similar in nature to the one the Energy Board approved in 2010 for Community Wind North to help expedite the process in moving the project forward.

**M/S/P** Potter, Hoime to approve resolution number 1-2011 in relation to Community Wind South and the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission docket EW-002/CN-01-1958, abstain Benson.

### **MEMBER UPDATES:**

- Faribault County – Warmka reported that there are 36 to 38 wind tower projects moving forward in Faribault County but they may have snags with MISO. Buffalo Lake Energy is having difficulties the MPCA. The MPCA will no longer allow discharge into a ditch that they have been using under a variance. MPCA wants Buffalo Lake Energy to put in a \$6 million pipeline to be discharged several miles away.
- Jackson County – Elm Creek II is generating. Commissioner Ringkob has noticed that wind farm arrays do not appear to be in line anymore. They are disbursed throughout which makes it more difficult to farm around. Discussion involved the reasons this is occurs (setbacks and regulations that necessitate where turbine placement it and that it often affects the arrangement of where the turbines are allowed to be).
- Lincoln County – Community Wind North has their towers up and completed. The cranes are gone. They anticipate testing with remote in a couple of weeks and by mid April plan to do the warranty testing and anticipate mid May for operation.
- Murray County – Murray County has received a zoning request for commercial solar farm near Slayton. The public hearing is scheduled for April 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. in Slayton.
- Redwood County – Redwood is revisiting the zoning ordinance for micro towers 40kW or less. They are experiencing projects being submitted at 39.95KV and coming in and requesting a height variance and none of the power is being used on location and it is being put on to the transmission line and the higher towers do affect the site for neighbors.
- Rock County – Geronimo Wind is moving forward with their 60 tower project and transmission line on the west side of the county connecting to the transmission line in South Dakota. The isobutonal plant is anticipated operational in 1 to 2 years.

There was comment by Commissioner's as to if other counties would be or are interested in joining the RMEB, for example; Freeborn County. Bair indicated that in the past the Executive Committee Members had given presentations to other county boards (Benson, Kletscher, Hansen, Keers). There is an entry or joining fee for the RMEB. Bair said that she would look into past materials provided to the Commissioner's who presented at the other boards. Commissioner's suggested that a packet be put together and invite other prospective counties to join on the tour.

### **SW CERT UPDATES:**

**Steering Committee - The Modifications to Membership.** Members are allowed 3 consecutive 2 year terms. Of the Core Steering Committee Members, some have 1 person who deals only energy and that is the only person in that organization that deals with energy. The RMEB recommends a change in the SW CERT roles and responsibilities (parameters for the

steering committee). Language added to reflect the following Steering Committee Members reflect the following: Steering Committee Members from AURI, SWMIF, Extension, and USDA are energy related staff experts and there is no term expiration.)

**Update on CERT Seed Grants:** The CERT has identified Putting Green for the \$3,500 that was left over from the Springfield School Green Roof Project.

The CERT Conference was held on February 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 in St. Cloud. There were 300 – 400 people there. Commissioner Benson attended, Jay Trusty, Annette Bair and Mark Willers presented. We did return early due to weather conditions.

**New Initiatives Vending Miser is Back:** There is now \$30 off the \$179 devices. There is a 16 month or less payback. Questioned was, do non-coin vending refrigerators count as vending machines? Bair was asked to check into that. (Note: non-coin vending refrigerators are not part of the vending miser initiative; however, if the company is called they do have devices that can be used to reduce energy).

#### **OTHER BUSINESS and REPORT**

- Paul Pierson from USDA gave a report on the USDA Grant Applications and Programs.
- Arlene Vee, from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency gave a report on the Minnesota Green Core Application that has a May 5<sup>th</sup> deadline.

**NEW BUSINESS:** There was no new business.

**MEETING DATES:** May 23<sup>rd</sup> (potential tour), July 25<sup>th</sup>, September 26<sup>th</sup> and November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

**FUTURE MEETING TOPICS:** Potentially the Xcel Energy Minwind Battery.

#### **ADJOURN:**

**M/S/P:** Ritter, Schueller to adjourn the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

Minutes Prepared By Annette Bair, Staff.

Minutes Reviewed By:

  
Energy Board Secretary

Minutes Approved By:

Energy Board Chairperson

