

MINUTES
RURAL MN ENERGY BOARD MEETING
MONDAY March 31, 2014
CRD, Slayton, MN

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Blue Earth County	Will Purvis	Mower County	Tim Gabrielson
Brown County	James Berg	Murray County	Gerald Magnus
Cottonwood County...	John Oeltjenbruns	Nobles County	Gene Metz
Faribault County	Tom Warmka	Pipestone County	William Johnson
Freeborn County	Glen Mathiason	Redwood County	Excused
Jackson County.....	Dave Henkels	Renville County	Bob Fox
Lincoln County	Larry Hansen	Rock County.....	Excused
Lyon County	Excused	Sibley County.....	Jim Nytes
Martin County	Steve Flohrs	Watsonwan County ...	Scott Sanders

ALSO PRESENT: Paul Henriksen (Lyon/YM Solid Waste Administrator), Betsy Herding (SRDC) and Annette Bair (SRDC).

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Chairman Purvis distributed the Public Utilities Commission agenda around the table for their April meeting.

INTRODUCTIONS: Chairman Purvis asked everyone present to introduce themselves.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

M/S/P Fox, Warmka to approve the following change to the agenda: moving the guest speaker up following the PACE report under Subcommittee Reports.

MINUTES:

M/S/P Magnus, Warmka to approve the Minutes of February 10, 2014 as written.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Treasurer Henkels reviewed the financial report and presented two bills for payment: \$500.00 to AMC for website maintenance and \$1,348.86 to the SRDC February bill.

M/S/P Johnson, Flohrs to approve the financial report and approve payment of the bills.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS & RMEB BUSINESS

PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy): Betsy Herding reported on the PACE Subcommittee meeting prior to the Energy Board meeting to discuss how the program would work.

Workshops were held in Tyler, Worthington, Redwood Falls, St. James and Albert Lea with about 70 people attending these meetings. Herding was asked if Economic Development Planners have been contacted regarding the PACE Program. She indicated "yes" but she would be reconnecting with them.

Guest Speaker – Paul Henriksen, Lyon County Environmental Officer on Land Gas Utilization:

Henriksen reported on the Lyon County Landfill that is currently flaring their gas from the landfill. In 2009 they completed a study that dealt with landfill gas utilization. In that study it identified compressing natural gas for use as well as changing it to electricity. In both cases the use or conversion of the gas would be at a higher cost than what the cost of natural gas or the cost of electricity was; so it was not found to be financially feasible at the time. Commissioners asked many questions about the landfill gas utilization of the landfill including the life of the landfill, the estimated supply of gas, and the expansion of the landfill. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation will be posted on the RMEB website under meetings.

Legislative Committee: Commissioner Metz reported on House File 2911 and its companion Senate File 2482. Both are moving through the committees. This is solar legislation that would place production tax on solar above 1MW, something similar to the Wind Production Tax. The topic of the levy limits and relation to the production tax was not found to be viable legislative initiative this year because we have short session. Commissioner Fox was thanked for speaking with Senator Koenen regarding the levy limit.

Also discussed was legislation that addresses the size of solar facilities and when they should be sited by the state or by the local unit of government. Currently, Minnesota Energy facilities that are 50MW and larger are sited by the state; there is a separate statute for wind. The Murray County Zoning Administrator is on a workgroup with the Minnesota Department of Commerce regarding solar siting and environmental review. Participation in the workgroup will provide counties a voice in the development of regulations for solar facilities. Commissioner Magnus indicated that if any of the RMEB counties has questions or comments to send them to Bair and she will forward them to the Murray County Zoning Administrator.

Bair indicated that this is very important because currently in the MISO queue there are six large solar projects in the study processes. Murray, Lyon and Renville County have 20, 50 and 50 MW in the queue. The other three counties are Dakota, Yellow Medicine and Chisago at 20, 20, and 100 MW.

Commissioners were asked if they could have someone discuss solar & solar panels with the Energy Board. Commissioner Metz indicated that Dan Juhl would be willing to join the meeting via conference call at some point this year.

Tour Committee: Bair reported that she had been in communication with the Hometown Biogas facility near LeSueur. A tentative date for the tour is June 2nd. Other options for the tour the same day may include the dairy at LeSueur or Jordan Transfer located in Jordan. Jordan Transformer rebuilds transformers that come from all over.

It was decided that Bair was to work on the logistics for a tour at the Biogas facility near LeSueur as well as Jordan Transfer with potentially a late lunch at the Henderson Haus in Henderson. The Commissioners decided that transportation arrangements should be done via car pool and the County Commissioners will be carpooling with neighboring counties. Until we know the number of people who can attend the tour we will be working with the number of 20.

REAP Grant Letters: Bair reported that the Energy Board has written two REAP grant letters of support: a facility in Adrian and for a facility near Mt. Lake. The letters provide an additional 10 pts. in the REAP scoring.

MEMBER UPDATES ON ENERGY PROJECTS:

- Blue Earth – Continues to do repair on the Rapidan Dam. There is about \$1.2 million of pending repairs to the gates, generator house, retaining wall.
- Mower –They have approved the EA for the wind towers.
- Jackson – The natural gas that was extended to Heron Lake and Okabena and maybe now to Miloma an issue developed over the winter with the buried line being too small to carry the gas needed for corn drying. To resolve that issue, a gas line was laid over the ground.
- Pipestone – Reported the EDA in the county is disbanding and their assessor has taken another position and they were looking for a new assessor.
- Renville –Watch the new farm bill. NACO worked on getting 10% set aside for joint projects.

SW CERT UPDATE:

- Bair reviewed the Campaigns and Initiatives: the gas station LED canopies and LED lighting for Turkey Barns with the RMEB. One question that came up at the meeting was LED and issues with power surges. How well do they work with generator start-ups and power surges? Bair did not know the answer but would ask people that did and would get back to the Board. Other projects being worked on is the Right Light Guide, and GESP. We have been assisting SW Star Concepts School with a proposed project and getting them connected to the state staff to look at doing a GESP project. Drew Hage worked with the Westbrook YES! Team to set up a B3 data base for the City of Westbrook and enter their data. Drew has also worked on a grant proposal to do a HIA (Health Impact Assessment) partnering with the City of Marshall, a GreenStep city.
- In the projects moving forward, PACE has been reported on, energy on the farm is being worked on with the LED lighting for animal facilities, working with youth (Westbrook YES! Team), Community Solar (Solar Conference).
- The Seed Grant status, there has been no change in the state of the Seed Grants at this time.
- In 2014 the CERT Steering Committee identified doing one to three workshops in SW CERT on reduce, reuse and recycle. So far we have had information that identifies that it is preferred that focus on commercial reduced, reuse and recycle. Bair presented this information to the Solid Waste Administrators and it was also presented to the Solid Waste Commission earlier in the day and will be requesting Solid Waste Administrator assistance in holding a workshop.

MEETING DATES: The 2014 meeting dates will be June 2nd, tentatively scheduled for the tour and committee business includes dues for county budgeting purposes. It was pointed out that the dates for the remainder of the year were incorrect on the agenda; they should be July 28th, September 22nd and November 24th.

ADJOURN:

M/S/P: Nytes, Sanders to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 p.m.

Minutes Prepared By Annette Bair, Staff.



Minutes Reviewed By:
Energy Board Secretary



Minutes Approved By:
Energy Board Chairperson