

**RURAL MN ENERGY BOARD MEETING**  
**MONDAY September 24, 2018**  
**CRD Office, Slayton, MN**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Blue Earth County .....	Will Purvis	Mower County.....	Tim Gabrielson
Brown County .....	excused	Murray County .....	Gerald Magnus
Cottonwood Co .....	Kevin Stevens	Nobles County .....	excused
Faribault County .....	Tom Warmka	Pipestone County .....	Dan Wildermuth
Freeborn County .....	Glen Mathiason	Redwood County .....	absent
Jackson County. ....	Don Wachal	Renville County .....	Bob Fox
Lincoln County .....	Mic VanDeVere	Rock County.....	Gary Overgaard
Lyon County .....	Steve Ritter	Sibley County.....	absent
Martin County .....	Steve Flohrs	Watonwan County .....	Scott Sanders

**ALSO PRESENT:** Josh Fiala (WorldWide Expense Redirection Advisor), Stu Dankers (Sundance Energy Solutions), Dave Eid (National Microgrid), Scott Reimer (Federated REA – Jackson), Vince Robinson (LCEDC), Cheryl Glaeser (Clean Grid Alliance (WOW)), Annette Fiedler & Robin Weis (SRDC – RMEB Staff)

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

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chairman Flohrs led the Pledge.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** All were asked to introduce themselves.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** A copy of the Daily Globe article “Invenergy plans solar farm east of Brewster” was passed around; Fiedler indicated a Thank you to MISO and HERC were sent following the tours; MISO queue (active projects) handout was provided.

**AGENDA:** Chairman Flohrs asked for any additions or corrections to the agenda.

**M/S/P** Mathiason, Gabrielson to approve the agenda as presented.

**MINUTES:**

**M/S/P:** VanDeVere, Warmka to approve the minutes of May 21, 2018 as presented.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Treasurer Magnus reviewed the financial of the RMEB. Current bills were: SRDC General \$2181.07, PACE finance \$210, PACE outreach \$1394, Lobbyist \$1392.70, SRDC Fiscal management \$192.50 for a total of \$5370.27. Funds available after pending \$106,504.26. In addition, the RMEB was asked to ratify the Executive Committee approval of bills on 7-23-2018.

**M/S/P:** Fox, Wachal to ratify the approval of bills on 7-23-2018 by the Executive Committee.

**M/S/P:** Purvis, Warmka to accept the financial report and approval of pending bills as identified in the report.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:** Flohrs reported that the Executive Committee will be meeting via conference call before the November meeting to review draft 2019 budget and review policies document.

**PACE COMMITTEE:** Robin Weis, staff to the Committee reported that the Committee met prior to today's RMEB meeting. The last loan approved was for \$8760. The initial PACE program was a pilot project with three pots of funds. The appropriation request was to pay off the interest accruing loans. There are currently \$165,000 available for PACE loans in ARRA funds. There are possible loans coming forward in Lyon, Nobles and Redwood counties. Of the 24 PACE loans, 62% of the loans were at their maximum of 20% of property tax value, and the average loan project was \$35,770.

To date, 13 counties have indicated that they have the appropriation of \$6336 in their FY2019 draft budget, 3 have denied the request, and we have not heard from two. These dollars will be paid back to the counties that participate in the appropriation. Based on this information, the ARRA dollars will cash flow for admin going forward. The Department of Commerce is pleased with the program and has asked for submitting a 5 year extension (in mid-year). All member counties will have access to PACE.

Weis asked that each of the counties provide her with a contact at the county to be able to refer businesses to for financing a project, if PACE is not appropriate (ie local options for financing). There will be no more PACE outreach through the RMEB with the new Fiscal Year, counties will need to help with any outreach.

There is also \$30,000 of the USDA funds still available for business energy audits, these funds will be available until April 2019. The funds cover 75% of the audit cost, up to \$750. There were also 4 energy assessments recently conducted by RETAP in Nobles, Rock and Murray Counties which may result in energy improvements, PACE information was provided to those entities.

**TOUR:** MISO and HERC tour – Commissioners commented that they learned a lot from both the HERC and MISO tours. They were well worth attending.

**LEGISLATIVE:** Fiedler referred the Commissioners to the Fryberger letter. They will be in the area at the time of the November meeting and would like to join the RMEB meeting at that time.

**SW CERT: The Power of Minnesota** Fiedler reported that the Premier of the Power of Minnesota, of which the RMEB was one of the sponsors had 105 people in attendance in Canby, and that Jim Nichols provided the upbeat closing of the session. The film was shown during the RMEB meeting. Discussion afterward on good paying jobs and advancement; not only jobs with the towers but with all aspects – from the office to the field. Original clips of the presentation had more from Southern MN. Fiedler will look into some of the shorter clips to see if more of southern Minnesota would be in them.

The SW CERT Steering committee will be meeting in Windom on November 29; and a Swine energy efficiency / solar workshop is being scheduled for November 15 in Watonwan or Martin counties.

**WIND ON THE WIRES UPDATE:** Cheryl Glaeser, WOW is now Clean Grid Alliance. Glaeser provided handouts regarding the cost competitiveness of wind, benefits to agriculture, and no health impacts. Healthy discussion of support and opposition to wind projects. AAA Attitude, Aesthetics and Annoyance seem to be the drivers. Usually, if the land is used to make a living, there is little opposition; when there are more hobby type farms there seems to be more opposition. There are also concerns regarding solar farms. Working on building a network of names of wind and solar "farmers" or owners to help offset the opposition. Several names were provided.

**SPPA:** The SPPA will be at the November meeting and Commissions discussed some initial questions for November meeting. There are 4 RMEB Counties that have a JPA with the SPPA. Staff will be putting together some questions for the Commissioner to ask Peter Klein at the November meeting.

#### **MEMBER UPDATES ON ENERGY PROJECTS AND ISSUES**

- Pipestone – Stoneray is in full swing, they have 6 cranes. The former Juhl wind project (14 turbines) is being repowered with 4 turbines. There is also a repower project in the northern part of the county.
- Lyon – no report.
- Rock – Elk Creek Solar 1600 acres. Walleye wind – near Hills is experiencing some opposition – even with a met tower application (cited issues were crop dusting, lower land values, etc.).
- Mower – several individual smaller solar projects.
- Renville – no report.
- Freeborn – PUC ruled to permit the project.
- Cottonwood – 2 wind projects in the Comfrey and Mountain Lake area, one at Westbrook (repower). Expressed concern of the legislature to take the production tax dollars away from counties.
- Faribault – windfarm is idle; SE part of the county land owners are signing Windlock, LLC leases for \$2 per acre to prohibit wind on their land.
- Blue Earth - several small solar. A little of the NIMBY – but have worked with surrounding landowners. Some wind opposition billboards. The Dam.
- Watonwan – no report.
- Lincoln – 2019 substation work, the Red Pine project. Anticipate employment of 20 new full time employees.
- Murray – solar near Lake Wilson, approved substation and battery storage backup.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS AND REPORTS**

**WorldWide Expense Reduction Advisors and Sundance Energy solutions** – projects to reduce energy costs through proven solutions – Josh Fiala, Stu with Sundance Energy solutions (LED lighting); and Dave Eid – National and grid resiliency.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Vince Robinson, Lincoln County Enterprise Development came to the RMEB regarding CBED flip projects (1% local owner and 99% equity owner). In 2011 or 2012 Legislature abolished CBED with no guidance to PUC for the contracts with the local owner. Essentially some are at flip time where they can buy out the project at a reduced rate then resell at a higher rate. The reason CBED was eliminated was because the industry had grown beyond and (Xcel) no longer wanted to deal with one and 2 MW projects, but with the larger ones. Commerce who is supposed to oversee PUC also will not deal with it. There needs to be a petition to deal with it.

To understand the magnitude of this, the Commissioners would like to understand how many projects this involved and in what counties. Is this something the RMEB / AMC should be engaging conversation in? Robinson & Fielder will gather some information for the RMEB.

**2018 MEETING DATES:** November 26. Proposed 2019 dates: January 28, March 25, June 3, July 22, September 23, November 25.

**ADJOURN**

**M/S/P** Purvis, Gabrielson to adjourn the meeting at 3:09 pm.

**On the November agenda**

- **SPPA – Financing Tools (MinnPACE, Trillion BTU, Kresge Foundation)** (Peter Klein - 30 - 45 min invited to November's meeting)
- **Lobbyist / Legislative – Fryberger**

Minutes Prepared By Annette Fiedler, Staff.



Minutes Reviewed By  
Energy Board Secretary



Minutes Approved By  
Energy Board Chairperson