

RURAL MN ENERGY BOARD MEETING
MONDAY January 25, 2016, 1:00 p.m.
CRD Office, Slayton, MN

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Blue Earth County ... Excused	Mower County Tim Gabrielson
Brown County Dennis Potter	Murray County Gerald Magnus
Cottonwood County Tom Appel	Nobles County Gene Metz
Faribault County Excused	Pipestone County.... Dan Wildermuth
Freeborn County Excused	Redwood County ... Excused
Jackson County. David Henkels	Renville County Excused
Lincoln County Mic VanDeVere	Rock County..... Ken Hoime
Lyon County Steve Ritter	Sibley County Excused
Martin County Excused	Watonwan County . Scott Sanders

ALSO PRESENT: Josh Fiala (Line Loss Pro), Larry Sprague (SEFP – via phone), Robin Weis(SRDC), and Annette Fiedler (SRDC – RMEB staff).

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Acting Chair Hoime asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Fiedler shared the media release on the Redwood Electric Cooperative Community Solar Array.

INTRODUCTIONS: Acting Chair Hoime asked everyone present to introduce themselves.

AGENDA:

M/S/P: Gabrielson, Potter to approve the agenda as presented.

MINUTES:

M/S/P: Ritter, Hoime to approve the Minutes of November 23, 2015 as presented.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Treasurer Henkels reviewed the financial report as of December 31, 2015. He directed the Board to the pending bill column which reflects services in November and December 2015: contracted services for the SRDC in the amount of \$880; SRDC contracted services for PACE \$2,304.83; SRDC contracted services for PACE

Outreach \$7,687; SRDC financial management \$465; lobbyist Fryberger \$2,035.50; and financials in the SRDC audit \$300. He noted that the total expenditures under pending should read \$13,672.33. The bill for the SRDC audit has not yet been submitted due to the audit currently being undertaken for CY2015. Total funds available after pending and inclusion of the \$300 for audit will be \$145,762.80.

M/S/P: Wildermuth, VanDeVere to approve the payment of bills including the \$300 payment for the financials in the audit.

RMEB SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Nominating Committee: Fiedler reported that the Nominating Committee of Warmka, Fox and Kruggel have provided a slate of officers for 2016. Glen Mathieson as Chair, Steve Flohrs as Vice-Chair, Ken Hoime as Secretary and David Henkels as Treasurer. Fiedler asked for nominations for officers of the RMEB.

M/S/P: Ritter, Gabrielson asked that nominations cease and a unanimous ballot be cast for Glen Mathieson as Chair, Steve Flohrs as Vice-Chair, Ken Hoime as Secretary and David Henkels as Treasurer.

Executive Committee: Fiedler indicated the Executive Committee had communicated via e-mail on the policies of the RMEB. An e-mail had been sent with the RMEB policies that had been approved as a September 28, 2011. Staff had added in yellow two policies that were passed in 2015. One being the entry fee being reconfirmed that it will continue to be \$1,000 and the second dealing with PACE, that Board Members may be permitted to access funds but they must abstain from voting.

M/S/P: Metz, Potter to approve the RMEB policies with the January 25, 2016 date.

PACE: Robin Weis reported that there is \$683,410 of PACE funds available. Staff is working with the Department of Commerce to make changes to the contract to include both solar or wind plus access the funds for administrative charges. In addition, staff is working with the Department of Commerce staff to expand their definition of a qualified professional beyond the CEM or CEA for an energy auditor. An example is the Brown County REA has an energy review with all the similar information for no cost. A lighting only audit at a minimum from a CEM or CEA is a \$1,200 fee. The energy audits tend to inhibit non-profits and businesses from applying for PACE funding.

Weis also reported that she had attended a residential PACE Workshop with the discussion as to seeing whether Minnesota would look at residential PACE.

Weis is working on an Energy Audit Application to the USDA. This will be for non-profits and government agencies where there needs to be a 25% match. The match must be from something other than the PACE funds.

Memorandum of Understanding between Sustainable Energy Funding Program and RMEB: Weis reviewed information that had been provided to the PACE Subcommittee as of this date and what would be under discussion with the phone call to Sprague. Several issues were identified and questions arose prior to the phone call with Sprague. Of concern included the \$3,000,000 threshold of aggregate projects, could it be less?

During the call, Sprague indicated it could be less however the interest levels would not be low. Perhaps there was a different way of doing it such as having a pool of funds to draw from. Sprague would check on that. Bulk purchasing was discussed as well as a single contractor that would be provided by SEFP. Following the phone call with Sprague, the RMEB discussed whether or not this endeavor would lose focus of the RMEB mission.

M/S/P Wildermuth, Sanders to not enter into a MOU with SEFP at this time.

Tour Committee: Commissioners discussed potential options of tours in CY2016: Deer Creek Station; Morris; a Burner at St. Cloud or Sherburne County; Chancellor SD where they burn railroad ties and bales from Emmetsburg; and in Nobles County the Peaking Plant at Worthington. Poet was suggested, however, they are having difficulties and it was decided not to include Poet as one of the options.

Legislative Committee: Metz reported that he had been working with Kevin Walli and Sam to line up committee chairs to discuss the Wind Production Tax Issue. The objective is to keep levy limits off but they need to keep an eye on what happens with taxes this year. Metz also reported on the ozone threshold from the last meeting which had been set by the EPA at 65ppb; EPA has back down from that threshold to 70 ppb and does not affect Minnesota counties.

LINE LOSS PRO PRESENTATION:

Fiala gave a presentation on an electrical reduction device. It is a passive copper based electro-magnetic technology that captures harmonics or “noise” and restores proper phase and polarity to the AC system. He reported that Murray County Medical Center had it installed last April. He indicated that hospitals and locations that have variable drives with a neutral bus are prime locations that could take advantage of this technology. Wildermuth had several questions:

- Was it UL listed?
- Do they have a license bonded contractor installing it?
- Are they filed with an inspection affidavit?

Following the presentation, Fiedler was asked to provide this information to the electric cooperatives and municipal utilities and ask if they had any feedback. Magnus will be checking with the Murray County Hospital to find out how the device is working at the hospital and report back at the March meeting.

Member Updates on Energy projects and issues:

- Pipestone County: Reported that they have two community solar gardens that have that have come for approval at the county board. One was approved and the second one was tabled. It dealt with the need and request to move the county tile. Questions of easement on the tile as well as maintenance was of concern.
- Jackson County: Reported that north of Jackson and south of Cottonwood, the wind turbines are being installed.
- Lyon County: Reported that they have approved a solar farm in the Tracy area.

SW CERT: Fiedler referred the Committee Members to the 3 individuals who have indicated an interest in serving at large on the SW CERT Steering Committee. Those individuals were Vince Robinson, Abraham Algadi and Michael Emerson.

M/S/P: VanDeVere, Ritter to approve the 3 nominations to serve on the SW CERT Steering Committee at large.

Fiedler reviewed the 5 projects that came from the CERT Conference: assisting rural cooperatives; working with youth; energy efficiency for hog farms; outdoor pools; and outreach on financing.

Seed Grants: Fiedler referred the committee to the SW Clean Energy Accelerator which has received its first request for funding in the amount of \$750 by a non-profit to do a qualified energy audit for a PACE project.

MEETING DATES 2016: Acting Chair Hoime referred the committee to the meeting dates in 2016. The next meeting is March 28, 2016.

ADJOURN:

M/S/P: Gabrielson, Wildermuth to adjourn the meeting at 3:22 pm.

Minutes Prepared By Annette Fiedler, Staff



Minutes Reviewed By
Energy Board Secretary



Minutes Approved By
Energy Board Acting Chairperson