

**MINUTES - MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2020 AT 1:00 P.M.  
RURAL MINNESOTA ENERGY BOARD  
CENTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE, SLAYTON, MN**

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**COMMISSIONERS ATTENDANCE:**

Blue Earth County .... Will Purvis	Mower County ..... Tim Gabrielson
Brown County ..... Jeff VeerKamp	Murray County ..... Dennis Welgraven
Cottonwood County . Tom Appel	Nicollet County ..... John Luepke
Faribault County ..... Tom Warmka	Nobles County ..... Gene Metz
Freeborn County ..... Glen Mathiason	Pipestone County ..... Dan Wildermuth
Jackson County ..... Don Wachal	Redwood County ..... Absent
Lincoln County ..... Mic VanDeVere	Renville County ..... Doug Erickson
Lyon County ..... Steve Ritter	Rock County ..... Gary Overgaard
Martin County ..... Steve Flohrs	Watsonwan County..... Bob Rinne

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Commissioner John Tuma (Public Utilities Commissioner); Jessi Wyatt and Brian Ross (Great Plains Institute); Kevin Walli (Fryberger); Fritz Ebinger (MN Extension and CERTS); Rose Patzer and Vince Robinson (SW CERT Steering Committee); Jason Walker (SRDC).

**CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Chair Metz called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Introductions.

**AGENDA:**

M/S/P Wildermuth/Welgraven to approve the agenda as presented.

**MINUTES:**

M/S/P Mathiason/Ritter to approve the minutes from March 23, 2020 as presented.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:**

Treasurer Wildermuth presented the financial report and bills and he thanked Dianne Crowley for the fine job she has done preparing the financial statements.

M/S/P VanDeVere/Flohrs to approve the Treasurer's Report and payment of the bills pending in April; SRDC General (\$787.50), PACE Outreach (\$190), Fryberger-Lobbyist (\$4,000), Finance (\$300) totaling \$5,277.50

M/S/P Purvis/Appel to approve the Treasurer's Report and payment of the March bills from the Executive Meeting on March 23; Fryberger (\$3,500); AMC for website (\$500); Ann Goering for JP review, (\$630); Gene Metz Expenses for testifying at Senate Energy Hearing (\$277.35); SRDC Staff, (\$2,888.13), PACE Outreach (\$479.60) totaling \$7,645.08. (Done in abundance of caution to ensure legitimacy of the approval at the last meeting).

**SUBCOMMITTEE AND RMEB BUSINESS:**

**Executive Committee:** Has not met since March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Joint Powers agreement and bylaws are still being edited. The plan is to meet sometime before the end of June 2020 to determine budget recommendations.

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**PACE:** The PACE Committee met at noon, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. ARRA funds are at \$104,678 and the SEP funds are at \$326,900. With the COVID situation this program has not seen much activity. Robin is working on PSAs through CERTS and other outreach activities. The committee is organizing a PACE orientation meeting for members since there are several new meetings

**Legislative Committee:** Committee Chair Gene Metz reported that partisanship has made moving energy bills forward difficult. Kevin Walli added that there were three bills that received some consideration but did not get passed during this session and it's uncertain what their fate will be in the upcoming special session. One bill was the Energy Conservation and Optimization Act that had hearings but then was laid on the table. There's a Natural Gas Innovation Act that was advanced by CenterPoint Energy and Xcel, passed the Senate 62-4 but was never picked up on the house side. Then there was the Clean Energy Act that included the transmission provision, but that, also, did not pass. The one energy bill that did pass was the one that had to do with the allocations from the Renewable Development Account programs, but it still left over \$58 million on the bottom line.

Chair Metz asked Walli about budgets in a shortfall year and whether counties that get production taxes will be penalized. He had not heard anything as of yet about county aid.

**Great Plains Institute:** Jessi Wyatt and Brian Ross presented on *Utility-Scale Renewable Energy Siting- Exploring Local Opportunity*. Jessi covered wind siting and Brian covered solar. Jessi discussed bigger, thus, fewer turbines per development and questions of fewer landowners receiving payments.

Brian noted how local governments have more control over solar siting compared to wind because of its different intense coverage footprint (blanket on a map) relative to wind (pins in a map). Easier to mitigate visual impacts of solar, etc.

Gary Overgaard asked a question about a solar project in Rock County where concerns were raised about soil and water contamination from solar panels. Both Ross and Ebinger stated that nowhere in the world had that been an issue and that it would take extreme, highly unlikely conditions for contamination to occur.

**Public Utilities Commissioner:** Commissioner John Tuma emphasized that the need for greater transmission capacity is clear based on a MISO study. He provided a historical overview of MISO and noted how RMEB was critical to getting the 25% standard in the Next Gen Energy Act in 2007.

- 1992 Energy Policy Act of 1992
- 1994 Xcel's Prairie Island Agreement with a mandate to develop wind projects
- 1998 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission accepts the organizational plan for the Midwest Independent System Operator MISO
- 2001 MISO begins reliability coordination and regional planning services
- 2003 MISO Transmission Expansion Plan (MTEP) MISO and stakeholders began to explore how to best provide a value-added regional planning process to complement the local planning of MISO members.

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- 2004 CAPX2020 starts a partnership with Great River Energy, Minnesota Power, Missouri River Energy Services, Otter Tail Power and Xcel
- 2005 MISO launched the Energy Markets and began centrally dispatching generating units throughout much of the central United States
- 2007 Minnesota Renewable Energy Act
- 2008 MISO develops in their MTEP Load Serving Entities regional needs that lays out the MultiValue Portfolio (MVP) reimbursement structure.
- 2011 MISO MTEP process identifies their MVP portfolio 5/28/2020 Partnering to Improve Energy Developm

“MISO Forward” – four phases. Phase 1 – get the grid science right. Phase 2 –run reliability analyses, and economic impact analyses. Phase 3 – implement

MISO has 120 members, including developers like Geronimo and Nextera, along with all the electric utilities. PUCs of the member states run the RTOs, but PUCs are not members. MISO Board of Directors have to be completely divorced from any financial connection to members.

Interestingly, MISO Board is driven by economic development more than climate change; fairly conservative, much like the voice RMEB brought to the table.

Commissioner Tuma’s big ask to the RMEB is to host a summit where MISO comes down to Southwest Minnesota. This would be an opportunity for RMEB to update MISO about their priorities and concerns. The tentative plan would be to host it in the first half of October, after MISO has approved their science Phase entered the phase of project development and prioritization.

The RMEB unanimously agreed to host some contingent of MISO in the Southwest MN in October.

**Member Updates:**

- *Blue Earth* – They just finished solar ordinances and expanded setbacks and screening conditions.
- *Brown* – No change.
- *Cottonwood* – Jeffers Repower mostly finalized and then Big Bend Wind is scheduled for construction next year.
- *Faribault* – None
- *Freeborn* – Started the wind project—pouring cement and moving along. Mentioned \$150K of small business funding for COVID came from Freeborn Wind permitting fees. (no interest loan)
- *Jackson* – Don, repower is winding up. Tradewinds Energy in SE is still moving along. Solar project in South Fork – in process waiting on permits
- *Lincoln* – 2<sup>nd</sup> 100 turbines of Buffalo Ridge towers being built. 20 tower reboot by Lake Benton this summer. 40 tower one by Lake Benton/Pipestone on hold due to transmission constraints (\$85 million to hook in).
- *Lyon* – None
- *Martin* – Trimont is wrapping up. About the same
- *Mower* – None

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- *Murray* -- None
- *Nicollet* -- None
- *Nobles* – 1<sup>st</sup> two turbines of Nobles county went up. 3.5 MW turbines are impressive in size
- *Pipestone* – Thanked commissioner for the history. Stoneray project production taxes earmarked a school expansion project – covered the cost. Definitely interested in transmission expansion and building out more wind.
- *Redwood* – None
- *Renville* – a second request for solar by a farm site – they would have to plant evergreens around it. Bonded it for \$200,000 – study said groundwork alone would have been \$100K, plus the recycling panels.
- *Rock* – Gary, NextEra proceeding with Walleye Wind project by next summer hopefully. Eliminated much of the opposition. Gevo Ethanol has two turbines officially running now, but not operating the business at the moment due to ethanol crisis.
- *Watsonwan*: In two years may be a project. Working on better ordinances.

**SW CERT:** Jason Walker updated the board about the 4-part webinar series through a partnership with the GreenStep programs and League of MN Cities about telework/flexwork, engaging communities virtually and telehealth. Also, RSDP is working with IonE-ETL about mapping sites for 1-10 MW size with pollinators in Murray County in partnership with SRDC under an RSDP grant this summer and fall.

**OTHER BUSINESS AND REPORTS** – None

**NEW BUSINESS** – The July 27<sup>th</sup> meeting will tentatively be scheduled as a face-to-face with a Zoom option at the 4H building in Slayton.

**NEXT MEETING** – July 27, 2020

**FUTURE TOPICS / GUESTS:** Tara Ritter, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, will present about the Murray County Dialogues

**ADJOURN**

Chair Metz adjourned the meeting at 2:59 PM

Minutes prepared by Jason Walker, Development Planner at SRDC

Reviewed by:

Secretary

Approved by:

Chairman