

**MINUTES - MONDAY, JULY 27, 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  
Brown County ..... Jeff Veerkamp  
Cottonwood County . Tom Appel  
Faribault County Absent  
Freeborn County ..... Absent  
Jackson County ..... Don Wachal  
Lincoln County ..... Mic VanDeVere  
Lyon County ..... Steve Ritter  
Martin County ..... Steve Flohrs

Mower County ..... Tim Gabrielson  
Murray County ..... Dennis Welgraven  
Nicollet County ..... John Luepke  
Nobles County ..... Gene Metz  
Pipestone County ..... Dan Wildermuth  
Redwood County ..... Absent  
Renville County ..... Doug Erickson  
Rock County ..... Gary Overgaard  
Watsonwan County..... Kathleen Svalland

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Kevin Walli (Fryberger); Rose Patzer (Energy Center), Tracy Haberman (Nobles Cooperative), Eric L'Abbe (RSDP), Laura Malwitz (Siemens), Vince Robinson; Darrick Moe (Rural Electric Cooperatives), Neta Eitan (DSI), Tara Ritter (IATP), Jason Walker (SRDC), Robin Weis (SRDC).

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

Chair Metz called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Introductions.

**AGENDA:**

M/S/P Gabrielson/Purvis to approve the agenda as presented.

**MINUTES:**

M/S/P Flohrs/Overgaard to approve the minutes from June 1, 2020 as presented.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:**

Treasurer Wildermuth presented the financial report and bills.

M/S/P Appel/VanDeVere to approve the Treasurer's Report and payment of the bills pending totaling \$6,237.50 which included \$2,900 (Fryberger); \$2,227.50 (SRDC General); \$650 (SRDC PACE Outreach); \$460 (SRDC Finance).

**SUBCOMMITTEE AND RMEB BUSINESS:**

**Executive Committee:** The Executive Committee met on June 29<sup>th</sup>. Progress on Joint Powers revisions is still pending. Also:

**Lobbying fees** – will remain the same as last year at \$15,800

**PACE Outreach** – recommendation is to keep it at \$6,000

**Dues** – recommendation is to keep dues the same at \$2,500.

**Tour next year?** – Nobody in the meeting was comfortable projecting whether or not a tour would be possible for next year. Recommendation is to keep the \$1,000 in the budget in case something is possible.

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**Other considerations?** – Recommendation is to add \$1,000 for legal fees for Joint Powers updates

M/S/P Purvis/Gabrielson to keep dues at \$2,500 for the next budget.

**PACE:** The PACE Committee met at 11:45am on July 27, 2020. Wachal encouraged commissioners to get the word out at various meetings that they attend. He reminded the board that RETAP is back to work doing energy assessments. Robin is working on PSAs through CERTS and other outreach activities. Robin Weis stated that the June orientation on PACE went well and that she would like to do that for the group as the whole every January during the regular meeting as a refresher. Also, in September she will present about the PACE legislation and in November about the audit and assessment.

Robin also presented briefly about past PACE projects (there are 27 total). Some key categories were LED lighting, HVAC (often when the unit is in critical condition), refrigeration, insulation, water heaters and ventilation. PACE can fund any project from the energy audit as long as there are cost savings. Some businesses have noted an increase in customers from improving their lighting and/or heating and cooling systems. PACE can go up to \$100,000, but the max is more limited by the property assessed or appraised value. PACE cannot exceed 20% of the assessed or appraised value. Robin also noted that apartment complexes are eligible.

**Legislative Committee:** Committee Chair Gene Metz reported about the need for additional transmission for renewable energy projects in the region. Many initiatives have been pushed to the wayside since COVID-19 appeared on the scene.

**Murray County Dialogue:** Tara Ritter from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy shared results with the board from their three-day dialogue with 18 demographically representative members about wind energy. When participants were surveyed at the end, everyone supported expanded/future wind development with six people stating “Yes, under most circumstances/whenever possible,” and 12 people voting “Yes, but only if certain conditions are met/put in place.” They realized many of the environmental, social and economic benefits of these projects. Their biggest concern was about the long-term health effects of wind energy.

**Member Updates:**

- *Blue Earth* – No change
- *Brown* – Projects stalled
- *Cottonwood* – Jeffers Repower mostly finalized and then Big Bend Wind is scheduled for construction next year.
- *Faribault* – None
- *Freeborn* – None
- *Jackson* – Hearing scheduled for 3 Waters Wind 200mW wind project
- *Lincoln* – 2<sup>nd</sup> 100 turbines of Buffalo Ridge towers being built. 40 tower one by Lake Benton/Pipestone is going forward
- *Lyon* – None
- *Martin* – None

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- *Mower* – Two 50mW Solar energy projects proposed for the area. Also a possible repower on some of the turbines.
- *Murray* – The possible solar project by Lake Wilson and Chandler is looking for higher land. Cameron Township may get a 60-70 mW solar project
- *Nicollet* – Had a contentious solar project, but the board unanimously approved it to go forward
- *Nobles* – 65% of the Nobles 2 project is completed. Old single tower has questionable ownership that brings the issue of decommissioning to the forefront
- *Pipestone* – Restricted to repower only due to transmission constraints
- *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* – NextEra proceeding with Walleye Wind project—applied for permit. *Watsonwan*: In two years may be a project. Working on better ordinances.
- *Watsonwan* - None

**SW CERT:** Jason Walker updated the board on the solar in schools initiative, a 5% and under campaign that is in development and seed grant updates.

**OTHER BUSINESS AND REPORTS** – None

**NEW BUSINESS** – None

**NEXT MEETING** – September 28, 2020

**FUTURE TOPICS / GUESTS:** Laura Malwitz from Siemens will present about public/private investment opportunities.

**ADJOURN**

Chair Metz adjourned the meeting at 2:25PM

Minutes prepared by Jason Walker, Development Planner at SRDC

Reviewed by:

Secretary

Approved by:

Chairman