

**MINUTES - MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2021 AT 1:00 P.M.
RURAL MINNESOTA ENERGY BOARD
CENTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE, SLAYTON, MN**

COMMISSIONERS ATTENDANCE:

Blue Earth County Kevin Paap	Murray County Dennis Welgraven and Molly Malone
Brown County..... Jeff Veerkamp	Nicollet County Absent
Cottonwood County . Tom Appel	Nobles County Gene Metz and Bob Paplow
Faribault County Absent	Pipestone County Dan Wildermuth
Freeborn County Brad Edwin	Redwood County Dennis Groebner
Jackson County Don Wachal	Renville County Doug Erickson
Lincoln County Mic VanDeVere	Rock County Gary Overgaard
Lyon County Steve Ritter	Watsonwan County..... Bob Rinne
Martin County Steve Flohrs	
Mower County..... Jeff Baldus	

OTHERS PRESENT: Jason Walker (SRDC), Robin Weis (SRDC), Joel Haskard (CERTs); Al Kruse; Annie Levenson-Falke (CUB), Darrick Moe, Harold Stanislawski, Tracey Haberman, Vince Robinson

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 Appel/Flohrs to approve the agenda as presented.

MINUTES:

M/S/P VanDeVere/Wildermuth to approve the minutes from November 23, 2020 as presented.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Treasurer Wildermuth presented the financial report and bills. He thanked Brooke Swart and Dianne Crowley for putting everything together. He explained the 112% expense on SRDC General was due to staff time working on the Energy Transmission Summit.

M/S/P Wachal/Flohrs to approve the Treasurer's Report and payment of the bills pending totaling \$4,865 which included \$1,800 (Fryberger); \$1,665 (SRDC General); \$800 (SRDC PACE Outreach); \$300 (SRDC Finance) and \$300 (Financials in RDC Audit). They also approved the January payment of the MCIT bill of \$2,718.

2021 BUDGET APPROVAL:

M/S/P VanDeVere/Veerkamp to approve the 2021 budget proposal as Dianne Crowley presented it.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS:

M/S/P Paap/Ritter to accept the appointments of the following new members/alternates to the RMEB.

- Jeff Baldus – Mower – Member to replace Tim Gabrielson
- Polly Glynn – Mower – Alternate
- Molly Malone – Murray -- Alternate

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- Bob Paplow – Nobles – Alternate
- Rick Wakefield – Redwood -- Alternate
- _____ Faribault – to replace Tom Warmka (yet to be determined)
- Brad Edwin -- Freeborn – to replace Glen Mathiason
- Kevin Paap -- Blue Earth – to replace Will Purvis

Nominating Committee:

M/S/P Paap/Ritter to approve all officers remaining the same as in 2020.

- Gene Metz, Chair
- Tom Appel, Vice Chair
- Mic VanDeVere, Secretary
- Dan Wildermuth, Treasurer

Executive Committee: Nothing to report.

PACE: Don Wachal asked for a volunteer to serve on the PACE committee since Will Purvis went off the board. Kevin Paap, the new member from Blue Earth volunteered and was accepted to the committee.

Robin Weis gave a refresher/orientation on the PACE program to the board. Her presentation will be uploaded to the RMEB website and sent to meeting participants.

Legislative Committee: When RMEB first organized the main topics they worked on were transmission siting, tower siting, and how to route the production taxes. Now there are many other clean energy initiatives. Highlights from the lobbyist report include information about a senate hearing with testimony from MISO. They reported that in 2020 about 12% of the energy is produced from renewables and MISO forecasts 35% by 2030. MISO's role is to ensure reliability at the lowest cost. MISO figures it would take \$160 billion to build enough transmission capacity to get to 35% covered by renewables. MN still imports about 10% of its power.

Gene asked if the RMEB wanted to weigh in on California Clean Car Standards. Also, the Walz administration is currently pushing for 100% carbon-free energy by 2040. How does MN go forward to reach these goals in an economically viable way?

Citizen's Utility Board Presentation: Annie Levenson-Falk, Executive Director of Citizen's Utility Board, presented on the services that CUB provides and several policy areas that may be of interest to the RMEB. CUB is an independent consumer advocacy organization. They are available, for free, to table events and present on a number of energy related issues. One of their most requested topics is about understanding energy bills. Some of their advocacy issues include shutoff protection, alternate steps for Xcel in their consumer resource plan, and better data access for public interest. In the legislature this year they are supporting ECO Act and Clean Energy First. Her presentation will be uploaded to the RMEB website.

Transmission Summit Discussion: RMEB members agree to continue to pursue the issue of transmission constraints. SRDC staff will continue conversations with GPI and the PUC to see what the best options may be. Some possibilities from Matt Prorock at GPI include:

- Set up a follow-up on meeting from the October Transmission Summit – a ~2 hour conversational meeting with RMEB members, MISO staff, GPI staff and any other stakeholders RMEB would like

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to join the conversation. This would be focused on getting into the weeds on advocacy opportunities within the MISO stakeholder process that RMEB could pursue (things like writing letters of support to MISO leadership, expressing local development goals in written comments to MISO, working directly with MISO leadership to ensure transmission planning is responsive to RMEB's goals, etc.). We would plan to develop a handful of key discussion questions ahead of time (RMEB + GPI) and the meeting would be relatively informal with the goal of making the MISO world less opaque.

- RMEB could work with similar groups from other states. Recognizing that transmission planning is a regional endeavor, GPI is interested in replicating the SW MN Transmission Summit in other states in the MISO region. Through this effort and ongoing engagement, GPI could support a broad coalition of local economic development-focused groups. This would do two things in terms of MISO advocacy. 1) It would lower the burden on any individual in RMEB compared to RMEB working to advocate on its own at MISO. 2) It would increase the impact by clearly demonstrating the multi-state appetite for increased transmission to enable renewable generation development.
- GPI could also help RMEB think through various advocacy options (legislative push, direct advocacy at MISO, engaging the Governor's office, etc.) to support transmission development. Things to consider for each option would be time and effort required, potential impact and the "path" to the impact (i.e. how does each action make a difference in MISO's planning processes and outcomes?), and opportunities to collaborate with other MN and regional entities.
- MISO has indicated that they expect preliminary transmission lines for their MTEP21 process to be identified as early as March 2021. We could convene RMEB members for an update from MISO and the states' utilities on what is coming out of MISO's MTEP21 planning process and implications for southwest MN landowners and RMEB members. This could include impacts of any lines that may be planning through the state, and/or a discussion of how those planned lines may help improve the interconnection issues we've seen holding back new renewable development in SW MN.

Member Updates:

- *Blue Earth* – Gave tips on engaging the legislature
- *Brown* – No update
- *Cottonwood* – Plumb Creeks is moving forward. Big Bend wind is also moving forward. Looking at 55 towers or so. Substation sites and transmission lines identified. Late 2021 or 2022 construction. Also, will have an 846-acre solar farm
- *Faribault* – No updates
- *Freeborn* – No updates
- *Jackson* – Not much change from last report.
- *Lincoln* – last set up 100 towers project are up Lyon. Transmission and production tax revenue are their top two legislative priorities.
- *Martin* – Great river energy – new transmission line from Wilbert to Blue Earth
- *Mower* – No update

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- *Murray* – Plum Creek 400 MW project is going forward. Solar – hog barn with dual axis trackers.
- *Nicollet* – No update
- *Nobles* – Nobles 2 is up and running, system has radar detection on them; Nobles 1 to be repowered in 2021 and 2022
- *Pipestone* – Wind repower at the county line is pretty much wrapped up. Solar – small community solar N. part of Pipestone. Asking about Ideal Energy consumer level. Nonprofit wants level 2 chargers. Suzlon is closing down.
- *Redwood* – No update
- *Renville* – Issued land usage permit for 1 MW system, but it expired and now they want to put it in a different spot
- *Rock* – Elk Creek solar project is postponed for 1 year. The Walleye Wind Project had 120 people who signed on, 15 comments (13 positive, 2 negative from SD who wanted the benefits)
- *Wantonwan* - No update

SW CERT:

- RSDP Idea briefs can be submitted at <https://extension.umn.edu/regional-partnerships/submit-idea-rsdp>
- Staff gave an overview of CERTs mission and activities for new members

OTHER BUSINESS AND REPORTS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

NEXT MEETING – March 22 at 1pm

FUTURE MEETINGS – May 24, July 26, September 27, November 22.

FUTURE TOPICS / GUESTS: Darrick Moe as potential speaker in the future

ADJOURN

Chair Metz adjourned the meeting at 3:27 PM

Minutes prepared by Jason Walker, Development Planner at SRDC

Reviewed by:

Secretary

Approved by:

Chairman