

MINUTES - MONDAY, JULY 26, 2021 AT 1:00 P.M.
RURAL MINNESOTA ENERGY BOARD
CENTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE, SLAYTON, MN

COMMISSIONERS ATTENDANCE:

Blue Earth County Kevin Paap	Mower County..... Polly Glynn
Brown County..... Jeff Veerkamp	Murray County Dennis Welgraven
Cottonwood County... Tom Appel	Nicollet County John Luepke
Faribault County John Roper	Nobles County Gene Metz
Freeborn County Absent	Pipestone County Dan Wildermuth
Jackson County Don Wachal	Redwood County Absent
Lincoln County Mic VanDeVere	Renville County Doug Erickson
Lyon County Rick Anderson	Rock County Gary Overgaard
Martin County Steve Flohrs	Watsonwan County..... Bob Rinne

OTHERS PRESENT: Jason Walker, Rose Patzer, Vince Robinson, Scott Reimer, Adam Tromblay, Harold Stanislawski, Elling Mann; and John Mueller and Dallas Roskamp (alternates)

CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chair Metz called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Introductions.

AGENDA:

M/S/P VanDeVere/Luepke to approve the agenda as presented.

MINUTES:

M/S/P Veerkamp/Welgraven to approve the minutes from May 24, 2021 as presented.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Treasurer Wildermuth presented the financial report and bills.

M/S/P Appel/Overgaard to approve the Treasurer's report as presented.

M/S/P Wachal/Flohrs to approve the payment of the bills pending from the months of May and June totaling \$6,745 which included \$2,900 (Fryberger); \$3,045 (SRDC General); \$400 (SRDC PACE Outreach); and \$400 (SRDC Finance).

Executive Committee: Met on June 24, 2021 to discuss the Joint Powers Agreement amendments and the budget. The committee recommended that the board approve the JPA as presented.

M/S/P Wachal/VanDeVere to approve the JPA as presented to then go to all member counties for ratification.

The committee also recommended that the budget for 2022 remain the same as for 2021 with dues remaining at \$2,500.

M/S/P Wachal/Luepke to keep the budget the same in 2022 as in 2021.

PACE: This committee did not meet and had nothing to report.

Legislative Committee: Chair Metz summarized the memo from Fryberger regarding how the legislative session ended. Some bill highlights included authorization for natural gas utilities to submit innovation

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plans for approval of the Department of Commerce and Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, extension of the Solar Energy Production Incentive Program, funding for solar installations at public schools and at state colleges and universities. The full memo will be uploaded to the RMEB website.

Chair Metz also discussed a recent discussion with Peder Mewes, of Clean Grid Alliance, about the proposed 15-year plan from Xcel that would create a natural gas peaker plant in Lyon County, which would include a transmission line with 2,000 MW of capacity that could enable more renewables to be added that feed into that line. This proposal is not yet approved. The PUC has comments open until October 1st regarding this revised proposal.

Midwest Power Partners: Jason DeRuyter, President of Midwest Power Partners, and Gary Tholen, representing his wind farm with the Peterson Wind Project, presented regarding extending a Power Purchase Agreement with Xcel to have a predictable revenue stream that allows them to do the necessary maintenance on their 13.25 Megawatt wind cooperative. Midwest Power Partners own several wind farms and provide servicing for dozens of others. Mr. DeRuyter is facing opposition from the large energy companies that, according to him, would prefer to tear down the small wind operations and build large, new operations in their place. He is also up against the market pricing from MISO. He is looking for recommendations about how to get legislation passed that would ensure that they can get a fair price for their wind so they can stay in business. The RMEB board members decided they would investigate further and discuss it at the next meeting since it was a new topic for many.

Member Updates:

- *Blue Earth* – No updates
- *Brown* – No updates
- *Cottonwood* – The setbacks with Big Bend Wind continue to be a sticking point. Currently the setback is 5 miles for the Jeffers Petroglyph site, but certain stakeholders would like the distance to be at least 8 miles.
- *Faribault* – No updates
- *Freeborn* – No updates
- *Jackson* – A small nine-tower project has come before the Jackson County zoning board and an organized group is trying to stop the project.
- *Lincoln* – No updates
- *Lyon* – Xcel has proposed a new natural gas peaker plant in the county.
- *Martin* – No updates
- *Mower* – No updates
- *Murray* – Issue of solar glare on a upcoming ½ MW community solar project.
- *Nicollet* – No updates
- *Nobles* – There are two potential repowers on the horizon. One would be 150 MW and the other would be 15 MW.
- *Pipestone* – Discussion about the wind turbine at the school getting torn down for \$50,000.
- *Redwood* – No updates.
- *Renville* – Had a request to waive \$200,000 for decommissioning on a project.

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- *Rock* – No updates.
- *Wantonwan* – They now have new solar ordinances in place.

SW CERT: Staff reported that he would be at Farmfest from August 3 – 5. Also, CERTs is seeking applications for the latest round of Seed Grants. Organizations have until October 8 to apply. To get more information and/or to apply, people can visit <https://www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org/seedgrants>

OTHER BUSINESS AND REPORTS: Dan Wildermuth requested that the board start lining up legislative visits for the fall.

NEW BUSINESS: No new business.

NEXT MEETING – September 27 -- will be in-person at the SRDC conference room. A Zoom link will be available for any persons unable to make it in-person.

FUTURE MEETINGS –November 22.

FUTURE TOPICS / GUESTS: Luepke suggested getting Senator Bill Weber to visit.

ADJOURN

Chair Metz adjourned the meeting at 3:05 PM

Minutes prepared by Jason Walker, Development Planner at SRDC

Reviewed by:

Secretary

Approved by:

Chairman