

**MINUTES - MONDAY, MARCH 28, 2022 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 .... 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 ..... Brad Edwin	Pipestone County ..... Dan Wildermuth
Jackson County ..... Don Wachal	Redwood County ..... Dennis Groebner
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:** Jason Walker, Clay Cameron (NextEra), Danell Herzig (NextEra), Jean Cristoffels (Murray County Zoning), Kevin Walli and Sam Richie (Fryberger), Dallas Roskamp (Pipestone alternate), Adam Sokolski (EDF), Nobles Cooperative Electric, Peder Mewis (Clean Grid Alliance), Molly Malone (Murray alternate)

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

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

**AGENDA:**

M/S/P VanDeVere/Roper to approve the agenda with addition of providing an update about the launch of Midcontinent Communities Alliance for Decarbonization and discussion about having members of the Public Utilities Commission and MISO visit for a special RMEB session on transmission constraints.

**MINUTES:**

M/S/P Flohrs/Ritter to approve the minutes from January 24, 2022 as presented.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:**

Treasurer Wachal presented the financial report and bills.

M/S/P Welgraven/Veerkamp to approve the Treasurer's report as presented.

M/S/P Welgraven/Veerkamp to approve the payment of the bills pending from the months of November 2021 through February 2022 totaling \$8,835.25.

**Executive Committee:** This committee did not meet. Nothing to report

**PACE:** This committee met at noon on March 28, 2022. Wachal reported that they have \$134,944 in ARRA funds and \$268,650 in SEP funds and they reduced the interest rate from 4 percent to 3 percent to attract more applicants to the program. Staff will do additional outreach to advertise the interest rate reduction to grocery stores, convenience stores/gas stations, contractors and other businesses that could have large returns on investment from making energy upgrades.

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**Legislative Committee:** Metz mentioned new legislation to tax solar under 1 megawatt has received a good reception in the house. The bill would reclassify these projects as commercial to triple or more the tax revenue. Sam and Kevin from Fryberger presented about the state of the legislature. House property tax bill is being held in the afternoon on March 28th on the small solar bill. Kevin also mentioned a new tree planting bill; a Future Fuels Act (HF 2083) establishing a standard to reduce the carbon intensity of transportation fuels, which has a hearing on March 29<sup>th</sup>, and new PACE (Port Authority) legislation that adds land and water improvements to the program.

In regards to transmission bottlenecks, Fryberger staff encouraged the RMEB to continue the dialogue with the PUC and lean on them to continue their leadership. As politicians are on the campaign trail, make sure to advocate for additional transmission in the region.

Metz brought up the issue of production tax declines in certain townships and counties – primarily due to transmission constraints causing curtailment on wind turbines.

**Presentation from NextEra:** Danell Herzog and Clay Cameron presented on three projects in the RMEB region that are planned over the next three to four years. Buffalo Ridge Wind in Lincoln and Pipestone counties is approved at the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and is slated for construction and operation in 2022. The Dodge County Wind project is under review by the PUC as they are planning for construction and operation in 2023. Three Waters Wind project does not yet have a site permit under review at the PUC.

NextEra Energy Resources' Minnesota Wind Energy Centers				
Project	County	Economic Investment	Jobs	Total Revenue Generated
Buffalo Ridge Wind	Lincoln and Pipestone counties	\$143 million	321	\$48 million
Dodge County Wind	Dodge and Steele counties	\$228.5 million	573	\$99 million
Mower Wind	Mower County	\$72.5 million	190	\$45 million
Three Waters Wind	Jackson County	\$317.1 million	528	\$51 million
Timberwolf Wind	Fillmore County	\$205.3 million	505	\$66 million
Walleye Wind	Rock County	\$138 million	412	\$57 million
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8 counties</b>	<b>\$1.1 billion</b>	<b>2,529</b>	<b>\$366 million</b>

Their presentation will be uploaded to [rmeb.org](http://rmeb.org).

At the end of their presentation, commissioners had questions regarding curtailment directed toward representatives from NextEra and a representative from EDF, Adam Sokolski. Commissioners wanted to know what was causing curtailment, specifically in the Fulton township of Murray County – an EDF project. Where the EDF project is located is where a large congestion bottleneck is located, so they are getting curtailed frequently resulting in over a 50 percent reduction in production tax revenues in the last year. They are working on some short-term, low-cost ways to reroute traffic to help alleviate the issues until the larger congestion issue can be addressed. Curtailment can come from the purchaser, or from MISO or from something like bats in the summer.

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One question was whether older turbines are curtailed more often than newer turbines. The short answer was that yes, the newer turbines are much easier to maintain, have better software for management and are more efficient, so older turbines are more likely to get curtailed than newer ones. The other key factor is the energy market – the dispatch pricing will also dictate who gets curtailed first.

Commissioners brought up the idea of needing to rework the taxing structure. Fryberger, EDF and NextEra were open to the idea, but said that a lot of thought and discussion needs to happen before approaching legislators on the issue because there could be negative, unforeseen consequences to going down that road.

**Member Updates:**

- *Blue Earth* – No updates
- *Brown* – No updates
- *Cottonwood* – Big Bend Wind – in the hands of the PUC
- *Faribault* – No updates
- *Freeborn* – No updates
- *Jackson* – Three Waters Project
- *Lincoln* – 40 New towers going up this year
- *Lyon* – No updates
- *Martin* – No updates
- *Mower* – No updates
- *Murray* – No updates
- *Nicollet* – Some local complaints about the small solar projects
- *Nobles* – No updates
- *Pipestone* – No updates
- *Redwood* – No updates.
- *Renville* – Five to six 1 MW sites to approve for solar
- *Rock* – Solar project
- *Wantonwan* – Most people are for the big wind projects

**SW CERT:**

Staff continue to work on electric vehicle education outreach. Staff is currently contacting all the utilities in the region to see what they are doing from EV programming (if anything).

**OTHER BUSINESS AND REPORTS:**

Summit Carbon Solutions: After a brief discussion, commissioners plan to wait and see what happens with this project. No action at this time.

Launch of Midcontinent Communities Alliance for Decarbonization: This group brings together stakeholders from cities, counties, and states with ambitious clean energy goals along with groups like the RMEB that benefit from more renewable energy projects. The idea is to get MISO to notice the

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needs from local government entities to improve the transmission infrastructure. As the group moves forward, it hope to have clear action items that everyone can implement to lobby for change.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Commission John Tuma with the PUC asked if the RMEB would be interested in a special meeting on transmission constraints. Commissioners were in favor and asked staff and Metz to make the plans for that meeting. They recommended that we avoid Tuesdays and look at the last week of April as a time that would likely work the best for everyone. The morning of April 29<sup>th</sup> was mentioned as the best date/time to schedule a meeting.

**NEXT MEETING** – May 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 in 2022** – July 25, September 26, November 28.

Possible tour: Marmen – wind tower manufacturing in Brandon, SD – maybe with a stop at EROS Center in Sioux Falls.

**FUTURE TOPICS / GUESTS:** None at this time.

Chair Appel adjourned the meeting at 2:55 PM.

Minutes prepared by Jason Walker, Development Planner at SRDC

Reviewed by:

Secretary

Approved by:

Chairman