

**RURAL MN ENERGY BOARD MEETING**  
**MONDAY March 28, 2016, 1:00 p.m.**  
**CRD Office, Slayton, MN**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Blue Earth County ... Will Purvis	Mower County..... Tim Gabrielson
Brown County..... Dennis Potter	Murray County ..... Gerald Magnus
Cottonwood Co .....Tom Appel	Nobles County ..... Gene Metz
Faribault County ..... Tom Warmka	Pipestone County ... Dan Wildermuth
Freeborn County ..... Glen Mathiason	Redwood County ... Sharon Hollatz
Jackson County..... David Henkels	Renville County ..... Bob Fox
Lincoln County.....Mic VanDeVere	Rock County..... Ken Hoime
Lyon County ..... Steve Ritter	Sibley County..... Gary Kruggel
Martin County ..... Steve Flohrs	Watonwan County . Scott Sanders

**ALSO PRESENT:** Paul Pierson (USDA – RD), Scott Knutson (Rural Development - Marshall), Robin Weis (SRDC), and Annette Fiedler (SRDC – RMEB staff).

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chairman Mathiason.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chairman Mathiason asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Chairman Mathiason asked everyone present to introduce themselves.

**AGENDA:**

**M/S/P:** Warmka, VanDeVere to approve the agenda as presented.

**MINUTES:**

**M/S/P:** Sanders, Hoime to approve the Minutes with one correction.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Treasurer Henkels reviewed the financial report, as of February 2016, after pending bills, there will be \$152,243.59; 17 of the 18 counties have submitted their dues. The following bills will be submitted for board review and approval. Commissioner Metz legislative meeting in the cities \$297.06; SRDC January 2016 \$1,595; SRDC February \$245; SRDC PACE January \$637; SRDC PACE February \$432; SRDC PACE Outreach January \$1,520; PACE Outreach February \$2,160; Fryberger, Buchanan, Smith & Frederick for January 2016 \$801.15.

**M/S/P:** Henkels, Gabrielson to approve the financial report and payment of bills.

**RMEB SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Executive Committee:** Chairman Mathiason discussed with the Energy Board, should there be per diem for conference call meetings? How do other counties address this? Commissioners discussed that within their own counties no per diem is provided for the conference calls. Currently no PACE Committee Members have submitted per diem for conference calls and this practice should continue.

Earlier this month the Rural Minnesota Energy Board was apprised of a change in the energy auditor qualification. The Executive Committee was asked if they would approve the change in the qualifications prior to the Energy Board meeting.

**M/S/P:** Fox, Wildermuth to ratify the Energy Auditor qualification.

**PACE:** Weis reported that PACE loan 8 and PACE loan 9 in Blue Earth and Redwood County, have been approved. She is working with the Department of Commerce to modify the contract that will allow administrative costs under an interest earned; as well as new construction to be eligible for a stand-alone project. She reported that there were 3 non-profits that have been referred to the SW CERT Accelerator to assist with the energy audit costs. Staff has submitted to USDA a grant application to assist paying up to 75% or \$750 of energy audits. It is the recommendation of the PACE Subcommittee to utilize the existing PACE Outreach funds that the Energy Board is contributing to the PACE program as match to the USDA grant. The grant application which was submitted by the SRDC was for \$70,060. The match was \$23,353. Approval was requested from the Energy Board to support the USDA application and use of RMEB PACE Outreach funds for the match.

**M/S/P:** Warmka, Purvis to approve support of the USDA application and use of the RMEB PACE Outreach funds for match to the application.

Discussion: Weis indicated that staff will be working to apply for numbers needed for future applications so that they would not to go through the SRDC Commission. Pierson indicated that USDA also does outreach for potential PACE projects as well as REAP projects.

**Tour Committee:** Commissioner Ritter indicated that the Solid Waste Commission and RMEB may consider having a meeting in Redwood Falls to tour the Redwood/Renville waste facility as well as the solar projects east of Marshall and near Tracy. In order for the solar projects to be toured it would need to be later in the year while construction is underway. It is suggested that the September 26<sup>th</sup> time frame be utilized for a tour.

**Legislative Committee:** Commissioner Metz has been working with the Lobbyist and is monitoring the legislation this session to make sure nothing crops up unexpectedly during this short and fast session. Fox reported there may be a bill similar to Pipelines where Revenue sets the taxes, and expects the county to pay the taxes. Discussion included permitting of the projects should include a 5-10 year plan without litigation, instead of being settled in tax court.

**Member Updates on Energy projects and issues:**

- Faribault Co – Developer – Gentek 200 MW wind; also developers are looking to develop solar in the county.
- Rock – Gevo had a fire last week, and is currently shut down; it is anticipated they will rebuild. Lewis and Clark Water ribbon cutting was in the Luverne area, the project still needs to be built to Worthington; MNWind – Bankruptcy was discussed.
- Jackson – Odell windfarm, ITC Transmission lines
- Renville – All communities are Xcel, and have had presentations on Community Solar Gardens; Novell Energy has also been in the area.
- Cottonwood – Odell wind farm construction
- Nobles – 150 to 200 MW Wind Nobles 2, looks like 2018 permitting.
- Lyon 200 MW in 2017 100 towers; 2019 Geronimo; ADM is looking at producing power for themselves – exemptions would be needed.
- Watonwan – Community Solar farm at Butterfield
- Pipestone – Solar Ordinance – Drainage issue with a project.
- Murray – Line Loss Pro and Murray County Hospital report. Metz indicated he would speak to the Coop to see if they might be interest in doing a test on the devices for validation; also discussed if Fritz with CERT might work with it.
- Sibley – several 40kw solar projects; \$45 million ethanol plant upgrades What is the rent / lease for land for solar – comments were \$500/acre for 30 years; also have heard \$750 – 1200 per acre.
- Blue Earth Co Vintage Dam \$2.4 million in bonding sun Edison long term agreement at a fixed rate of \$0.115 kWhr, a savings of \$1.2 million over 25 years.
- Mower Co. Pleasant Valley farm is done and running.
- Other discussions: Is Emmetsburg Energy running; Discussion of the value of older turbines / maintenance costs; Low Frequency noise from turbines? How is the production tax used, discussion of roads and funding.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

USDA provided a handout of all the USDA Programs and discussed each of the programs.

**SW CERT:** Fiedler reported that Sleepy Eye looks to be moving forward with a community solar project, there is interest in New Ulm for solar on the civic center. Change in the SW CERT Roles and responsibilities document to remove SWIF as a permanent member and replace with the U of MN SW SDP Energy Committee members.

**M/S/P:** VanDeVere, Metz to approve the change in the SW CERT Roles and responsibilities.

**PRESENTATION. Solar Considerations for Planning and Zoning –** Annette Fiedler (20 minutes). If a county would like Fiedler to give the presentation, they should connect with her.

**MEETING DATES 2016:** Chairman Mathiason referred the Board to the meeting dates in 2016 of May 23<sup>rd</sup>, July 25<sup>th</sup>, September 26<sup>th</sup> and November 28<sup>th</sup>.

**ADJOURN:**

**M/S/P:** Ritter, Henkels to adjourn the meeting at 2:52 pm.

Minutes Prepared By Annette Fiedler, Staff.



Minutes Reviewed By  
Energy Board Secretary



Minutes Approved By  
Energy Board Chairperson