

RURAL MN ENERGY BOARD MEETING
MONDAY July 27, 2015, 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 County...	Tom Appel	Nobles County	Absent
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.....	excused
Martin County	Steve Flohrs	Watonwan County ...	Scott Sanders

ALSO PRESENT: Connie Schmoll (Kandiyohi County Economic Development), Michael Franklin (Clean Energy Economy MN), Joe Sullivan (Center for Energy & Environment), Chris Kunkle (Wind On The Wires), Duane Hebert (Novel Energy Solutions), Robin Weis (Staff), Annette Fiedler (Staff).

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Fiedler drew Board attention to the Home Energy Guide book for each of the members. Fiedler acknowledged Commission Flohrs and thanked him for agreeing to deliver the Sherburn GreenStep City award.

INTRODUCTIONS: Chairman Purvis asked everyone present to introduce themselves.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: none.

M/S/P Ritter, Fox to approve the agenda.

MINUTES:

M/S/P Warmka, Hoyme to approve the Minutes of May 18, 2015

FINANCIAL REPORT: Treasurer Henkels gave the financial report and presented the following bills: SRDC May and June \$1090 & \$250; and SRDC PACE \$1168 & June \$560; and \$300 for Audit cost. See financial report for SRDC fiduciary6 net position and schedule of findings and questioned costs. Treasurer Henkels has a full copy of the SRDC audit report

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

RMEB SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Executive Committee: Fiedler reported that she forgot to include the setting of the CY 2016 dues at the May meeting. The Executive Committee agreed via electric communication to set the dues at \$1000, the same as CY 2015 and this information was sent out to the counties so they could include the RMEB dues in their budgeting process.

M/S/P Wildermuth, Potter to ratify the Executive Committee decision of setting the CY 2015 dues at \$1000

PACE: Robin Weis staff, reported on the 4 funded projects; 4 more energy audits have been completed and it is anticipated that more applications will be submitted. The PACE Now website now has updated RMEB PACE. In 2016, PACE Now will have a symposium on PACE – details are currently unknown. The McKnight outreach grant funds have been expended. The grant was to go through the end of December 2015. A funding request for January McKnight funding has been submitted. Commissioners Magnus, Purvis, Sanders, and Fox proposed continued outreach funded with RMEB funds because it does not make sense to drop outreach as we now have momentum and interest in submitting applications.

M/S/P Fox, Sanders to approve amending the CY 2015 budget to use \$18,980 toward PACE outreach through the end of December 2015.

Discussion: This would be approximately 8 hours per week, \$500 printing, \$200 per week travel)

Tour Committee: *(no report)*

Legislative Committee: The Legislative committee is currently Metz (chair), Magnus, Warmka, and Flohrs. Committee members indicated they had met and discussed legislative issues and direction for the 2015-16 session. The committee discussed the need to renew a contract with Walli; that a significant amount of work is expected to be done before the session; that the Tax bill is expected to be brought forward again; and to keep expenses down look for additional partners, such as AMC.

Tax Bill. Discussion on Senator Skoe's bill that included a production tax for all energy generation facilities which significantly changes the wind and solar production tax and its benefits to counties. All members are asked to connect with their legislators regarding keeping the production tax for both solar and wind in place and to not have it connected with levy limits. Benefits include: there is no state dollars with the production tax (revenue neutral), and counties use the funds for things such as road and bridge repair. Wind on the Wires representative also indicated that they were opposed to the bill introduced by Senator Skoe and they could partner with the RMEB.

M/S/P Gabrielson, Magnus to amend the CY 2015 Budget, Legislative line from \$7200 to \$10,000.

M/S/P Fox, Mathiason to direct the Legislative committee and staff to develop and submit a resolution to the AMC Policy committee.

Minnesota Clean Energy Economy: Michael Franklin, Joe Sullivan, Chris Kunkle presented on Clean Energy and Job Creation – Economic Development in Minnesota. They discussed that the Clean Power Plan (CPP) is already happening. They provided information about energy efficiency reducing costs for

Minnesotans, as well as an increase in job growth in the renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors. The presenters encouraged the RMEB to tell their story on the benefits to their counties of renewable energy.

A Commissioner asked why installation of geothermal increases property evaluation, penalizing people for being more energy efficient. There is a formula built in for an automatic increase. Is solar treated the same way?

Novel Energy Solutions. Duane Hebert provided a presentation about community Solar Gardens in the Xcel Energy Territory. Xcel Energy is in 14 of the RMEB Counties where there is an opportunity for Xcel customers to participate in Community Solar Gardens, if there is one located in the same county or adjacent county.

Member Updates on Energy projects and issues

- Sibley County – Fiedler reported that the windfarm was approved by PUC, but people outside of the county have stopped it from moving forward. Commissioner Kruggel asked Fiedler to connect with the developer.
- Brown County had two wind farms permitted for construction – one has asked the PUC for an extension of the permit; the second recently had the permit rescinded because there was no forward action on it.
- Cottonwood, Watonwan, Martin, Jackson – the Odell windfarm is under construction.
- Faribault County reported there is one – windfarm east of Blue earth.
- Lyon County reported 55 MW solar being permitted by PUC about 500 acre, 23 MW solar permitted by county north of Tracy on 220 acres.

SW CERT

- Fiedler reported on the July 9th community solar workshop in Pelican Rapids. The utilities met in the morning and discussed how the community solar garden projects were started in their utility; the afternoon session was for the public and included a tour of the solar garden.
- CERT Campaigns gas station canopy with LED lighting continues; Renewable Energy for Greater Minnesota is a new program and CERT staff is providing assistance to the Ag sector and rural businesses (REAP).

- Seed grants for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects will have an RFP soon. There will be \$20,000 for projects to be used for labor.

OTHER BUSINESS AND REPORTS: none

NEW BUSINESS: none

MEETING DATES: September 28, November 23.

ADJOURN:

M/S/P Magnus, Ritter to adjourn the meeting at 3:00 pm.

Minutes Prepared By Annette Fiedler, Staff.



Minutes Reviewed By
Energy Board Secretary



Minutes Approved By
Energy Board Chairperson