

**RURAL MN ENERGY BOARD MEETING**  
**MONDAY November 28, 2016 1:00 p.m.**  
**CRD, 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 ..... Rodney Stensrud	Sibley County.....Gary Kruggel
Martin County ..... Steve Flohrs	Watonwan County ..Scott Sanders

**ALSO PRESENT:** Annette Fiedler (SRDC – RMEB staff), Jean Christoffels (Murray County ZA), Paul Pierson (USDA), Chris Kunkle (WOW).

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

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chairman Mathiason led the Pledge.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** none

**AGENDA:** One change was noted to the agenda to add discussion of de-commissioning and re-powering of wind turbines.

**M/S/P:** Wildermuth, Flohrs to approve the amended agenda.

**MINUTES:**

**M/S/P:** Purvis, Gabrielson to approve the minutes of July 25<sup>th</sup> and September 12<sup>th</sup>.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Treasurer Henkels reviewed the financial report provided to the commissioners. After payment of bills pending, there will be \$125,665.38 in funds available.

**M/S/P:** Hoime, VanDeVere to approve the finance report and payment of the following bills: SRDC general and finance (September & Oct 1040.38 & \$295; SRDC PACE Sept & Oct \$360 & \$928.22; PACE outreach Sept and Oct \$1192.64 & 1600; Fryberger \$2158.75

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**PACE:** (Property Assessed Clean Energy)- Purvis reported that there has been 13 energy audits assistance projects completed; Weis has been doing outreach and she has done 25 visits and has 2 presentations coming up. Outreach has also included getting PACE on utility websites. There have been 11 PACE loans closed. There are 3 more that are being reviewed and are pending. Before the approval of the loan on November 28th, there was \$530,656.63 of available PACE loans.

Discussion involved the amount of funds the RMEB has put towards outreach and administration for the loan dollars. In January, Jay Trusty plans to come to the Energy Board for a work session focused on where the Energy Board would like to go from here.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:** Chairman Mathiason indicated that the Executive Committee had met via phone to review the draft CY 2017 budget. He requested Fiedler to review the draft budget as presented.

Discussion involved concern of the depleting revenues. PACE is a large part of that. Commissioners discussed that the PACE program should be self-sufficient. Another area of expense has been in the general fund the lobbyist. Pierson indicated that often there is a 2 year deferral on payment of the interest on loan dollars, has this been looked into. Commissioners also indicated that there are other programs that act as a PACE financing such as the City of Marshall Municipal Utilities, Xcel Energy territory has something similar, as well as the St. Paul Port Authority.

**M/S/P:** Gabrielson, Wildermuth to approve the draft CY 2017 budget as presented.

**CONTRACT:** The contract for CY 2017 was reviewed as well as the changes in hourly amounts.

**M/S/P:** Magnus, Fox to approve the CY 2017 contract with the SRDC as presented.

**TOUR COMMITTEE:** - No report.

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:** Committee Chairman Metz indicated that he has been in communication with Sam Richie at Fryberger's office. He will be sending the committee assignments to Fiedler to send out to the Energy Board members. Chris Kunkle from WOW, provided information on their view of the upcoming legislative session. WOW believes that

Minnesota has a strong renewable energy standard, that the Clean Power Plan may not impact Minnesota. One area that needs reform is, it is easier to build a wind farm in Iowa and North Dakota than it is in Minnesota due to regulations. Production tax does have an impact and it seems to be good for both wind and solar. There is however a hodgepodge of revenues from energy sources and that may move forward again this year.

Repowering of wind: – This will improve efficiencies, the retrofits new blades software on the existing for repowering which would be the take down and build as new turbines. It will be a PUC & DOC issue as well as an issue for the counties. WOW is supporting the

PUC and holding a workshop for what is happening; new site permits, environmental permits, setbacks, improvements, the PPA what is eligible.

Discussion involved repower the definition, delegated counties, the 5 foot removal of concrete, onsite demo, the MISO Queue.

Also discussed was noise per pollution from turbines. Question was what happens with the tax revenue on farms that are idle? One of the Energy Board counties is experiencing one of the wind farms who has not been generating revenue.

Also discussed was the federal tax credit. If that goes away, is it still feasible to build wind farms? For the PTC, it is still a large factor in the financing of wind farms. Kunkle was asked what the time frame is for when they may be looking at during repowering of the older wind farms. The talk has begun. It is possible that the PTC is going to be phasing down by the end of 2016, that there may be some starting of repowering by 2017.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:** Warmka will be Chair, Potter and Appel will be members of the committee and will be meeting at AMC to determine the slate of officers for Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.

**MEMBER UPDATES:** Updates on Energy projects and issues and indicate if they have heard about any repowering / decommissioning of wind farms.

- Rock: Broadband is in.
- Jackson: Odell is up and running, Geronimo 6 towers
- Lyon: Solar farm is on line, 60' setback from road, there was push back from two neighboring farmers.
- Sibley: Gibbon has a solar ordinance putting up a 40 kW solar. Do solar panels have hazardous waste? Lyon Co indicated no.
- Cottonwood: Odell up and running, NW Cottonwood/NE Murray 200 MW wind farm moving forward
- Watonwan: Butterfield – is in Xcel Energy and is putting in a solar farm
- Mower: Working on solar plan; there are about /2 dozen farmers with 2 MW solar-most use the energy on site, and sell a little they don't use.
- Redwood: Zoning 3 solar gardens being sited
- Martin Co: Powerline, small solar gardens
- Renville: Small solar systems at hog facilities put in by Novel; Landowner meetings
- Faribault: 45 acre solar garden in / for an Xcel energy community
- Brown: no solar; working on the wind and solar ordinance
- Blue Earth: Dam Improvement \$1.2 million from a \$2.4 million DNR grant
- Pipestone: Passed a solar ordinance
- Lincoln: solar on hog farms; 3 200 MW wind projects are moving forward one each scheduled in 2017, 2018, and 2019
- Nobles: two-250 MW projects – met towers are up, construction scheduled for 2018. Solar ordinance – if not attached to building, a CUP is needed. For wind farms, they are to decommission after 1 year of non-operation then remove 4 feet down.
- Murray : solar development in the county location not yet known; wind in NE part of county

- Freeborn: Proposed project – status unknown.
- USDA: Pierson indicated that the USDA has a guaranteed loan of \$15 million in the REAP program for repowering.
- Netty indicated she would take a look at the MISO queue for wind and solar projects and let the commissioner know what is moving forward.

**SW CERT:**

- Seed grants: funding for labor to replace seven 1950's vintage windows at the Avoca community Center has been approved.
- Recognition of outgoing RMEB Steering Committee members and discuss discuss new members. Thank you to David Henkels and Ken Hoime; a proposed new at large member biography was reviewed.

**M/S/P:** VanDeVere, Gabrielson to approve the new SW CERT Steering Committee member Tracey Haberman.

**RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING RMEB MEMBERS:** Commissioners Hoime, Hollatz, Henkels, Boyenga and Evers were recognized for their appreciation of their participation and membership on the RMEB.

**OTHER BUSINESS AND REPORTS:**

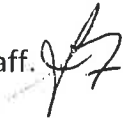
**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**2017 MEETING DATES:** The following meeting dates were reviewed; January 23; March 27; May 22; July 24; September 25; November 27. The two items for the January meeting will be PACE and a recap or history of the RMEB.

**ADJOURN:**

**M/S/P:** Henkels, Hoime to adjourn the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Minutes Prepared By Annette Fiedler, Staff.



Minutes Reviewed By  
Energy Board ~~Secretary~~ Vice Chair



Minutes Approved By  
Energy Board Chairperson

