

MINUTES

RURAL MN ENERGY BOARD MEETING

MONDAY September 10, 2012 following CAPx2020 tour (approx. 1:00 pm)

CRD, SLAYTON, MN

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Blue Earth County.....	Will Purvis	Martin County	excused
Brown County	Dennis Potter	Mower County.....	excused
.....	Jim Berg	Murray County	Kevin Vickerman
Cottonwood County	John Oletjenbruns	Gerald Magnus
Faribault County	Tom Warmka	Nobles County	absent
.....	Greg Young	Pipestone County	excused
Freeborn County.....	excused	Redwood County ...	John Schueller
Jackson County.....	excused	Renville County.....	Bob Fox
Lincoln County	Larry Hansen	John Stahl
.....	Don Evers	Rock County	Ken Hoime
Lyon County	Steve Ritter	Sibley County	Jim Nytes
.....	Rick Anderson	Watonwan County	Scott Sanders
.....	Yellow Medicine Co		absent

ALSO PRESENT: Annette Bair, Staff.

CALL TO ORDER : The meeting was called to order at 1:20 p.m. by Chair Warmka.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chair Warmka asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: One addition was made to the agenda under new business to address payment of the buses and food for the CAPX2020 tour.

M/S/P Ritter, D Potter to approve the agenda as amended.

MINUTES:

M/S/P Fox, Ritter to approve the Minutes of July 23, 2012 as presented.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer Hansen referred the Commissioners to the finance handout and the bills submitted.

M/S/P Hansen, Hoime to approve the financial report and payment of the following bills:

- SRDC \$100 (July)
- SRDC \$1,340 (August)

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Legislative Committee. Chairman Warmka reviewed the letter from Kevin Walli regarding the levy limit and production tax. In the 19 counties, there is currently one legislator on the tax committee (Senator Julie Rosen). Walli has suggested the RMEB members speak with their legislators and suggest they want to consider requesting assignment to the Tax Committees in order to look after the concerns of the rural Minnesota.

Chairman Warmka reviewed the background of the levy limit in relation to the production tax. Briefly, the production tax was considered as part of the levy when levy limits were imposed. It significantly affects counties who have wind power developed. An example of the impact is the production tax collected in Murray County is \$1 million and the levy is at \$5 million.

The Board has employed a lobbyist for the past two years who is in St Paul and is able to monitor the legislative issues. The RMEB has set up a process so they can react quickly to legislative issues, rather than waiting two months for a meeting.

Commissioners discussed the possibility of broadening the scope of the agreement with Walli. There are other issues, such as powerlines, solar, methane, biofuels, and other renewable energy technologies. An example would be the Sibley County landfill produces methane that supplies 30% of Gaylord's electricity.

The Legislative committee was tasked with outlining how the legislative part of the agenda would run in order to help explain legislative issues. Commissioner were asked to individually invite and encourage the legislators (both house and senate) to come to the November 26th meeting in Slayton. The legislative session will be first on the agenda at 1 pm. The legislators may stay for the entire meeting or could leave after the legislative issues have been discussed.

MEMBER UPDATES ON ENERGY PROJECTS AND ISSUES

- Faribault: Big blue is scheduled to begin erecting towers on September 24th and will be completed before the end of the year.
- Sibley County: There is no PPA so the windfarm cannot move forward.
- Blue Earth County: Not a good year for hydro power. There is some experimentation with a methane digester at a hog barn.
- Rock County: Gevo is producing Isobutanol, Geronimo Wind project is erecting wind turbines and anticipates completion by December 6th – the ownership has also been transferred to another company, New Vision feed mill – a \$15 million project will be using 1 million bushels.
- Murray County: Solar farm – the County Board has extended their permit, the project has been delayed because of delays in getting the title to the land.
- Renville County: there is an artesian well just south of the substation, and the CAPX2020 project is having difficulty with the test holes for poles in that area.
- Tour comments: Chairman Warmka expressed appreciation to Commission Fox and to Bair in setting up the arrangements for the CAPX2020 tour. The construction elements for the project are bringing a great deal of economic development for the counties along the line.

SW CERT UPDATE.

Two projects have been selected for Seed grant funding in the SW Region:

- Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership will be preparing manuals and holding demonstrations on energy and water conservation strategies for tenants and property managers at SWMHP properties. The SW CERT grant will assist the SWMHP in extending the energy and water conservation outreach to the community where the SWMHP has properties and planned demonstrations. The education and outreach activities will lead to increased water and conservation in the SW CERT area. (\$5,000)
- Incorporate a renewable energy module into the RADC website that will be accessible to residents, businesses, and ag producers. The information will include programming and resources that can assist in implementation of more energy efficiency practices. The focus would be on all utility providers in the 15 communities in the county with the goal of reducing energy use and assisting Redwood County in becoming energy independent. The website module is envisioned to be the “go-to-resource” for renewable energy, energy efficiency, and education for ag producers, small businesses, manufactures and residents. (\$5,000)

A solar tour is being set up in relation to a n earlier seed grant for late October in the Marshall / Pipestone areas. CERT is also working with the Region 9 Renewable Energy Task Force to hold a Energy Summit in Mankato this fall.

The newest CERT Campaign is the Spray Valve and working with Niagara to offer a reduced cost to purchase the spray valve. These are used primarily in commercial kitchens (nursing homes, restaurants, hospitals, schools, etc). It has been reported that the return on investment is about 2 months. There is both less water used and less energy to heat the water. Some of the utilities also have rebates that can also be used to further reduce the cost of the spray valve. Marshall Municipal Utilities offers the spray value at no cost to their commercial customers.

NEW BUSINESS. Tour expenses.

M/S/P Vickerman, Hansen to reimburse Commission Fox for the refreshment and restaurant costs involved with the tour and meal following the tour.

M/S/P Oeltjenbruns, D Potter to pay Renville County for the van and bus transportation used for the CAPX2020 tour.

Discussion. These expenses were approved in advance of receiving the bills to avoid a 2 month delay in reimbursement.

NEXT MEETING DATES. The next meeting is scheduled for November 26th and will include Legislative discussion with legislators, revisiting 2013 dues, and the development of the 2013 draft budget. The Executive committee will meet at noon at the Pizza Ranch prior to the RMEB meeting.

The following dates were tentatively approved for 2013: January 28, March 25, June 3, July 22, September 23, and November 25.

Chairman Warmka adjourned the meeting at 2:10 pm.

Minutes Prepared By Annette Bair, Staff.

Minutes Reviewed By:


Energy Board Secretary

Minutes Approved By:


Energy Board Chairperson