

RURAL MN ENERGY BOARD MEETING
MONDAY August 25, 2014
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...	John Oeltjenbruns	Nobles County.....	Gene Metz
Faribault County	Excused	Pipestone County.....	William Johnson
Freeborn County.....	Glen Mathiason	Redwood County	John Schueller
Jackson County.	Dave Henkels	Renville County	Bob Fox
Lincoln County	Larry Hanson	Rock County.....	Ken Hoime
Lyon County	Steve Ritter	Sibley County	Jim Nytes
Martin County	Steve Flohrs	Watonwan County	Excused

ALSO PRESENT: Annette Bair (SRDC) and Dan Juhl on the phone for Legislative discussion, Betsy Herding for PACE discussion.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None

INTRODUCTIONS: Chairman Purvis asked everyone present to introduce themselves.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: Chairman Purvis identified setting of the dues to be added under the Financial report.

M/S/P Gabrielson, Flohrs to approve the agenda as amended.

MINUTES:

M/S/P Fox, Magnus to approve the Minutes of June 2nd as presented.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Treasurer Henkels reviewed the Financial report and bills for payment.

M/S/P Hoime, Ritter to approve the financial report and payment of \$2,434 MCIT Bill in January.

M/S/P Schueller, Oetjenbruns to approve the payment of the following bills: SRDC \$190 (May) and \$1165 (June), PACE \$3390 (Dec. 1, 2013 to Aug. 25, 2014), and \$11 (Commissioner Magnus – tour expenses) as presented.

M/S/P Henkels, Ritter to set the calendar year 2015 dues at \$1000 per county.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Legislative Committee: Committee Chair Metz asked Dan Juhl (via phone) to provide his insight on renewable energy and legislative activity. Juhl indicated that current Minnesota Legislative leadership is in favor of using a combination of solar and wind technology to firm the energy with a little storage. Wind and solar would work for communities in rural Minnesota in reducing need for outside energy as well as reducing peak load. There is a need to watch November election which have the potential to change the political climate.

Juhl indicated that 150,000 MW of energy from coal plants will be taken off line between 2014-2018; that energy needs to be replaced. Discussed was a long term energy future, abundance of natural resources in rural MN (solar / wind) and how the rural economy can benefit from the use of wind/solar. Lithium phosphate batteries have deep cycle can be charge 4000 times to bring back to 70% life – and after 20-25 years can be completely recycled. There is a need to concentrate on peak demand power technology. Lobbyist discussion, the RMEB may want to consider an RFP.

Certified Energy Managers for PACE. Current statute requires Dept of Commerce to approve the energy auditors for PACE. There may be some corrections to statute to revise this requirement.

PACE: (Property Assessed Clean Energy) Betsy Herding reported that the first PACE project was approved – Blue Line in Worthington. The total project cost was \$74,000 and will realize a \$14,000 energy saving per year. Other projects are coming forward. There has been an audit completed in Lyon County and it is anticipated it will be paired with the SRDC's RLF for gap financing and PACE. A multi-unit housing in Cottonwood County is also interested in PACE. Herding will be a speaker in Austin for a group of associated energy services professionals regarding PACE in September.

CERT has paired one of their campaigns – LED Canopy Lighting for service stations with PACE. Bair distributed the flyers and requested the Board to stop at their local service stations and share with the owner / manager. Then let Bair know who and where they made contacts.

Finally, as PACE projects come to the PACE subcommittee, the RMEB was asked how they would like the information. It was decided that as the PACE projects come forward, and e-mail update would be appreciated.

Tour Committee: Commissioner Ritter indicated that the June 2 tour was well worth his time. RMEB members made suggestions for tours:

- Emmetsburg – Poet, now that it is up and running. BTW – there is an open house coming up – it was thought in September.
- See a geothermal site where they have or are drilling for geothermal. Another geothermal suggestion was visit Slayton International and ask Russ winter how it is working for them.
- Visit Deer Creek Station again now that CAPX2020 is hooked up to it.
- Fracking – natural gas in the Winona area.

Member Updates on Energy Projects and Issues:

- Schueller reported on the August 20th ribbon cutting at Highwater Ethanol and butamax. This \$12 million expansion uses an oil extraction process to make Isobutanol.
- Henkels reported on the Odell wind farm in Jackson, Martin, Watonwan and Cottonwood counties. And the 9.5 mile 115 kw transmission line. Geronimo Wind will also have a project in the south part of Jackson county
- Purvis reported on the Rapidan dam; received \$2.1 million to refurbish the dam.
- Johnson reported that Pipestone County has okayed the final bid for the hospital (\$23.3 million) and has received an M1 bond rating. Both the city and county have rejected Suzlon's request for tax abatement.
- Nytes reported that the wind farm in the county does not look as though it will go through. A Community Solar Project in Winthrop was supposed to have a meeting soon- but that has been delayed.
- Hoime reported that there was \$1.5 million in damage to the short line railroad in Nobles and Rock Counties; FEMA will be reimbursing to the two counties.

SW CERT:

Bair referred the board to the pages 2 - 4 on the agenda which provided information on two new perspective SW CERT Steering Committee Members.

M/S/P Schueller, Metz to approve Nan Larson and Miron Carey to serve of the SW CERT Steering Committee.

Bair then reviewed CERT Campaigns and Initiatives – gas station canopies, LED Lighting for turkey barns, Right Light Guide, GESP, B3 database, GreenStep City; and the status of the 5 projects moving forward:

- PACE – reported by Betsy, and with the gas station canopy campaign
- Solar at pools – Met with U of M sustainable development partnership and solar skies in Alexandria – their system is not right for seasonal outdoor pools. We will continue to look at options.
- School – Drew assisted with the Westbrook Walnut Grove YES! team to input the B3 database information for the city. We are looking at working with some of the schools to assist communities with inputting the B3 database information as well as GreenStep City reporting.
- Energy on the farm – turkey lighting campaign- and will be sharing the PACE information to the zoning administrators and other county staff that work with the farmers.
- Community solar – nothing at this time

The status of Seed grants is:

- Slayton LED Street lights are installed
- Status of the Lynd and Arco Street lights – unknown, Tyler are installed.
- Christ Lutheran Church window project is either completed or near completion.

Finally, the CERT Conference held every two years is scheduled for March 10th – 11th, 2015.

Next Meeting: The meeting schedule was discussed and it was determined that it was un-necessary to hold a September meeting; therefore the next meeting of the RMEB will be November 24.

ADJOURN:

M/S/P Nytes, Ritter to adjourn the meeting at 2:15 p.m.

Minutes Prepared By Annette Bair, Staff. *AB*



Minutes Reviewed By:
Energy Board Secretary



Minutes Approved By:
Energy Board Chairperson