

**MINUTES**  
**RURAL MN ENERGY BOARD MEETING**  
**MONDAY July 25, 2011, 9:30 A.M.**  
**CRD, SLAYTON, MN**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Blue Earth County..... Will Purvis            | Murray County.....Kevin Vickerman       |
| Cottonwood County... John Oletjenbruns        | Nobles County .....David Benson         |
| Faribault County ..... Tom Warmka, Greg Young | Pipestone County .....William Johnson   |
| Jackson County. .... Roger Ringkob            | Redwood County..... .....John Schueller |
| Lincoln County ..... Larry Hansen             | Renville County ..... Bob Fox           |
| Lyon ..... Rodney Stensrud                    | Rock County ..... Excused               |
| Martin County..... Jack Potter                | Watonwan County ..... Scott Sanders     |
| Mower County ..... Absent                     | Yellow Medicine Co ... Greg Renneke     |

**ALSO PRESENT:** Paul Pierson (USDA), Yvonne Simon (Center for rural Policy and Development), Amy Hoglin (Murray County), Cheryl Glaeser (SW Initiative Foundation), Jeff Vetsch (CERT), Paul White (PRC), Jean Christoffels (Murray County), John Shepard (SRDC), Phil Z\_\_\_ (Green Energy Products), Eric Anderson (PRC), Randy Fordice (CAPX2020/GRE), Annette Bair (staff).

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ANNOUCEMENTS:** None

**AGENDA:** A report by Cheryl Glaeser, Southwest Initiative Foundation was added to the agenda.

**M/S/P** Fox, Vickerman to approve the amended agenda.

**MINUTES**

**M/S/P** Stensrud, Vickerman to approve the minutes of May 23, 2011 as written.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Treasurer Hansen reviewed the RMEB general operating financial report and the bills submitted for payment. Bills are:

Commissioner Benson expenses \$269.10 (Legislative meetings in the Cities with Governors staff)

Commissioner Ringkob expenses \$176.97 (Legislative Breakfast)

May SRDC Staff \$1380

June SRDC staff \$1600

Fryberger Law Firm (Kevin Walli) \$2104.60 (Lobbyist)

Ludolph Bus Service \$1041 (June bus tour to Emmetsburg, IA)

Slayton Bakery \$22.50 (Emmetsburg, Iowa bus tour)

Legislative breakfast \$357 (shared expenses of breakfast with SRDC)

**M/S/P** Purvis, Potter to approve the financial report and payment of bills identified above.

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee will be meeting prior to the September RMEB meeting to review the RMEB Policies.

**Legislative Committee.** Committee Chair Benson reported on work leading up to the special session and results of the special session. This year, no levy limits were enacted, so the production tax is temporarily safe. There is need to continue to work on it. Another related issue is the 40% ceiling on the production tax. Developer Paul White indicated it would be appropriate to eliminate the ceiling on the production tax and did not see the wind industry objecting to that. It was recommended that Kevin Walli be scheduled on a call with the Energy Board at the September 26 meeting to discuss Legislative plans.

Commissioners discussed other Counties who may be interested in joining the RMEB, especially as wind projects are .

**Ecos Energy Solar Energy Presentation.** Chris Little from Ecos Energy presented on the proposed 2 MW solar farm at Slayton and the viability of solar in Minnesota. A copy of his presentation is posted on the RMEB website. All of the energy generated from the Slayton project will go into the distribution system and used in the Slayton area (the hospital uses a significant amount of power). Two-thirds of the project is funded through grants – which at this time, make the project viable.

The prices for solar power continue to decrease as improvements to the technology continue. Prices have decreased 3-5% over last year's prices. The RMEB may visit the solar site when it is in operation.

**Zoning for Solar Farms.** Jean Christoffels, Murray County Zoning Administrator presented on the process Murray County followed in updating their ordinance to address solar power projects in the County. A copy of her presentation will be posted on the RMEB Website. The county began with research on solar energy. Stearns County has a solar farm and had revised their ordinance to reflect solar power. After research and viewing the solar farm, the County began the process to revise their Renewable Energy Ordinance. The ordinance is posted on the Murray county website: <http://murray-countymn.com/mc/pdfs/RenewableEnergyOrdinance.pdf>

**Member Updates:**

- Warmka asked what other counties do with the lines that go from the turbines to the system. Most counties have them buried when they are 34.5 kV and smaller, the larger are overhead due to costs. Counties regulate lines less than 10 miles in length and the state regulates longer distances.
- Fox reported on NACo
- Glaeser reported on the Bio Business alliance – Industry leaders for bio chemical production (ethanol, biodiesel). Involvement has included GEVO, Cargil, etc. They SW Initiative Foundation is setting up meeting in august and September – Windom and Redwood or Granite Falls for how we get to the next step. The Southern and WC Initiative Foundations will also be holding meetings. She also reported on the expansion of YES! this coming year which is two-fold. Expanding into southeast through partnership with Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center and Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation. Expanding further in southwest, west central and central Minnesota through Prairie Woods ELC and SWIF with funding in part by LCCMR. The YES teams have been proving to provide significant value to both their schools and the community, as well as learning leadership skills. She indicated that there is a lack of YES teams in SW MN, such as in Pipestone, Murray and Rock counties.
- Faribault Co – Big Blue is not moving forward very fast.
- Lincoln: Community Wind North recently has an open house and the project is up and running
- Jackson – The Lakefield wind project continues construction

- Pipestone – wind project for the sheriff's office and will be learning more about the project on the Rock / Pipestone border. The July 1 storm did a lot of damage to the turbines in the Ruthton area.
- Blue Earth County, it has been a good year for the hydro facility, the Rapidan dam is operating at full capacity
- Renville County, one of the wind farms got hit hard with blades twisted.
- Redwood County – re-looking at their wind ordinance for the 39.5 kV to become a conditional use. They are finding turbines are being placed in their county and power sold – not used locally. *Muskego Co.*
- Nobles – enXco recently had an open house.
- USDA – REAP - 34 projects were awarded, 17 in SW Minnesota, 2 geothermal and the remainder were grain dryers.
- CERT – Kandiyohi Co, the Power Coop, and Willmar Muni are working on a financial structure of 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 ownership for a 300 kW solar system that will have a 103% payback in 1-3 years. If it works they hope to have it replicated.
- PRC – 25 MW wind farm completed in June and part of MN wind share. They have also constructed an operation and maintenance facility at the site and can take on maintenance of the one and two projects.

**CAPX2020 – Randy Fordice** - General update and request support of a resolution on the Brookings County-Hampton project to receive the Multi-Value Project designation from the Midwest ISO. Fordice will be sending a draft resolution on MVP for the Board consideration at the September meeting

**SW CERT update** Putting Green has been working on the EcoPreneur project, which sets up a business plan for a triple bottom line. Students will work with businesses and areas that will increase their sustainability. This was the last of the Seed Grant dollars (\$3500).

**Meeting Dates – 2011 meeting dates (4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of odd months): September 26, November 28**

## Adjourn

M/S/P Purvis, Oletjenbruns to adjourn the meeting at 11:15 am

Minutes Prepared By Annette Bair, Staff. *AB*

Minutes Reviewed By:

*Ken Heine*

Energy Board Secretary

Minutes Approved By:

*Tom Warming*

Energy Board Chairperson