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# Memo

**Date: 12/4/2024**

**To: ETAC**

**From: Carla Vita, Director Energy Transition**

## RE: Minutes

### Background

Attachment A has the submitted minutes for the August 21, 2024, ETAC meeting for ETAC Board consideration.

### Recommendation

Approve minutes.

Roll call vote.

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE**

**Attachment A**

**ENERGY TRANSITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**HYBRID OVER TEAMS AND PHYSICALLY AT THE**

**CITY OF COHASSET BASS BROOK COMMUNITY CENTER**

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2024**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The Energy Transition Advisory Committee met in Regular Session and ETAC Chair Tamara Lowney welcomed all in attendance and called the meeting to order at 11:00am at the City of Cohasset Bass Brook Community Center, Cohasset, MN. Roll call was taken.

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| **Representing** | **Name** | **Status** |
| **Voting** |  |  |
| Senate Majority Appointment | **Grant Hauschild** | **Absent** |
| Senate Minority Appointment | **Karin Housley** | **Present** |
| Speaker of the House Appointment | **Josiah Hill** | **Absent** |
| House Minority Appointment | **Shane Mekeland** | **Present** |
| Prairie Island Member | **Michael Childs Jr** | **Present** |
| Impacted Communities - County Representative #1 | **Tamara Lowney** | **Present** |
| Impacted Communities - Municipal Representative #1 | **Marshall Hallock** | **Absent** |
| Impacted Communities - County Representative #2 | **Gregg Felber** | **Present** |
| Impacted Communities - Municipal Representative #2 | **Mary McComber** | **Present** |
| Impacted Worker at Impacted Facility #1 | **Mike Hoppe** | **Present** |
| Impacted Worker at Impacted Facility #2 | **Kristin Renskers** | **Present** |
| Impacted Worker at Impacted Facility #3 | **Luke Lallemont** | **Present** |
| Impacted Worker Employed by Company under Contract | **Richard Sackett** | **Present** |
| Professional Economic Development or Workforce Retraining Experience Representative | **Abigail Wozniak** | **Present** |
| Utilities that Operate an impacted Facility #1 | **Trisha Duncan** | **Present** |
| Utilities that Operate an impacted Facility #2 | **Joshua Skelton** | **Present** |
| Nonprofit Organization with expertise and experience delivering energy efficiency and conservation programs | **Alyssa Eilers** | **Present** |
| Coalition of Utility Cities Representative | **Shane Zahrt** | **Present** |
| **Non-Voting** |  |  |
| Commissioner - Department of Employment and Economic Development (or Designee) | **Matt Varilek** | **Present** |
| Commissioner - Department of Commerce (or Designee) | **Sydnie Lieb** | **Present** |
| Commissioner - Department of Labor and Industry (or Designee) | **Jeremy Parker** | **Absent** |
| Commissioner - Department of Revenue (or Designee) | **Holly Soderbeck** | **Present** |
| Executive Secretary of the Public Utilities Commission (or Designee) | **William Seuffert** | **Present** |
| Commissioner - Pollution Control Agency (or Designee) | **Frank Kohlasch** | **Present** |
| Chancellor - Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (or Designee) | **Logan Schrader** | **Present** |
| Governor (or Designee) | **Nicauris Heredia Rosario** | **Absent** |

DEED Staff also present: Kevin McKinnon, Catalina Valencia, Mike McCrownsey and Carla Vita.

1. Welcome & Transition Community Details by Tamara Lowney, Itasca Economic Development Corporation.

Chair Lowney, President of the Itasca Economic Development Corporation (IEDC), provided a welcome. Her welcome covered work completed in Cohasset to assist with diversification of the economy. Items included trails and the Bass Brook Community Center. She educated that the community is working to create a downtown; a vision that they have had for a variety of years.

Lowney further educated that the IEDC was awarded a grant from the national Just Transition Fund. The grant to allow for planning for a sustainable energy transition shift. She stated that numerous people are working together. Including people in industry, childcare, housing, business, Leech Lake Band, IRRR and others. She informed that they will be creating a strategic plan.

1. Welcome to Holly Soderbeck, Department of Revenue Representative

Chair Lowney provided a welcome to Soderbeck. She is replacing Neeck as the representative for the Department of Revenue.

1. Introduction of Sarah Lerohl, Environmental Quality Board

Chair Lowney introduced Lerohl. Lerohl provided her professional background and that she has been meeting with impacted communities and counties during the Energy Office’s regular check-ins. She informed that she is the environmental contact for communities and counties. Lerohl educated that she plans to visit the impacted communities in the future.

1. Approve April 23, 2024, Minutes – Roll Call Vote

Motion by McComber, second by Sackett to approve the April 23, 2024, minutes as presented. Roll Call vote passed unanimously.

1. Presentation by Dr. Briggs White, Executive Director, the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization (IWG)

White started his presentation by congratulating the ETAC on the great work happening in Minnesota. He stated that Minnesota has great support for their impacted communities that is being watched from other states.

White informed that the IWG has been bringing people to MN to assist with the transition. This includes Cindy Winland (grant navigator) and Jon Grosshans (EPA). Both have attended events and participated in the Energy Transition Summit and Grosshans with the ETO strategic planning.

White informed that the IWG is multi-agency to assist impacted communities. He stated that the IWG updates include:

-Stakeholder retreat. Vita provided a survey that was completed by impacted communities. The retreat created a report that will be submitted to the President. The report will detail what has happened and what is to come in the future. The report will also include recommendations to policies to the President.

Communities identified that capacity is the #1 issue during the retreat. #2 is basic infrastructure, especially for economic development projects.

Workers also need support. This includes from job loss and new jobs.

-Funds. Money drives investment to the communities. The IWG website has a tool to assist in driving additional investment to communities. The tool has information on roads and transmission lines at impacted sites to help site selectors. The funds include greenhouse gas funds and community-based lenders. White indicated that the CPRG funds that Kohlasch will discuss later in the agenda is an example.

-IWG is working to better support communities. They want to work more proactively for communities that are facing closures.

-Other communities are working on economic development, broadband, nuclear transition, downtown redevelopment, and entrepreneurism.

-IWG tools: clearinghouse, site selector tool, navigators, getting started guide, success stories, and maps.

He requested that success stories are shared with him to include in the IWG’s library.

White stated that the funding currently available is once in a life-time.

The IWG has a bi-weekly newsletter.

Sacket inquired to the impacted workers. He asked about private sector work on power generation alternatives. He inquired to when locations qualify for Federal support. White stated that the USDA and DOE both have funds to assist.

Skelton, MN Power, inquired to the length of time expected for Federal funds to exist; possible extensions. White stated that and extensions would need to be Congressionally approved. He is not aware of any work to extend the IRA funds.

Sacket stated that the IRA is great for projects in cue, but not for future projects. He asked how much information is needed for funding. White stated that each program has its differences. White stated that conversations are needed sooner and need to start with the Federal program officer.

Lowney stated that she has reviewed the IWG website. She found out that many communities have rapid response teams, but Minnesota does not. She has communicated with the Regional Development Commission and the Tic-Tac. Lowney inquired if the IWG would consider a rapid response team for Minnesota. White indicated that they might be able to commit some resources. Currently the IWG is exploring how that might look as the IWG has capacity issues as well.

Lowney stated that the impact of power plant closures is significant. She stated that the community needs more businesses to assist with tax base. Communities need housing for the workforce. The workforce needs childcare. In exploring the IWG website she found nothing covering childcare.

White stated that housing funds are not showing up easily on the IWG website. This is being improved. White stated that he has not heard of childcare as an issue prior to this meeting.

Lowney stated that they received a Just Transition grant to assist, but they are short-term funds. She stated that more long-term solutions are needed. Lowney stated that capacity funds are needed. White stated that Congress has not allocated funds for capacity. Only philanthropy has been able to assist in this space. White continued that Appalachia did receive funds for capacity.

Sacket stated that the State has rules on power generation. He inquired if the IRA has funds to replace/offset different technology if no projects are in process as the communities have closures looming. He asked if advocacy groups can help.

Mekeland stated that the SHERCO site in Becker, MN is seeing solar being installed. He stated that a hail storm caused damage to some of the solar panels and he wondered if funding exists to repair. White does not know.

Mekeland inquired to funds for recycling. Briggs would need to explore this further. Mekeland asked for White’s contact info. Kohlasch stated that he is working on a report on recycling.

1. Presentation by Kali Judd, Managing Director, Research and Intelligence Greater MSP on Sustainable Aviation Fuels

Julia Silvis from Greater MSP presented as Judd was unable to attend. She discussed what sustainable aviation fuels are, why they are important, and business pressure for the fuels. McComber was interested in the work with regional airports. Silvis was unaware. Childs stated his concern for the environment and asked her to attend a MIAC meeting to educate all Minnesota tribes. He wants more information on the impact on water.

Commissioner Felber inquired to the Carbon dioxide emissions from SAF. Silvis stated that that type of SAF needs corn and tax incentives are needed for this type of production. She said that SAF can also be made with hydrogen which is cleaner. At this time, they are asking for DOE funds to explore this option.

1. Presentation by Frank Kohlasch, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on MN’s CPRG award

Kohlasch provided a high-level update to the CRPG award that the MPCA received from the DOE. The intent is replicability for projects so that other parts of the US can duplicate. The award was for $200M for the Climate Smart Food Systems. The award was the submittal from 6 state agencies, Ramsey and Washington counties and Minnesota tribal nations. The spectrum is from land being prepared to plant thru the entire food system. Kohlasch anticipates most funding to be provided to Minnesota communities, counties and tribal nations thru grants. They will work with economic development agencies. Housing and Childcare are not a part of the application.

Lowney inquired to a match for the grants. Kohlasch indicated that at this time no decision has been made, but he is aware of the issues that match requirements have on recipients. Kohlasch informed that they often allow in-kind for a match for the agency’s grants.

Lowney stated that food shelves are needed as well as housing. Kohlasch indicated that the Climate Innovation Authority might have assistance in this area as a portion covers residential housing.

Mekeland inquired to funds for wetland districts. Mekeland indicated his desire to discuss with Kohlasch on energy efficiency and workforce housing. Kohlasch stated that he works with the MN Housing Finance Agency, they might be eligible for some funding.

1. IRP updates
   1. MN Power

Skelton provided an update. He stated that they are working on more wind power and transmission work. He stated that they are exploring other advancements and that they are working with GRE with MISO grid upgrades.

Skelton informed that they are working on their 2025 IRP submittal with the caseation of Boswell. With the closure of Boswell, they will be 80% clean energy. He stated that 2 groups are meeting regarding the MN Power IRP: 1) Energy Supply and 2) Societal. He stated that the work is difficult, but the engagement is great.

Zahrt informed that he is attending the societal group meetings and the foundation of the work is being created to move forward.

Mekeland inquired to the data centers and power. He informed that Xcel stated that within their IRP that they will need power for data centers outside of MN. Conversation on the power needed for data centers and maintaining the power needed for demand. Skelton stated that MN Power already has numerous high load customers. With their IRP they are modeling energy needs. Skelton informed that nationally it is expected that energy demand will increase.

Lowney informed that with the economic development work that they perform, business and industry is asking for green energy.

Mekeland informed that the State Legislature has had conversations on the repurposing of SHERCO. He stated that the IRPs are interesting.

* 1. Xcel Energy

Duncan informed that the IRP comment period has ended. She said that reply comments are due October 9. She stated that they themes were: support nuclear, host communities need to be in the conversations, and data centers and electric usage.

1. ETAC Plan 2024 – Roll Call Vote

Vita presented that the Task Force on the ETAC met and is recommending the modifications on the attachment. Zahrt thanked all that were a part of the original plan, the task force updating it, and the legislators. Wozniak also thanked all that assisted in the updating. She also asked that next year the overall ETAC have more time to review the updates.

McComber thanked Housley for her work.

Motion by McComber, second by Sackett to approve the ETAC updates. Motion carried unanimously.

1. Updates
   1. ETAC School Representative.

Lowney stated that they applications have been submitted and that the selection process is taking place.

* 1. Emerging Issues Sub-Committee

Vita updated on the work for the sub-committee.

* 1. Grants Update by Mike McCrownsey, ETO Grants Coordinator

McCrownsey provided an update to the grants awarded and approximate amount of funds remaining to be awarded.

Lowney inquired if the grant funds are automatic or need legislative allocation. Zahrt started that the funds are allocated by the legislature and that it is important that additional funds are added to continue to the grants. Lowney inquired if a group needs to meet to ensure more funds are allocated. Zahrt informed that the Coalition of Utility Cities has grant funds as a top priority. He is willing to add other communities to support the effort.

* 1. EQB

Memo was provided.

* 1. MN State Colleges and Universities

Schrader was just appointed to ETAC.

* 1. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Kohlasch informed that the MPCA has numerous grants on their webpage. He also infirmed of a trip he took recently to Sweden regarding clean hydrogen and steel. Kohlasch informed that his agency recently added 15 new staff members.

Kohlasch informed that he is working on the Climate Action Framework. He offered to anyone interested in participating in workgroups to let him know.

* 1. Department of Revenue

Soderbeck informed that they are working on items for the “idea” that DOR is exploring. She anticipates the webpage to be updated soon with the information. Soderbeck also informed that in the fall that to expect more public meetings.

* 1. Department of Labor and Industry

No updates were provided.

* 1. Public Utility Commission

Mike Bull from the PUC provided his greetings and to watch for updates on the PUC dockets.

* 1. Department of Commerce

No updates were provided.

* 1. Other ETO updates (Newsletter, Strategic Plan, REE mtg, IWG mtg, RMI)

Vita presented on updates.

* 1. Next Meeting

Vita stated that the Executive Committee asked Becker to host the next meeting and they graciously accepted. The Committee also narrowed down dates to December 4th or 5th. The Board discussed and it was determined that Wednesday, December 4 at 1pm in Becker will be the next ETAC meeting.

1. Adjourn – Roll Call Vote

Motion by McComber, second by Zahrt to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.