**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE**

**ENERGY TRANSITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**HYBRID OVER TEAMS AND PHYSICALLY AT THE**

**CITY OF BECKER, CITY HALL**

**TUESDAY, MAY 31, 2022**

1. Call to order

The Energy Transition Advisory Committee met in Regular Session and ETAC Chair Marshall Hallock welcomed all in attendance, thanked the City of Becker and Staff for hosting the meeting and called the meeting to order at 11:00am at the City Council Chambers, City of Becker City Hall in Becker, MN. Roll call was taken.

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| Attendee Name | Representation | Voting Status | Status |
| Chair Marshall Hallock | Impacted Community | Voting | Present |
| Vice-Chair Tamara Lowney | Impacted Community | Voting | Present |
| Michael James Childs Jr | Prairie Island Indian Community Representative | Voting | Present |
| Shelly Christensen | Speaker of the House Appointment | Voting | Absent |
| Richard Evans | Utilities That Operate an Impacted Facility | Voting | Present |
| Jamie Fitzke | Nonprofit Organization with Expertise and Experience Delivering Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs | Voting | Absent |
| Mike Hoppe | Impacted Workers at Impacted Facilities | Voting | Present |
| Luke Lallemont | Impacted Workers at Impacted Facilities | Voting | Present |
| Karin Housley | Senate Majority Appointment | Voting | Present |
| Mary McComber | Impacted Community | Voting | Present |
| Jennifer McEwen | Senate Minority Appointment | Voting | Absent |
| Shane Mekeland | House Minority Leader Appointment | Voting | Absent |
| Kristin Renskers | Impacted Workers at Impacted Facilities | Voting | Absent |
| Richard James Sackett | Impacted Worker Employed by Company Under Contract | Voting | Present |
| Joshua Skelton | Utilities That Operate an Impacted Facility | Voting | Present |
| Derek Vetsch | Impacted Community | Voting | Present |
| Abigail Wozniak | Professional Economic Development or Workforce Retraining Experience | Voting | Present |
| Shane Zahrt | Coalition of Utility Cities | Voting | Present |
| Beth Binczik | Governor’s Designee | Non-Voting | Present |
| Steve Grove | Commissioner of Employment & Economic Development | Non-Voting | Present |
| Kevin Lee | Commissioner of Commerce Designee | Non-Voting | Absent |
| Craig McDonnell | Commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency’s Designee | Non-Voting | Present |
| Jeremy Parker | Commissioner of Labor & Industry Designee | Non-Voting | Absent |
| Rose Patzer | Colleges & Universities Designee | Non-Voting | Present |
| Katie Sieben | Executive Secretary of the Public Utilities Commission or Designee | Non-Voting | Absent |
| Jon Van Nurden | Commissioner of Revenue’s Designee | Non-Voting | Present |
| Will Seuffert | Executive Secretary of the Public Utilities Commission or Designee | Non-Voting | Present |

Others Present: Mayor Tracy Bertrum (City of Becker), Angela Huss (Lockridge Grindal Nauen P.L.L.P.), Ann Lenczewski (Lockridge Grindal Nauen P.L.L.P.), Greg Lerud (City of Becker), Bruce Messelt (Sherburne County), Mark Osendorf (Xcel Energy), Dan Weber (Sherburne County), and Andrew Witter (Sherburne County).

DEED Staff: Kevin McKinnon, Catalina Valencia and Carla Vita

1. Mayor **Tracy Bertram**, City of Becker

Hallock welcomed Mayor Bertram and thanked City Staff for all their support for the meeting to be held at their location.

Mayor Bertram thanked the ETAC for coming to Becker. Mayor Bertram informed that the SHERCO Power Plant comprises of 72% of the cities tax base. Recently the city was awarded $20 million towards infrastructure as they work on economic diversification. She discussed a recent PUC ruling on Solar on the Xcel property and her frustration on the lack of input from local communities on PUC decisions.

1. Energy Approve April 29, 2022 minutes – Roll Call vote

Motion by McComber, second by Lowney to approve the April 29, 2022 minutes as presented. Roll Call vote passed unanimously.

1. Presentation – Cindy Winland, Community Transition Planning

Lowney welcomed Winland and thanked her for attending the meeting. Winland presented on her work in the United States and specifically in Minnesota on impacted communities from power plant closures. She has been in Becker a variety of times and other MN locaations. She informed that the use of coal for energy production is changing fast. She believes that plans to assist communities need to be community related. That the plan needs to be fair and have fair decisions. She stated that she worked to ensure that local governments drive their own solutions. She informed that most local governments lack staff capacity for the transition and building that capacity is very important.

Winland discussed the work in Becker on their infrastructure, zoning, redevelopment planning and comprehensive planning.

Many communities are being impacted by Power Plant closures. She provided examples. She provided an example from Colstrip, MT where she assisted them on community planning, working with their local Native American community, and accessing federal funds.

With her work with Nuclear Host communities, she is working with the funding to assist those communities. Funding for planning leads to better success after the power plant closes. She stated that currently the Federal Government has resiliency grants and new funding to assist those communities.

Her current role with the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities. The IWG came from a White House initiative to foster a governmental approach for a 1 stop shop for communities to access Federal information. Federal agencies are working together to assist the impacted communities.

Winland discussed the importance of capacity building for impacted communities. Most communities are small, and do not have staff or expertise to transition effectively.

Lowney thanked Winland and reiterated the importance of capacity building. She stated that Itasca County has benefited from Winland. Winland stated that hiring consultants to assist communities is important for successful transition. She informed that the USDA is working on capacity building funding to assist communities. She stated that regional planning agencies are important for the transition.

Hallock stated that it is important to have everyone working together for a successful transition.

1. PUC presentation – Will Seuffert, Executive Secretary, Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

Seuffert thanked the ETAC for asking him to present. He stated that the PUC has a non-voting tole on the ETAC. Seuffert provided a powerpoint presentation. In the presentation he stated that the PUC regulates investor owned electric and gas utilities including rates, services and infrastructure. Five Commissioners compose the quasi-judicial PUC Board. He informed that the PUC meetings are run like a court. Decisions are based on State Law. They do not make policy.

Seuffert stated that they just provided their decision on the Xcel Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). Information within the plan include how the company plans to generate electricity. Seuffert educated that energy is 1/6 of the State’s economy, with Xcel comprising of ½ of State’s energy load. He educated that energy companies use computer modeling to make plans that are submitted to the PUC. The PUC has a public participation process and he stated he would send information to the group.

Hallock inquired to the PUC process. Seuffert stated that the PUC follows policy, any policy modifications come from the State Legislature. People are provided opportunities to provide input on the PUC matters.

1. Task Force updates
	1. Community Engagement

Michael Childs Jr. presented on:

* Met on May 16 – Task Force will meet monthly
* Success for the task force includes:
	+ Educating ourselves on plant closures dates and process
	+ Important for Community and Power Plants to work together. This includes our impacted Native American communities.
	+ Anticipated impacts from the entire process within the entire community
	+ Important that the engagement includes **all** people within the community.
	+ Plan must include need for consultants to work with communities for a non-bias perspective (community education, marketing funds, grant writing and administration, re-branding, etc.) is important. The closure will have a financial, emotional, mental health, visual, etc. impact. Plans need to be updated as needed
	+ What grants, funding exist to help today? What gaps can we identify?
	+ Best practices from other communities on their engagement from beginning to complete redevelopment

Pennsylvania Coal Property redevelopment Playbooks.

* 1. Economic Diversification

Lowney presented on:

* + - Met on May 23 – Task Force will meet monthly
		- Success for the task force includes:
			* What economic development tools exists? Gaps? Areas that might need modification.
			* Unique tools and funding to attract businesses
			* Funding for planning, impact studies, economic development studies to attract businesses
			* Understand current infrastructure and transportation of each community to attract businesses
			* State, Fed, non-profit – Funding for re-use and permitting requirements
			* Community needs to bring in business – childcare, housing, high speed internet, transportation enhancements/improvements, infrastructure enhancements/improvements, job training
			* Best practices

Lowney added that the task force has significant work including current legislation to add to their section of the plan for Legislative consideration. That economic diversification includes infrastructure. She stated that Vita found Playbooks from Pennsylvania that is assisting in economic diversification.

* 1. Re-Use of Assets

McComber presented on:

* + - Met on May 20 – Task Force will meet monthly
		- Success for the task force includes:
			* Communities & Power Plant Research:
				+ What has been done?
				+ What has been/being planned on site? Long term – environmental, coal ask, nuclear storage,
				+ Regulations (Federal, State, local, environmental), ect. for re-use
				+ Cities and counties planning – Comprehensive Planning, zoning, utility/infrastructure (streets, water sewer, stormsewer, rail, etc.) /CIP, financial, impact analysis. Planning needs to start early and be constantly reviewed.
				+ State, Fed, non-profit – Funding for re-use and permitting requirements
		- Best practices from other Power Plant and other large business reuse
		- Important for community and property owner to work together.
	1. Tax Base – Financial Assistance

Evens presented on:

* + - Met on May 19 – Task Force will meet monthly
		- Success for the task force includes:
			* Recognizing that the impacts on tax base and the need for financial assistance for cities, counties, Native American communities, schools and other taxing jurisdictions
			* Need to understand LGA, CPA, solar and wind taxing, and how power plants are taxed
			* Need for tools and assistance for the tax base that is lost
			* Need for incentives to redevelopment property to start filling in tax base
			* Communication for the community to understand the tax base current, future
			* Need for great communication on closure dates as some have changed
			* Importance of financial planning for the fiscal impacts
			* Look at best practices of other US closure locations on tax base financial assistance

Evans added that they are working on the communities planning inventories. He is providing research on Xcel facilities and the impacts. Vetsch inquired to modeling. Evans stated that power plants pay property and personal property tax.

Von Nurden informed that taxes has many nuances that the Task Force will work to address.

* 1. Workforce
		+ Met on May 18 – Task Force will meet monthly
		+ Success for the task force includes:
			- Overriding Goal: Actionable steps and tangible outcomes – more robust than the Colorado Transition plan’s workforce section
			- Considerations for Impacted Communities
				* Recognition that each community has different needs, customizable per community
				* Important to attract employment opportunities for impacted communities with similar pay/benefits for those employees that might not want to leave.
				* Recognition that current unemployment rates may be different at different times of plant closures as we think of re-employment
			- Considerations for Impacted Workers
				* Recognition that Utility Workers have extensive training already, many 6 + years, are employees committed to their employer and their work
				* Employees will have different employment goals after closure, including retirement, some employees might not be able to/want to move
				* Assistance for mental health needs of worker and their families.
			- Link Efforts to the Future
				* Youth might have been considering the Power Plant as their careers.  Resources to assist them as they look at other opportunities
				* Workforce skills have evolved and will continue to evolve.
		+ Next steps: Conversations with previously impacted communities and existing programs, more detailed community profiles

Motion by Vetsch, seconded by Evans to nominate Lowney as Vice-Chair. The roll call vote carried unanimously.

1. Executive Committee Report

Vita presented:

* Staff has met in person in Fergus Falls, Becker, Cohasset and Oak Park Heights; meeting with Monticello today
* Staff is met virtually with all impacted cities within the Sprint
* Researching on best practices nationwide
* Coordinating Task Forces
* Future plans to meet in person in other impacted communities

1. Engagement Process Update - Commissioner Grove

Grove presented on the engagement process for the Office of Energy Transition. He stated that Vita will be visiting communities, meeting with Mayor’s, City Councils, Staff and others. The ETAC might be interested in meeting with stakeholders. When this occurs, communities must include all people, beyond Mayors, City Councils, Staff. Communities must inform and engage Hallock, Lowney and Vita. Vita to work with DEED on engagement. The ETAC meetings themselves are public engagement.

1. Discussion

Hallock invited any other discussion. Childs stated that energy transition includes solar and windmills. Windmills are made from composite materials that have environmental impacts. He inquired to what happens when solar fields end their useful life. He wants to be forward thinking as to the end life of windmills and solar.

McComber inquired to whether battery storage as a reuse has waste and environmental impacts. Hallock stated that the task forces might want to address Childs’ and McComber’s concerns and determine what or if the report includes.

McComber inquired if clean energy options include burning coal clean. Hallock stated that the PUC is willing to assist the ETAC on questions such as these.

Lowney stated that timelines are important. She would like a conversation on a goal date for completion and how detailed of a plan. Grove stated that he was educated that no legislative fix is needed to change the plan’s due date. His goal is to have it done by year’s end, but due diligence is needed. Zarht stated that it is important to do the work right. Housley stated that a plan with legislative recommendations is important.

Evans stated that IRP’s are a 15 year plan. That clean coal technology is not a 15 year plan and that technology is changing.

Hallock stated that the Executive Committee has recognized that every community is affected differently. He wants more conversation at the next ETAC meeting on the plan and Task Force length for the final report.

1. Next meeting – June 28, 2022 at 11am
2. Adjourn – Roll call vote

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