**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE**

**ENERGY TRANSITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**HYBRID OVER TEAMS AND PHYSICALLY AT THE**

**PRAIRIE ISLAND INDIAN COMMUNITY, COMMUNITY CENTER**

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2022**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The Energy Transition Advisory Committee met in Regular Session and ETAC Chair Marshall Hallock welcomed all in attendance, thanked the Prairie Island Indian Community for hosting the meeting and called the meeting to order at 11:03am at the Community Center, Prairie Island Indian Community, Welch, 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 | Present |
| Mike Hoppe | Impacted Workers at Impacted Facilities | Voting | Present |
| Luke Lallemont | Impacted Workers at Impacted Facilities | Voting | Absent |
| Karin Housley | Senate Majority Appointment | Voting | Absent |
| Mary McComber | Impacted Community | Voting | Present |
| Jennifer McEwen | Senate Minority Appointment | Voting | Present |
| Shane Mekeland | House Minority Leader Appointment | Voting | Present |
| Kristin Renskers | Impacted Workers at Impacted Facilities | Voting | Present |
| Richard James Sackett | Impacted Worker Employed by Company Under Contract | Voting | Present |
| Joshua Skelton | Utilities That Operate an Impacted Facility | Voting | Absent |
| 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 | Present |
| Craig McDonnell | Commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency’s Designee | Non-Voting | Absent |
| Jeremy Parker | Commissioner of Labor & Industry Designee | Non-Voting | Present |
| Rose Patzer | Colleges & Universities Designee | Non-Voting | Absent |
| 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 |

DEED Staff: Kirk Crow Shoe, Darielle Dannen, Ann Meyers, Vanessa Roman, Catalina Valencia, Carla Vita

1. Welcome by Prairie Island Indian Community, President Johnny Johnson

President Johnson welcomed everyone and gave a traditional Prairie Island Indian Community meeting ceremony opening. He thanked the ETAC for all their work. Johnson informed ETAC members taking the tour of his nation some of the items that they would be viewing.

1. Presentation by Wade Buchanan, Director Colorado Office of Just Transition

Buchanan congratulated the ETAC for their work and accomplishments. Buchanan stated how he and Vita work together and is excited to see how the ETAC plan is put into action.

Buchanan provided a history to the coal mine and plant closures in Colorado. The goal being no coal power plants operating by January 1, 2031. Colorado has determined differing tiers to handle the coal plant closures. The tiers are based on timing and if the plant pays taxes or not; some cities own power plants and do not pay taxes.

Buchanan informed that the Colorado model began in 2019 by Union Workers. His office started in late 2019. From there an advisory committee was created to compose Colorado’s plan. His office receives funding from the State. The office now has 4 people.

Buchanan educated that the Utility companies play an important role. An example he provided was Xcel Energy providing to 6 to 10 years in subsidies to cover the lost taxes to impacted communities after the power plant is closed – net out for business expansions and new business taxes. Tri-State, another coal plant utility has started conversations, no commitments at this time.

Lessons learned was offered to the ETAC from Buchanan.

Hallock thanked Buchanan. Lowney inquired to any advice Buchanan may have to assist in working with communities, especially in community engagement. Buchanan stated that going to the communities is important. This assists with building trust, opening doors of communication, and partnering. He stated that he builds connections from the impacted communities to others that can assist.

Hallock inquired to how his office obtained State and Xcel funding. Buchanan discussed state funding for his office. The State believed in investing in the communities and that started with his office. He stated that many people want to debate the power plant closures. His office does not participate in that conversation – the office is there only to assist the community with the power plant closure.

Buchanan continued that Xcel Energy has been a responsible corporate citizen assisting with funds for the plant closures. The Colorado PUC played a role in the community assistance including the resource planning and community assistance planning that was thru the State Legislature.

Sackett inquired to the different utilities and how they are assisting the communities differently. Buchanan informed that 4 utilities generate electricity from coal in Colorado. 2 are cities – they are not engaged and the impacts are small. There is no tax base issue and the cities have stated that no employees will be laid off. 2 Utilities- Xcel and Tri-State. 2 different business models and different ways of handling the closures. Buchanan stated that the workers are very important and are represented. The future for many energy workers is more in technology and electricity production.

Buchanan stated that the situation with coal mines are different than with coal plants. Utilities are very regulated and transparent.

Lowney inquired to the voice of business, especially large manufacturers. Buchanan stated that his role is not to replace energy. That is the role of the PUC. His office is only to help communities and workers. Businesses are a part of communities and are active with PUC’s and politically.

Hallock inquired to any closed nuclear plants. Buchanan stated that a nuclear plant has not closed in many years. The plant that was closed was converted to coal power. At this time his office is not handling any nuclear closures.

1. Presentation by Ann Meyers & Vanessa Roman, DEED – Xcel RFP

Meyers and Roman presented on the Xcel – DEED Partnership. They covered the DEED adult career pathways program and how that team is leading the partnership. The PUC began this process in 2020 to help build a skilled and diverse workforce in energy and related construction careers. The program has many components that were discussed. The Power Up Pilot Program has 2 parts. 1) Focus on outreach and recruitment, navigation services, support services, and workforce readiness. 2) fucuses on apprenticeship readiness, technical training, active construction site tours and placement. The goal is to build on workforce development expertise, have a single point of contact, remove barriers, utilize workforce one, coordination, technical assistance and monitoring.

Wozniak inquired to the scope of workers to access the training – for example workers facing closure, but the plant is not yet closed. Roman indicated that the first step is to connect with Careerforce. The local careerforce centers know the local resources and services. Meyers informed that the adult career pathways are not as restrictive as the Dislocated Worker Program. Grove informed that funds are changing and allowing for more flexibility.

Hallock stated that the ETAC Workforce Task Force identified a gap of people having to wait for training until a business is closed. He expressed his happiness that flexibility is being worked on. He stated that work on flexibility needs to continue.

Zahrt inquired if DEED has the resources needed to assist 300 plus people with a closure. Grove stated that the Xcel program is great. He continued that the Dislocated Worker Program (DWP) started in the 1980s and has old regulations. He stated that he is working to modernize the program. He stated that the recommendations are great, but work needs to be done, especially with flexibility.

Sackett stated that Minnesota Power will have closures and northern Minnesota lacks job opportunities. He stated that programs are needed. Roman stated that the DWP is available to meet with the workers. Zarht stated that the Boswell/Cohasset closure will occur years from now with many impacted workers. Roman stated that a good first step is the utility to meet with the DWP and DEED leadership. Lowney stated that the utility companies are concerned about losing workers prior to the closure. She inquired to what the future of the worker will be with training needed and the need for the company to still operate. Roman stated that Careerforce has many programs that the worker is able to access. Grove stated that the DEED Rapid Response is important. It is very mechanical, so flexibility is needed. Grove informed that the committee can assist on asking for flexibility.

Hallock informed that he toured many power plants. He stated that the uncertainty of closure dates was very concerning for the workers. Seuffert informed that the PUC has Xcel Energy using public engagement to assist in the communication. He stated that information exists on the PUC website on the power plants. Seuffert informed that the PUC is working on the MN Power IRP.

Childs stated that power plant employees are verry well educated and paid. Other jobs in the area often lack the high pay and high skills.

1. Approve September 27, 2022 Minutes – Roll Call vote

Motion by McComber, second by Lowney to approve the September 27, 2022, minutes as presented. Roll Call vote passed unanimously.

1. Survey Analysis Team - September Stakeholder Survey Analysis

Wozniak presented on the survey starting that the response rate was higher than before. She stated that an outcome was the need for the plan to be more concise and the work from last month to now has met those comments. She stated that people have questions on how energy will be provided, but that is not the scope of the ETAC.

Childs stated that a comments made in the survey regarding the lack of safety being met at the plants was and is a concern of his. Childs stated his concerns for the workers and the communities.

Lowney stated that the survey made it clear on the importance of engaging the community. She stated that more work with the communities needs to be done. She stated that the survey shows community push back on power plant closures. She continued that community members want to understand that they will have reliable power and what the future looks like without the power plant.

1. Final Draft Plan Presentation
   1. Action to Approve

Vita presented on the ETAC meetings, presenters and topics. She discussed the task forces, presenters from cities, counties, other states, MN State Agencies, and other business closures. She stated how the timeline was very aggressive and significant work took place. More work needs to occur including polishing, adding images, etc. Once those are complete, the document will be re-sent for ETAC review.

Vetsch stated that he desires more information within the report on the impacts to counties. McComber inquired to the Workforce Chart. Vita stated that the chart it is an addendum.

Wozniak stated that one more final review is needed with any changes. She stated that she believes that a conclusion is needed and cover the need for safety improvements at the power plants. Vetsch stated that the report needs to cover the actual dollar amounts that will be lost, a snap-shot in time from the power plant closures as per the excel spreadsheet Xcel had provided with their locations.

Childs stated that tribal consultations is important.

Evans stated that with any report, areas will need further and further refining. He is recommending to vote today on the plan.

Mekeland stated that impacts on schools also need to be included. Conversation on whether the report should be delayed after more information is added and then revoted.

Grove stated that it is important to educate new legislators, that delaying is against the ETAC’s goal of completing in October, that a chart with county information is an easy addition. He inquired to any substantial modifications. Vetsch and Evans gave their agreement with Grove with adding county percentages and actual amounts. Van Nurden reminded everyone that the actual dollar amounts are easily found as it is public information. Childs recommended that approval is made in is substantial form. Zahrt comments that the report has been reduced from 50 + pages to 20. That some background needs to be included, county information to be re-added, that in economic diversification that pros and cons need to be re-added, or we need to archive the information removed from the 50+ page document.

Sackett informed that the legislators will take the information and use it as they see fit.

McComber stated that the ETAC continuing needs to be a top recommendation. Hallock agreed. Hallock stated that he wants the ETO to be a centralized location for resources for impacted communities.

Fitzge stated that the report is great. Add percentages per Vetsch. DEED resources is appreciated; that we need to move forward.

Zarht stated that the survey inquires to who is doing what. The ETAC plan needs to spell that out. He stated that the plan needs to detail out more what the ETO will do. Zarht continued that the legislature needs to fund marketing efforts of communities to the plant closures. Hallock stated that the plan is at a stage to move forward we do not want to re-work the project. He stated that scoping on what the ETO can do is important. Grove stated that the ETO can place more information on the webpage regarding resources and that many resources already are located there.

Childs stated that he does not want to see funding for power plant closures coming from RDF/RDA funds.

Hallock stated that the plan should be approved in substantial form with incorporating additional information. He said, once the additions are made, the plan should be sent to the ETAC for their review.

Vetsch motioned to approve the plan it sits current form with the addition of school and county data and that the ETAC needs to be added as a top recommendation, photos and illustrations needs to be added. Seconded by McComber.

Wozniak inquired if the motion is subject to word-smiting. Evans said no word-smithing, only photos and illustrations. Only grammar and punctuation can change. Mekeland stated he is uncomfortable voting on something other than the final product. Discussion on another meeting for the final, glossy product took place.

McEwen stated that she is not concerned with the motion. McEwan stated that the scope of the ETAC needs to be at the beginning of the document.

Due to the significant dialogue Vita asked that the motion be restated to ensure all were clear.

Motion by Vetsch, second my McComber to approve the document in its substantial form with the additions of: scoping of the ETAC, chart of tax capacity for city, county and schools, addendum of Xcel Power plants taxes, ETAC as a top recommendation, and the only other changes are for grammar and readability.

Zarht inquired to if Vetsch would include who/what/when to be addressed within the plan. Vetsch said that the plan cannot address that until we know what the Legislature will do. Lowney stated that she agrees with Zahrt. Hallock stated that he feels that it all falls to the ETO. Childs stated that this topic is a good reason to continue the ETAC. Zarht re-stated the importance to add who does what within the plan. Mekeland brought up his concern on the plan and the need for an additional meeting. Hallock stated that the plan is late as it was to be completed July 1. The ETAC worked hard to get the plan completed as close to the deadline as possible, the plan must move forward today and give staff the liberties as stated in the motion. Zarht stated that the motion is narrow. Mekeland stated that this issue is very complex and this decision is very important. He believes that the vote should be moved to December.

Hallock stated that we have two options. 1) vote with the plan as motioned by Vetsch or 2) not vote for it and wait until December for the plan with the modifications. Vetsch stated that this plan could be rediscussed in December with even more modifications, it is 99% done today and needs to move forward. Evans agreed with Vetch. Marshall reminded everyone if the plan is approved that the ETAC is done. No more opportunities to change. Lowney informed that the next phase after plan approval is the very difficult phase. We need the month of November to educate legislators on the topic.

Roll Call vote\_ all voting members voting in favor, except Mekeland that voted nay. 13(aye) - 1 (nay).

* 1. ETAC Legislative Volunteers

Vita presented the task force volunteers.

* 1. Next steps by Darielle Dannen – DEED Government Relations Director

Dannen stated that the plan is a good document for the legislative process. She stated that the communities will appreciate all the work prepared by the ETAC. Dannen covered the next steps of the legislative process regarding the plan.

Zarht inquired to any recommendations that DEED might have regarding the plan. Dannen stated that some components will be brought forth to the Governor.

Seuffert informed the ETAC that the PUC would like them to meet together and discuss the Plan directly.

1. Adjourn – Roll call vote

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