

Renewable Energy Committee

Thursday, March 19, 2015– 3:00 P.M.

Polk County Government Center, County Board Room
100 Polk Plaza, Balsam Lake, WI 54810

- Call to order
- Approve agenda
- Approve 1/15 minutes
- Public comments
- John Richards, NWECC
- Potential Solar Study
 1. Update on solar panel study
- Member comments
 - Discuss potential renewable energy workshop
- Set next meeting date
- Adjourn

(Agenda items may not be presented in this order)

This meeting is open to the public according to Wisconsin State Statute 19.83. Persons with disabilities wishing to attend and/or participate are asked to notify the County Clerk's office (715-485-9226) at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting time so all reasonable accommodations can be made. Requests are confidential

Polk County Renewable Energy Committee Meeting

Held on March 19, 2015 at the Government Center

Members Attending: Marlin Baillargeon, Jay Luke, Jeff Peterson, Marvin Caspersen, Timm Johnson, Tim Anderson, County Planner, and Dave Muller. John Richards, VP of Northwestern Electric, Polk County electric provider, joined the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Chair Timm Johnson called the meeting to order at 3 p.m. The agenda and previous meeting minutes were approved by voice vote. Johnson informed the members that Kathryn Kienholz had resigned from the committee in the past month and we are seeking a replacement member.

Johnson asked Muller for an update on Kurt Reinhold and Solar Connections pending proposal to the county for an energy audit. Muller informed the members of a recent phone call with Reinhold and proceeded to call Reinhold in Madison for an update by speaker phone.

Reinhold stated that he was still compiling the proposal and the cost would be \$2375, below the \$2500 threshold for a competing bid. His group will propose a 200kW system that will be either ground or roof-mounted on the Justice Center. Per Public Service Commission (PSC) standards, this size is considered a Category 2 system, between 20 and 200 kW. Any system above 200 kW requires a separate engineering requirement with no ceiling on costs. Johnson asked about the roof size of the Government Center and the finished size of the City of Monona project. Reinhold said that Monona consists of 4 separate panel systems totaling 156 kW. The Government Center has over 5000 sf available which would allow a system in the range of 100-150 kW, in addition to the proposed Justice Center.

Peterson asked Reinhold how he proposed to maintain net metering (retail rate payback) with the 20 kW interconnection standard. Reinhold responded that all electricity generated up to 20 kW will be used at a retail rate. The balance is at wholesale. Baillargeon asked about weekend generation on the Justice Center and Reinhold stated that all electricity would likely be used by the facility operating 7 days a week. Muller asked for an overview of the process. Reinhold responded that the first step is to involve all stakeholders like the Sheriff's Department and the County Property Committee for educating and discussing implications of the solar project. After that, then a RFP can be sent out for vendors.

The goal would be to complete the work in 2015 because the Federal Tax Credit will be lowered from 30% to 10% after 2016. Peterson inquired about Third Party Ownership. Reinhold responded that his proposal is called an "Energy Performance Contract" to include updates to laundry, lighting, HVAC, and solar panels. A Legacy Solar Co-operative LLC is formed with all costs paid by a third party that then sells subscription units for investment within the Co-op. After 7 years, the county has the option to purchase the system at fair market value. Muller asked if Polk County would have any costs at all. Reinhold answered that the county can buy down which acts as a price hedge against future energy cost increases. Johnson inquired about the cost of panels which Reinhold estimated at \$3 per kW, or about \$1 million depending on the final size of the panel array. The LLC would pay the cost and serve the county interests similar to low-income housing tax credit projects of the past. The call ended with Reinhold promising to deliver his proposal to the county promptly.

Baillargeon asked if this fit the 25 x 2025 plan and Peterson stated the goal is 10% renewables by 2015.

John Richards from Northwestern Electric joined the meeting and discussed the Public Service Commission rules for grid connection and price tariffs for retail and wholesale electricity generation. PSC 119 covers the process and application for systems between 20 and 200kw. NEI already has 18% of its portfolio in renewables, exceeding the WI 10% state average in 2015. Richards recommended a series of smaller systems, 20 kW or less, to obtain the best retail pricing for the county. He asked to be kept informed by the committee as the project evolves.

Johnson and Muller will stay in contact with Reinhold and update the PC Commissioners in April.

The next Renewable Energy Committee meeting is set for April 23 at 3 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Muller, Secretary