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# Memo

**Date: June 5, 2025**

**To: Energy Transition Advisory Committee ETAC**

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

## RE: Minutes

### Background

Attachment A has the submitted minutes for the March 27, 2025, ETAC meeting for ETAC Board consideration.

### Recommendation

Approve minutes on Attachment A.

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 OAK PARK HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2025**

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 9:30am at the City of Oak Park Heights City Council Chambers, Oak Park Heights, MN. Roll call was taken.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Representing** | **Name** | **Status** |
| **Voting** |  |  |
| Senate Majority Appointment | **Grant Hauschild** | **Absent** |
| Senate Minority Appointment | **Karin Housley** | **Absent** |
| Speaker of the House Appointment | **Duane Quam** | **Present** |
| House Minority Appointment | **Larry Kraft** | **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** | **Absent** |
| 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** | **Absent** |
| Utilities that Operate an impacted Facility #1 | **Trisha Duncan** | **Absent** |
| Utilities that Operate an impacted Facility #2 | **Joshua Skelton** | **Present** |
| Nonprofit Organization with expertise and experience delivering energy efficiency and conservation programs | **Alyssa Eilers** | **Absent** |
| 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** | **Absent** |
| 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: Adesewa Adesiji, Colleen Eddy, Mike McCrownsey, Kevin McKinnon, and Carla Vita.

1. Welcome & Transition Community Details by City of Oak Park Heights

Assistant City Administrator, Jennifer Pinski, thanked the Energy Transition Advisory Committee for choosing Oak Park Heights for their meeting. She discussed how important the work that ETAC is doing and the impacts to Oak Parks Heights.

1. Welcome MN House Representative Larry Kraft

Chair Lowney provided a welcome to MN House Representative Kraft. She read Kraft’s bio.

1. Welcome MN House Representative Duane Quam

Chair Lowney welcomed Mn House Representative Duane Quam and read his bio.

1. Approve December 4, 2024 Minutes – Roll Call Vote

Motion by Childs, second by Sackett to approve the December 4, 2024, minutes as presented. Roll Call vote passed unanimously.

1. Presentation by Dr. Brian J. Anderson, Federal Interagency Working Group on Coal & Power Plant Communities & Economic Revitalization

Lowney welcomed Anderson. Anderson stated that the Federal Government has a new administration that is looking at the investments and aligning with their goals.

Anderson stated that he works with DOE and is not sure how the IWG will look like in the future. Currently the IWG is funded in a continuing resolution.

Anderson stated that power demands are increasing. The current administration is working on energy exports, filling the petroleum reserve and leveraging existing grip assets.

Lowney inquired to funding pauses that have impacted her organization and others. Anderson stated that a brief pause occurred in many grants as the new administration reviews them. Anderson stated that if their grant pause was not lifted to let him know and he will work on identifying the situation. Anderson stated that unawarded grants are being reviewed by program officers.

1. Presentation by Nathan Ratner, DEED Legislative Liaison

Ratner thanked ETAC for inviting him to present. Ratner stated that this session has been unique. Many seats have changed, and special elections were held.

May 19th the legislative session ends. This is a budget year, and the State is in a difficult fiscal situation.

Ratner stated that in the Governor’s Budget, DEED saw some reductions. He stated that the ETO office is funded, but not the grants. Ratner stated that the grants are listed in Statute and could be funded in the future.

Ratner stated that the Governor’s budget does add a new DEED program – Service to Success. This program would coordinate pathways into public service for people leaving other programs like AmeriCorps, 4H and education. Ratner educated that the Drive for Five program has more funding in the Governor’s budget. The program has workforce development in the State’s top 5 industries.

Ratner also discussed DEED’s BDPI program.

1. Presentation by Shane Zahrt, Coalition of Utility Cities – Legislative Update

Zahrt gave the history of the Coalition of Utility Cities, its members, the history of ETO and the Community Energy Transition (CET) Grants.

Zahrt informed that in FY 23 $10 million was allocated to the CET grants. Most of the funds have been granted out and are performing impactful work throughout MN. The CET grant is not in the Governor’s budget. No changes for the ETO.

Zahrt stated that the Governor’s budget for BDPI removes the base funding from within the budget. This is important as BDPI has been impactful to impacted communities.

Zahrt educated on the CET bills at the legislature. As of the ETAC meeting, none of the bills have had a hearing which is important to the funding process. Zahrt stated that he has sensed a reduced urgency by State Legislators on the power plant closures. He stated that when the announcement occurred on the King plant closing a huge sense of urgency existed, but not now. Zahrt stated that communities and workers need to tell their story to the legislators.

Zahrt informed that many ETAC members have been interested in new electrical technologies. Many bills to eliminate the nuclear moratorium are in place. He stated that the Nuclear Alliance has signed on to support the removal. Zahrt stated that legislators are interested in PIIC’s position on the nuclear moratorium removal. Childs stated that PIIC is working with its members on their position. He stated that he anticipated a position the early part of April.

Felber informed that Mekeland and Mathews have had conversations on waste to energy. It does not appear that the bill will be introduced. Felber stated that he was informed that the PUC is working on a similar matter.

Zahrt stated that paying attention to both the legislature and PUC is important. PUC is looking at new and emerging issues, including data centers. PUC wants more stakeholder discussions and is encouraging collaboration.

Lowney inquired on the accuracy of information she received that if a bill is not heard by the end of next week, it would not move forward. Zahrt educated on the bill reading deadlines. He stated that the legislature has a limited budget which has meant that many programs have not seen progress.

Zahrt stated that ETO is funded and using ETO resources is important for the impacted communities.

1. IRP Updates
	1. MN Power

Kuklenski, MN Power Regulatory Strategy and Policy Manager, presented on the MN Power IRP that was submitted earlier in the month. She discussed the history and usage of MN Power. She informed of the unique customer mix for MN Power. The company has no peaks and valley of usage, which is normal for other electrical providers, but a consistent need. She informed that MN Power has invested largely in renewable energy.

Kuklenski stated that the newly submitted IRP is a continuation of the past IRP. She stated that IRP’s have a 15-year outlook. MN Power engages people in the decision making. She informed on the carbon-free future and their plans to achieve their goal.

Kuklenski informed that the IRP proposes natural gas at Boswell Unit 3. They plan to cease coal and natural gas would replace the electric generation. They are also looking at biomass and other options. All options need to be reviewed to also on the economics of the option.

MN Power is planning for increased demand for electricity. They have a growth contingency for the possible electrical growth.

Sacket inquired if MN Power is planning for PUC decision in 2026. Kuklenski stated that they are.

Zahrt stated that the filing had many appendices. He inquired if one appendix is societal. Kuklenski said it is. She stated that it was facilitated by Great Plains Institute and that they would be filing their report.

Kuklenski informed that they are planning for a workforce reduction. They just do not know the numbers. The workforce depends on refueling and the type of refueling.

Felber stated that he is happy to read that they are planning for 1000MW in their proposal. Lowney stated she is concerned on pushback on natural gas.

* 1. Xcel Energy

No presentation was provided.

1. Presentation by Will Seuffert, Executive Secretary Public Utilities Commission

Seuffert provided a presentation on the PUC, the IRP (Integrated Resource Planning) process and public input opportunities. He informed that the PUC is an independent regulatory body. Commissioners are appointed by the Governor. The PUC regulates a variety of areas as stated by State Statute. They also work on resource and distribution planning, gas planning, approve large energy infrastructure, and new laws can add more proceedings for review.

Seuffert educated that all decisions come from the application of state law. All PUC meetings must meet open meet law rules. Seuffert discussed ex parte rules, dashboards on the PUCs work, the planning process, and IRPs. In IRPs the Commission will approve or deny. Software assists in the review of the plans. The Xcel Energy past IRP was used as an education on the process.

Seuffert informed that a new area of review for the IRPs is data centers. The PUC is concerned on rate payer protection. He informed that he anticipates that future IRPs will have data center usage predictions within their modeling. Seuffert informed that a diesel generation back-up to a data center is currently being reviewed by the PUC.

Seuffert stated that on April 3 the MN Power IRP will be discussed at the PUC meeting.

Seuffert educated that solar and transmission projects have increased. The projects have a certificate of need and decommissioning plans.

As the PUC has 800 unique filings yearly, Seuffert requested all stay informed by registering for the PUC’s newsletter and the online calendar is another great resource.

Sackett stated that the Becker coal plant is ceasing operation, but the community is also seeing a new data center. He wondered if the data center has more than 100MW of electricity needs. Seuffert stated that it does and some data centers might have even more electricity needs.

Zahrt informed that PUC Commissioner Sullivan has an informational meeting on data centers. He inquired if the informational meeting could be shared. Seuffert informed he would send to Vita to send to the ETAC board.

Childs informed that cannabis operations also have a large load. Seuffert informed that electrification of homes and more is also impactful.

Lowney stated that it is important that the PUC gets the word out that electricity needs is being worked on in order to educate the public. Seuffert informed that the Department of Commerce can educate on data centers statewide.

Schmidt inquired if large companies create their own energy. Seuffert stated that some do, but the generation has to meet a certain threshold for the PUC to review, many like some solar is never seen by the PUC.

Zahrt stated that he understood from the MN Power presentation that they hope their IRP will have action in 12 months. Seuffert stated that the PUC’s goal is to have decisions out within 1 year. Changes can impact the deadline. Seuffert informed that settlements between parties outside of the PUC process can move the process along.

1. Updates
	1. BRECC/NACO Update by Sherburne Commissioner Felber

Felber informed that he and Vita attended the NACO (National Association of Counties) BRECC (Building Resilient Economies in Coal Communities) presentation in Washington DC. Felber informed that many impacted communities throughout the US are working to replace taxes and jobs lost from the power plant closures. He informed that many are working on tourism to fill a part of the gap. Felber informed that many are working to repurpose buildings – schools to apartments for example. Lots of conversation on how the base load will be met with the power plant closures.

Felber stated that his number one takeaway is that MN is not alone.

Felber also informed that the funding for BRECC ended. He stated that Vita convened a meeting to see how the conversation will continue and NACO stated that they will work to continue the conversation, but it will be more online than in person.

* 1. Sparking Change Summit update – Tamara Lowney

Lowney educated on the event and the subsequent report. She stated that the report is on their website for all to read. She informed that she brought in people from Colorado and Appalachia to inform on their transition process and for their community to learn. She stated that bringing them in was fundamentally important to the summit and people really appreciated the information, especially that MN is not alone.

Lowney informed that the funding for the after-summit work was frozen by the federal government. She stated that work to apply for grants is significant and funding for applying for grants is important. She informed that she is hopeful that the funds will be unfrozen.

* 1. Emerging Issues Sub-Committee

Vita informed that within the packet is a memo regarding the work. It includes conversations on Federal Funding and other topics on envisioned within the ETAC plan. Vita also stated that any topics to be reviewed can be sent to Vita for the sub-committee consideration.

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

McCrownsey informed that the grants are rolling and a financial update.

Sackett inquired if ETO is prepared for additional funds if the State Legislature allocated more funds. Vita said that the ETO is not only prepared, but has been working with DEED’s online grant team to modernize and bring the entire granting process to an online portal. This should be more efficient for the applicant and the ETO grants team.

Zahrt informed ETAC and impacted communities that funds are tight at the legislature, so informing them on the need for the grants is important.

* 1. EQB

Memo was provided.

* 1. MN State Colleges and Universities

Memo was provided. Schrader information that earlier in the week his department held their summit. They are focusing on the energy workforce, especially K-16.

* 1. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Memo was provided.

* 1. Department of Revenue

Memo was provided. Soderbeck added that the Department of Revenue website has information on free tax preparation that impacted communities might have interest to educate their community.

* 1. Department of Labor and Industry

Memo was provided.

* 1. Department of Commerce

No memo was provided.

* 1. ETO updates

Vita stated that her memo with details and the legislative report is attached.

Vita informed that after the meeting a survey will be sent by her. The survey is anonymous. It is meant to educate ETAC’s Chair, Vice-Chair and Director on what is going well, what needs help and ideas for future meetings. ETAC will need to update its plan again this year, knowing topics to enhance the plan to ensure it is a timely document is important.

Vita stated to also be thinking of the future ETAC plan update and if they have the bandwidth to take on the update. Sackett informed that he is willing to assist.

* 1. Next Meeting

Vita educated that the next meeting will likely take place in June. Past locations was listed with the intent of ETAC member’s awareness as they determine a future location. Lowney indicated that a doodle poll will be forthcoming regarding a date and time.

1. Adjourn – Roll Call Vote

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