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# Memo

**Date: September 30, 2025**

**To: Energy Transition Advisory Committee ETAC**

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

## RE: Minutes

### Background

Attachment A has the submitted minutes for the June 5, 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 FERGUS FALLS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 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 1:30pm at the City of Fergus Falls City Council Chambers, Fergus Falls, 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** | **Present** |
| Impacted Communities - County Representative #2 | **Gregg Felber** | **Absent** |
| 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** | **Present** |
| Utilities that Operate an impacted Facility #1 | **Trisha Duncan** | **Present** |
| Utilities that Operate an impacted Facility #2 | **Joshua Skelton** | **Absent** |
| 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** | **Absent** |
| Commissioner - Department of Commerce (or Designee) | **Sydnie Lieb** | **Absent** |
| Commissioner - Department of Labor and Industry (or Designee) | **Jeremy Parker** | **Present** |
| Commissioner - Department of Revenue (or Designee) | **Holly Soderbeck** | **Present** |
| Executive Secretary of the Public Utilities Commission (or Designee) | **William Seuffert** | **Absent** |
| 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.

Chair Lowney announced the passing of ETAC Vice Chair McComber. She read an announcement from Xcel Energy on the history of Mayor McComber’s involvement in transition activities within her community, regionally, state-wide and nationally. A moment of silence was held in memory of ETAC Vice-Chair McComber.

1. Welcome & Community Transition Power Plant Presentation by City of Fergus Falls

Fergus Falls Mayor Ben Schierer, City Administrator, Andrew Bremseth, Otter Tail Power Christopher Waltz, Community Development Director Klara Beck and Otter Tail County Community Development Director Amy Baldwin, thanked the Energy Transition Advisory Committee for choosing Fergus Falls for their meeting. The Fergus Falls team presented the closure of the Hoot Lake Power plant to ETAC. The history of the location, the importance to the community, workforce, demolition, and the current situation was all covered.

The community has spent time enhancing the community as a regional hub for business, recreation, shopping and more. Staff and others informed that the whole community working together has been the secret to their transitional accomplishments.

1. Approve March 4, 2025 Minutes – Roll Call

March 4, 2025 correction – Add Jeremy Schmidt as present at the meeting.

Motion by Zahrt, second by Childs to approve the March 4, 2025, minutes as presented. Roll Call vote passed unanimously.

1. Building Resilient Economies in Coal Impacted Communities Report by Blake Gardiner (National Association of Counties.

Gardiner presented a power point on the past and current work with BRECC. The documentation, research and information are on the NACO website. Also, they offered assistance to counties with direct questions. Any ideas to add to their resource page is requested.

NACO is also adding clean energy tolls to their webpage.

1. Just Transition Fund Announcement by Rachel Young

Rachel Young, Deputy Director of Partnerships, Just Transition Fund, educated on the history of JTF, what areas MN in qualify for their grants, the projects that they have funded in Minnesota, types of grants that they offer, future grants that they will be funding, and then announced that their 2025 National Convening will take place in Minnesota in late October.

Lowney expressed her enthusiasm for the announcement and offered her thoughts to additional tours and areas of impact by JTF work in MN.

1. Transition Aid, Bill Sparks, MN Department of Revenue

Sparks, Program Manager for the MN Department of Revenue, provided a PowerPoint presentation on transition aid. Sparks informed that State Statute directs how, who, and how much funds are disbursed to impacted communities. Cities, counties and school districts qualify – after their power plant closes. Calculations for the funds occur on May 1. Every year the amount is reduced by 5%, it will always end in 20 years, but more likely will end more quickly.

Sackett inquired to whether Boswell 1 & 2 in Cohasset qualified as they closed prior to the 2023 legislation. Lowney stated that Cohasset, Itasca County and the school district all received state funds.

Lowney inquired to whether the calculation takes inflation into consideration. Sparks informed that it does not.

1. Legislative Updates:
   1. DEED Legislative Update by Nathan Ratner, DEED Legislative Liaison

Ratner thanked ETAC for inviting him to present. Ratner informed that as of May 19, no budget bills were passed. He informed that the legislature was divided. This legislative session had a $150 M surplus. The next biennium a deficit is anticipated. The legislature is also anticipating cuts from the Federal government.

Ratner stated that the Governor suggested many options for cuts for the future.

Ratner stated that the funding bill language is complete. ETO is funded, the grants are not. The childcare grant program will receive $1.4M over the next 2 years. No additional programs were created. Ratner stated that a possible government shut-down could occur if an agreement is not reached.

* 1. Shane Zahrt, Coalition of Utility Cities

Zahrt informed that the legislature worked with impending deficits in future years for its work this past fiscal year. Zahrt informed that the legislation for Community Energy Transition grants was submitted, City of Becker City Administrator LeRud spoke on behalf of the grant. However no funding was put into the fiscal bill.

Zahrt informed that the office was funded.

1. Sherburne County Family Childcare Finder by Brian Fleming, Sherburne County

Fleming, Sherburne County Economic Development Coordinator, informed on a tool to assist people looking for childcare in Sherburne County and for childcare facilities to inform on openings at their facilities. The project educated that about 200-300 slots currently exist in Sherburne county, a county with significant childcare needs. Families were not aware of the openings.

Fleming worked with the County’s GIS specialist to create the website. The website has a map of the childcare facility location and the types of openings/age groups available at the facility.

Fleming informed that the next steps in the project is to add the childcare openings available at schools. Fleming informed that the project was easy to complete and will help with the childcare needs within the county.

Vita informed that in her conversations with Fleming, the project did not have any funding other than staff time from Sherburne County. No state, no federal, no non-profit; a 100% local effort to work and try to solve a local need. The website is easily replicable, and Fleming has offered to educate how to replicate for those interested.

A question was raised to whether any large daycare centers were included. Fleming informed that at this time it is only private daycare centers.

Schmidt indicated his delight that school daycare options will be included.

1. Community Energy Transition Grants, by Mike McCrownsey, ETO Grants Coordinator

McCrownsey provided a presentation on the grants to date that had been funded, the amount, what the community plans to achieve with the grants and the status of the remaining grants funds.

1. Energy Transition Plan 2025

Three years ago, ETAC created a survey to help direct the work for the Energy Transition Advisory Plan. At that time, the plan had less impacted locations, fewer people on the ETAC board, and transition aid had not been passed. Nationally grant availability has changed. The Interagency Working Group on Coal impacted communities was eliminated. The communities themselves have changed. Many have seen staff changes, projects completed and new opportunities. For all the reasons stated and more, staff is recommending an updated survey to the communities to analyze and us against the previous data.

Conversation on the plan also adding more information on labor market information locally and regionally could be used. A survey addition to ask the communities on the studies that they have used and had prepared as well as studies that they would like to see was asked to be incorporated.

Another point to bring to the group working on the plan update is the difference in pay from base load facilities to wind and solar workers. Also if the workers are union or non-union.

Add additional infrastructure needs of Power and Gas to the survey.

Plan update team: Sackett, Lowney, Zahrt, Duncan, Soderbeck and Vita as staff.

1. IRP Updates
   1. MN Power

Jennifer Kuklenski, Regulatory Strategy and Policy Manager for MN Power presented the status of the IRP that was submitted earlier in 2025. The proposal has a recommendation of more wind to be added to their system, as well as, expanding storage, increasing energy-efficiency, and converting Boswell from coal to another source to continue producing energy.

Kuklenski informed on the upcoming IRP public meetings that will be held in late July.

The expectation is that the PUC will hold a public hearing on the IRP in the 2nd quarter of 2026.

* 1. Xcel Energy

Trisha Duncan informed that the IRP was approved April 2025. Duncan further informed that the MN Energy Connection was also approved.

Childs informed that PIIC supported the Lyon connection. He recognized that the project was controversial, but PIIC felt that grid stability was important.

1. Updates
   1. Emerging Issues Sub-Committee

Vita informed that the memo summarizes the information. No questions were presented.

* 1. Workforce Sub-committee

Vita informed that the memo summarizes the information. No questions were presented.

* 1. EQB

Vita informed that no additional updates exist.

* 1. MN State Colleges and Universities

Vita informed that no additional updates exist.

* 1. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Kohlasch provided an update to the $200 Federal grant he first informed ETAC in 2024. He stated that the grants are open. Kohlasch further informed that he is working with other state agencies on other green house gas reductions.

* 1. Department of Revenue

Vita informed that no additional updates exist.

* 1. Department of Labor and Industry

Vita informed that no additional updates exist.

* 1. Department of Commerce

Vita informed that no additional updates exist.

* 1. Public Utility Commission

PUC informed of no updates.

* 1. Other ETO updates

Vita informed that the memo summarizes the information. No questions were presented.

* 1. Next Meeting

Vita recommended a meeting poll as prior meetings. The group agreed and recommended that the poll additionally poll on a location.

1. Adjourn – Roll Call Vote

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