

Minutes of the
EMPOWER NORTH DAKOTA COMMISSION
July 20, 2020
ND Department of Commerce
1600 E Century Avenue Suite 2 Bismarck ND
WSI Boardroom

Members present:

Michelle Kommer, Vawnta Best, Jason Bohrer, Al Christianson, Ron Day, Ron Ness, Dale Niezwaag, Mark Nisbet, Mike Rud, Jay Skabo, David Straley, Jeff Zueger, Danette Welsh

Ex Officio Members present:

Stacey Dahl, Julie Voeck

Public present:

Call in only via Microsoft TEAMS Platform

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Chairwoman Kommer, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m., welcoming members and guests.

Michelle thanked the members for their progressive discussions, received so far. These discussions have resulted in a drafted report. With more review and recommendations, this report will be ready for presentation to the Interim Energy Development & Transmission Committee in September.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Christianson and seconded by Day to approve the June 30, 2020 minutes with an addition of the meeting address to be put in the header of the minutes. Motion carried.

REMARKS

Lt. Governor Brent Sanford

Lt. Governor Sanford thanked the commission members and requested their continued collaboration to achieve the needed growth and development with the legislature.

BUSINESS FRIENDLY DEVELOPMENT

James Leiman

James highlighted the six strategies to be discussed in the drafted report. The strategies addressed the challenges, opportunities and next steps needed before meeting with

the Interim Energy Development & Transmission Committee, along with the ND Legislature in January.

North Dakota is among the most business-friendly states in the nation. As a result of its commitment to industry, the energy sector has enjoyed tremendous private sector investment and growth since 2000.

Discussion points:

- A potential targeted study of state and local regulatory environments to address and assess obstacles, for creating a better business friendly environment.
- A culture shift for a more business friendly environment, resulting in regular held meetings with other agencies, private or public.
- Review of current executive orders and the impact of not reinstating them after the COVID virus.

**INDUSTRIAL PARK and VALUE-ADDED ENERGY
Petrochemical Facility, Biomass Facility,
Datacenter, Carbon Market**

- Recommendation to change “market” in carbon market, to not confuse with carbon tax.
- More refined discussions will be brought to the next meeting.

PUBLIC EDUCATION and COMMUNICATION

A synergistic approach to communication will enable the public to understand the energy’s impact on the State of ND.

Discussion points:

- Educating public groups could lead to more ambassadors for ND.
- In the past, the EmPower ND Commission held local meetings, that led to more public awareness of the challenges in the energy industry.

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**ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, CORPORATE
GOVERNANCE**

Energy markets were the first to be impacted by evolving ESG investment standards. With energy representing the largest industry in the state, it is critical to get ahead of these trends to ensure long-term financial stability for the industry.

Discussion points:

- Discussions focused around where the state could add the most value in growth, managing risk, and return on investment.
- Speakers to present at the next EmPower meeting on ESG.

TIMELINE AND MOVING FORWARD

James discussed the seven steps leading to presentation to the Interim Energy Development & Transmission Committee in September, along with step eight, for legislative session in January 2021.

TRANSMISSION

The state must continue to work with the SPP and MISO to ensure that the power that is produced can be transmitted and sold. In addition, there must be adequate and long-term funding in place to meet these requirements.

- More refined discussions will be brought to the next meeting.

The Commerce Department will work on organization of the dialogue/discussion recommendations and continue further discussion at the August meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bob Harms commented that he may have a few more additions to add for the commission. Senator Wardner thanked the members for their collaboration with the report.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned unanimously at 4:15 p.m.



James Leiman
Proxy for Chairwoman Kommer

8/25/20

Date

Sherri Frieze

August 24, 2020

Sherri Frieze
Boards & Commissions E.A.

Date