

Minutes of the
EMPOWER NORTH DAKOTA COMMISSION

June 11, 2020
TEAMS Video/Audio Conference Call

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:

Lt. Governor, Gerald Bachmeier, Wade Boeshans, Stacey Dahl, Julie Voeck

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Bohrer and seconded by Nisbet to approve the May 28th, 2020 minutes. Motion carried.

Issues Facing ND

Discussions from the last meeting in May have led to working through the topics discussed by each leader drawing conclusions to a path forward. Topics not covered during today's meeting will be covered at the follow up meeting on June 30th.

Energy Research
Jason Bohrer

Shared concepts:

- **Leveraging**
 - Private
 - Federal
- **CO2**
 - Sequestration
 - Re-use
 - Leadership, first in field
- **Commercialization**
 - Risk mitigation
- **Value Added**
 - Synergies – energy park
 - Other industries
- **Cost Share**
 - Leverage
- **Absolute Funding Amounts**
- **Diversification of economy**
- **ESG – Environmental, Social and Governance**

Dialogue discussion

- Agreement on focus for research and funding model.
- Hurdles to overcome:
 - ESG, alignment
 - Appropriate risk mitigation
- Designation of EERC as a research center
- Continue to endorse the allocation of dollars toward energy as funded through the EERC, including education through outreach.
- Match requirement waivable by industrial commission, to support baseline research to support the value added and commercialization.
- Create criteria on energy projects to expand energy pie.
- Auditing of our own policies and processes that govern our research councils, making sure they allow for maximum leverage of federal dollars, giving that extra “squishiness” in deadlines, timelines and federal funding requirements.
- Risk mitigation resulting in consulting with other groups; Renewable Energy Council, Oil and Gas, NDSU, EERC; stranded funding due to incentive constraints.
- Opportunity to leverage funding to the outdoor heritage fund to fulfill the ESG impacts beyond current boundaries, creating a private/public partnership, expanding

Condensed Takeaway Action Items

- Auditing of our own policies and processes that govern our research councils, making sure they allow for maximum leverage of federal dollars, giving that extra “squishiness” in deadlines, timelines and federal funding requirements.
- Identify uses of the outdoor heritage fund that would benefit the energy industry collectively
- Expand the outdoor heritage funding parameters in order to utilize funding beyond current boundaries, so the state can demonstrate that it embraces and welcomes companies that want to be part of the ESG concept.

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Transmission
Jay Skabo/John Weeda

Challenges:

- **SPP and MISO**
 - Full; restricting new generation within the state
- **Timing or very near future**
 - Transmission is a long lead construction process – permitting process and construction process
- **Funding from RTO**
 - Ten-year process for a fair method for funding

John Weeda presented information that reflected on the ND Transmission Study, MISO Renewable Integration Study & CapX2020 key points, Impact of Coal Creek

Public Education
Ron Day and Danette Welsh

- **Cohesive message and plan**
 - Understand the connectivity with the energy industry
 - Opportunities created across the state to the east to the west
 - Legislators understand the value chain across the state and be advocates for
- **Synergy within different entities - general collaboration**
 - Educating the public on the impacts of the energy industry in ND

Suggestion

It was suggested that the commission travel as a group on the road in an advocacy role, educating students, parents, and public in listening sessions, focusing on industry workforce opportunities.

Action items:

- Department of Commerce to have the support of the EmPower ND Commission for funding allocated towards marketing the state's energy industry.
- Partnering with career and workforce academies.
- Station retirement, and a vision for utilizing existing transmission to grow the industry.
- More discussion will take place at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

Due to time constraints, the topics of Industrial Park/Value Added led by James Leiman and Mark Nisbet; and Business Friendly Environment led by Ron Ness will be presented at the next meeting in June.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

A presentation on County Zoning in McLean County was offered for a future meeting to the commission.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned unanimously at 4:30 p.m.

Michelle Kommer 6/30/20
Chairwoman Kommer Date

Sherri Frieze 06.30.20
Sherri Frieze, Boards and Commission E.A. Date