

Minutes of the
EMPOWER NORTH DAKOTA COMMISSION

October 12, 2020
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
ND Department of Commerce
TEAMS Conference Meeting

Members present:

Vawnita Best, Jason Bohrer, Al Christianson, Ron Ness,
Dale Niezwaag, David Straley, Danette Welsh

Ex Officio Members present:

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

Public present:

Call in only via Microsoft TEAMS Platform

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

James Leiman, proxy for Interim Chairman Shawn Kessel, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., welcoming members and guests.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Christianson and seconded by Welsh to approve the September 16, 2020 minutes. Motion carried.

**LEGISLATIVE FEEDBACK
FOLLOWING ENERGY DEVELOPMENT &
TRANSMISSION INTERIM COMMITTEE**

James Leiman

James talked about the Strategic Development Proposal Report, presented recently to the ED&T Committee. The proposal included a \$65 million request. James mentioned he sees an expectation for submission of additional information for supporting this request.

Lt Governor commented that the presentation went well with no report issued from the ED&T committee. Senator Wardner commented that to receive white papers from the different industries of oil, gas, coal, renewables would be welcomed.

James discussed the need for a hybrid model that would cover policy, regulatory, business development, and applied research that would cover more education and communication on how Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG) affects industry and how the state can play a role in the overall scheme.

In November, a small group of EmPower leaders will start to have one to three meetings before sessions to refine the strategic development proposal, discuss ESG impacts on industry in North Dakota, and any additional details to cover before heading into legislative session.

The group consists of:

- Ron Ness – oil
- Jason Bohrer – coal
- Danette Welsh – natural gas
- Gerald Bachmeier – ethanol
- Julie Voeck – wind
- James Leiman – commerce

Matt Marshall, Minnkota Power, commented to the group that he is looking for legislative partners and sponsorship for changes to a bill that will extend legislation to allow for sales tax abatement for qualified data centers. Changes to the bill include eliminating the cap on how many data centers are allowed and extending the sunset on the bill.

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL
VALLEY PROSPERITY (VPP)
NDSU President Dean Bresciani
UND President Andy Armacost
Co-Chair of VPP, Marshall Albright**

VPP is focused on achieving a shared vision for high value and sustained economic growth for the Red River Valley and North Dakota. The R&D Proposal will strengthen and Diversify North Dakota's economy by investing in Research and Development.

- 30-member Steering Committee
- 5 priorities: water, research, talent, entrepreneurship, and infrastructure

Proposal white paper to include:

- State funding for basic or applied research
- Level of funding – 15% of Legacy Fund Earnings
- Governance – accountability via internal and external advisory committees.

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LEGISLATIVE STRATEGY DISCUSSION

In late November James will collect industry white papers that will help push more education and communication to legislators and leaders.

The white papers will contain:

- High level synopsis of ESG
- ESG impacts on industry
- Private sector perspective
- How state government can help support

A spokesperson will be needed to move the education/communication along to leaders and legislators.

NEXT STEPS

Lt. Governor Brent Sanford

Lt. Governor Sanford discussed the need for collaboration from private sector and universities, as the ask for funding for R&D becomes more competitive. dollars.

James mentioned the next full EmPower ND Commission meeting may be in late November early December to discuss the industry white paper, along with a refined Strategic Development Proposal Report.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made from Welsh, seconded by Bohrer to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

James Leiman

James Leiman, Proxy for Interim Chairman Date
Shawn Kessel

Sherri Frieze

12.2.20

Sherri Frieze, Boards & Commissions E.A. Date