

Minutes of the
RENEWABLE ENERGY COUNCIL (REC)
Monday, June 23, 2025 -- 1:00 pm (CDT)
TEAMS Meeting Via Conference/Video Call
ONSITE Location: Workforce Safety & Insurance Board Room,
1600 E. Century Ave., Ste. 1, Bismarck, ND 58503

Members Present

Rodney Holth
Terry Goerger
Tony Grindberg (Teams)
Rich Garman, Commerce Dept.

Staff Present

Jordan Kannianen, NDIC
Erin Stieg, NDIC
Brenna Jessen, NDIC (Teams)
Joleen Leier, Commerce Dept.

Guests Present

Erik Lind, BWR Innovations
Geoff Simon (Teams)
Rob Steir (Teams)
Xiaodong Hou (Teams)

Alison Ritter (Teams)
Andrea Rebsom (Teams)
Mat Hirst, Well Spring Hydro/Volt Lithium
Patricia (Teams)

WELCOME & OPENING COMMENTS

Rich Garman called the Renewable Energy Council (REC) meeting to order at 1:00 pm (CDT). The meeting began with introductions, including Jordan Kannianen's from ND Industrial Commission. Jordan has been on the job for six months and has a background in the legislature. Garman will be representing the Dept. of Commerce on behalf of Commissioner Chris Schilken. Garman welcomed the members and guests in the meeting room and on the TEAM video/audio platform.

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the September 16, 2024, meeting was presented to the board.

Terry Goerger motioned to approve the September 16, 2024, meeting minutes as presented. Rod Holth seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Renewable Energy Program Project Management and Financial Report

Jordan Kannianen provided the following overview:

- **Uncommitted Funds:** Approximately \$1.4 million in uncommitted funds.
- **Active Projects:** 15 active projects with over \$5 million in committed funds.
- **Revenue Source:** \$3 million from well production taxes.
- **Forecast Numbers:** OMB did not have forecast numbers available, but the fund has historically not had issues filling.
- **Assumptions:** Based on \$60 per barrel and \$57 per barrel for the two years of the biennium, with 1.1 million barrels per day, which are currently ahead of projections.

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- **Example of Completed Project:** A project awarded to UND in 2020-2021 successfully employed a thermal catalyst system to decompose methane into nano carbon, achieving 70% methane conversion.

Jordan emphasized the importance of these projects and the ongoing efforts to manage and allocate funds effectively.

Declaration/Consideration of Conflicts of Interest

Rich Garman declared a potential conflict of interest regarding a project he is involved in, which is also being considered by the ND Development Fund. The board discussed and concluded that it was not a conflict.

CONSIDERATION OF SPECIAL GRANT ROUND 55 REQUESTS

Rich Garman gave an overview of project R-055-A.

R-055-A – Producing Silicon Anode Materials for Li-ion Batteries

Submitted by University of North Dakota

Total Project Costs: \$1,249,999

Amount Requested: \$200,000

Technical Reviewers' Results

- Fund – 201/250
- Fund – 213/250
- Fund – 205/250
- Average Weighted Score – 206.33/250

Technical Advisor Recommendations:

Reviewers' recommendation is to fund this project.

Xiaodong Hou presented the project.

Tony Grindberg inquired about the DOE Award and Talon Metals Interaction. Xiaodong confirmed that the DOE award is still pending due to an ongoing agency review. He also mentioned interactions with Talon Metals, particularly in collaboration with Packet Digital for securing domestic sources of critical minerals.

Rich Garman gave an overview of Project R-055-B.

R-055-B – Improving Renewable Energy Resources with Hydrogen Offtake

Submitted by BWR Innovations LLC

Total Project Costs: \$1,120,232

Amount Requested: \$500,000

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Technical Reviewers' Results:

- Fund May Be Considered– 168/250
- Funding May Be Considered – 132/250
- Fund – 172/250
- Fund – 227/250
- Average Weighted Score – 174.75/250

Technical Advisor Recommendations:

Reviewers' recommendation is to fund this project.

Erik Lind from BWR Innovations presented the project.

Terry Goerger questioned the proposed usage of hydrogen in North Dakota. Erik explained the potential for hydrogen use in transportation, critical infrastructure and various industries. He emphasized the need for a hydrogen pump in North Dakota to kickstart the hydrogen economy and mentioned ongoing projects in Texas and other states.

Tony Grindberg questioned Blue Water's focus and REC's equipment funding policy. Erik clarified that Blue Water is transitioning to focus more on commercial transportation and resilient power. Jordan and Rich discussed the eligibility of funding equipment, concluding that it would be up to the board to decide.

Rich Garman asked for clarification on hydrogen production costs. Erik detailed the cost structure, aiming to bring hydrogen production costs down to \$8-\$12 per kilogram, with a long-term goal of reaching \$3 per kilogram through various production methods.

Tony Grindberg questioned Jordan and Rich about the precedence for funding equipment. The REC policies were reviewed, noting that while there is no explicit mention of equipment funding, it would be up to the board to decide based on the project's potential to advance to a commercially viable stage.

DISCUSSION/COMPLETION OF BALLOTS

Ballots were completed and forward to Erin Steig. Results are below:

R-055-A – Producing Silicon Anode Materials for Li-ion Batteries

Project Duration: 1.5 Years

Requesting: \$200,000

Total Project Costs: \$1,249,999

Conflict of Interest: 0

Fund: 4 Do Not Fund: 0 Abstain: 0

R-055-B – Improving Renewable Energy Resources with Hydrogen Offtake

Project Duration: 24 Months

Requesting: \$500,000

Total Project Costs: \$1,120,232

Conflict of Interest: 0

Fund: 3 Do Not Fund: 1 Abstain: 0

Terry Goerger motioned to accept both proposals. Rod Holth seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

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Jordan Kannianen will take these proposals to the Industrial Commission meeting on July 29, 2025.

DISCUSSION ON DECOMMISSIONING FUNDS

1. R-027-037 (Landfill Gas) Remaining amount: \$485,000
2. R-042-052 (Living Stone Lodge) Remaining amount: \$161,811.45
3. R-045-054 (Spiritwood Greenhouse) Remaining amount: \$500,000 (full award)
4. R-046-055 (Airtonomy) Remaining amount: \$50,000

Erin Stieg reviewed the above listed projects that have not had any movement, thus asking the board to consider decommissioning funds allocated to these projects.

1. **Landfill Gas Project:**

- **Grantee:** City of Fargo
- **Contract Details:** Executed in December 2016, amended in 2019
- **Status:** Received two status reports in 2017, no further updates
- **Funds:** \$15,000 paid out, \$480,500 remaining
- **Action:** Suggested decommissioning due to lack of progress and response.

2. **Livingston Lodge:**

- **Grantee:** MHA Nation
- **Contract Details:** Executed in May 2020, amended in 2021 due to COVID-19
- **Status:** Six reports received, final report missing
- **Funds:** \$237,000 paid out, \$161,811.45 remaining
- **Action:** Rich suggested Erin contact Anthony Bauer from Indian Affairs Commission to assist in getting a response and final report. Rich will make the introduction to Erin.

3. **Spiritwood Greenhouse:**

- **Grantee:** Spiritwood Energy Park Association
- **Contract Details:** Executed in 2021
- **Status:** No movement, no signed contract
- **Funds:** \$500,000 remaining
- **Action:** Suggested decommissioning due to lack of progress and response.

4. **Aeronomy (Evolve Analytics):**

- **Grantee:** Evolve Analytics (now Thread)
- **Contract Details:** Executed in March 2021
- **Status:** Seven reports received, final report missing
- **Funds:** \$50,000 remaining
- **Action:** Tony Grindberg will contact Josh Reedy to get a response and final report.

The discussion highlighted the importance of accountability and follow-up on project progress to ensure effective use of allocated funds. They also discussed the return of funds to the council if a project doesn't fulfill the agreement.

Terry Goerger motioned to decommission funds for the Landfill Gas and Spiritwood Greenhouse projects. Rod Holth seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

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LEGISLATIVE DISCUSSION

Jordan Kannianen gave an overview of legislative discussions concerning the composition of the Renewable Energy Council (REC) board:

- **Board Composition Changes:**
 - There was a discussion about potential changes to the board composition, specifically the elimination of the biodiesel industry seat and the addition of two seats for advanced biofuel or sugar-based biofuel members.
 - Jordan stated that he spoke with several legislators and representatives from the soybean associations, but there was not enough support to move forward with the proposed changes during the last legislative session.
- **Current Board Vacancies:**
 - The council identified three vacant positions: biodiesel, biomass and ethanol.
 - It was noted that Gerald Bachmeier, who represents the ethanol industry, is still listed on the board and has been bought out of Red Trail. The council needs to confirm if he will continue to serve.
- **Next Steps:**
 - The council will make the Governor's Office aware of the upcoming appointments and encourage potential candidates, such as Ryan Peterson, to submit applications to the Governor's Office.

**PROJECT UPDAE FROM WELLSRING HYDRO: R-050-067 “UNLOCKING LITHIUM
EXTRACTION IN PRODUCED WATER”**

Mat Hirst gave an update on the project.

- **Project Overview:**
 - Wellspring Hydro is focused on lithium extraction from produced water in the oil and gas industry. The project aims to leverage existing infrastructure to extract lithium from super-saturated water, which contains significant amounts of lithium.
- **Progress and Testing:**
 - Initial testing involved sending 100 barrels of water to Canada for pilot plant testing, which showed successful lithium extraction.
 - The current field trial is running on location in North Dakota, with successful lithium extraction reported.
- **Technology and Operations:**
 - The technology uses ion exchange media to selectively remove lithium from produced water. The media has been tested and improved over multiple generations.
 - The field trial setup includes reaction tanks, asset recovery tanks, and equipment for washing and recharging the media. The process involves minimal changes to existing oil and gas operations.
- **Future Plans:**
 - The goal is to scale up to commercial operations, with plans to manufacture ion exchange media in North Dakota and establish a central location for lithium upgrading.
 - The project aims to create high-value jobs and contribute to the state's economy by producing lithium and other valuable chemicals.

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

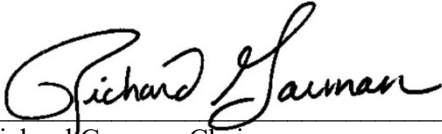
Tentative dates and venue for the next Renewable Energy Council Meeting in September 2025 were discussed. It was suggested to align the next board meeting with legislative interim meetings for convenience. It was also

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suggested having the meeting prior to September 17 due to member conflict. Joleen Leier will send out a Doodle Poll with prospective dates after we receive the next round of applications. The deadline for the next application cycle is August 1, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

Rod Holth motioned to adjourn the meeting. Terry Georger seconded. With no public comment, the meeting was adjourned at 2:58 pm.



Richard Garman, Chairman