

NCMEDD Quarterly Meeting Minutes, March 24, 2022, Conrad, MT

Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 2:04 pm with the following members present:

Attending:

Sarah Converse, Sean McGuire, Kathy Woodford, Cyndi Johnson, Tony Sitzmann, Brenda Schilling, Mary Harwood, Jim Larson, Shane Etwiler, Mike Mills, Lorette Carter, Dale Seifert, John Overcast, Sanford Stone, and J. Tatsey.

Approval of Agenda:

Agenda was approved.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

The minutes for December 22, 2021 were approved.

Financials:

Financials for December, January, and February were approved. 2022 budget reviewed, to be finalized at the annual meeting in April.

Administrative Report:

Project/Grant/Activity Updates:

ARPA: Wrote a letter of support for 3Rivers' broadband application and contacted entities in Belt, Niehart, and Monarch to encourage other letters. Staff continues to work with multiple water systems clients and will be hearing next month about Minimum Allocation grants. DNRC has raised concerns that supply chain and contractor availability issues may force water program cycles to roll into the next legislative session. Discussions beginning concerning the looming infrastructure bipartisan bill.

RLF: all current clients have continued without change in status. NCMEDD is almost ready to be able to make a new loan. Additional American Rescue Plan-related funding is pending for the state of Montana which NCMEDD intends to pursue.

CRDC: Annual report submitted and pending approval. This process will take longer than usual with the volume of programs with which the Department of Commerce is involved in 2022.

Brownfields: 2 new projects are pending review and approval. NCMEDD will apply for the next grant cycle in June. Making progress in assistance with Glacier Hotel resolution. Petrofund projects continue without incident.

Marketing: Will be revising strategy in tandem with the CEDS rewrite. Digital marketing trainings booked with KRose Company, free to the public. Discussion of a workshop with 3Rivers Communications.

EDA: KLJ Engineering was selected to contract with NCMEDD on the CEDS rewrite.

Business Items:

Committees were discussed. Previously there has been a CEDS Strategy Committee separate from the board and finding members has proven challenging.

Annual meeting was discussed. April 19 at 11:30 am is the target date/time. This will include the meeting itself as well as a tour of the Little Shell Center and a CEDS kickoff session with KLJ Engineering. Staff will follow up to confirm details and inform the public.

Shane Etwiler presented the Low-Cost Airline Initiative, as a representative of the Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce. NCMEDD will promote the fund in future communications.

Sanford Stone and J. Tatsey presented on a solar energy project for the Babb community, including panels and a backup battery. NCMEDD would assist with MOUs and community engagement. Board moved to approve sending a letter of intent to the USDA REPP program on behalf of the Babb project, contingent on documentation of buy-in by additional individuals and entities in the Babb community. Motion passed.

Local government dues were discussed, as well as the possibility of NCMEDD pursuing private funding for select projects. No motion was raised, but a consensus was reached that review of procedure is required and that more information will be reviewed at the annual meeting in April.

Public Comment:

Sanford Stone (Babb, MT) thanked the board for their support of the solar project.

President Cyndi Johnson stated that OneMontana is looking for an agricultural representative for their board.

Dale Seifert asked about the status of one of the current Brownfields projects in more detail.

There being no further business to come before the Board, meeting adjourned at 3:51 pm.