

Citizens for Clean Energy, Inc. (CCE)

www.ccemontana.org

Minutes for February 8, 2022 Meeting

Location: Zoom Meeting in Great Falls, Montana

Welcome: Rich Liebert, Chair, called the Zoom meeting to order at 7 p.m. Eleven CCE, Inc. supporters attended the Zoom meeting; a quorum was present. Rich welcomed Donna Williams, a guest of Melissa Smith, and Matt Rains, with Farmers Union, to the meeting. Thank you, David Saslav and Melissa Smith, for setting up the Zoom meeting.

Melissa introduced Donna W. to the group and said Donna is very interested in solar but has too many trees around her house to be able to install solar for her home. Donna asked if it was possible to find an ideal home for solar system efficiency and then cooperatively share in the costs and benefits of a solar installation on that home. Rich said this idea was a good lead-in to his guest speaker, Matt Rains, who is a Special Projects Manager with Farmers Union, graduate of Simms High School and the US Military Academy, an aviator, and owner of Birdtail Ranch. Matt said he is now Chief of Staff at Farmers Union and advised that their newsletter will have more information on Solarize Central Montana; he is working to learn more about solar. He worked on building a Co-op in Havre from the ground up for Montana beef producers where they will produce USDA certified beef. Farmers Union and the Co-op are excited about working with MSU-Northern to train students about the beef industry and developing a curriculum for the Co-op's beef program. Rich said Farmers Union and Northern Plains Resource Council have a Zoom event promoting "Solarize Central Montana." The group discussed solar opportunities in Montana and some of the problems involved. Donna mentioned off-grid charging and battery options for solar energy systems and provided several links: <https://www.empower-solar.com/commercial-solar/#solar-business-models> and <https://beamforall.com/product/ev-arc-2020/>.

Rich asked everyone to introduce themselves to Donna and mentioned she served on Neighborhood Council 8 in the past. Rich congratulated Shannon for her appointment to the Park and Recreation Board. Donna added a few more links to questions people brought up during the discussion:

<https://www.cleanenergyku.org/home/about-us/our-story> - Clean Energy Credit Union, a cooperative business, started up to help mitigate climate change, reduce pollution and improve public health, etc.

<https://deq.mt.gov/energy/programs/aerlp> - The Alternative Energy Revolving Loan Program (AERLP) provides low-interest loans to increase investments in alternative energy systems and energy conservation measures in Montana.

Secretary: Kathy Gessaman summarized the January 11, 2022 CCE Zoom meeting minutes. David said the minutes didn't include the second business email address which was info@ccemontana.org. Kathy said she didn't recall the second name being in the motion but would amend the minutes to include it. **Shannon Wilson moved to accept the January 11, 2022 CCE, Inc. electronically distributed minutes as corrected; David Saslav seconded.** Rich called for additional discussion; **the minutes were approved as amended.**

Treasurer: Shannon Wilson said there were no changes in the CCE checking account since the last meeting. Shannon said she had two invoices from Sandra Guynn: one for the 2022 annual website maintenance and Weebly hosting fees totaling \$396.00 and a second invoice for the Microsoft 365 Email Essentials from GoDaddy (two business emails: info@ccemontana.org and admin@ccemontana.org) for \$47.76 which was approved at the January meeting. **Kathy Gessaman moved to pay Sandra Guynn for the 2022 annual website maintenance and annual Weebly hosting fees totaling \$396.00. Lita Sharone seconded the motion; the motion passed.**

CCE Website/Communications: Please visit the new CCE, Inc. website for the latest updates on CCE activities. <https://www.ccemontana.org/> The original CCE website address continues to be active as an archive along with current LENR info: <http://www.cce-mt.org/>. Send articles of general interest and notices about CCE activity to Kathy G. at cce.secretary@gmail.com. Please check out the new website to view links to current events.

Rich asked if the ‘info’ address would be put on the website and whether Sandra would have to set this up. David asked Rich if he would take the emails from info@ccemontana.org and he said yes. David said more needs to be done to get info@ccemontana.org set up. Rich asked about putting a calendar on the website to make it easy to see upcoming activities at a glance. Kathy said she talked to Sandra. Sandra hadn’t built a calendar using Weebly yet and, depending on how much time it takes to produce and maintain a calendar, there could be a fee associated with it. David said it wasn’t hard to put a calendar on the website to help track monthly activities. Kathy said she’d talk to Sandra about adding a calendar to the website. Rich said CCE could pay for a calendar if it is very time consuming.

CCE Facebook: Shannon Wilson is the administrator of CCE’s Facebook site and David is a co-administrator. Please visit the site at <https://www.facebook.com/Great-Falls-Citizens-for-Clean-Energy-CCE-110217491438621/> Shannon said the admin@ccemontana.org is functional, and she is using this address for Facebook communications to facilitate the boosting capabilities; she should be ready to boost as early as tomorrow. David was concerned about paying for boosts. Shannon said David could pay for boosts if needed since he is an admin on the Facebook page. CCE would reimburse whoever pays for a boost according to the motion made for the boost.

Unfinished Business:

Energy – Conservation & Sustainability Committee: Ken Palisin, Chair, said he and Lita S. met with Charles K. and Susan E. and they discussed developing insights and ideas on ways to encourage City, County, and citizens to incorporate clean energy use in public and private situations. The committee plans to engage the City and County on conservation and development of public and private clean energy and work to develop a vision for conservation. Lita was concerned about companies exploiting Montana. Rich asked the committee to ask the City Commission about the City’s growth policy – last updated in 2013. David suggested the committee ask Commissioners about the growth plan outside of the commission meetings and keep the focus on the mission of CCE to promote conservation and clean energy usage.

SIP - 2022 Science Fair: The Great Falls College–MSU Regional Science and Engineering Fair will be held on March 8, 2022 for middle and high school students (grades 6-12). Mike Enk, Chair of the SIP Science Fair Committee, was out of town. Kathy G. said Mike won’t know how many projects will meet CCE’s criteria until he evaluates the project abstracts which won’t be available until March; the science projects could be virtual or in-person. CCE was awarded the Dr. David W. Baker Memorial Student-Science Foundation grant (for 13 years in a row) for \$200, bringing the total Student Incentive Program (SIP) fund to \$600. Kathy said there was an error in the previous minutes asking for \$300; the SIP fund still totals \$600 for the 2022 Science Fair. Rich said Mike will lead the CCE oversight team to decide what projects meet CCE’s criteria for awards. Please contact Mike (trouter@q.com) if you are interested in helping judge for CCE at the March 8th Science Fair.

C-PACE: Rich said County Commissioner Joe Briggs sent C-PACE draft legislation to Helena for legal review. Rich noted Cascade could be one of the first counties to pass C-PACE. Rich said he’d send a notice when the County Commissioners vote on C-PACE.

New Business:

City – County Growth Policy: Rich said he plans to push growth policy review when the County Planning Board meets in a couple weeks. David said he thought City staff wanted the City Commission to develop a vision for future growth. Rich said the census showed the County gained about 4,000 people, with less than half being in Great Falls. Donna said Great Falls is a very livable city and she prefers the slow growth. David said there is a need to set growth policies that help maintain Montana’s clean and healthy environment, and he encouraged developing good relationships with County and City Commissioners and the Mayor. Lita suggested pushing for an energy-related plan using more alternative energy.

Solarize Central Montana: Rich said Farmers Union and Northern Plains Resource Council are jointly working to help Central Montana get access to expert solar installers, information, etc. David provided a link for the February 9th “Solarize Central Montana” kick-off Zoom meeting: <https://northernplains.org/solarize-central-mt/>. Solarize Central Montana is a 9-month campaign by Central Montana Resource Council to help community members from Fergus and Judith Basin Counties get more solar energy. Ken T. said it is good to see solar is now good economics – solar payback is very short.

Reports:

Grassroots: Rich said Gerry Jennings is working with Northern Plains Resource Council (NPRC) about starting a Great Falls chapter of NPRC; the planning and due diligence continues.

The next CCE, Inc. Zoom meeting was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at 7 p.m. Watch your email for Zoom meeting instructions. Please email agenda items to Rich L. at wvranch@3rivers.net.

David S. moved to adjourn and Kathy G. seconded; the meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Please check your email and the CCE, Inc. website for additions or updates.

- Feb 9 – “Solarize Central Montana” 6-8 p.m. Zoom via northernplains.org
- Feb 15 – City of Great Falls Commission meeting, Tuesday, 7 p.m.
- Feb 22 – Cascade County Planning Board, 9 a.m. (*Growth Policy discussion*)
- Feb 23 – Great Falls Rising 6 p.m. Zoom - MT Constitution - <https://www.facebook.com/greatfallsrisingmt>
- Mar 8 – Great Falls College–MSU Regional Science & Engineering Fair for grades 6 – 12
- Mar 8 – CCE Zoom meeting at 7 p.m.

“Success is not final; failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts.”

Winston Churchill