

New Mexico Renewable Energy Transmission Authority

**Minutes of Board Meeting
October 10, 2019
1:00 p.m.**

**NM State Capitol – Room 317
490 Old Santa Fe Trail
Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87501**

Present

Robert (Bob) Busch, Chairman
Dr. James Miller, Member
Megan O'Reilly, Member
Noah Long, Member
Yovanne Lucero, Designee for Tim Eichenberg
Louise Martinez, Designee for EMNRD Cabinet Secretary

Absent

Brian Moore, Member

RETA Staff

Fernando Martinez, RETA Executive Director
Lynn Mostoller and Mariposa Padilla-Sivage – General Counsel, Sutin Thayer & Browne
Ginny Selvin – RETA Manager of Finance
Gloria Castillo – RETA Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Busch called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. A quorum was present for the meeting.

2. Approval of Agenda

Member Long made a motion to accept the agenda as presented. Member Miller seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Chairman Busch called for a vote and it passed unanimously.

3. Approval of September 5, 2019 Board Meeting Minutes

Member Long made a motion to accept the September 5, 2019 Board Minutes as presented. Member O'Reilly seconded the motion. There being no additional discussion, corrections, additions or updates to the minutes, Chairman Busch called for a vote and it passed unanimously.

4. Report of the Chairman

Chairman Busch reported on the following:

- PRC approval of the PNM acquisition of the Western Spirit Transmission Project
- Disagreement with a letter received from Socorro County Commission opposing the Western Spirit Transmission Project. Attorney Mostoller explained that, because PNM was paying fair market value for the Project, RETA was in compliance with the Anti-Donation Clause. Chairman Busch explained that RETA's participation in the Project was well within the scope of the RETA Act and exactly why RETA was formed in the first place. He also addressed concerns about EMF and Stray Voltage and highlighted two EPRI studies that had been provided to board members, available at:
 - <https://www.epri.com/#/pages/product/1025392/>
 - <http://www.atc-projects.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/EPRI-2012.pdf>
- Progress made on selecting a contractor for the Renewable Energy Transmission and Storage Study, indicating that the contract is expected to be signed early next week and that the Advisory Committee will have its introductory meeting scheduled soon thereafter.
- RETA will be meeting with the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) to request appropriations for next fiscal year.

5. Report of the Executive Director

Executive Director Fernando Martinez introduced himself and thanked the Chairman and Board members for their help. He noted that he is currently working on forming relationships and meeting with key people such as legislators and stakeholders in order to introduce himself and reintroduce RETA. He is also working on next year's budget and preparing presentations for the upcoming meetings with the LFC and the Finance Authority Oversight Committee.

6. Review and Consider Approval of Draft Financial Statement for the Year Ending August 31, 2019

Ms. Selvin presented the financial statements for the period ending August 31, 2019.

Member Long made a motion to approve the financial statements for the period ending August 31, 2019. Member Miller seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Chairman Busch called for a vote and it passed unanimously.

7. Update on the Western Spirit Project

Mr. Rentz reported on the status of the Western Spirit Project. He noted that the PRC approval of the transaction with PNM was the last major regulatory approval for the Project. He also reported that the Project has reached about 43% land acquisition and that several more agreements with landowners were close to being finalized, which would bring land acquisition in the range of the high 60% to low 70% range. In addition, geotech and lidar work was ongoing in the field. Mr. Rentz indicated that the next phase includes placing orders for the towers and finalizing the EPC Agreement.

8. Public Comments

Sandra Noll, resident of Socorro, expressed concern about possible negative impacts that will occur with the Western Spirit project. She contended that the proposed area is critical to the survival of migratory birds. The property crossing by SunZia will affect trail hikers, powerlines and she fears it will kill birds. Ms. Noll also felt that views will be impacted, especially for potential movie projects. She commented that powerlines will badly affect the aesthetics and environment of the property. Ms. Noll asked that RETA consider all of these issues.

Mary Ruff and Sue Green talked at length about why lines should be buried. Both contended that the lines could be placed underground at the Rio Grande crossing in a way that would be cost effective and less environmentally disruptive.

Sandra Hoogerwerf, of Socorro County, commented on the overall Statewide planning of transmission lines and questioned whether there would be any jobs with the Western Spirit project that would benefit Socorro County. Ms. Hoogerwerf noted that Socorro's power is served through Tri-State, therefore, residents will not benefit from the Western Spirit Project. She asked that the public be made aware of Statewide planning of transmission lines.

Leigh Davidson, stated that she is protesting the Western Spirit project, noting that the transmission lines will cross six acres of farmland. She added that electric and transmission lines run across the Rio Grande and therefore are dangerous for birds. Ms. Davidson asked that RETA consider the needs of its constituents.

Stephanie McCleary, resident of Bosque Farms, showed photographs of powerlines and expressed concern with the transmission lines being placed too close to her property line. She also disputed whether transmission lines are safe.

Romy Baca, resident of Bosque Farms, stated that she has attended previous RETA Board meetings and will continue to attend the Board meetings to express her concerns with the Western Spirit Project crossing properties. She noted that the properties include farmlands, dairy lands, and airstrips. Ms. Baca informed the Board that she represents several people within the area of Bosque Farms who have signed a petition against the Western Spirit Project crossing properties and that she has submitted the petition to the Governor's Office. Ms. Baca contended that she is not against renewable energy but is against lines crossing the farmlands, dairy lands and airstrips. She noted that it will not benefit their valley nor landowners and the lines will destroy the beauty of their land.

Vicki Husbands, resident of Bosque Farms, expressed concern with devaluation of properties. She contended that properties will be devalued by 50 percent. Ms. Husbands commented that she has done extensive research on the health issue and has data that shows there are health issues involved. Ms. Husbands requested that the lines be buried.

9. Closed Session

Chairman Busch called for a motion to go into closed session for confidential discussion of real estate acquisition status for Western Spirit Project, *see* NMSA 1978, § 10-15-1(H)(7) (meeting subject to attorney-client privilege pertaining to threatened or pending litigation in which the public body is or may become a participant); § 10-15-1(H)(8) (meeting for the discussion of the purchase, acquisition or disposal of real property or water rights by the public body); § 62-16A-16 (protecting the proprietary technical or business information obtained by the authority as confidential); *see also* NMAC § 17.8.2.9.

Member Miller made a motion to go into closed session. Member Long seconded the motion. There being no further discussion or comments, Chairman Busch called for a vote and it passed unanimously.

Chairman Busch announced that the Board would now go into closed session. The Board went into closed session at 2:10 p.m.

Chairman Busch called for a motion for the RETA Board to come out of closed session. Member Long made a motion for the Board to come out of closed session. Member Miller seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Chairman Busch called for a vote and it passed unanimously.

The Board returned to its regular meeting at 3:20 p.m.

10. Next Meeting

Chairman Busch suggested that a tentative date of Thursday, November 7, 2019 at 1:30 p.m. be set for a regular RETA Board of Directors meeting.

11. Adjournment

Chairman Busch called for a motion to adjourn the Board meeting.

Member Long made a motion to adjourn. Member O'Reilly seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to adjourn.

The RETA Board meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.