

# Citizens for Clean Energy, Inc. (CCE)

[www.ccemontana.org](http://www.ccemontana.org)

## Minutes for February 21, 2023 Meeting

**Location:** Great Falls Zoom meeting.

**Welcome:** Rich Liebert, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. Eight CCE members attended the Zoom meeting; a quorum was present. Thank you, David Saslav and Melissa Smith, for setting up the Zoom meeting. Rich welcomed the Zoom attendees on a cold snowy evening.

**Secretary:** Kathy Gessaman summarized the January 10, 2023 CCE meeting minutes. **Melissa Smith moved to accept the January 10, 2023 CCE, Inc. electronically distributed minutes; David Saslav seconded.** There was no discussion. **The minutes were approved.**

**Treasurer:** Shannon Wilson said CCE, Inc. received a \$400 grant from the Dr. David W. Baker Student-Science Memorial Foundation for the 2023 Science Fair awards. Kathy deposited the check into CCE's bank account on February 2nd. Shannon reported on the CCE Website invoice and the invoice for the two business emails needed for the Facebook account. **Kathy Gessaman moved to pay Sandra Guynn for the 2023 annual website maintenance (\$300), the 2023 annual Weebly monthly hosting fees (\$96), and the 2023 Microsoft Essentials renewal from GoDaddy (\$143.76). Lita Sharone seconded the motion.** Rich called for discussion, and David wondered if the two business emails were still necessary. Kathy said she thought they were needed to boost items on the Facebook page. Shannon said she would talk to Sandra about the business/administrative email addresses. **The motion passed.**

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

**CCE Facebook:** Shannon Wilson is the administrator of CCE's Facebook site, and David is a co-administrator. Visit the site at <https://www.facebook.com/Great-Falls-Citizens-for-Clean-Energy-CCE-110217491438621/>. If you get a chance, please send photos of energy efficient appliances, solar installations, wind turbines, or other energy conservation or alternative energy ideas/projects you may see around the city or state to David or Shannon to post on the CCE Facebook page. Shannon spent \$15 to boost the Jan. 10<sup>th</sup> CCE meeting on the CCE Facebook page and it reached 1006 people.

### Unfinished Business:

**GTRC (Golden Triangle Resource Council):** Rich asked for an update on GTRC. David said they had a meeting scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup> where they hope to select a new solar installer for their campaign to encourage people to sign up for solar installations. David said the Great Falls Public Library is interested in having a solar installation. Ken T. said the First United Methodist Church's solar array has saved them \$10,000 over seven years; paying off 50% of the installation cost.

**2023 Legislative Session:** Rich encouraged people to visit [leg.mt.gov](http://leg.mt.gov) and call (406) 444-4800 on bills. David encouraged people to check out the GTRC website [<https://northernplains.org/bill-tracker/#/>] and learn what issues are coming before the legislature that need to be addressed. The group briefly discussed some of the bills that have come before the legislative committees and have been dismissed due to involvement by citizens.

**Nominations:** Kathy Gessaman read out the list of nominations for the 2023 CCE Board of Directors/Steering Team: Rich Liebert for President/Chair, David Saslav for Vice President/Vice Chair, Shannon Wilson for Treasurer, Kathy Gessaman for Secretary, Michael Enk for Director/Steering Team, Ken Palisin for Director/Steering Team and Ken Thornton for Director/Steering Team. **Melissa moved to accept the slate of nominations for the CCE Board of Directors/Steering Team and Shannon seconded.** Rich asked if there were any nominations from the floor as two positions as Directors were open, and there were none. **The motion passed unanimously.**

**2023 Science Fair/SIP:** Kathy said the Science Fair was Thursday, March 9<sup>th</sup>. Shannon said she attended one science fair organizational meeting at GFC-MSU; the next meeting is Friday, Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>. She'll check out the most promising projects and try to check all the project titles. Shannon said the science fair judges would make the assignments for the CCE Merit Awards.

Melissa asked if the high school program that builds houses couldn't incorporate energy saving ideas like solar installations, heat pumps, convection or induction ovens, more insulation, etc. Rich said he'd talk to Tom Moore, the Great Falls Public Schools (GFPS) Superintendent, about GFPS getting involved in the Science Fair again.

#### **New Business:**

**City of Great Falls Energy Policy:** Rich said the City is facing much higher energy costs now that their contract with Energy Keepers has expired. Shannon said she learned the water and sewer departments' electricity costs will increase by around \$800,000. Shannon said with all the building going on the city really needs a new growth policy. Rich said a developer wants to make the proposed 432-unit apartment complex where Dick's RV Park is located a TIFF district. Melissa said the TIFF funds have around \$4.2 million in them. The group discussed checking out the 2013 City of Great Falls growth policy. Ken T. said he'd try to look at the 2013 growth policy and compare it to the county's growth policy.

#### **Reports:**

**Grassroots 1/24/23 Great Falls Economic Outlook Summit:** David said he and Melissa attended the summit which included topics on the future of Montana, tourism, agriculture, forests, housing and the local economy, and an update by the CEO of NorthWestern Energy (NWE). David emailed slides and a table of contents to the Steering Team and others. Melissa said the audience wasn't as receptive to NWE's message that they had to build a gas plant in Laurel, MT so they can distribute energy because the sun doesn't always shine nor the wind always blow. Melissa said the CEO didn't mention the 25% rate increase but he claimed their energy was cheap. David said he attended the drought discussion and said the effects of the drought will linger on for quite a while. David said if the drought continues the hydro power from the dams could be affected if the water level drops too low; so far there are no dead pools behind the dams in Montana unlike some in Colorado. Melissa said she heard the lack of broadband will slow economic growth in Cascade County.

**C-PACE:** Rich said Lisa Schmidt sent him an email saying C-PACE is on the Pondera County Commissioners' agenda and it looks like it has a good chance to pass. C-PACE provides funding for renewable energy, conservation, and efficiency improvements for commercial businesses and the improvements are paid for by taxes.

The next CCE, Inc. meeting was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held in-person at the Black Bear Diner with a Zoom connection for remote attendees (no-host dinner at 6 p.m. in restaurant meeting room). Watch your email for Zoom meeting instructions. Please email agenda items to Rich L. at [wwranch@3rivers.net](mailto:wwranch@3rivers.net).

**David Saslav moved to adjourn, and Kathy Gessaman seconded; the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.**

**UPCOMING EVENTS:** Please check your email, CCE website, and/or Facebook Page for additions or updates.

- City and County Commission Meetings at: [greatfallsmt.net](http://greatfallsmt.net); [cascadecountymt.gov](http://cascadecountymt.gov)
- Mar 14 – CCE in-person and Zoom meeting at 7 p.m. No-host dinner at Black Bear Diner at 6 p.m.

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.  
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”* Margaret Mead