

Citizens for Clean Energy, Inc. (CCE)

www.ccemontana.org

Minutes for October 10, 2023 Meeting

Location: Great Falls Zoom and in-person CCE meeting at the Black Bear Diner, 1400 Market Place Drive, Great Falls, MT 59404 (no-host dinner at 6 p.m. in restaurant meeting room).

Welcome: Rich Liebert, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. Eleven total CCE members attended the in-person and Zoom meeting (10 in-person and 1 Zoom); a quorum was present. Guest speaker, Makenna Sellers, with Montana Renewable Energy Association (MREA) attended via Zoom. Thank you, David Saslav, Vice Chair, for setting up the Zoom meeting.

Rich welcomed Makenna Sellers, the guest speaker with Montana Renewable Energy Association (MREA), to the meeting. Rich asked everyone to briefly introduce themselves to Makenna. Some highlights of the presentation: Makenna said distributed energy resources (DER) like solar panels, wind generators, and heat pumps are important to our communities because they are customer owned, geographically dispersed, generating power closer to the point of use, and connected to the energy grid. Cheryl R. said their solar panels are still working and NorthWestern Energy gave them a \$10,000 grant to help defray the \$26,000 installation cost. David S. said the Great Falls Public Library director would like to add solar panels to the roof of the library. Makenna said she didn't think there were any solar installers located in the Great Falls area yet and mentioned MREA is working with the MT legislators to make sure policy proposals keep solar available to all Montanans. Melissa S. said Bozeman Green Build is working with the Golden Triangle Resource Council to install solar PV systems in Central Montana (<http://bozemangreenbuild.com>).

Makenna said MREA had their 12th annual Clean Energy Fair in Billings, MT on Saturday, August 12, 2023 on the Montana State University Billings campus. Makenna said it might be possible to hold a future Clean Energy Fair in Great Falls. Rich asked if MREA is involved with C-PACE and Makenna said she's trying to stay in touch with C-PACE. Makenna asked CCE members to consider joining with MREA to help promote clean energy projects.

Some back ground on MREA can be found at <https://montanarenewables.org/about-us/> – MREA is a membership based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2000. MREA includes individuals, families, businesses, and advocates dedicated to expanding Montana's use of renewable energy in order to conserve natural resources, create jobs, and increase the independence and resilience of our communities. "MREA's mission is to foster the growth of renewable energy for all Montanans through education, advocacy, and industry engagement. Our vision is a Montana where the widespread use of renewable energy drives Montana's economy and powers every aspect of Montanans' lives."

Secretary: Kathy Gessaman summarized the minutes of the May 9, 2023 CCE meeting. **Melissa Smith moved to accept the May 9, 2023 CCE, Inc. electronically distributed minutes; David Saslav seconded.** There was no discussion. **The minutes were approved.**

Treasurer: Shannon Wilson reviewed the expenditures since the last meeting: 7-18-23, the CCE debit card was used to pay Mecca Hosting \$11.95 for the domain name for the original CCE website; 7-28-23, the CCE debit card was used to pay Mecca Hosting \$59.95 for hosting the original CCE website; 8-28-23 check #1047 cleared for \$50 for sharing half a table at the Little Shell Pow Wow with Golden Triangle Resource Council members.

Charles Bocock moved to pay the \$125.00 yearly membership fee to join Montana Renewable Energy Association (MREA). Melissa Smith seconded the motion. The group discussed the proposal and some of the comments were: MREA would be a good group to network with, and MREA might have more creative ways to advance clean energy. **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 cce.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. David noted there is a 20-30% increase in the number of comments after boosting the CCE meeting. Melissa suggested CCE work on a way to capitalize on the Held v Montana decision where young Montanans won the case for a clean and healthy environment.

Unfinished Business:

City of Great Falls Growth Policy: Rich asked members for their vision of future growth in Great Falls. Cheryl said affordable housing is critical to growth in Great Falls and she thought the population is about the same as in the 1960s but the infrastructure has grown; the city has spread out. David said positive growth like the medical college is good for Great Falls; smart growth is essential. Melissa noted Great Falls is a center for health care and the businesses that support health care.

New Business:

GTRC (Golden Triangle Resource Council): Rich asked David for an update on GTRC activities. David said around 25 homes signed up to get solar installations. David hoped people would look closer at the demand side of energy use and suggested the groups study how to keep demand in check to reduce the need for natural resources.

America’s Climate Corp: There wasn’t enough time for a discussion on America’s Climate Corps initiative; more information can be found at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/09/20/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-launches-american-climate-corps-to-train-young-people-in-clean-energy-conservation-and-climate-resilience-skills-create-good-paying-jobs-and-tackle-the-clima/>

Reports:

Grassroots: Rich asked David to announce the launch of a joint venture with KGPR. David said the *Electron* will launch on October 25, 2023, and it will post current events that are not political, religious, or sports orientated in Great Falls on Montana Public Radio station KGPR. Check out what’s happening at: <https://kgpr.org/electron/>

Legal: Rich noted the MEIC v DEQ hearing will be held in the Helena Federal Courthouse at 3:30 p.m. on Oct. 16th

Government: Candidate forum for City Commission at the Great Falls Public Library on Oct. 26th sponsored by *The Electric*. Another forum will be held at the College of Great Falls – MSU in room B101. Rich said Eric Peterson will record the forum for KGPR.

The next CCE, Inc. meeting was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, ~~November 14~~, 2023 at 7 p.m. [Due to a conflict with the Great Falls Rising forum on the 14th, the CCE meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 15th 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.

Kathy Gessaman moved to adjourn, and Melissa Smith seconded; the meeting adjourned at 8:34 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; cascadecountymt.gov
- 16 Oct – MEIC v DEQ Hearing in Helena Federal Court at 3:30 p.m.
- 17 Oct – City Commission meeting
- 18 Oct – City Commission Forum at College of Great Falls – MSU in room B101 – KGPR will record forum
- 26 Oct – City candidates forum, Great Falls Library and The Electric
- 7 Nov – Election Day – Please VOTE and encourage others to Vote!

- 14 Nov – Great Falls Rising Unhoused Women and Children Forum at the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, (600 3rd Ave N) starting at 6:30 p.m.
- 15 Nov – CCE in-person and Zoom meeting at 7 p.m. No-host dinner at Black Bear Diner at 6 p.m.

“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.” Theodore Roosevelt