

**Energy and Resiliency Advisory Board
City of Vergas**

The Energy and Resiliency Advisory Board met on Thursday, August 14th 2025, 5:30pm, at the Vergas Event Center Meeting Room

Attendance:

2025	Aug 14	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Julie Bruhn	P				
Alex Ohman	P				
Bruce Albright	A				
Kara Trupka	A				
Virginia Satrom	A				
Luca Moser	A				

• **P: Present. A: Absent**

1. Julie Bruhn provided an overview regarding the role of the Advisory Board; as outlined in city ordinance and approved by City Council June 9, 2025. The Board is advisory to the City Council regarding energy, climate, environment action planning and the achievement and tracking of GreenStep Cities best practices.
2. Julie Bruhn provided background and current status information on the following:
 - a. **Energy Grant and Plan:** The energy grant is coming to conclusion with a draft plan compiled by the student working with RSDP and the City of Vergas. Final plan pending completion, following the weatherization work and assistance by WCI in completing the writing of the plan.
 - b. **Energy Survey:** Community energy survey conducted April to mid-May. There were 91 respondents, with 35 (38%) reflecting Vergas Resident. Greatest concern was lake water quality (53%), followed by infrastructure (47%). Strong support was noted for energy efficiency (43%), solar energy (37%), streamlining permitting for renewable energy & efficiency upgrades (42%), and ordinances that protect the natural environment (51%).
 - c. **Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Grant:** Applied and received grant from the MPCA to fund the weatherization improvements identified in the conducted energy assessments, as part of the energy grant with RSDP. Received \$21,500 to complete improvements to event center, liquor store building and fire hall.
 - d. **West Central Initiative Solar Grant:** As part of the WCI municipal solar cohort, Vergas will be receiving funding to install solar at the event center. Expected cost of \$104,280.00; which \$97,680.00 would be covered by available incentives; which includes OTP rebates, IRS credit and West Central Incentive Grant Gap. Vergas will pay \$6,528 which will cover battery hub, that supports emergency management plan need. Anticipate energy cost savings of at least \$2,000.00 annually and \$67,848 over the projects lifetime. Holsen Solar approved to do the project.
 - e. **GreenStep Cities** (greenstep.pca.state.mn.us): Vergas has achieved a level 2. Handout information provided regarding the 29 best practices in 5 categories. Discussed best practices that will be added with the energy work, but would like to expand in the other areas. Discussed more focus on environmental management, that was identified as a priority in the Energy Survey related to lake water quality. Community garden, Prairie /pollinating gardens were areas that would support soil conservation efforts. Based on feedback from GreenStep Cities program; to achieve level 3 need a transportation action, sustainable purchasing, inclusive & coordinated decision-making, and prepare to maintain public health and safety during extreme weather. Will meet the last 2 with community survey and this committee and installation of solar with battery hub at the event center.
3. Discussed next steps noting city energy work is moving forward, but future opportunities exist for expansion and education. Noted opportunity in terms of environment actions as pollinating and/or prairie gardens on city property and community garden. Additionally noted air quality, which has been an issue this summer with the wildfires. Julie Bruhn noted the Margaret A. Cargil Foundation had visited Vergas with a strong interest in funding environment projects as pollinating garden and prairie gardens.
4. Meeting schedule to be discussed at next meeting when more members present and interest verified by those members absent.

No Recommendations for action

Recorder
Julie Bruhn