

POWERLINE

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but said the timeline for the project plays a role. Instead, he asked them to provide their suggested route in the Environmental Impact Statement's scoping process. He said he would support and recommend the modification, which would very likely be accepted by an administrative law judge who will oversee that portion of the process. "You're asking us to trust in the process that this will change," Oveson said. "If we could have came up with this earlier, I'd tweak it again," said Atkinson. "Based on the different data sets I've looked at since our conversation I'd say this could be changed and still meet our requirements."

Trask suggested the change could be made in five minutes, but Atkinson said more is needed than a line drawn on a map.

Oveson said proposing the Littlefork cutoff so late in the process is unfair because it allows he and the Trasks no time for a response to their input. Oveson said he was notified of the new proposal at his residence in Arizona and felt so strongly about it he returned to Littlefork to attend the open house. He said he'd been following the process on the Internet.

Koochiching County Commissioners Wayne Skoe and Wade Pavleck also attended the meeting and listened to residents' opinions about the proposal.

Other area residents, like George Gray, said they oppose the route nearest to the city of Littlefork because it may impact the Littlefork Airport. Bonnie Horne said she's concerned about that route because she fears it may cause health issues for area residents who live near it.

The initial study area encompassed about 20,000 square miles, or about one-quarter of the state of Min-



STAFF PHOTO BY LAUREL BEAGER

Jim Atkinson, left, of Minnesota Power, attempts to assure Bruce Trask and Bob Oveson the Littlefork cutoff alternative route recently proposed may be modified in the EIS scoping process. The transmission line could be viewed from their residences, should that route alternative be selected as presented Wednesday.

nesota. Other proposed route alternatives would bring the transmission line near Northome and Big Fork.

The transmission line is needed to change how the company gets its energy, Atkinson has said. Now, about 75 percent is created by burning coal, he said. Completion of the project would allow the company to get about one-third of its electricity from coal, one-third from renewable sources and one-third from natural gas.

In addition, he said the project would help to mitigate the negative effect on rates of continuing to produce electricity with too much coal.

At the same time, he said the project would help keep up with increased power demands, much of which is coming from the taconite plants on the Iron Range, where about 60 percent of Minnesota Power's sales are generated.

Similar open house meetings have been held in four different rounds at different sites over the last year. Prior to that, stakeholder

meetings with local leaders, resource managers and others were invited.

Towers for the transmission line would be located in a 200-foot right-of-way, or about 24 acres per mile, which Atkinson said could continue to be used in many situations. While tall trees would be cleared from the right-of-way, farming and other uses would still be allowed. He said in agricultural areas, self-supporting towers would be used to avoid the need for guide wires sticking out into the fields. The towers would be on average one-quarter mile apart, and as much as 1,450 feet apart in some cases.

Minnesota Power pays full market value for its easements, Atkinson said. In addition, he said the company pays personal property taxes on its line. He estimated \$40,000 to \$60,000 per mile per year would be paid on the proposed line.

Atkinson said three major permits are needed before the project is built. Public hearings and comment opportunities are included in the processes.

Minnesota Power has a purchase agreement with electricity provider Manitoba Hydro, which calls for the transmission line to be operational by June 1, 2020.

To get to that point, the company must jump several federal, state and local hurdles.

The company will in the next few weeks, submit to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission an application for a certificate of need, a mechanism to prove the line is in the public interest and needed, Atkinson said.

Next, a route permit will be sought from the same state agency, which would ultimately decide where the line would go, he said. That step includes development of a full environmental impact statement.

At the same time, a presidential permit is needed from the United States Department of Energy because the line would cross the boundary between the U.S. and Canada. He said he hoped the state and federal processes can avoid duplication.

BOARD

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30 to pursue his St. Cloud-based consulting business full time.

Later in April, however, Nelson reversed course and accepted a one-year contract, adding he'd be willing to stay on even longer after this new contract ends — depending on how much progress the district has made.

Board Chairman Darrell "Boxer" Wagner in February said Nelson is one of the better superintendents the district has had. In Wagner's 16 years on the board, he said the district had seven or eight different superintendents.

A new superintendent will be faced with declining enrollment and the task of working to settle a contract for the district's about 70 teachers, who are working under a 2011-2013 agreement that expired June 30.

In related business Monday, the board is expected to schedule a special work session for 5 p.m. Dec. 3 for a cost adjustment review. The meeting will be open to the public.

The board Nov. 4 held its first special work session to kick start the process of how to handle spending adjustments to offset the loss of about \$425,000 in state funding to the district. The loss in funding is caused by the decline in enrollment. Reducing staff and eliminating two non-revenue sports teams are among the proposed options.

The board will also Monday enter a closed session following the regular meeting for contract negotiation discussions with the teacher's union Local 331.

Monday's agenda also includes the consideration to allow use of Falls High School to the International Falls Police Department and the Koochiching County Sheriff's Department to conduct training exercises during winter break.

The board is also expected to consider the following under its personnel consent agenda:

■ Accept the resignation of custodian Darrell Ulrich.

■ Acknowledge Charlie LeDuc as a volunteer boy's hockey coach.

■ Approve the hire of Lynda Faith as an hourly Title I teacher to be placed at St. Thomas School for a total of 99 hours.

■ Approve the hire of Michelle Hebner as the assistant boy's swim coach.

■ Approve the hire of Chuck Remus and Jonathon Isenor as co-coaches for the speech team.

■ Approve the hire of Rayleen Bishop as a regular route, non-union bus driver.

The board is expected to hear an audit report Monday night as well as reports from Nelson and the schools' principals.

At the beginning of each regular school board meeting, an open forum allows members of the public to fill out a comment card and address the board on any topic they choose.

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which a business proposes the economic benefit of a grant, he said. The other is a community enhancement application, for projects designed to improve life and the appearance of the county.

"It's a matter of collectively looking at the applications and evaluating the benefits we see and the people who are administering them, and their ability to bring those activities to fruition," he said. "We base our judgment on that."

The group was originally created to provide a place where communities can fund projects for which they might not be able to find funding, Steinhurst said. The \$1,600 grant for replacing and upgrading flooring

in the Birchdale Community Center in 2013, he said, didn't have any other place from which to seek grant funding.

"Business applications have other avenues of sourcing funding," he said. "Community enhancement projects may not have many other places to go."

The group is geared towards smaller towns in more remote areas of the county, Skoe said, and to help small entrepreneurs looking for funding or community projects.

The members of the board are typically all on the same page when it comes to approval of grant applications, Steinhurst said. They sometimes differ on the value between business applications and community enhancement applications, but tend to agree on the applications they approve.



Bee Informed


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SENDOFF

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The swimmers are the second Falls team to earn a state tournament bid this season. The Bronco girls cross country team Nov. 2 participated in the State Class A Meet at St. Olaf College in Northfield and received 15th place.

HAPPY 31ST BIRTHDAY
On November 18th




Noah David Ginter

We Love You Lots
Family & Friends



Pretty Nifty
My Sweeties Turning 50
On November 19th

Love You To The Moon And Back



Thank You

The family of James R. Leseman wishes to acknowledge all of those who remembered us at the time of our loss. Those who sent flowers, cards, gifts and food to our homes. We are grateful and thankful for the ways you showed your love for James.

A special thanks to all who participated in the memorial services, Rev Darren Olson, pallbearers, mortuary, the Covenant Ladies for their treats and most of all to Hospice Ladies.

A Big Thank You!
Roseann Leseman
Roberta, Richard & Family
Dwayne, Deanna & Family
Carrie & John (Duane)
Arthur & Joelle & Family

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25TH ANNIVERSARY OPEN HOUSE

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