

## District 4

### **MARK EBENSTEINER**

9629 Co. Rd. 23 SE, Becker, MN 55308

#### **Occupation**

Local Government Finance Director

#### **Board Experience**

Minnesota Government Finance Officers Board of Directors (2022 - Present)

Becker Youth Football Board (2020 - Present)

#### **Post-Secondary Education**

Alexandria Technical College – Associate of Science, Business Administration

St. Cloud State University – Bachelor of Science, Accounting

#### ***What do you believe is an important opportunity and the most important challenge facing Connexus Energy, and how would you address both if you were elected?***

I believe the flexibility achieved through the power supply contract continues to be a significant opportunity. Connexus can continue to shop for available sources for power in a larger marketplace and select which generation types go into its power portfolio. Connexus has the ability to build their own portfolio of generation assets needed to meet the state mandate of carbon-free energy by 2040.

The most significant challenge facing Connexus is managing its path toward Minnesota's 2040 carbon-free mandate while keeping energy reliable and affordable. As a father of four school age kids, the pressure of energy costs on a family's budget is real. If elected, I will support renewable resources that meet these requirements in the most financially responsible manner possible.



#### ***What do you believe members want from their electric utility and what keeps them satisfied with Connexus Energy?***

I believe that in today's environment, Connexus members simply want reliable and affordable energy. With investments in robust infrastructure, members value minimal outages and quick responses to restore service. Strategic investment in sustainable energy while not adversely impacting rates and reliability has been successful. Members want continued reliable service without significant rate increases.

#### ***What personally motivates you to serve on the Connexus Energy Board of Directors?***

My personal motivation is driven by a love to learn new things and a passion for serving others in my community. Working in local government finance for nearly two decades I have experienced and seen the impact of serving others firsthand. I appreciate the hard work that has been done to-date by the Connexus Energy Board. I am excited for the opportunity to assist Connexus Energy meet necessary mandates while keeping service reliable and rates as low as possible.

#### ***What do you believe are the top three reasons you would be well-qualified to serve on the Connexus Energy Board of Directors?***

Having worked in local government finance for nearly 20 years, my connection to communities served by Connexus is strong. Auditing local governments of all shapes and sizes and keeping connected with what is happening in the northwest metro has provided me with a unique perspective into the communities and challenges they face. I have also been actively involved in many local non-profit organizations over the years. This connectivity provides me valuable input and feedback into the impact of Connexus on people and businesses in our service territory.

My financial and accounting background is very strong, with 18 years of reviewing and preparing financial statements and long-term financial plans via my occupation in local government auditing and finance. I have worked with cities of all shapes and sizes on a variety of things from long-term financial plans to preparation of comprehensive financial statements, to the completion and execution of water and sewer utility rate studies. Overall, my ability to comprehend information and strategically evaluate is strong.

The local governments that I have worked with and for, over the years have one thing in common, they are customer service focused. I have experienced the range of customer service from top notch to less than desirable. Through all those experiences I have a deep understanding of the collaborative, responsive and quality service that is necessary to be a high achieving organization. As a director my understanding and experiences around customer service will translate well into supporting the high quality Connexus service standards.

#### ***Tell us what you believe are three of the most impactful member-owner benefits of the electric cooperative business structure?***

A benefit of being a member-owner is that you truly are an owner. Rates are charged and revenue collected based on a forecast of needs for the future year. If there is any excess collected, it is allocated and returned over time to the members.

As a member-owner you have voting rights, and directors are your neighbors, elected by you, to represent you. This means your voice is heard and taken to heart. As a newly elected director I would be inspired by the opportunity to represent my fellow neighbors.

Connexus is community minded as a cooperative. They work to enhance life within the communities they serve. Through collaboration with community leaders and strategic economic development they plan for and support the needs of members wherever they may live.

#### ***Regarding your skills as a potential director, tell us one of your strengths and how it would contribute to the Connexus Board and list one weakness needing development and your plan to address it.***

I believe I am a well-rounded finance professional who thrives in a collaborative environment. I put in the effort into understanding a topic, effectively communicate my views and challenge my colleagues to consider all alternatives. As my career has progressed, I have continually benefited from working with great professionals who have contributed to my growth and development. I believe that my unique background and expertise would complement the current board well.

One weakness I have as it relates to the Connexus Board is that I have not been educated or employed directly in the energy field. I believe it will take effort to get an understanding of Connexus Energy's strategic plan, financials, and the Resource Plan before I am a full contributor as a director. I intend to learn quickly, determine areas for improvement, and ask for clarification and assistance as needed along the way. I believe the best teams have professionals that complement each other well and provide their own diverse perspectives. I do believe that if given the opportunity I would be a strong contributor to the board and represent the members of district 4 well.