

**MINUTES**  
**GENERAL BOARD MEETING, FEBRUARY 28, 2023**  
**FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**

- 1. GENERAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER.** The Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Trustees met in general session February 28, 2023, with PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAER calling the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. JANINE RIFE DIDIER was scrivener. Board members in attendance were BRAD ARNTZEN, TERRY FROST, CATHY KOMBOL, BRETT MAXWELL and JASON SWANZ. BOB EVANS participated via conference call. Other attendees included GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY, LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA, OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK and CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL. The attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** After reviewing the meeting agenda, BRAD ARNTZEN moved to approve it. JASON SWANZ seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.** After reviewing the minutes of the January 31, 2023, general meeting and discussing them, BRETT MAXWELL moved their approval. CATHY KOMBOL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- 4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD.** No one from the public appeared.
- 5. 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW - ENGINEERS.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY introduced the Staking Engineers, complimenting the amount of work the engineers did in preparation for their presentation. Each staking engineer gave a comprehensive report. STAKING ENGINEER SCOTT OLSON reviewed creating and completing line patrol tickets, describing the ticket types used, i.e., P1 – Priority 1: Repair as soon as possible; P2 – Priority 2: Complete by the end of the year; and P3 – Priority 3: Informational, mapping changes, etc. STAKING ENGINEER DAN BALSTER, PE reviewed new connects, net miles of line added, electric load comparison of 2022 vs. 2021; purchasing regulators, testing substation transformers; and substation maximum demands. STAKING ENGINEER MELANIE FORAN, PE reviewed multiple 2022 outage statistics and reported on the larger projects slated to be built starting in September 2023. The Board thanked the Engineers for their verbal/visual presentation saying it was well done and very informative.
- 6. NRECA LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE - TRAVEL.** The Board engaged in a brief discussion about who would be able to attend the upcoming NRECA Legislate Conference being held April 16 through April 19 in Washington, D.C. to confirm travel arrangements. Board Directors will contact MANAGER SWEENEY if attending.
- 7. CFC LOAN DOCUMENT REVIEW.** MANAGER SWEENEY reported on the loan documents being presented to the Board for their consideration. Additional discussion will occur at the next board meeting.
- 8. FLEET VEHICLE – EV CAR DISCUSSION.** MANAGER SWEENEY and the BOARD engaged in a lengthy discussion regarding purchasing an electric vehicle. The Board gave consent for Manager Sweeney to proceed in purchasing the budgeted fleet electric vehicle.
- 9. CMMC CANCER CENTER.** A discussion occurred regarding the new Cancer Center, to be built at CMMC, and their potential to qualify for the USDA REDLG Program. The Board directed Manager Sweeney to invite CEO CODY LANGBEHN to an upcoming meeting to give the Board an opportunity to gain more information and ask questions.
- 10. SCHOLARSHIPS – BASIN/MECA.** MANAGER SWEENEY reported that BROOKE WEINHEIMER was selected to win a \$1,000 scholarship from Fergus Electric Cooperative and her name will be submitted to MECA for a chance to win a \$500 scholarship. RILEY OBERT was selected to win a \$1,000 scholarship sponsored by Basin Electric Power Cooperative; and HAYLEY STAHL was selected to win a \$1,000 scholarship sponsored by Members 1<sup>st</sup>.

**11. FINANCIAL AND OTHER MONTHLY REPORTS.** Financial and other monthly reports were presented to the Board for discussion. OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reviewed the January 31, 2023, Form 7 operating report. PAYROLL ADMINISTRATOR JANINE RIFE DIDIER reviewed the January 31, 2023, ratios report.

**12. OPERATIONS AND SAFETY REPORT.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT RIKALA reported on the Safety Meeting held February 15<sup>th</sup>. MIKE DAVIS provided training for First Aid/CPR/AED, which is furnished annually. The March 15<sup>th</sup> safety meeting will include active shooter training, presented by KIRBY DEMPSTER and COLE EADES with the Fergus County Sheriff's office. RIKALA reported that the co-op is working with Wesco and NISC to meet the March 27<sup>th</sup> go live date for implementation of a barcode system. RIKALA reported that Wesco, the co-op's material supplier, gave us a rebate check in the amount of forty thousand dollars. RIKALA reported that Lewistown and Roundup crews are completing Priority 2 tickets created in 2022. RIKALA reported that on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 12:40 a.m., a broken distribution conductor caused an outage affecting 1,280 meters, north of Lewistown and in the areas surrounding Winifred, Roy and Hilger. The power was restored by 7:30 a.m. RIKALA reported that Fergus Electric is advertising for a journeyman lineman to fill a position in Roundup. The deadline to apply is April 3, 2023.

**13. INVENTORY OF WORK ORDERS.** After reviewing Inventory of Work Orders No. 612-612X for \$31,134.52 dated January 31, 2023, BRETT MAXWELL moved to affirm them. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**14. POWER OUTAGE REPORT.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA reviewed the January 2023 Outage Report prepared by STAKING ENGINEER MELANIE FORAN, PE.

**15. REPORT OF CORPORATE COUNSEL.** CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL reported he had worked on various items of importance for the co-op. BIRDWELL reported that he had worked with various employees on several issues.

**16. MANAGER'S REPORT.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reported that he had traveled to Helena recently and spent two days with MECA DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, MARK LAMBRECHT, and MECA CEO GARY WIENS. The group met with several legislators and worked on amendment suggestions for HB55 – EV Charging Station Road Tax. SWEENEY also attended a House Energy Committee meeting where MECA testified in support of HJ 6 – a power reserves study bill. SWEENEY reported that he attended a virtual Basin Manager's meeting on February 24<sup>th</sup>.

**17. MEMBERS 1<sup>ST</sup> /BASIN UPDATE, FEBRUARY 27.** PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAERKER reported on the meeting he attended.

**18. EXECUTIVE SESSION.** At 2:07 p.m., BRETT MAXWELL moved to go into executive session for the purpose of reviewing Board Resource Committee Recommendations. JASON SWANZ seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**19. REGULAR SESSION CONTINUES.** At 2:35 p.m., BRETT MAXWELL moved to resume general session. CATHY KOMBOL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**20. BOARD RESOURCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS.** PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAERKER asked the committee for a written proposal to review at the next meeting.

**21. DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS/NEW MEMBERS LIST.** The Board reviewed the delinquent accounts showing accounts paid in full and accounts still owing.


**22. ESTATE CAPITAL CREDITS.** The Board reviewed the list of estate capital credits for February 2023 totaling \$6,590.81, which were prepared by ERIKA MATTALIANO. JASON SWANZ moved to affirm the retirements and BRETT MAXWELL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Clerical correction to item No. 20 in the January 31, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes: The affirmed Estate Capital Credits for \$28,492.44 were incorrectly reported in the minutes as December 2022. The Estate Capital Credits affirmed were for January 2023.

**23. FUTURE MEETINGS.**

- a. Safety Meeting, March 15
- b. FEC Board Meetings, (10:00 a.m.), March 30, April 27, and May 25
- c. NRECA Annual Meeting, Nashville, March 3-8
- d. MECA Spring Board Meeting: Great Falls, April 4-5
- e. NRECA Legislative Conference: Washington, D.C., April 16-19

**24. NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.**

**25. ADJOURNMENT.** PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAEKER adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

SECRETARY  ATTEST: PRESIDENT 