

MINUTES
GENERAL BOARD MEETING, OCTOBER 31, 2023
FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

- 1. GENERAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER.** The Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Trustees met in general session October 31, 2023, with PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAER calling the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. JANINE RIFE DIDIER was scrivener. Board members in attendance were BRAD ARNTZEN, TERRY FROST, CATHY KOMBOL, JASON SWANZ and BRETT MAXWELL. Other attendees included GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY, LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA, OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK, and CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL. BOB EVANS participated via speaker telephone. The attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** After reviewing the meeting agenda, JASON SWANZ moved to approve it. BRETT MAXWELL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- 3. MINUTES APPROVAL.**
 - a. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.** After reviewing the minutes of the October 5, 2023, general meeting and discussing them, BRETT MAXWELL moved their approval. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- 4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD.** No one from the public appeared.
- 5. PLANNING.**
 - a. 2024 CAPITAL BUDGET REVIEW.** STAKING ENGINEER SCOTT OLSON gave a presentation on what is being budgeted for 2024 for pole changes, underground replacements, system improvements, and pole testing analysis. STAKING ENGINEER DAN BALSTER, PE presented the recloser replacement plan reporting that the six-year goal is to replace an average of 79 reclosers per year. There is a safety concern with the current reclosers installed on the co-op's system. New reclosers are expected to last 25 years. STAKING ENGINEER MELANIE FORAN PE gave an update on the Winifred Transmission Project. Contractors are working from Winifred to Hilger and have set 150 poles thus far. FORAN presented information for 2024 regarding meters, mapping, and outage management software. ASSISTANT LINE SUPERINTENDENT BRET OPHUS reported on budgeted equipment items for 2024. MANAGER SWEENEY provided a summation of everything that was covered, noting that there will be more coverage of the 2024 budget at the next board meeting.
 - b. NEW RATE STRUCTURE – MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS.** MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reviewed the communication done so far for the members regarding the new rate structure. The Board thanked MANAGER SWEENEY for sending letters to members who will be impacted most by the rate restructuring.
 - c. STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION AGENDA.** MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reviewed the agenda for the December 11th -13th Strategic Planning Session being held at Chico Hot Springs. ASSISTANT SECRETARY BRAD ARNTZEN said that he appreciates that the goals set at the 2021 Strategic Planning Session will be reviewed.
 - d. BASIN LOAD FORECAST AND RESOLUTION.** MANAGER SWEENEY presented the Resolution of the Board of Directors of Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. to approve the 2024 Load Forecast prepared by Basin Electric Power Cooperative. After a brief discussion, BRETT MAXWELL moved to approve the Resolution and BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- 6. FINANCIAL AND OTHER MONTHLY REPORTS.** Financial and other monthly reports were presented to the Board for discussion.

- a. **OPERATING AND RATIOS REPORTS.** OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reviewed the September 30, 2023, Form 7 operating report. PAYROLL ADMINISTRATOR JANINE RIFE DIDIER reviewed the September 30, 2023, ratios report.
 - b. **OPERATIONS AND SAFETY REPORT.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA provided an update of the Roundup facility. Three-phase power will be put in next week. The co-op will interview four of the 13 people who applied for the mechanic position. At the November 1st Safety Meeting, MECA SAFETY INSTRUCTOR JERRY LEMM will present Towing/Recovery, PPE, Hazard Assessment and Slips, Trips and Falls. RIKALA reported that NorthWestern Energy's planned power outage on October 18th-19th to complete maintenance on our equipment in the Roundup Substation went well. Fergus crews changed insulators and added recloser bypass switches in the Roundup Substation. Other crews changed insulators on the high side fuses in the Winnett Junction Substation and adjusted two air brake switches on the transmission line. The outage started at 10:00 p.m. with the power being restored at 3:55 a.m. Overnight temperature remained in the mid-fifties. RIKALA reported that the co-op has received 85 percent of the electronic reclosers ordered for the year. The plan is to change out reclosers in the Winifred, Roy, and Roundup area this year. RIKALA reported that to date, 6,813 poles have been tested with a 2.3 percent failure rate.
 - c. **INVENTORY OF WORK ORDERS.** After reviewing Inventory of Work Orders No. 620-620X for \$189,932.40 dated September 30, 2023, BRAD ARNTZEN moved to affirm them. CATHY KOMBOL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
 - d. **POWER OUTAGE REPORT.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA reviewed the September 2023 Outage Report prepared by STAKING ENGINEER MELANIE FORAN, PE.
7. **POLICIES.**
- a. **BOARD POLICY 247: RETENTION OF UNCLAIMED PATRONAGE REFUNDS.** The Board reviewed Board Policy 247.
 - b. **BOARD POLICY 248: PROCUREMENT CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY.** MANAGER SWEENEY reviewed the policy and asked about its origin. After a brief period of discussion, the Board recommended researching the origin of board policy 240 and bringing it back next month for approval.
8. **REPORT OF CORPORATE COUNSEL.** CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL reported he had worked on various items of importance for the co-op.
9. **MANAGER'S REPORT.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reviewed the items in his report.
10. **MEETING REPORTS.**
- a. **MEMBERS 1ST.** No report for October 17th meeting.
11. **EXECUTIVE SESSION.**
- a. **DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS/NEW MEMBERS LIST.** The Board reviewed the delinquent accounts showing accounts paid in full and accounts still owing. The third quarter 2023 list of write offs for \$372.15 was reviewed.
 - b. **ESTATE CAPITAL CREDITS.** The Board reviewed the list of estate capital credits for October 2023 totaling \$23,413.78, which were prepared by SENIOR BILLING CLERK ERIKA MATTALIANO. BRETT MAXWELL moved to affirm the retirements and JASON SWANZ seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
12. **OTHER BUSINESS**

13. FUTURE MEETINGS.

- a. Safety Meetings:
 - i. November 1
 - ii. December 13
- b. FEC Board Meetings:
 - i. December 1 – Noon
 - ii. December 29 - 10:00 a.m.
 - iii. January 30 – 10:00 a.m.
- c. Fergus Christmas Party: December 1, 5:30 p.m.; Central Feed Grilling
- d. MECA Legislative Trip: Washington, DC; November 7-9
- e. CFC IBES: Savannah, GA; November 11-15
- f. MECA Winter Meeting: Great Falls, MT; December 5-6
- g. MECA Strategic Planning: Great Falls, MT; December 6-7
- h. Fergus Electric Strategic Planning: December 11-13
- i. Mid-West Electric Consumers Association Annual Meeting: December 12-14
- j. Members 1st Annual Meeting: Sheridan, WY; December 18-19
- k. NRECA PowerXchange: San Antonio, TX; March 1-6, 2024
- l. NRECA Legislative Conference: Washington, DC; April 21-24, 2024
- m. CFC Forum: Indianapolis, IN; June 17-19, 2024

14. NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.

ADJOURNMENT. PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAEEKER adjourned the meeting at 3:26 p.m.

SECRETARY  ATTEST: PRESIDENT 