

**MINUTES**  
**GENERAL BOARD MEETING, MAY 2, 2024**  
**FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**

**1. GENERAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER.** The Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Trustees met in general session May 2, 2024, with PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAER calling the meeting to order at 2:12 p.m. JANINE RIFE DIDIER was scrivener. Board members in attendance were BRAD ARNTZEN, BOB EVANS, 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. The attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Board members and co-op staff, listed above, met at the Fergus Electric office in Lewistown at 10:00 a.m. on May 2, 2024, prior to meeting in general session, to take a guided tour of the Hilger Substation, new Winifred transmission line that is under construction, and the Winifred Substation. SERVICEMAN RYAN d'AUTREMONT and STAKING ENGINEER MELANIE FORAN, PE guided the tour. The Fergus group also had the opportunity to meet and visit with the Red Rock Power line crew at their shop near Winifred. Despite the weather being cold, wet, and windy, the tour was good. The Board commended d'AUTREMONT and FORAN for the knowledge and information the two shared about the substations and transmission line. The Fergus group ate lunch in Winifred before returning to Lewistown for the Board Meeting.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** After reviewing the meeting agenda, BRETT MAXWELL moved to approve it. JASON SWANZ seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**3. MINUTES APPROVAL.**

- a. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.** After reviewing the minutes of the March 28, 2024, 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. PLANNING.**

- a. **NORVAL MATERIAL DISCUSSION.** MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY gave an update on the 556 ACSR conductor that NorVal is eliminating from their inventory. At the request of the Board, MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY is actively negotiating with NorVal for the purchase of the 556 ACSR.
- b. **ROUNDUP BUILDING OPEN HOUSE.** MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reported that barring any unforeseen circumstances, the Roundup Open House is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, May 15, from 3:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. The Back Porch in Roundup will provide the food.

**6. FINANCIAL AND OTHER MONTHLY REPORTS.** Staff presented financial and other monthly reports to the Board for discussion.

- a. **OPERATING AND RATIOS REPORTS.** OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reviewed the March 31, 2024, Form 7 operating report. JANINE RIFE DIDIER reviewed the March 2024 Ratios Report.
- b. **OPERATIONS AND SAFETY REPORT.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA reported that during the morning session of the April 17, 2024, Safety Meeting, MIKE DAVIS instructed First Aid, CPR and AED techniques. The afternoon included in-house discussions on close calls, specifications for framing, and tagging underground cables. The May 2<sup>nd</sup> safety meeting will include presentations from a MECA safety instructor on Fire Extinguisher Usage and Live Fire Training. RIKALA reported that ROW GROUNDMAN JAKE DEROSIER worked with Yellowstone Valley Electric's right-of-way crew for a week to gain/share knowledge on tree trimming techniques. SERVICEMAN METER TECH BRIAN GODBEY attended a four-day annual meter school in Ft. Collins, Colorado, hosted by Rocky Mountain Electric Metering Association. On April 9-11, 2024, STAKING ENGINEER DAN BALSTER PE attended the

NWPPA Engineering and Operations Conference in Tacoma, Washington. For attending, BALSTER received credits for his Professional Engineering License. JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN ANDREW REUTERSKIOLD attended a Tree Trimming School at Ravalli Electric Cooperative April 23-25, 2024. RIKALA reported that crews are changing out reclosers. The changeouts are about 85 percent complete in Winifred, 95 percent complete in Roy and 95 percent complete in the Roundup Substation area. Line crews added new reclosers at Weed Creek Metering Point, southeast of Musselshell. Crews installed the electronic reclosers in the Spion Kop Substation on April 25, 2024. RIKALA said that crews have changed out 11 poles in the Winnett area, five in Grass Range and two served from the Carters Pond Substation. The poles are replacements for those that failed testing in 2023. RIKALA reported that DERRICK WENDLING installed ethernet cables in the Roundup building, which will serve RESCO's needs for the area they are renting and will provide WIFI and a feed for exterior cameras. IT SPECIALISTS RICK WALTEBAUGH and JOHN PAYNE are waiting to receive routers from NISC to complete setting up the WIFI and internet in the new Roundup building.

- c. **INVENTORY OF WORK ORDERS.** After reviewing Inventory of Work Orders No. 626-626X for \$202,145.64, dated March 31, 2024, BOB EVANS moved to affirm them. CATHY KOMBOL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- d. **POWER OUTAGE REPORT.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA reviewed the March 2024 Outage Report prepared by STAKING ENGINEER MELANIE FORAN, PE.

7. **POLICIES – REVIEW.** No policies were scheduled for review this month, due to the late start time for today's board meeting.

8. **REPORT OF CORPORATE COUNSEL.** CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL reported he had worked on various items of importance for the co-op. BIRDWELL reported that it was a good month.

9. **MANAGER'S REPORT.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY covered items included in his written report. SWEENEY reported that his meeting with FOREST SERVICE PROGRAM MANAGER TESSA DONAHUE went well. SWEENEY reported that he and STAKING ENGINEER MELANIE FORAN, PE and MECA representatives will be meeting with MDT in Helena on May 7 to discuss Build America Buy America (BABA) requirements for previous and upcoming MDT projects with electric cooperative service territories, specifically Fergus Electric projects, but they will be representing all Montana electric cooperatives. SWEENEY reported that GOVERNOR GIANFORTE has invited Montana Electric Cooperatives to his personal house for a dinner scheduled on May 21. To date, 26 co-op managers/directors plan to attend along with 13 spouses, including SWEENEY. Final negotiations on language for the new CHS contracts (Power Supply and Engineering, Procurement, and Construction) are nearing completion. SWEENEY expects to sign each contract within the month.

#### 10. MEETING REPORTS.

- a. **MECA SPRING BOARD MEETING.** VICE PRESIDENT TERRY FROST reported on the meeting he and GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY attended April 9-10 in Great Falls, Montana. FROST said the Roundtable discussion at MECA, chaired by MANAGER SWEENEY, was the best it has ever been, thanks to SWEENEY. FROST said that the Communications Committee and the Member Services Committee have joined to become a group, which he anticipates will be good.
- b. **NRECA LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE.** ASSISTANT SECRETARY/TREASURER BRAD ARNTZEN and MANAGER SWEENEY reported on the NRECA Legislative Conference they attended April 21-24 in Washington, DC. ARNTZEN said that it was good and told the Board that even though both chambers were out of session, ARNTZEN and SWEENEY were able to meet with U.S. SENATORS representing Montana, JON TESTER, and STEVE DAINES and with an aid of GOP REPRESENTATIVE MATT ROSENDALE'S as well as staff of REPRESENTATIVE RYAN ZINKE.

**11. EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

- a. **ESTATE CAPITAL CREDITS.** The Board reviewed the list of estate capital credits for April 2024 totaling \$48,735.38, which were prepared by SENIOR BILLING CLERK ERIKA MATTALIANO. JASON SWANZ moved to affirm the retirements and TERRY FROST seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- b. **DELINQUENT STATUS, NEW MEMBERS.** The Board reviewed the delinquent accounts showing accounts paid in full and accounts still owing. The Board reviewed the first quarter 2024 list of write offs for \$742.86.

**12. OTHER BUSINESS.**

**13. FUTURE MEETINGS.**

- a. Safety Meeting:
  - i. May 2, 2024
- b. FEC Board Meetings 2024
  - i. May 28 – 11:00 a.m.
  - ii. June 27 – 9:00 a.m.
  - iii. August 1 - 9:00 a.m.
  - iv. August 29 – 9:00 a.m.
- c. MECA Line Superintendent Meeting: Lewistown, MT; May 16-17
- d. FEC Annual Meeting: June 6
- e. Members 1<sup>st</sup> / Basin Board Meeting: Gillette, WY; June 10-12
- f. MECA Managers Summer Meeting: Lewistown, MT; June 12-13
- g. CFC Forum: Indianapolis, IN; June 17-19
- h. MECA Summer Board Meeting: Lewistown, MT; July 9-11
- i. Basin Managers Conference: Deadwood, SD; July 24-26
- j. Basin Annual Meeting: Bismarck, ND; August 13-15
- k. Members 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Meeting: Sheridan, WY; September 16

**14. NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.**

**ADJOURNMENT.** PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAEKER adjourned the meeting at 3:49 p.m.

SECRETARY



ATTEST: PRESIDENT

