

**MINUTES**  
**GENERAL BOARD MEETING, JANUARY 2, 2025**  
**FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**

**1. GENERAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER.** The Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Trustees met in general session January 2, 2025, with PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAER calling the meeting to order at 12:42 p.m. JANINE RIFE DIDIER was scrivener. The 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. ASSISTANT LINE SUPERINTENDENT BRET OPHUS was not in attendance. The attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** After reviewing the meeting agenda, TERRY FROST moved to approve it. BOB EVANS seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**3. MINUTES APPROVAL.** After reviewing the minutes of the December 6, 2024, general meeting and discussing them BRETT MAXWELL moved their approval. JASON SWANZ seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD.** No one from the public appeared.

**5. PLANNING.**

- a. **FINANCIAL PLANNING SEMINAR REVIEW.** The Board and staff engaged in a lengthy discussion reviewing the Financial Seminar they attended in White Sulphur Springs, MT. The Board thanked the staff for planning and attending the meeting.

**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 November 30, 2024, Form 7 operating report. JANINE RIFE DIDIER reviewed the November 30, 2024; ratios report.
- b. **OPERATIONS AND SAFETY REPORT.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA reported that at the December 17 safety meeting, crews performed an annual inspection of winches, chains, slings, testing of hot sticks and grounds and covered close calls. RIKALA reported that the Wednesday, January 15 safety meeting will include the co-op's Annual Wellness Screening conducted by CMMC. RIKALA reported that he, ASSISTANT LINE SUPERINTENDENT BRET OPHUS and MECHANIC JASON 'SLIM' MILLS, met with Altec, virtually, to review the truck specifications for the new digger truck that is scheduled for completion June 2025. The price is seven percent lower than the previous price quote. This was a miscommunication as to whether the Federal Excise Tax (FET) was included in the quote. RIKALA reported that crews are continuing to change poles in the Grass Range area and have completed the Benchland pole changes. Tree trimming is being performed in the Grass Range and Winnett areas. Crews rerouted 10 poles that conflicted with a shop being built along Forest Grove Road. The removed poles were originally set in 1951 and had long spans. Interviews for the Assistant Line Superintendent position will be held the week of January 6, 2025. Several candidates have applied.
- c. **INVENTORY OF WORK ORDERS.** After reviewing Inventory of Work Orders No. 634-634X for \$54,707.74, dated November 30, 2024, CATHY KOMBOL moved to affirm them. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- d. **POWER OUTAGE REPORT.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA reviewed the November 2024 Outage Report prepared by STAKING ENGINEER MELANIE FORAN, PE.

**7. POLICIES.**

- a. **Review:**
  - i. **102 – FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES.** Board Policy 102 was reviewed.

**8. REPORT OF CORPORATE COUNSEL.** CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL reported that he worked on various matters of importance to the cooperative.

**9. MANAGER'S REPORT.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY briefly covered items included in his written report. SWEENEY reported that he will be traveling to Helena on January 20 for Cooperative Day at the Capitol to help kick off the 2025 Montana Legislative Session. MECA is planning a trip to Washington, DC in early February to introduce ourselves to the new delegates. With the DC trip planned, SWEENEY has cancelled the NRECA CEO Close-Up Conference trip to Florida to reduce travel and spending. SWEENEY said that he appreciated the opportunity to meet with the Board in White Sulphur Springs for the Financial Planning Seminar. SWEENEY said that he will be working with the Operations team to develop a 5-year work plan based on what was presented during the recent seminar. SWEENEY said that the co-op has communicated the January 1, 2025, rate increase to the co-op members in multiple formats including the Rural Montana magazine and within the monthly electric bill. He said he anticipates the increase to go smoothly. SWEENEY reported that the co-op has signed an updated contract with the Air Force pertaining to the upcoming rate increase on Missile Rate 1055 effective January 1, 2025.

**10. MEETING REPORTS.** PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAEKER and MANAGER SWEENEY reported on the MECA Winter Meeting they attended.

**11. EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

- a. **ESTATE CAPITAL CREDITS.** The Board reviewed the list of estate capital credits for December 2024 totaling \$42,707.88, which were prepared by SENIOR BILLING CLERK ERIKA MATTALIANO. JASON SWANZ moved to affirm the capital credit retirements and BRETT MAXWELL 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.

**12. OTHER BUSINESS.**

**13. NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.**

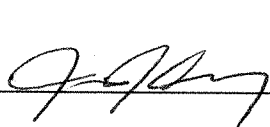
**14. FUTURE MEETINGS.**

- a. Safety Meeting; January 15, 2025
- b. FEC Board Meetings 2025:
  - i. January 30, 2025 - 10:00 a.m.
  - ii. February 27, 2025 - 10:00 a.m.
  - iii. March 27, 2025 - 10:00 a.m.
- c. Co-op Day at the Capitol: Helena, MT; January 20
- d. Basin Winter Managers Conference: Sioux Falls, SD; February 19-20
- e. NRECA PowerXchange: Atlanta, GA; March 7-12
- f. Members 1<sup>st</sup> Board Meeting: Sheridan, WY; March 17
- g. MECA Spring Board Meeting: Great Falls, MT; April 8-9
- h. NRECA Legislative Conference: Washington, DC; April 26-30
- i. Members 1<sup>st</sup> Board Meeting: Sheridan, WY; June 16
- j. CFC Forum: New York City, NY; June 30-July 2
- k. Basin Summer Manager's Meeting: Deadwood, SD; July 23-25
- l. Basin Annual Meeting: Bismarck, ND; August 12-15

**15. NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.**

**ADJOURNMENT.** PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAEKER adjourned the meeting at 3:14 p.m.

SECRETARY



ATTEST: PRESIDENT

