

**MINUTES**  
**GENERAL BOARD MEETING, APRIL 24, 2025**  
**FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**

1. **GENERAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER.** The Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Trustees met in general session April 24, 2025, with PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAER calling the meeting to order at 12:48 p.m. JANINE RIFE DIDIER was scrivener. The Board Members in attendance were BRAD ARNTZEN, BOB EVANS, TERRY FROST, CATHY KOMBOL, BRETT MAXWELL, and JASON SWANZ. Other attendees included GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY, OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK and CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL. LINE SUPERINTENDENT BRET OPHUS was absent. The attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

3. **MINUTES APPROVAL.** After reviewing the minutes of the March 27, 2025, general board meeting and discussing them, BRETT MAXWELL moved to approve them. CATHY KOMBOL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD.**

a. **WINNETT ACES - CHARSI SHEARER.** COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM COORDINATOR CHARSI SHEARER provided information about the Winnett ACES 501(c)3 non-profit organization, which began in 2016 when a group of Winnett area producers joined together to address rural vitality issues that affect agricultural communities in central Montana. SHEARER met with the Board to ask the co-op for a donation for Phase 3 of the 55 Main Revitalization project: building a public restroom/shower/laundry facility and finishing out the first floor of the historic building as a Visitors Center and business space. The facility will serve the many travelers, including bicyclists, hunters, and anglers, as well as community members as events are held at the Town Square that has been created on the four lots owned by the Winnett ACES on Main Street. Winnett ACES hopes to have the first floor open for business summer of 2025. SHEARER welcomed questions from the Board and offered to provide additional information upon request. The Board thanked SHEARER for attending.

5. **PLANNING.**

a. **ANNUAL MEETING PREPARATION.**

i. **ELECTION AND CREDENTIALS.** The Board approved having OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK contact members to be on the Election and Credentials Committee.

ii. **GRAND PRIZES.** After considerable discussion about what it cost to purchase and process a beef and hog last year, in 2024, and what the cost would be in 2025, the Board decided to continue the conversation regarding an annual meeting grand prize at next month's board 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 March 31, 2025, Form 7 operating report. HORACEK reported that the auditing firm of Douglas Wilson & Company, P.C. would be at the co-op during the third or fourth week of May to conduct an audit of Fergus Electric Cooperative's 2024 financials. JANINE RIFE DIDIER reviewed the March 31, 2025, ratios report.

b. **OPERATIONS AND SAFETY REPORT.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY covered the report due to LINE SUPERINTENDENT BRET OPHUS' absence. INSTRUCTOR MIKE DAVIS provided annual training in First Aid and CPR procedures during the April 2 safety meeting. In-house safety discussion continued with a review of close calls and sections 5 and 6 of the MECA Safety Manual. The next safety meeting is scheduled for May 7. The engineers have been working on the CHS Pump Station's Substation and new transmission line. Rocky Mountain Contractors will build the line. MANAGER SWEENEY said that the project is progressing nicely. JJ Kane sold several items for the co-op, including

the co-op's 2005 Buick LeSabre. SALLY HORACEK was pleased to learn that hers was the winning bid for the Buick. SWEENEY reported that three semi loads of poles, two Fergus truck and trailers plus five semi loads of material purchased from NorVal Electric Cooperative, in Glasgow, MT, were transported to Fergus. The co-op purchased the material at a discounted price. Buying the material has helped to keep project costs down.

- c. **INVENTORY OF WORK ORDERS.** After reviewing Inventory of Work Orders No. 638-638X for \$83,976.42 dated March 31, 2025, JASON SWANZ moved to affirm them. BOB EVANS seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- d. **POWER OUTAGE REPORT.** MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reviewed the March 2025 Outage Report prepared by STAKING ENGINEER MELANIE FORAN, PE.

**7. POLICIES.**

**a. Eliminated:**

- i. **108 – STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONS OF FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE.** The Board reviewed Board Policy 108. After a period of discussion, BRETT MAXWELL moved to eliminate Board Policy 108, in light of retaining Board Policy 104, STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONS OF COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES. BOB EVANS seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**b. Reviewed:**

- i. **109 – STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONS OF EXECUTIVE AND POLICY COMMITTEE.** The Board reviewed Board Policy 109.

**8. REPORT OF CORPORATE COUNSEL.** CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL reported that he worked with the engineers and the front office staff on various matters of importance to the cooperative. BIRDWELL reported that he had worked with MANAGER SWEENEY on the CHS project.

**9. MANAGER'S REPORT.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY said that MECA had excellent success with HB 490 Wildfire Liability bill. Having passed the House and Senate, the bill will now be sent to GOVERNOR GIANFORTE'S desk for signature. SWEENEY reported that he traveled to Helena on April 16 to attend the legislative retirement reception for CENTRAL MONTANA ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE GENERAL MANAGER DOUG HARDY and MECA CEO GARY WIENS. He said that the celebration was well attended and enjoyable. SWEENEY said that he has been working with FEMA personnel to amend the total costs of the May 2024 storm to include the loan interest on the money borrowed after the storm. SWEENEY reported on the MECA Spring Meeting noting that several cooperatives have implemented rate increases in 2025 and have noticed declines in new service requests. SWEENEY reported that he recently signed a non-disclosure agreement with the Black Butte Copper Mine. SWEENEY will be traveling to Washington, D.C. next week with PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAER to attend the NRECA LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE.

**10. MEETING REPORTS.** VICE PRESIDENT TERRY FROST briefly reported on the MECA Spring Board Meeting held in Great Falls on April 8-9.

**11. EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

- a. At 2:51 p.m., JASON SWANZ moved to go into executive session. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- b. At 3:19 p.m., BRAD ARNTZEN moved to return to regular session. CATHY KOMBOL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- c. **ESTATE CAPITAL CREDITS.** The Board reviewed the list of estate capital credits for April 2025 totaling \$18,753.29, which were prepared by SENIOR BILLING CLERK ERIKA MATTALIANO. BRETT MAXWELL moved to affirm the estate capital credit retirement and JASON SWANZ seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

d. **DELINQUENT STATUS, NEW MEMBERS.** The Board reviewed the delinquent accounts showing accounts paid in full and accounts still owing.

12. **OTHER BUSINESS.** After a brief discussion, the Board agreed that, at this time, they wish to continue to start the monthly board meetings directly after lunch as has been the practice since December 2024.

13. **NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.**

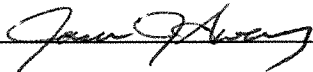
14. **FUTURE MEETINGS.**

- a. Safety Meeting; May 7, 2025
- b. FEC Board Meetings 2025:
  - i. May 29 - 12:00 p.m.
  - ii. June 25 - 12:00 p.m.
  - iii. July 31 - 12:00 p.m.
- c. NRECA Legislative Conference: Washington, DC; April 26-30
- d. Fergus Annual Meeting; June 5
- e. Fergus Reorganization Meeting; June 5
- f. MECA Managers' Group Meeting: Helena, MT; June 5-6
- g. Members 1<sup>st</sup> Board Meeting: Sheridan, WY; June 16
- h. CFC Forum: New York City, NY; June 30-July 2
- i. MECA Summer Board Meeting: Sidney, MT; July 9-10
- j. Basin Summer Managers' Meeting: Deadwood, SD; July 23-25
- k. Basin Annual Meeting: Bismarck, ND; August 12-15
- l. NRECA Region 7/9 Meeting: Bellevue, WA; October 6-8

15. **NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.**

**ADJOURNMENT.** PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAEKER adjourned the meeting at 3:52 p.m.

SECRETARY



ATTEST: PRESIDENT

