

**MINUTES
GENERAL BOARD MEETING, JULY 30, 2020
FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**

1. **GENERAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER.** The Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Trustees met in general session July 30, 2020 with PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAER calling the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. JANINE RIFE DIDIER was scrivener. Board members in attendance were BRAD ARNTZEN, BOB EVANS, TERRY FROST, CATHY KOMBOL, BRETT MAXWELL, and JASON SWANZ. GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY, CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL, LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA and OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK were also present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** After reviewing the meeting agenda, BOB EVANS moved to approve it. BRETT MAXWELL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.** After reviewing the minutes of the June 25, 2020 general meeting and discussing them, JASON SWANZ moved their approval. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
4. **APPROVAL OF REORGANIZATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES.** After reviewing the minutes of the June 25 reorganization board meeting and discussing them, TERRY FROST moved their approval. BRETT MAXWELL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
5. **2020 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES.** The minutes of the June 25, 2020 Annual Meeting of the Membership were reviewed by the Board of Directors. They will be presented to the membership for approval next year at the 2021 Annual Meeting of the Membership.
6. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD.** The Board noted the regular time for member input relative to any issue of interest or importance to them. No member appeared.
7. **COVID-19 - GOVERNOR BULLOCK'S FACE COVERING DIRECTIVE.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reported on Montana Governor Steve Bullock's Phase 2 face covering directive: If four or more active cases of Covid-19 exist within the county, face masks will be required by employees. The office doors remain closed to the membership and the staff continue to assist members via phone and electronically. A payment lockbox at the west entrance of the office accommodates members who choose to drop off their payment in person. The co-op is currently operating on four 10-hour days, closed Fridays. Delivery people like UPS and FedEx call and leave delivery items outside and if signatures are required, a staff member steps outside to sign. The employees are equipped with face masks and hand sanitizer. Fergus Electric Cooperative's employee appreciation picnic is postponed due to Covid-19.
8. **APPROVAL OF LINEMAN SCHOLARSHIP.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA reported that the line school in Bismarck, North Dakota offers a three-semester course that currently costs \$14,800 and Butte, Montana offers a four-month course that currently costs \$8,500 plus \$2,000 in tools. MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY recommended Fergus Electric offer an annual lineman scholarship. CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL told the board that Central Montana Foundation is willing to administer the scholarship for the co-op. MANAGER SWEENEY recommended having Central Montana Foundation administer the scholarship. After a period of discussion, BOB EVANS moved to continue the scholarship for lineman school for \$6,000 managed by Central Montana Foundation. JASON SWANZ seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. KRIS BIRDWELL will contact Central Montana Foundation to work out the details.
9. **FINANCIAL AND OTHER MONTHLY REPORTS.** Financial and other monthly reports were presented to the Board for discussion. OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reviewed the June 30, 2020 operating report and reported that in August 2020 she will need to let RUS know the co-op's decision regarding the handling of the cushion of credit. JANINE RIFE DIDIER presented the June 30, 2020 monthly ratios report.

10. APPROVAL OF ESTATE CAPITAL CREDITS PAYMENT. Fergus Electric received notice that the Jane Glennie estate is seeking distribution of Glennie's capital credits. The forthcoming payment is subject to board review as it exceeds the payment limitation amount stated in Board Policy 220.0. OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK and CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL provided information and answered questions pertaining to the estate capital credits. After a brief discussion, JASON SWANZ moved to approve paying out the capital credits to the Jane Glennie estate. BRETT MAXWELL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

11. OPERATIONS REPORT. LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA reported that the Roundup Assistant Line Superintendent position was offered to and accepted by BRET NELLERMOE. Roundup's current ASSISTANT LINE SUPERINTENDENT DON CRISWELL is retiring July 30, 2020. ROUNDUP FOREMAN DEAN LAWLER is retiring as well with his last day being July 30, 2020. The Board extended their congratulations to NELLERMOE, CRISWELL and LAWLER. RIKALA noted that an individual has expressed interest in the Roundup journeyman lineman position and an individual has been selected for the Lewistown journeyman lineman's position and will start employment this fall. RIKALA was pleased to report that Fergus Electric had received a 50kV transformer from Yellowstone Valley, free for the hauling. STAKING ENGINEER DAN BALSTER is working with ECI to make plans to move the approximately 35,000-pound transformer to Fergus Electric Cooperative.

12. AFTER-HOURS ANSWERING SERVICE. LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA said that members have reported not having their after-hours calls answered recently. DON BARBER informed RIKALA that due to a recent illness he had been unable to answer the co-op's after-hours calls but had not let RIKALA know his predicament. MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY said the after-hours calls are currently being forwarded to him and other staff members to meet the needs of the membership. GENERAL MANAGER SWEENEY AND CORPORATE COUNSEL BIRDWELL will review the current after-hours contract. RIKALA noted that the co-op is looking at options that can meet the co-op's business requirements going forward.

13. INVENTORY OF WORK ORDERS. No work orders were closed this month.

14. POWER OUTAGE REPORT. The Board reviewed the outage report prepared by JANINE RIFE DIDIER which covered power interruptions for January 2020-June 2020.

15. BOARD POLICY 104 - STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONS FOR COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES. The Board reviewed Policy 104.

16. BOARD POLICY 105 - STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONS OF FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE. The Board reviewed Policy 105.

17. BOARD POLICY 106 - STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND POLICY COMMITTEE. The Board reviewed Policy 106. After discussion, TERRY FROST moved to approve amendments to the policy. BOB EVANS seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

18. REPORT OF CORPORATE COUNSEL. CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL reported he had worked on items of importance to the cooperative.

19. MANAGER'S REPORT. MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY gave a brief review of the AMI installation status report prepared by STAKING ENGINEER MELANIE FORAN. ORION THORNTON of ONSITE ENERGY is hoping to begin Phase 2 installation in the coming weeks. SWEENEY reported doing several field visits with the various crews and noted the co-op has a very impressive staff. SWEENEY told the Board that the IBEW (union) business manager is at the co-op today as the IBEW is presenting a LifeSaver Award to BRIAN GODBEY while also recognizing MELANIE FORAN'S role in saving a pilot's life in 2019. FEDERATED INSURANCE CONSULTANT STEVE PAULSON met with LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA and ASSISTANT LINE SUPERINTENDENT BRET OPHUS on July 29 regarding fire mitigation. SWEENEY noted that the co-op received a patronage payment and statement from NRTC for the 2019 fiscal year.

20. **FERGUS ELECTRIC OFFICE HOURS/SCHEDULE.** MANAGER SWEENEY reported that he met with his direct reports and the two IBEW Stewards pertaining to the work schedule, present and future. SWEENEY provided the Board with a detailed proposed work schedule for the operations, office, and engineering departments for the remaining months of 2020 and for the year 2021. MANAGER SWEENEY said that the co-op will post signs showing the hours and days of the week the office will be in operation.

21. **MECA SUMMER BOARD MEETING.** TERRY FROST and MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reported on the July 8-9th board meeting they attended. FROST provided a thorough report and noted that the consensus was that MECA is and should remain a non-partisan organization. SWEENEY gave a report and added that he appreciated the opportunity to meet MECA staff, as well as board members and managers from other co-ops. MECA has hired a new lobbyist who will begin working on September 1. MECA's annual meeting is scheduled for October 2. MECA still hopes to be able to hold an in-person annual meeting in October.

22. **PRECORP/MEMBERS 1ST MEETING.** MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reported on the July 21 Members 1st that he attended via Zoom meeting. MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reported that he and FORMER MANAGER SCOTT SWEENEY are working with PRECORP MANAGER MIKE EASLEY to participate in a Basin Focus Group Survey in the coming weeks.

23. **SAFETY MEETING - LOCK OUT TAG OUT, PRE-TRIP/POST-TRIP INSPECTIONS.** RIKALA reported that the July 30th safety meeting will be a Zoom presentation by MECA SAFETY INSTRUCTOR, TROY KAMPS. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, it is likely that virtual safety meetings will continue until further notice.

24. **ESTATE CAPITAL CREDITS.** The Board reviewed the July 2020 estate capital credits in the amount of \$24,693.51, prepared by SUSAN HINKLEY. BRETT MAXWELL moved to affirm the retirements and BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

25. **DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS/NEW MEMBERS LIST.** The Board reviewed the delinquent accounts showing those that were paid in full and those that were still owing. A list of new members was also reviewed.

26. **OTHER BUSINESS.** None.

27. **FUTURE MEETINGS.**

- a. Safety Meeting, All things fire and Mayday training, Aug. 26
- b. PRECorp/Members 1st, Sep. 15, or Sep. 22
- c. FEC Board, Aug. 27, Sep. 24 & Oct. 29
- d. MECA Annual Meeting, Oct. 5-7

28. **NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.**

29. **ADJOURNMENT.** PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAEKER adjourned the meeting at 1:18 p.m.

SECRETARY



ATTEST: PRESIDENT



