

**MINUTES
GENERAL BOARD MEETING, OCTOBER 29, 2020
FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**

- 1. GENERAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER.** The Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Trustees met in general session October 29, 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 TERRY FROST, CATHY KOMBOL and JASON SWANZ. GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY, CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL, OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK and LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA were also present. Board members in attendance via conference call were BRAD ARNTZEN, BOB EVANS and BRETT MAXWELL. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** After reviewing the meeting agenda, BRETT MAXWELL moved to approve it. TERRY FROST seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.** After reviewing the minutes of the September 23, 2020 general meeting and discussing them, TERRY FROST moved their approval. JASON SWANZ seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- 4. 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.
- 5. PLANNING.**
- 6. FINANCIAL AND OTHER MONTHLY REPORTS.** Financial and other monthly reports were presented to the Board for discussion. OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reviewed the September 30, 2020 operating report. JANINE RIFE DIDIER presented the September 30, 2020 monthly ratios report.
- 7. OPERATIONS REPORT.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA reported that he was satisfied with the accepted 2020 material inventory counts for the Lewistown and Roundup warehouses. RIKALA noted that the crews have installed about 500 of the 1300 relays and 800 of the 6500 meters for the AMI project. New construction requests have taken priority over the AMI project recently. RIKALA said that JOHN NANINI, with VICTOR MOUNTAIN, INC. and TRANSFORMER REPAIRMAN MARK SCHWOMEYER drew annual test oils samples from the substation transformers. The samples were sent to Alternative Technologies, Inc. for testing. RIKALA reported that he contacted four companies that provide after-hours answering services and concluded that additional research is necessary to find a suitable service that will consistently and effectively meet the co-op's needs.
- 8. INVENTORY OF WORK ORDERS.** No work orders were closed this month.
- 9. POWER OUTAGE REPORT.** The Board reviewed the outage report prepared by JANINE RIFE DIDIER which covered power interruptions for January 2020-September 2020.
- 10. BOARD POLICY 203 - TRUSTEE EXPENSES AND FEES.** The Board reviewed Policy 203. After discussion, JASON SWANZ moved to approve the policy as amended. TERRY FROST seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- 11. BOARD POLICY 204 - TRUSTEE OR EMPLOYEE LOANS AND/OR PURCHASE OF MATERIAL, EQUIPMENT, ETC.** The Board reviewed Policy 204.
- 12. BOARD POLICY 205 - RETIREMENT.** The Board reviewed Policy 205. After discussion, CATHY KOMBOL moved to approve the policy as amended. JASON SWANZ seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

13. REPORT OF CORPORATE COUNSEL. CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL thanked the Board for permitting him to attend the annual Co-op Regulatory Seminar. BIRDWELL noted that the seminar was held virtually this year and that was difficult as it consisted of over 12 hours of online presentations. BIRDWELL noted that there are many items counsel is watching related to co-ops. BIRDWELL had also worked on items of importance to the cooperative.

14. MANAGER'S REPORT. MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reported that after the October 1st safety meeting he led a well-received discussion with the operations' employees on the co-op's linework practices. MANAGER SWEENEY reported MECA's Annual Meeting held in Great Falls October 5-7 was only at two-thirds normal attendance, mostly due to covid-related concerns. SWEENEY noted that he and BOB EVANS attended the NRECA Region 9 Resolutions Committee meeting virtually. PAUL DESCHEEMAER, BOB EVANS, and CARSON SWEENEY attended the NRECA and CFC virtual business meetings on Friday, October 16th. SWEENEY noted that BRENT McRAE was elected as a CFC Director. SWEENEY reported that construction for Phase 2 Solar is complete. Thus far, the co-op has sold 81 of the 192 panels. SWEENEY noted that SENIOR BILLING CLERK SUSAN HINKLEY is working with NISC on programming changes to accommodate an additional rate for member credits. SWEENEY reported that he will meet virtually with Basin on October 30th to discuss the language within the 2020 Class A Member Rates. Fergus has requested a meeting with NRTC to review our AMI communication system. The co-op is looking into expanding its use of the network to include communication with line devices for visibility and control of reclosers and regulators. MANAGER SWEENEY reported that he, the line superintendent, assistant line superintendent and engineers have covered after-hours calls for the last 12 weeks and while it has worked well and our members and line crews appreciate having knowledgeable staff taking calls, it requires staff to work their normal day shift and to keep an ear to their phone during the night. LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA is working through details on the co-op's satellite radio system for integration to a reliable third party to cover our outage calls after hours.

15. FEDERATED INSURANCE AND POLICY REVIEW. DAVE REHRER/FEDERATED ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE gave a comprehensive review of the coverage provided in the co-op's insurance policy. REHRER allowed time for questions from the Board.

16. CAPITAL CREDIT GENERAL RETIREMENT DISTRIBUTION. OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reviewed a spreadsheet showing a proposed distribution of capital credits. A discussion covering a broad number of items took place. The Board will continue with these discussions moving forward. PRESIDENT DESCHEEMAER requested that OFFICE MANAGER HORACEK run some scenarios for the Board to consider.

17. BOARD RESOLUTION REGARDING RDUP FORM 674. After discussion, BOB EVANS moved to approve the Board Resolution Regarding Rural Development Utilities Programs, (RDUP Form 674), which states that MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY shall be responsible for submitting and certifying any and all data required by RDUP Form 674 to the Rural Utilities Service, and that OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK be the Security Administrator on behalf of the Corporation, who shall give access to the Corporation's data, as appropriate, for the purpose of complying with RDUP Form 674. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. A copy of the executed resolution is attached.

18. MECA ANNUAL MEETING, OCT. 5-7. BOB EVANS reported on the power supply meeting he attended, which he said was good. BRAD ARNTZEN reported that he attended the communications meeting and had enjoyed the meeting. He noted that there were fewer people in attendance due to Covid-19 concerns. BRETT MAXWELL and CATHY KOMBOL reported that they attended a capital credits class that had a good discussion on capital credits, even though it was held virtually. CATHY KOMBOL said that the safety committee meeting she attended was good as was the MECA board meeting she attended in place of TERRY FROST who was unable to attend. PAUL DESCHEEMAER reviewed MECA's books and reported that they are doing well. He noted that the 2021 Youth Tour is cancelled. OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reported that she attended the METSPOOL meeting and learned that the co-op is getting a decrease on its workers' compensation fees.

19. NRECA REGIONAL MEETING. BOB EVANS reviewed the virtual meeting he attended on October 13th and 16th, reporting that BRENT McRAE was elected to the NRECA Board. The Board wanted to offer its congratulations to McRAE.

20. **PRECORP/MEMBERS 1ST MEETING.** BOARD PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAEKER reported on the October 20th PRECorp/Members 1st meetings that he attended via Zoom.

21. **SAFETY MEETING.** RIKALA reported that the October 1st safety meeting was a Zoom presentation by MECA SAFETY INSTRUCTOR, JERRY LEMM who covered close calls and Slips, Trips and Falls. The safety committee will meet to discuss topics for the November 18th safety meeting. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, it is likely that virtual safety meetings will continue until further notice.

22. **BLACK BUTTE COPPER MINE UPDATE.** The Board reviewed and discussed an article in the October 1st *The Meagher County News* titled Black Butte Copper Update in which the mine thanked the White Sulphur Springs community for its continued support, provided a progress report, told about various legal issues and challenges that they continue to work through and told that they are accepting resumes for future jobs.

23. **ESTATE CAPITAL CREDITS.** The Board reviewed the October 2020 list of estate capital credits in the amount of \$11,698.59 prepared by SUSAN HINKLEY. TERRY FROST moved to affirm the retirements and JASON SWANZ seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

24. **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.

25. **OTHER BUSINESS.** None.

26. **FUTURE MEETINGS.**

- a. Basin Annual Meeting, Nov. 4
- b. PRECorp/Members 1st, Nov. 19 & Dec. 15
- c. FEC Board, Nov. 19 & Dec. 17
- d. Safety Meeting, Nov. 18

27. **NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.**

28. **ADJOURNMENT.** PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAEKER adjourned the meeting at 2:58 p.m.

SECRETARY Bradley Antzger ATTEST: PRESIDENT Paul Descheemaeker