

MINUTES
GENERAL BOARD MEETING, JANUARY 28, 2025
FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

- 1. GENERAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER.** The Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Trustees met in general session January 28, 2025, with PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAER calling the meeting to order at 12:36 p.m. JANINE RIFE DIDIER was scrivener. The Board Members in attendance were BRAD ARNTZEN, TERRY FROST, CATHY KOMBOL, JASON SWANZ and BRETT MAXWELL. BOB EVANS attended virtually. Other attendees included GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY, LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA, ASSISTANT LINE SUPERINTENDENT BRET OPHUS, OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK, and CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL. The attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** After reviewing the meeting agenda, BRAD ARNTZEN moved to approve it. JASON SWANZ seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- 3. MINUTES APPROVAL.** After reviewing the minutes of the January 2, 2025, general meeting and discussing them, BRETT MAXWELL moved their approval. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- 4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD.** No one from the public appeared.
- 5. PLANNING.**
 - a. USDA FUNDS FOR CMMC.** MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY and CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL presented an updated version of the CMMC \$2 Million Fund Release – Promissory Note in need of a date and signature, required by USDA Rural Development. MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY and SECRETARY JASON SWANZ signed the document and updated the date to January 28, 2025.
- 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 December 31, 2024, Form 7 operating report. JANINE RIFE DIDIER reviewed the December 31, 2024; ratios report.
 - b. OPERATIONS AND SAFETY REPORT.** ASSISTANT LINE SUPERINTENDENT BRET OPHUS announced that FOREMAN TYSON RUFF was offered and accepted the promotion to Assistant Line Superintendent. RUFF will officially start on February 26, 2025. We extend our congratulations to RUFF and are happy to have him be the new assistant line superintendent. OPHUS reported that the Wellness Day scheduled for the January 15 safety meeting was postponed due to the weather and is rescheduled for January 29, 2025. The safety committee will meet soon to create the Safety Meeting schedule for 2025. OPHUS reported that the engineers project list for 2025 has approximately eight jobs with others in the works. FEMA is close to finalizing the payment process from the large spring storm in 2024. OPHUS reported that Terex was awarded the bid to remount the service bucket on a new chassis. The new cab and chassis are expected to arrive in April and Terex anticipates 4-6 weeks to build. OPHUS reported that the crews were changing poles in Winnett and Grass Range and completing P2 tickets prior to the big snowfall. Since the area received heavy snow, the line crews have been making repairs to members' service wires from heavy snow and member tear downs, moving snow and conducting monthly substation inspections and annual OCR/sectionalizing reads. OPHUS reported that the Roundup line crew likes using drone videos and would like to continue using it in the future. OPHUS said that LINEMEN DAREK DYGERT and DAN RICE will join 13 linemen from 11 other Montana Co-op and participate in the international trip to Guatemala, February 13-28. LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA announced that beginning March 17, 2025, he will seldom be in the office, and he will officially retire in January 2026.
 - c. INVENTORY OF WORK ORDERS.** After reviewing Inventory of Work Orders No. 635-635X for \$8,061,551.24, dated December 31, 2025, CATHY KOMBOL moved to affirm them. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

- d. **POWER OUTAGE REPORT.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA reviewed the December 2024 Outage Report prepared by STAKING ENGINEER MELANIE FORAN, PE.

7. POLICIES.

a. **Review:**

- i. **103 – DELEGATION FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO THE MANAGER.** Board Policy 103 was reviewed.

8. REPORT OF CORPORATE COUNSEL. CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL reported that he worked on various matters of importance to the cooperative. BIRDWELL reported that the CMMC-USDA REDLG monies will finally be disbursed to CMMC. BIRDWELL said when he looked back at his year working for Fergus Electric, 2024 was a good year.

9. MANAGER'S REPORT. GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY briefly covered items included in his written report. SWEENEY reported that the weather and road conditions from winter storms led him and the leadership team to make the decision to closed the office on January 12 and January 22, 2025. The MDT report showed severe driving conditions on many highways including several road closures. School was cancelled. The risk of having employees driving to and from work was great. The employees greatly appreciated the decision as many of them spent both days digging themselves out. SWEENEY reported that he and LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA were able to plow on Monday in preparation for employee and member parking on Tuesday. Throughout the weather events, no outages were reported. SWEENEY reported that the leadership team put extensive effort and consideration into the selection process for the new assistant line superintendent adding that we look forward to working with TYSON RUFF and mentoring him in his new role, which begins on Wednesday, February 26, 2025. SWEENEY reported that he talked to the CEO of RESCO and told him RESCO can only lease the Roundup shop for three years. RESCO has 39 – new 22 kW Generac Generators sizes that they are selling at a reduced price of approximately four thousand dollars each. Generator sizes 18 kW to 26 kW are the most common that the co-op sells. RESCO is selling a minimum of 10 generators per shipment. SWEENEY said there are several people interested in the generators, so he does not feel it would be a risk for the co-op to purchase them. MANAGER SWEENEY reported that he would be participating in the MECA Legislative trip to Washington, DC, February 3-5, 2025.

10. MEETING REPORTS.

- a. **CO-OP DAY AT THE CAPITOL, JANUARY 20; HELENA:** PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAERKER and GENERAL MANAGER SWEENEY reported on the Co-op Day at the Capitol. DESCHEEMAERKER reported that the event was well attended; approximately two hundred people took part. DESCHEEMAERKER said that it was a good experience, and he suggested that everyone take time to go. He said he was pleased to see the political parties work together during the sessions.
- b. **MEMBERS 1ST BASIN UPDATE, JANUARY 21; VIRTUAL:** PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAERKER and GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY gave a brief update of the meeting they attended virtually.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION.

- a. **ESTATE CAPITAL CREDITS.** The Board reviewed the list of estate capital credits for January 2025 totaling \$5,433.44, which were prepared by SENIOR BILLING CLERK ERIKA MATTALIANO. JASON SWANZ moved to affirm the capital credit 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 4th Quarter 2024 list of write offs for \$823.66. No further action was taken.

12. OTHER BUSINESS.

13. NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.

14. FUTURE MEETINGS.

- a. Safety Meeting; January 29, 2025
- b. FEC Board Meetings 2025:
 - i. February 27, 2025 – 12:00 p.m.
 - ii. March 27, 2025 – 12:00 p.m.
 - iii. April 24 – 12:00 p.m.
- c. MECA Legislative Trip: Washington, DC; February 3-5
- d. Basin Winter Managers Conference: Sioux Falls, SD; February 19-20
- e. NRECA PowerXchange: Atlanta, GA; March 7-12
- f. Members 1st 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 1st 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
- m. NRECA Region 7/9 Meeting: Bellevue, WA; October 6-8

15. NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.

ADJOURNMENT. PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAERKER adjourned the meeting at 3:23 p.m.

SECRETARY

Bradley A. Hark

ATTEST: PRESIDENT

Paul Descheemaeker