

**MINUTES**  
**GENERAL BOARD MEETING, NOVEMBER 1, 2021**  
**FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**

1. **GENERAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER.** The Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Trustees met in general session November 1, 2021, 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, LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA, OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK and CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL were also present. The attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** After reviewing the meeting agenda, BOB EVANS moved to approve it. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.** After reviewing the minutes of the September 30, 2021, general meeting and discussing them, BRETT MAXWELL moved their approval. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
4. **BASIN ELECTRIC LOAD FORECAST.** MANAGER SWEENEY reviewed the Resolution of the Board of Directors of Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. to Approve the 2022 Load Forecast Prepared by Basin Electric Power Cooperative. After a brief discussion, TERRY FROST moved to approve the resolution. BRETT MAXWELL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. A copy of the resolution is attached.
5. **BASIN ELECTRIC MEMBER SERVICES.** MANAGER SWEENEY reported that Basin Electric Power Cooperative's SR. V.P. MEMBER SERVICES AND ADMINISTRATION CHRIS BAUMGARTNER hopes to visit Fergus Electric during the first quarter of 2022 and attend a board meeting.
6. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD.** At 11:00 a.m., the Board noted the regular time for member input relative to any issue of interest or importance to them. The Board welcomed CEO of Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association GARY WIENS. WIENS thanked the Board for the opportunity to talk about MECA. He reviewed several state and national legislative issues in play, mentioned the education, safety, and training programs that MECA provides and talked about the award-winning Rural Montana magazine that includes member-co-op's monthly inserts.
7. **ROUNDUP SUBSTATION PROPERTY.** MANAGER SWEENEY reported that he contacted the two parties who had expressed interest in the Roundup Substation property. One party is purchasing another property and is no longer interested. The other party, an adjoining neighbor is interested in purchasing several acres, but not the house and buildings. After an extended conversation regarding getting the Roundup Substation property ready to sell, i.e., obtaining a land survey to relocate property boundaries and evaluating property values, BRETT MAXWELL moved to sell the residential property surrounding the Roundup Substation property at fair market value. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
8. **MUSSELSHELL RIVER PROPERTY.** MANAGER SWEENEY reported that a cover letter and easements were mailed certified, return receipt requested to eight of Fergus Electric's Musselshell River property neighbors and a ninth was sent via email to NorthWestern Energy. After a period of discussion, JASON SWANZ moved to sell the 2.6 acres of Musselshell River property at or near fair market value. BOB EVANS seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
9. **FERGUS ELECTRIC CHRISTMAS PARTY/DINNER.** MANAGER SWEENEY and OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK talked about the co-op's upcoming Christmas party and dinner. The event is scheduled for Friday evening, December 3. SWEENEY and HORACEK will work out the details and send invitations.

**10. 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, 2021 operating report. HORACEK noted that a general retirement of capital credits for 1995, 1996 and forty percent of 1997 was paid out. MANAGER SWEENEY recognized all the work that OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK and SENIOR BILLING CLERK SUSIE HINKLEY did to get the general retirement capital credit checks paid out. JANINE RIFE DIDIER reviewed an abbreviated version of the September 30, 2021, ratios report.

**11. OPERATIONS AND SAFETY REPORT.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT RIKALA reported that on October 15, CMMC NURSES, JAMIE SWEENEY and MACHELLE CRAWFORD, presented Stop the Bleed, a nationwide program, designed to empower civilian bystanders to act quickly and save lives. DON PYRAH, with DNRC discussed the importance of coordination between Fergus Electric and fire crews at a fire scene. The November 10 safety meeting will include presentations from MECA SAFETY INSTRUCTOR JERRY LEMM, on Material Safety Data Sheets and Flagging, which are topics OSHA requires. RIKALA reported that MECA SAFETY INSTRUCTOR TROY KAMPS is retiring Nov 15. RIKALA reported that the safety committee selected ANDREW REUTERSKIOLD to replace outgoing SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBER BRIAN GODBEY who completed his three-year term on the safety committee. RIKALA commended GODBEY for doing an excellent job on the safety committee. Other members on the committee include SUSAN HINKLEY, LOUIE HOULD, and SCOTT OLSON. RIKALA serves as the committee's safety director. RIKALA said that Roundup and Lewistown are conducting their annual physical inventory of material, which RIKALA plans to have reconciled by Thanksgiving or sooner. RIKALA stated that Basin Electric's after-hours answering service will be able to integrate our satellite radio into their dispatch service. Basin will meet with Fergus on December 8 to discuss the details. RIKALA told the board that material is getting harder to obtain with lead times up to a year for certain utility industry materials. The co-op will continue to work with all material vendors for supplies. RIKALA reported that the co-op received notice from Landis+Gyr saying they will not host the co-op's Turtle Meter System after December 31, 2021.

**12. INVENTORY OF WORK ORDERS.** No work orders were closed in September 2021.

**13. POWER OUTAGE REPORT.** The Board reviewed the September 2021 Outage Report.

**14. BOARD POLICY 226 - GRIEVANCE AND ARBITRATION PROCEDURE AND BOARD POLICY 227 - HARASSMENT AND/OR DISCRIMINATION.** CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL requested that he and MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY continue to work through the details of these two policies and report back at the next board meeting. The Board agreed.

**15. REPORT OF CORPORATE COUNSEL.** CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL reported that he has kept busy working on several items of importance to the cooperative.

**16. MANAGER'S REPORT.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reported that MIKE PARSONS with Horizon Aerial Inspection Services is currently inspecting the 220 miles of overhead power line in the Nihill area, outside of Judith Gap. The inspection should take approximately five weeks. Members within the area were notified of the project via the co-op's automated calling system. SWEENEY said that during the October 19 Members 1<sup>st</sup> board meeting a motion was made and approved to allow MEMBERS 1<sup>ST</sup> POWER COOPERATIVE GENERAL MANAGER MIKE EASLEY to sign the updated/modified wholesale power contract between Basin Electric and Members 1<sup>st</sup> to remove the parity adder that is currently assessed to Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. The parity adder will be removed ten years and nine months ahead of the original contract terms. MANAGER SWEENEY gave an update pertaining to the Strategic Planning session that is scheduled for December 14 - 16, 2021. MANAGER SWEENEY thanked the board for permitting him to attend the Leadership Montana Program the last week of October 2021. He reported that it was worthwhile and enjoyable.

**17. MECA ANNUAL MEETING.** The Board members gave a report on the meetings they each attended. They noted that TONGUE RIVER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE BOARD PRESIDENT DEEDEE ISAACS was elected President of MECA. MECA BOARD MEMBER TERRY FROST continued with the review of the MECA board meeting. The Board reported that they enjoyed the annual meeting.

**18. MEMBERS 1<sup>ST</sup>/BASIN UPDATE.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reported on the October 19 meeting.

19. **EXECUTIVE SESSION.** At 2:23 p.m., BRAD ARNTZEN moved to go into executive session to review director benefits. JASON SWANZ seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

20. **ESTATE CAPITAL CREDITS.** The Board reviewed the October 2021 list of estate capital credits in the amount of \$24,014.69 prepared by SUSAN HINKLEY. BRETT MAXWELL moved to affirm the retirements and BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

21. **BAD DEBTS WRITE OFFS REVIEWED.** OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK presented the September 2021 bad debts write offs of \$361.52 for review.

22. **DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS/NEW MEMBERS LIST.** The Board reviewed the delinquent accounts showing those that were paid in full and those that were still owing.

23. **RESUME GENERAL SESSION.** At 2:38 p.m., BRETT MAXWELL moved to resume general session. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

24. **HEALTH PLAN OPTIONS OFFERED.** OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reviewed the cost savings of a High Deductible Health Plan. After a period of discussion, JASON SWANZ moved to give board members the option of electing to enroll in a High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) or a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) health insurance plan. BOB EVANS seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

25. **OTHER BUSINESS.**

26. **FUTURE MEETINGS.**

- a. Basin Annual Meeting, November 9-11
- b. Safety Meeting, November 10
- c. PRECorp Board Meeting, November 16
- d. MECA Winter Meeting, November 30-December 2
- e. FEC Board Meeting, December 3
- f. Fergus Electric Strategic Planning, December 14-16
- g. FEC Board Meetings in 2022, January 21, February 24, and March 31

27. **NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.**

28. **ADJOURNMENT.** PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAEKER adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

SECRETARY Brad Arntzen ATTEST: PRESIDENT Paul Descheemaeker