

**MINUTES**  
**GENERAL BOARD MEETING, JANUARY 28, 2026**  
**FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**

1. **GENERAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER.** The Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Trustees met in general session January 28, 2026, with PRESIDENT TERRY FROST calling the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. JANINE RIFE DIDIER was scrivener. The Board Members in attendance were BRAD ARNTZEN, PAUL BRADY, CATHY KOMBOL, BRETT MAXWELL, and JASON SWANZ. BOB EVANS participated via Owl Video Conferencing. Other attendees included GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY, ASSISTANT LINE SUPERINTENDENT TYSON RUFF, OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK, and CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL. The attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** After reviewing the January 28, 2026, meeting agenda, BRETT MAXWELL moved to approve it. CATHY KOMBOL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
3. **MINUTES APPROVAL.** After reviewing the general board meeting minutes of December 19, 2025, and discussing them, BRETT MAXWELL, moved to approve them. VICE PRESIDENT JASON SWANZ seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD.** No one from the public appeared.
5. **PLANNING.**
  - a. **NRECA POWERXCHANGE: MARCH 8-12; NASHVILLE, TN - VOTING DELEGATES.** MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY told the Board about the upcoming meeting being held in Nashville, Tennessee, and said to let him know if they are interested in attending.
  - b. **FERGUS ELECTRIC ANNUAL MEETING: JUNE 4, 2026.** MANAGER SWEENEY talked briefly about what he and staff will be doing in the coming months to prepare for the annual meeting.
6. **FINANCIAL AND OTHER MONTHLY REPORTS.** Staff presented financial and other monthly reports to the Board for discussion.
  - a. **FINANCIAL REPORTS. FINANCIAL REPORTS.** OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reviewed the December 31, 2025, Form 7 operating report. JANINE RIFE DIDIER reviewed the December 31, 2025, ratios report.
  - b. **OPERATIONS AND SAFETY REPORT.** ASSISTANT LINE SUPERINTENDENT TYSON RUFF reviewed the report prepared by LINE SUPERINTENDENT BRET OPHUS. The Wellness Day Clinic was held on January 14, 2026. Central Montana Medical Center conducted its annual Lipid Panel blood test on participating employees to evaluate cholesterol and triglyceride levels. The wellness clinic also included blood pressure, weight, height, and a few additional optional blood tests, along with a questionnaire. The monthly Safety Meeting was January 22, 2026. MECA SAFETY INSTRUCTOR JERRY LEMM discussed several topics that are required each year: tailboard/crew audits, hydraulic safety, current OSHA changes, and focus were the main topics. The operations staff reviewed close calls from around the state and in-house as well. RUFF reported that the engineering department is receiving calls for line extensions. About one dozen underground jobs are waiting for spring to arrive. STAKING ENGINEER DAN BALSTER, PE has been working on sectionalizing, substation oil testing of transformers, an OCB change in Hilger to an SF6 breaker and coordinating with substation contract crews. STAKING ENGINEER SCOTT OLSON is prepping Straw pole changes. STAKING ENGINEER MELANIE FORAN, PE is working on the transmission/distribution rebuild from Hilger to Roy. RUFF provided the Board with an update on the trucks and equipment. The skid steer that is budgeted for 2026 should arrive by the end of February as should the new large Altec bucket truck for Roundup. The Co-op hired a company to perform alignments on all the large trucks in Lewistown, which should help with drivability and tire wear. RUFF reported on the projects being completed by the contract crews.

c. **INVENTORY OF WORK ORDERS.** After reviewing Inventory of Work Orders No. 647-647X for \$15,079.44 dated December 31, 2025, CATHY KOMBOL moved to affirm them. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

d. **POWER OUTAGE REPORT.** ASSISTANT LINE SUPERINTENDENT TYSON RUFF reviewed the Outage Report for December 2025 prepared by STAKING ENGINEER MELANIE FORAN, PE.

**7. POLICIES.**

**a. Review:**

i. **215 – ADVISORY COMMITTEE.** The Board reviewed Board Policy 215. No changes were made.

ii. **216 – COMMUNICATIONS.** The Board reviewed Board Policy 216. No changes were made.

**8. REPORT OF CORPORATE COUNSEL.** CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL reported that it was a good month working with staff on contracts and various items.

**9. MANAGER'S REPORT.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY covered items in his written report. SWEENEY reported that TONGUE RIVER ELECTRIC GENERAL MANAGER TARY HANSON informed his board that he will be retiring in May 2026. The Basin Electric Power Cooperative Board of Directors had a split vote of 5-5 to amend existing Board Policy 03-Diversity. SPIKA DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING CEO, KATIE SPIKA, inquired about the USDA REDL/G program. SWEENEY stated he provided SPIKA with a detailed history of the co-op's experience with the USDA REDLoan/Grant program and told her that assisting with funding of any project involving the co-op would be the Board's decision. After a period of discussion, the Board declined to participate and directed SWEENEY to recommend that SPIKA consult with a current Rural Development Electric or Telecommunications Programs Borrower or any other eligible nonprofit utilities to pursue obtaining funding under the USDA REDL/G program.

**10. MEETING REPORTS.** The Board and MANAGER SWEENEY discussed their interests and intentions to attend upcoming meetings.

**11. EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

a. **MOTION.** At 12:41 p.m., JASON SWANZ moved to go into executive session for the purpose of conducting a review of CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL. BRETT MAXWELL seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

b. **REGULAR SESSION CONTINUES.** At 12:53 p.m., BRETT MAXWELL moved to resume general session. JASON SWANZ seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

c. **RATIFY DISCUSSION DURING EXECUTIVE SESSION.** The Board expressed their appreciation for the fine work KRIS BIRDWELL, and his team provides Fergus Electric. JASON SWANZ moved to ratify discussion held in executive session. BRETT MAXWELL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

d. **ESTATE CAPITAL CREDITS.** The Board reviewed the list of estate capital credits for January 2026 totaling \$30,306.39, which were prepared by SENIOR BILLING CLERK ERIKA MATTALIANO. JASON SWANZ moved to affirm the retirement and BRETT MAXWELL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

e. **DELINQUENT STATUS, NEW MEMBERS.** The Board reviewed the delinquent accounts showing accounts paid in full and accounts still owing, which included the quarterly bad debts for December 31, 2025, for \$818.93.

**12. OTHER BUSINESS.** PRESIDENT TERRY FROST complimented the changes to the front office layout, saying it looks great, is more open, and lets in more light.

**13. FUTURE MEETINGS.**

- a. Safety Meeting; February 11; Fergus Electric Headquarters
- b. FEC Board Meetings 2026:
  - i. February 24 – 10:00 a.m.
  - ii. March 24 – 10:00 a.m.
- c. Basin Manager’s Conference: February 17-19; Sioux Falls, SD
- d. NRECA PowerXchange: March 8-12; Nashville, TN
- e. MECA Spring Board Meeting: April 7-8, Great Falls, MT
- f. NRECA Legislative Conference: April 26-29; Washington, DC
- g. Fergus Electric Annual Meeting: June 4; Lewistown, MT
- h. CFC Annual Meeting: June 13-17; Chula Vista, CA

**14. NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.**

**ADJOURNMENT.** PRESIDENT TERRY FROST adjourned the meeting at 1:42 p.m.

SECRETARY Brada Amthor ATTEST: PRESIDENT Terry Frost