

**MINUTES**  
**GENERAL BOARD MEETING, JUNE 25, 2025**  
**FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**

1. **GENERAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER.** The Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Trustees met in general session June 25, 2025, with PRESIDENT TERRY FROST calling the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m. JANINE RIFE DIDIER was scrivener. The Board Members in attendance were BRAD ARNTZEN, PAUL BRADY, BOB EVANS, CATHY KOMBOL, BRETT MAXWELL, and JASON SWANZ. Other attendees included GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY, OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK, LINE SUPERINTENDENT BRET OPHUS and CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL. The attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** After reviewing the meeting agenda, JASON SWANZ moved to approve it. BRETT MAXWELL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
3. **MINUTES APPROVAL.**
  - a. **GENERAL BOARD MEETING.** After reviewing the general board meeting minutes of May 29, 2025, and discussing them, BRETT MAXWELL moved to approve them. CATHY KOMBOL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
  - b. **REORGANIZATION MEETING.** After reviewing the reorganization meeting minutes of June 5, 2025, and discussing them, BOB EVANS moved to approve them. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD.** No one from the public appeared.
5. **PLANNING.**
  - a. **ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS MEETING PREPARATION.**
    - i. **MEMBERS 1<sup>ST</sup> BOARD MEMBER.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY briefly told the Board about the Members 1<sup>st</sup> organization. VICE PRESIDENT JASON SWANZ agreed to become the Members 1<sup>st</sup> Board Member, replacing FORMER BOARD MEMBER PAUL DESCHEEMAEKER, and represent Fergus Electric Cooperative at Members 1<sup>st</sup> and PRECorp board meetings if no other board members were interested. After a brief discussion, BRAD ARNTZEN moved to appoint JASON SWANZ as the Members 1<sup>st</sup> Board Member. BOB EVANS seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
    - ii. **MECA BOARD MEMBER AND VOTING DELEGATE.** After a brief discussion, BOB EVANS moved to appoint PRESIDENT TERRY FROST as Fergus Electric's Board Representative on the MECA Board of Directors at the MECA annual meeting in Great Falls, September 30 – October 1, 2025, and VICE PRESIDENT JASON SWANZ as alternate representative. He also moved to appoint CATHY KOMBOL as voting delegate and BRAD ARNTZEN as the alternate voting delegate. BRETT MAXWELL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
    - iii. **MECA COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS.** After a brief discussion, the Board agreed that BRETT MAXWELL will replace FORMER BOARD MEMBER PAUL DESCHEEMAEKER and will represent Fergus Electric on the Audit Committee and PAUL BRADY will represent Fergus Electric on the Dues Formula Committee.
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 May 31, 2025, Form 7 operating report. JANINE RIFE DIDIER reviewed the May 31, 2025, ratios report. HORACEK and DIDIER each provided a more in-depth version of their financial reports for the benefit of the newly elected board member, PAUL BRADY.
  - b. **OPERATIONS AND SAFETY REPORT.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT BRET OPHUS reported that on June 18, AUDIOLOGIST TINA BERG, Central Montana Hearing, conducted the employees' annual hearing tests in her Lewistown office. METER TECH BRIAN GODBEY gave a meter review for the line crew. The next Safety Meeting is scheduled for July 16 during which line crews will conduct tool inspections and

pole and bucket truck rescues. OPHUS reported that the engineering department were working to reconcile the physical inventory of material. OPHUS said that the line crews have been building new services in both the Roundup and Lewistown areas. There are twenty plus ready-to-build jobs in Lewistown and Roundup has five or more. ROW GROUNDMAN JAKE DEROSIER AND LINEMAN DAN RICE have been busy clearing the right of way on National Forest Service land. Fergus Electric's plan is to make vegetation management a priority as it relates to wildfire mitigation.

- c. **INVENTORY OF WORK ORDERS.** After reviewing Inventory of Work Orders No. 640-640X for \$44,192.21 dated May 31, 2025, CATHY KOMBOL moved to affirm them. BOB EVANS seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- d. **POWER OUTAGE REPORT.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT BRET OPHUS reviewed the May 2025 Outage Report prepared by STAKING ENGINEER MELANIE FORAN, PE.

**7. POLICIES.**

**a. Reviewed:**

- i. **111 – TRUSTEE DUTIES AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT PLUS SIGNATURE PAGE.** After a brief discussion, BRETT MAXWELL moved to approve Board Policy 111 as presented. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion. The Board Members each signed the Signature Page that is included with Board Policy 111.

**b. Amended:**

- i. **201 – FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.** After a brief discussion about the proposed amendments made to Board Policy 201, BRETT MAXWELL moved to table Board Policy 201 until the next board meeting. JASON SWANZ seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Tabling the motion will permit the Board to further review the language, since the amended policy was provided to the board just prior to the board meeting.

**8. REPORT OF CORPORATE COUNSEL.** CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL reported that it was a normal, busy month. BIRDWELL shared that in addition to working with the engineers, he truly enjoys working with the ladies in the office on matters related to their department.

**9. MANAGER'S REPORT.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY covered items included in his written report. SWEENEY reported that the inventory of material is keeping the engineering staff busy. Inventory is typically completed in late fall, however, because of the co-op's expectation to transition to bar coding in early 2025, inventory was not completed in 2024. Bar coding implementation has slowed due to changing material vendors. SWEENEY noted that the Roundup office has a need for an engineer. Lewistown is seeking an additional tree trimmer to work with ROW GROUNDMAN JAKE DEROSIER. SWEENEY reported that he had attended a virtual meeting with MDT and utility stakeholders to discuss the new requirements for HB 672: Generally revise Montana Department of Transportation's utility relocation process. SWEENEY said that the new law requires utilities to relocate their facilities within a reasonable time for MDT projects. If the utility does not meet the deadline, MDT has the authority to remove the facilities and reduce utility payment to zero percent. SWEENEY said that his group has been tasked with developing rules and expectations regarding the new law.

**10. MEETING REPORTS.**

- a. **MEMBERS 1<sup>ST</sup> BOARD MEETING, JUNE 16, VIRTUAL, CARSON.** MANAGER SWEENEY gave a brief update on the virtual board meeting he attended.

**11. EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

- a. **ESTATE CAPITAL CREDITS.** The Board reviewed the list of estate capital credits for June 2025 totaling \$9,095.04, which were prepared by SENIOR BILLING CLERK ERIKA MATTALIANO. BOB EVANS moved to affirm the retirement and BRETT MAXWELL 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.

**12. OTHER BUSINESS.**

- a. **UPDATE BANK SIGNATURE AUTHORIZATIONS.** OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reported that on June 5, 2025, board member PAUL DESCHEEMAERKER stepped down upon failing to receive the majority of votes for reelection of board directors at the annual meeting of the membership. HORACEK said that Fergus Electric Cooperative is required to formally notify the bank(s) of a change in authorized signers. Bank of the Rockies, Account Number 1400392820 requires a statement of the board’s decision to remove the signer from a bank account. After a brief discussion, BRETT MAXWELL moved to update bank signature information removing PAUL DESCHEEMAERKER as an authorized signer and to authorize the following co-op representatives to sign on behalf of Fergus Electric Cooperative: PRESIDENT TERRY FROST, VICE PRESIDENT JASON SWANZ, SECRETARY TREASURER BRAD ARNTZEN, GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY, OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK, and PAYROLL ADMINISTRATOR JANINE RIFE DIDIER. BOB EVANS seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- b. **BOARD MEETING DATE CHANGE.** PRESIDENT TERRY FROST requested that the next board meeting time and date be changed to 11:00 a.m. July 30 instead of noon July 31. The Board concurred.

**13. NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.**

**14. FUTURE MEETINGS.**

- a. Safety Meeting; July 16, 2025
- b. FEC Board Meetings 2025: (New time schedule)
  - i. July 30 – 11:00 a.m.
  - ii. August 21 – 10:00 a.m.; Roundup
  - iii. September 25 – 10:00 a.m.
  - iv. October 30 – 10:00 a.m.
- c. CFC Forum: New York City, NY; June 30-July 2
- d. MECA Summer Board Meeting: Sidney, MT; July 9-10
- e. Basin Summer Managers’ Meeting: Deadwood, SD; July 23-25
- f. Basin Annual Meeting: Bismarck, ND; August 12-15
- g. MECA Annual Meeting: Great Falls, MT; September 30 – October 1
- h. NRECA Region 7/9 Meeting: Bellevue, WA; October 6-8
- i. MECA Winter Meeting: Great Falls, MT; December 2-3

**15. NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.**

**ADJOURNMENT.** PRESIDENT TERRY FROST adjourned the meeting at 3:13 p.m.

SECRETARY \_\_\_\_\_ ATTEST: PRESIDENT Terry Frost