

**MINUTES**  
**GENERAL BOARD MEETING, APRIL 28, 2021**  
**FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**

1. **GENERAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER.** The Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Trustees met in general session April 28, 2021 with PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAERKER calling the meeting to order at 10:10 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, OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK, LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA and CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL were also present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** After reviewing the meeting agenda, BRETT MAXWELL moved to approve it. JASON SWANZ seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.** After reviewing the minutes of the March 25, 2021 general meeting and discussing them, BRETT MAXWELL moved their approval. BRAD ARNTZEN 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. **ANNUAL MEETING.** OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reviewed the annual meeting schedule, agenda, and Covid-19 protocol. Additional discussion covered annual meeting reports, oral and written, scholarships and prizes. After a period of discussion, the Board agreed that the grand prize will be a thousand-dollar credit on the winning member's power bill.
6. **FINANCIAL AND OTHER MONTHLY REPORTS.** Financial and other monthly reports were presented to the Board for discussion. OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reviewed the March 31, 2021 operating report. HORACEK covered the Board's hours for 2020 and 2019 for reporting on the Form 990 for 2020. HORACEK reported that Stockman Bank has not received an update on the status of the PPP money. JANINE RIFE DIDIER presented the ratios report for March 31, 2021.
7. **OPERATIONS AND SAFETY REPORT.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT RIKALA reported that the Roundup crew is installing relays for the AMI project in the Winnett Junction area. Meters will be changed out in the Grass Range area soon. Landis & Gyr announced they will no longer host the TS-1 Turtle Meter system, so installation of the AMI system has become a higher priority. RIKALA reported that May 3, 2021 will be the last day of work for Roundup's retiring ASSISTANT LINE SUPERINTENDENT DON CRISWELL. RIKALA told the Board that CRISWELL was a conscientious employee who kept a good set of records, which will be an asset to ASSISTANT LINE SUPERINTENDENT BRET NELLERMOE. RIKALA told the Board that Anixter and Fergus Electric's inventory partnership is going well. RIKALA and MANAGER SWEENEY met with SCOTT HAWES with Anixter to discuss the current partnership and availability of material. RIKALA said that the groundsman positions will be filled soon.
8. **INVENTORY OF WORK ORDERS.** After reviewing the Form 219 Inventory of Work Orders No. 602-602X for \$137,990.88 and 602-602X (A) for \$38,899.50, dated March 31, 2021, BOB EVANS moved to approve them. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
9. **POWER OUTAGE REPORT.** With the implementation of the new Outage Management System, the outage report is going through a transition and an updated version will be presented at next month's board meeting.
10. **BOARD POLICY 218 - EASEMENTS OR RIGHTS-OF-WAY FOR TRANSMISSION LINES AND ASSOCIATED FACILITIES.** The Board tabled Policy 218 until next month.
11. **BOARD POLICY 219 - MANAGEMENT AND USE OF FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE OWNED LAND.** The Board tabled Policy 219 until next month.

**12. REPORT OF CORPORATE COUNSEL.** CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL reported that it had been a busy month having worked on several items of importance to the cooperative. COUNSEL BIRDWELL reminded the Board that it is their annual duty to review the Form 990.

**13. MANAGER'S REPORT.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reported on the meeting with DAVE RAATZ, BASIN ELECTRIC SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF ASSET MANAGEMENT, RESOURCE PLANNING, AND RATES he attended via a video conference call on April 1, 2021 to discuss Basin's rates. SWEENEY said he and PRESIDENT DESCHEEMAEKER have plans to attend the Basin Board meeting in June. SWEENEY noted that the co-op has approximately 40 Phase 2 solar panels remaining to sell. SWEENEY told the Board that the day spent cleaning up the office, shop, and grounds was a success. MANAGER SWEENEY gave a comprehensive electronic power point presentation using Google Earth detailing Fergus Electric's entire service territory, ownership of land, substations, transmission and distribution power lines, metering points, etc. The Board and staff enjoyed seeing the maps and listening to SWEENEY describe what was being shown. SWEENEY answered questions throughout his presentation.

**14. MECA SPRING BOARD MEETING.** TERRY FROST covered the MECA Spring Board Meeting held April 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. The Summer MECA Board Meeting will be scheduled for July 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>.

**15. PRECORP/MEMBERS 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING.** MANAGER SWEENEY reported that CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER JOANNE KOLB left PRECorp for another job in her home state.

**16. SAFETY.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA reported that the April 21<sup>st</sup> safety meeting began with staff reporting to the office of TINA BERG of Central Montana Hearing & Audiology for the annual hearing test. STAKING ENGINEER SCOTT OLSON presented a video to line personnel discussing the rules and regulations associated with underground locates. JOSIE STOKKEN and REGAN BOLD, with BIGHORN PHYSICAL THERAPY and SPORTS MEDICINE, presented techniques for stretching, lifting, and keeping the proper body positioning while working.

RIKALA reported that on April 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, a Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) team inspected Fergus Electric's Lewistown office, yard, shop, power lines, and a substation. The team also performed a crew field observation. The RESAP observation team included: LEA POTOCZNY, MECA; DOUG TU, FLATHEAD ELECTRIC; KELLY KEYSOR, LOWER YELLOWSTONE ELECTRIC; and KYLE KEARNS, RAVALLI COUNTY ELECTRIC.

RIKALA also noted that on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, TRANSFORMER REPAIRMAN MARK SCHWOMEYER, APPRENTICE LINEMAN BROCK PYRAH, and STAKING ENGINEER DAN BALSTER attended a regulator school, hosted by Yellowstone Valley Electric.

**17. MECA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reported that GOVERNOR GIANFORTE signed HB103 on March 25, 2021. The bill allows cooperatives to modify their bylaws giving them flexibility as to how they can hold an election. TERRY FROST and MANAGER SWEENEY reported on the various items covered during the legislative session. There will not be any more legislative calls unless something comes up.

**18. ESTATE CAPITAL CREDITS.** The Board reviewed the April 2021 list of estate capital credits in the amount of \$17,308.39 prepared by SUSAN HINKLEY. JASON SWANZ moved to affirm the retirements and BRETT MAXWELL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**19. 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.


**20. OTHER BUSINESS.** None.

**21. FUTURE MEETINGS.**

- a. MECA Line Superintendent Group Spring Meeting, May 4-5
- b. NWPPA Annual Meeting, May 11-12, virtual
- c. Basin Board Meeting, May 11-13
- d. PRECorp/Members 1<sup>st</sup> Board Meeting, May 18
- e. Safety Meeting, May 20
- f. FEC Board, May 24
- g. MECA Office Manager's Meeting May 25-27
- h. FEC Annual Meeting, June 10

**22. NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.**

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

SECRETARY  ATTEST: PRESIDENT 