

**MINUTES**  
**GENERAL BOARD MEETING, FEBRUARY 27, 2020**  
**FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**

- 1. GENERAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER.** The Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Trustees met in general session February 27, 2020 with PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAER calling the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. JANINE RIFE DIDIER was scrivener. Board members in attendance were BRAD ARNTZEN, BOB EVANS (via conference call), TERRY FROST, CATHY KOMBOL, BRETT MAXWELL and JASON SWANZ. GENERAL MANAGER SCOTT SWEENEY, ASSISTANT MANAGER DAVID DOVER, CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL, LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA and OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK were also present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** After reviewing the meeting agenda, BRETT MAXWELL moved to approve it. TERRY FROST seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.** After reviewing the minutes of the January 30, 2020 general meeting and discussing them, JASON SWANZ moved their approval. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- 4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD.** The Board welcomed co-op member, JIM DONOVAN, who had requested an opportunity to speak briefly to the Board about his account.
- 5. NEW METERING SYSTEM.** ASSISTANT MANAGER DAVID DOVER gave an update on the status of the AMI installation telling the Board that progress on AMI is starting to pick up, however meter delivery is slow on several classes of meters. Due to the relay battery delay, ITRON will extend the warranty on the equipment for four months. A map showing the progress was provided. The board and management discussed various metering policy options related to the AMI system. PRESIDENT DESCHEEMAER asked for those options to be outlined and presented to the Board.
- 6. SANDFIRE RESOURCES COPPER MINE.** MANAGER SWEENEY reported that the Facility Study is planned to be completed by NorthWestern Energy in May. Black Butte Copper is still waiting for the MT DEQ to issue the final Environmental Impact Study and Record of Decision so they can start the process of building the mine. Tintina expects the Record of Decision in April.
- 7. ANSWERING SERVICE AND SATELLITE RADIO SYSTEM.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA reported that DON BARBER is working on a new website that will be helpful to the co-op's linemen during an outage.
- 8. MARCH BOARD MEETING: CORY WHEELER – AUDIT; CHRIS BAUMGARTNER – BASIN; AND MIKE EASLEY – MEMBERS 1<sup>ST</sup>.** MANAGER SWEENEY noted that the March board meeting agenda will be full due to the addition of several guest presenters. After a brief discussion, it was decided that the March 26<sup>th</sup> board meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m.
- 9. 2020 BUDGET UPDATED.** MANAGER SWEENEY reviewed the updates that were made to the 2020 Budget. The adjustments more accurately reflect the anticipated projections for the year. After a brief discussion, BRETT MAXWELL moved to approve the updated 2020 budget. JASON SWANZ seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- 10. FINANCIAL AND OTHER MONTHLY REPORTS.** GENERAL MANAGER SCOTT SWEENEY presented financial and other monthly reports to the Board for discussion. OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reviewed the January 31, 2020 operating report and FINANCIAL ANALYST JANINE RIFE DIDIER presented the January 31, 2020 ratios report.

- 11. OPERATIONS REPORT.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA reported that Anixter, the co-op's material vendor, is being purchased by Wesco. RIKALA expects nothing to change from the co-op's perspective, due to the sale. Fergus received a \$10,500 rebate check from Anixter, for its 2019 material purchases, as part of Anixter's Volume Gain Share program. RIKALA stated that the engineers are upgrading the mapping system by linking meters to transformers at each map location. The upgrade must be completed before the Outage Management software will function.
- 12. INVENTORY OF WORK ORDERS.** No work order closure to report.
- 13. POWER OUTAGE REPORT.** GENERAL MANAGER SWEENEY and the Board reviewed a report prepared by JANINE RIFE DIDIER covering power interruptions for January 2020.
- 14. 2019 YEAR-END FORM 7.** OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reviewed the 2019 Year-End Form 7 stating that the annual form is approved by the Board of Directors and will be submitted to RUS after the annual audit review is completed, which will occur during the March 2020 board meeting. Having no questions or concerns, TERRY FROST moved to accept the 2019 Year-End Form 7 as presented. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- 15. REPORT OF CORPORATE COUNSEL.** CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL reviewed having worked on items of importance to the cooperative.
- 16. MANAGER'S REPORT.** GENERAL MANAGER SWEENEY reported that Mid-Rivers Communications is installing a new phone system at Fergus Electric this week. SWEENEY reported that the co-op is donating \$500 to the Lewistown Soccer Park. SWEENEY noted that due to a scheduling conflict, FOREMAN LOUIE HOULD was unable to join other Montana linemen participating in MECA's trip to Bolivia to do a power line installation/upgrade. SWEENEY presented the bill stuffer that will be included in the next billing statement asking members to inspect their overhead wiring as it poses a safety issue and could result in a potential fire hazard.
- 17. SAFETY MEETING.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA reported the safety meeting on February 12 included a presentation by STAKING ENGINEER, MELANI FORAN on AMI training and annual Material Safety Data System (MSDS) review. The crews tested chains, hot sticks and personal protective grounds.
- 18. MEMBERS 1<sup>ST</sup>/PRECORP MEETING.** GENERAL MANAGER SCOTT SWEENEY reported on the February 18 Members 1<sup>st</sup> that he, PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAERKER and ASSISTANT MANAGER DAVID DOVER attended via conference call.
- 19. BASIN MANAGER'S MEETING.** GENERAL MANAGER SCOTT SWEENEY showed the Board the power point presentation and provided the narration that was included in the Basin Manager's Meeting he attended in Sioux Falls, South Dakota on February 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>.
- 20. NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEETING.** OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reported that on the February 20<sup>th</sup> nominating committee meeting held at the Yogo Inn that she, GENERAL MANAGER SWEENEY and ASSISTANT MANAGER DOVER had attended. HORACEK stated that she will publish notice of the next meeting in the Judith Basin Press, Lewistown News-Argus and the Harlowton Times-Clarion, which is scheduled to be held March 26 at Eddies Corner (District 2) and Little Montana in Grass Range (District 4).
- 21. ESTATE CAPITAL CREDITS.** The Board reviewed the February 2020 estate capital credits in the amount of \$36,680.28, prepared by SUSAN HINKLEY. JASON SWANZ moved to affirm the retirements and BRETT MAXWELL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- 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. A list of new members was also reviewed.



**23. FUTURE MEETINGS.**

- a. Safety Meeting, Jerry Lemm, PPE, Accident Investigation, Anger Management, Mar. 5
- b. PRECorp/Members 1st, Mar. 16-17, Sheridan
- c. FEC Board, Mar. 26, Apr. 24, May 28 & June 25
- d. MECA Meeting, Apr. 7-8, Great Falls
- e. NRECA Legislative Rally, Apr. 26-28, Washington, D. C.
- f. Annual Meeting, June 4

**24. NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.**

**25. EXECUTIVE SESSION.** At 3:26 p.m., TERRY FROST moved to continue the meeting in an executive session to discuss hiring a new general manager. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**26. GENERAL SESSION RESUMES.** At 4:36 p.m., BRETT MAXWELL moved to resume the general session. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**27. ADJOURNMENT.** PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAEKER adjourned the meeting at 4:36 p.m.

SECRETARY  ATTEST: PRESIDENT 