

**MINUTES
GENERAL BOARD MEETING, FEBRUARY 25, 2021
FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**

1. GENERAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER. The Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Trustees met in general session February 25, 2021 with PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAER calling the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. JANINE RIFE DIDIER was scrivener. Board members in attendance were BRAD ARNTZEN and TERRY FROST. BOB EVANS, CATHY KOMBOL, BRETT MAXWELL, and JASON SWANZ attended via conference call. 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, 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 January 28, 2021 general meeting and discussing them, BRAD ARNTZEN moved their approval. BRETT MAXWELL 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. Fergus Electric invited representatives acting on behalf of Musselshell County who are requesting an easement from the co-op for the Riverside Fishing Access Site near the Musselshell River and a landowner who neighbors the proposed fishing access site to attend the February 25 general board meeting and speak to the Board of Directors.

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS FISHERIES MANAGER, MIKE RUGGLES and MUSSEL SHELL COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT SUPERVISOR, TOM STOCKERT met with the Board of Directors to discuss the possibility of obtaining an easement to the Riverside Fishing Access Site on the Musselshell River from Fergus Electric Cooperative on the property the co-op owns. The Board listened as RUGGLES and STOCKERT discussed plans and presented a map of the property on which they are requesting a sixty-foot right of way for a twenty-four-foot road. RUGGLES and STOCKERT provided their contact information and told the Board that the fishing access site would be a huge asset to the Roundup community as it is secluded from the city limits and will provide a place for fishermen to camp overnight. The Board thanked MR. RUGGLES and MR. STOCKERT for attending.

MUSSEL SHELL COUNTY RESIDENT and LANDOWNER, RAYMOND RATHS then met with the Board. RAYMOND RATHS said that he is the immediate neighbor to the proposed fishing access site, and he has concerns with the proposed route for the easement. RATHS suggested that perhaps a professional engineer should review the area and propose which route the road right of way should be constructed. The Board listened as MR. RATHS reviewed the maps and told them the history of his property. RATHS said although no date is currently set, he anticipates having a meeting with MIKE RUGGLES in Billings to further discuss the matter, then RATHS or RUGGLES will follow up with the Board. The Board thanked MR. RATHS for attending.

5. BASIN MILL EQUITY ADDER. MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY discussed Basin power rates and asked the Board to review the four-page letter and the contents of the bound report that MANAGER SWEENEY will present to DAVE RAATZ, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF ASSET MANAGEMENT, RESOURCE PLANNING, AND RATES with Basin Electric Cooperative, at a meeting scheduled for March 5 in Bismarck, ND.

6. 2021 BUDGET REVIEW. After a brief discussion, TERRY FROST moved to approve the 2021 Budget and Work Plan as presented. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

7. NOMINATING COMMITTEE - DISTRICTS 3, 5, AND 7. OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK covered a letter to the Nominating Committee that says the Nominating Committee is scheduled to meet at the Yogo Inn in Lewistown at noon on Sunday, March 7, 2021 in preparation for the election of board directors in districts 3, 5, and 7, which will take place at Fergus Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting on June 10, 2021.

- 8. MARCH 15 – RETURN TO MONDAY-THURSDAY WORK SCHEDULE.** MANAGER SWEENEY reported that with the change to Daylight Saving Time, on Monday, March 15, Fergus Electric Co-op would be returning to working ten-hour days. Fergus Electric's office hours will revert to 7:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, closed Friday, keeping the same schedule as in 2020 during the months of Daylight Saving Time.
- 9. FINANCIAL AND OTHER MONTHLY REPORTS.** Financial and other monthly reports were presented to the Board for discussion. OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reviewed the January 31, 2021 operating report and the year-end Form 7 financial report for 2020. HORACEK reported that Stockman Bank has pushed back the timeline saying that it could take longer than sixty days to hear whether the PPP money is classified as a loan or a grant. OFFICE MANAGER HORACEK completed her board presentation and left the meeting mid-day, due to a previous commitment. JANINE RIFE DIDIER presented the ratios report for January 31, 2021.
- 10. OPERATIONS AND SAFETY REPORT.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA reported that ANDREW REUTERSKIOLD accepted the job offer for the Journeyman Lineman position in Roundup and will begin work on Monday, March 29. With the addition of REUTERSKIOLD, RIKALA reported that as of February 26, 2021, BRET NELLERMOE will officially be working as ASSISTANT LINE SUPERINTENDENT having served as foreman/assistant line superintendent in the interim. RIKALA reported on several outages that had occurred in February due to the extreme cold and strong winds. AMI installations are going well with meters being changed out in the Roundup, Winifred, and Heath areas. RIKALA reported that the underground locating service is requesting an increase in the 2021 contract for locating Fergus Electric's underground cables. RIKALA noted that a shortage of personnel has become a problem for locating services; being understaffed, some of the local locating services will not offer a quote. RIKALA reported that Fergus Electric has located two used trenchers for sale. ASSISTANT LINE SUPERINTENDENT BRET OPHUS and MECHANIC JASON DEFFINBAUGH traveled to Sidney, MT to inspect the machine Lower Yellowstone Electric Cooperative has for sale and reported that it is very clean. RIKALA reported that he and ROUNDUP ASSISTANT LINE SUPERINTENDENT BRET NELLERMOE rough-sketches plans for a future office/shop building that would be built at the pole yard east of Roundup. RIKALA sent the drawing to General Contractors Clausen and Sons in Havre, MT and is waiting for them to provide the co-op with a ballpark estimate cost of construction.
- 11. INVENTORY OF WORK ORDERS.** No work orders were closed in January 2021.
- 12. POWER OUTAGE REPORT.** The Board reviewed the outage report prepared by JANINE RIFE DIDIER which covered power interruptions for January 2021.
- 13. SCHOLARSHIPS.** CATHY KOMBOL and BOB EVANS reported on the scholarship winners. JACY AYERS is the co-op's winner for the Basin \$1,000 scholarship. The winner for the \$1,000 Youth Tour is KATIE GLENNIE. The co-op's winner whose name will be put in with the other winners in our district for a chance to win the MECA \$500 scholarship is DYAUNI BOYCE and the winner of a \$1,000 scholarship from Fergus is TESS SHAW. The co-op will contact the winners. The Board offered its congratulations and said the decision was difficult thanks to the fine entries the co-op received from the pool of scholarship applicants.
- 14. BOARD POLICY 214 - INTERCONNECTION OF COGENERATORS.** The Board reviewed Policy 214.
- 15. 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.
- 16. MANAGER'S REPORT.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reported that the after-hours calls program continues to be completed by the employee group and is going well. SWEENEY will meet with staff in approximately six weeks to hear any recommendations or improvements that could be made. SWEENEY reported that he has been working with NISC on software training. NISC is expecting to release some software updates within the year that the co-op will utilize for a future system inventory project. SWEENEY talked to the Board about possibly scheduling a strategic planning session for later this year. He provided some topics for the Board to consider and said that the matter would be discussed more at a future board meeting. MANAGER SWEENEY noted that AUDITOR CORY WHEELER will be here to present the 2020 Audit at the March Board Meeting.

17. **PRECorp/MEMBERS 1ST.** PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAERKER gave a report on the PRECorp/Members 1st (virtual) Board Meeting for February.

18. **SAFETY.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA reported that the February 11th safety meeting included a presentation from MECA instructor Troy Kamps, via zoom, covering Personal Protective Equipment and Slips, Trips and Falls. The March 17th safety meeting will be conducted in house and will include Meter Training, Outage Management System Review and Capacitor Training.

19. **BASIN MANAGER'S CONFERENCE.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reported that the in-person conference in South Dakota on February 17-18 was cancelled due to covid, so a virtual meeting was held instead. SWEENEY gave a report on the meeting stating that Basin's CEO AND GENERAL MANAGER, PAUL SUKUT announced his plans to retire at the end of 2021.

20. **MECA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY reported on the various legislative topics MECA is watching.

21. **ESTATE CAPITAL CREDITS.** The Board reviewed the February 2021 list of estate capital credits in the amount of \$13,674.35 prepared by SUSAN HINKLEY. BRAD ARNTZEN moved to affirm the retirements and TERRY FROST 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. MANAGER SWEENEY said that he is impressed at the level of detail the billing staff records on the member's electric accounts. The Board said to tell them to keep up the good work.

23. **OTHER BUSINESS.** None.

24. **FUTURE MEETINGS.**

- a. PRECorp/Members 1st Board Meeting, March 16
- b. Safety Meeting, March 17
- c. FEC Board, March 25, and April 29

25. **NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.**

26. **ADJOURNMENT.** PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAERKER adjourned the meeting at 3:12 p.m.

SECRETARY



ATTEST: PRESIDENT

