

**MINUTES**  
**GENERAL BOARD MEETING, MAY 24, 2021**  
**FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**

1. **GENERAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER.** The Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Trustees met in general session May 24, 2021, with PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAER calling the meeting to order at 10:07 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, ASSISTANT LINE SUPERINTENDENT BRET NELLERMOE, and CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL were also present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** After reviewing the meeting agenda, TERRY FROST moved to approve it. BRETT MAXWELL seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.** After reviewing the minutes of the April 28, 2021 general meeting and discussing them, BRETT MAXWELL moved their approval. JASON SWANZ 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. **ROUNDUP SUBSTATION PROPERTY.** BRET NELLERMOE updated the Board on the Roundup Substation property. NELLERMOE reported on his conversations with a member who told him that in approximately 2019, he visited with ASSISTANT LINE SUPERINTENDENT DON CRISWELL and had expressed interest in moving the house off the co-op's property. NELLERMOE said that CRISWELL, now retired, confirmed that the conversation had occurred. NELLERMOE presented photos of the house, garage and shop and described where they were in relation to the Roundup substation. NELLERMOE noted that the co-op owns the propane tank at the substation property site, which could be moved to the co-op's Railroad Avenue property in Roundup where it could be used. CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL will request a title commitment and report to the Board at the June Board meeting.
6. **MUSSELSHELL RIVER PROPERTY.** CORPORATE COUNSEL KRIS BIRDWELL will request a title commitment on the Musselshell River property and report to the Board at the June Board meeting. MANAGER SWEENEY talked to the Board about granting easements to surrounding property owners. The discussion will resume at the June meeting.
7. **ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA AND ROUNDUP BUILDING COMMITTEE DISCUSSION.** OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reviewed the annual meeting agenda with the Board. The Board agreed to meet at the co-op office at 10:30 a.m. on June 10, 2021, for a final review of annual meeting assignments, prior to leaving for the Trade Center. OFFICE MANAGER HORACEK presented the brochure that is included in the member's annual meeting packets that shows photos of Fergus Electric's Roundup office/shop located in the old 1908 railroad depot on the edge of town in the floodplain. The brochure also includes the co-op's future plan to build a new multi-purpose building on the 5.7 acres of land the co-op owns east of Roundup on Highway 12. Fergus Electric's Roundup pole yard is located on the co-op's Highway 12 property.
8. **SCHOLARSHIPS - BOARD ACTION.** The Board of Directors discussed three types of scholarships that are currently available: 1) a lineman scholarship, which is managed by the Central Montana Foundation; 2) a scholarship funded by an anonymous donation the cooperative received; and 3) the Luck of the Draw scholarships that are awarded during the annual meeting. After a period of discussion, the Board recommended that the donation and the money for the lineman scholarship be split between two lineman scholarships. The Central Montana Foundation had advertised the lineman scholarship, but there was considerably less interest in the scholarship this year than there had been in years past, so the Board recommended that the cooperative assist them by working harder to promote the lineman scholarship, going forward.

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- A. BOB EVANS moved to contact the two parties who are interested in the lineman school and let them know that the co-op will be sending them applications for the scholarship. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
- B. TERRY FROST moved to approve awarding ten Luck of the Draw Scholarships at the Annual Meeting. BOB EVANS seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**9. EXECUTIVE SESSION.** At 11:15 a.m., JASON SWANZ moved to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel issues. TERRY FROST seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**10. GENERAL SESSION RECONVENED.** At 12:40 p.m., BRETT MAXWELL moved to return to general session. TERRY FROST seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**11. FINANCIAL AND OTHER MONTHLY REPORTS.** Financial and other monthly reports were presented to the Board for discussion. OFFICE MANAGER SALLY HORACEK reviewed the April 30, 2021 operating report. HORACEK and MANAGER SWEENEY reviewed the Form 990 for 2020. HORACEK reported that Stockman Bank notified the co-op that the PPP money has been considered a grant and therefore, is forgiven. HORACEK provided the Board with a report showing what the co-op has borrowed and purchased. HORACEK will have several loan scenario options prepared for the next board meeting. No ratios report was presented for April 30, 2021.

**12. OPERATIONS AND SAFETY REPORT.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT RIKALA reported that the Roundup crew is installing relays for the AMI project in the South Roundup area. Meters are being changed out in the Winnett Junction and Grass Range areas. RIKALA said that the Lewistown crews are focused on hanging relays and changing meters of members served from the Ruby Gulch Substation and he thinks June 1<sup>st</sup> will be the last turtle meter readings that the co-o will receive from Ruby Gulch. RIKALA reported that the last primary meter on our system will be replaced with individually metered sites. RIKALA reported that three groundsman have been hired and will work with the crews: TANNER SMITH and WYATT TERRY in Lewistown and DALTON SALTHER in Roundup. RIKALA said that he is pleased that ZARIUS MITZEL has returned to work for the third summer as a general seasonal helper. RIKALA reported that on May 18<sup>th</sup>, JJ Kane took pictures of two digger trucks, one bucket truck, one service truck (bad camshaft) and the Bombi Snowcat to list in a June auction. The party interested in the Bombi withdrew from the agreement forfeiting a five-hundred-dollar deposit.

**13. INVENTORY OF WORK ORDERS.** No work orders were closed in April 2021.

**14. POWER OUTAGE REPORT.** The Board reviewed the April 2021 Outage Report.

**15. BOARD POLICY 218 - EASEMENTS OR RIGHTS-OF-WAY FOR TRANSMISSION LINES AND ASSOCIATED FACILITIES.** The Board reviewed Policy 218. After discussion, BOB EVANS moved to approve the policy as amended. BRAD ARNTZEN seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**16. BOARD POLICY 219 - MANAGEMENT AND USE OF FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE OWNED LAND.** The Board reviewed Policy 219.

**17. 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 has worked on several projects with the engineers lately and said they are a super bunch; he has enjoyed working with them.

**18. MANAGER'S REPORT.** GENERAL MANAGER CARSON SWEENEY said that he and PRESIDENT DESCHEEMAERKER have plans to attend the Basin Board meeting June 15-17. SWEENEY reported that he and PRESIDENT DESCHEEMAERKER plan to travel to Sheridan, Wyoming on June 22<sup>nd</sup> to attend the PRECorp board meeting. SWEENEY extended an invitation to any board members interested in joining them. SWEENEY noted that he has been taking online financial courses through NWPPA that he is really enjoying. The courses each cost less than a hundred dollars.

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19. **PRECORP/MEMBERS 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING.** MANAGER SWEENEY reported on the May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting.
20. **SAFETY.** LINE SUPERINTENDENT DALE RIKALA reported that on May 20<sup>th</sup>, JERRY LEMM, MECA SAFETY INSTRUCTOR, presented Lock Out/Tag Out, All Things Fire, and May Day training. An in-house pole top/bucket truck rescue and May Day training is planned for June 23<sup>rd</sup>.
21. **ESTATE CAPITAL CREDITS.** No estate capital credits this month.
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. **OTHER BUSINESS.** PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAERKER suggested that the Board spend an hour or two discussing Strategic Planning at the July 2021 general board meeting.
24. **FUTURE MEETINGS.**
- a. MECA Office Manager's Meeting May 25-27
  - b. FEC Annual Meeting, June 10
  - c. Basin Electric Cooperative Board Meeting, June 15-17
  - d. PRECorp/Members 1<sup>st</sup> Board Meeting, June 22
  - e. Safety Meeting, June 23
  - f. FEC Board, June 24, and July 29
  - g. Basin Manager's Conference, July 20-22
25. **NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS.**
26. **ADJOURNMENT.** PRESIDENT PAUL DESCHEEMAERKER adjourned the meeting at 3:40 p.m.

SECRETARY Brady Antz ATTEST: PRESIDENT Terry Host V.P