

**APPROVED REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS - WHEAT BELT PPD**

**August 28, 2020**

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Wheat Belt Public Power District was called to order by President Bernard Fehringer, at 8:30 a.m., Friday, August 28, 2020, at the District Headquarters, 11306 RD 32, Sidney, Cheyenne County, Nebraska.

**ROLL CALL**

The following Directors were present:

Mike Blomenkamp  
John Gortemaker  
Stuart Morgan  
Brian Zimmerman

Bernard Fehringer  
Moe Moffat  
Doug Smith, arrived @ 8:36 a.m.

Also present were Tim Lindahl, General Manager; Earl Reilly, Operations Manager; Carolyn Hostetler, Chief Financial Officer; Ryan Borges, Staking Engineer; Lacey Gulbranson, Corporate Services Manager; Kelli Chaon, Customer Engagement Manager; and Jim Weeda, Technology Manager.

Debra Schlaman recorded these Minutes at the request of the Board Secretary.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

President Bernard Fehringer declared a quorum present.

Attention of the Directors and attendees was directed to the Open Meetings poster.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Lindahl announced that Attorney Jason Gray, would be available at noon for a virtual meeting with the Directors. Gortemaker made a motion to approve the August 28, 2020, Agenda as presented. Moffat seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

**NOTICE OF MEETING**

Notice of the meeting was by publication in the Sidney Sun-Telegraph on Wednesday, August 12, 2020, and proof of publication showing such notice as

published is attached and thereby made a part of these Minutes. Gortemaker made a motion to waive the reading of the meeting notice. Zimmerman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

### **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Kendra Strommen – Attorney  
Marcus Milanuk – director candidate

### **APPROVAL OF July 24, 2020, BOARD MINUTES**

Fehringer announced that with no corrections to the July 24, 2020, Board Meeting Minutes, they would stand approved as published.

### **Public Hearing & Comment Period**

No one appeared before the Board.

### **GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

Lindahl began with:

Dennis Houston, new GM for NREA visited the office.

### **Legislative & Regulatory**

The Nebraska Legislative Session did close, and the Broadband Bill did pass.

Lindahl showed a video on Facebook aerial fiber technology to the Directors. We may be able to enter into a pilot project with Facebook for fiber on our lines. Questions and discussion followed. There are a lot of issues to work through, such as ice, maintenance, etc. A lot of infrastructure changes could be forthcoming.

Lindahl reported that FE Warren Air Force Base will be first in line to rebuild their defense system. We are working to make sure we obtain funding for the upgrades.

Camping World announced they will be building in Sidney. Some of the new businesses may be in our territory.

### **Financials**

The Financial Report was presented under separate cover.

Lindahl reviewed our financials in detail with the Board concerning the current figures and status.

The storm adder was discussed and how much we may recoup.

Lindahl reviewed his “dashboard” and the projected and budgeted expenses.

Lindahl reported on artificial intelligence software and discussion followed.

Blomenkamp commented on the TOU program he uses for his pivots and how much he has saved.

### **Legal**

The NRECA Legal Reporting Service Report and the Federated Litigation Report were included in the Board book.

Strommen reported that she did contact the city manager concerning Camping World.

### **Financial Planning Update/Debt Options Update**

Lindahl reported on the way he budgets and opened the floor for discussion from the Directors looking at how they would like to see the budgeting designed. Lindahl stated that financial objectives can be spelled out in a policy. Timing and hearing requirements can also be spelled out in the same policy. Following discussion, Lindahl and staff will work through some issues with Board guidance and determine a policy to present to the Directors as the 2021 budgeting process begins. Lindahl and staff are currently working through the internal budgeting process as well, to insure continued prudent budgeting with accountability.

**A break was taken at 10:08 a.m.**

**The meeting resumed at 10:18 a.m.**

Following the break, Lindahl reported that budgeting margins to zero, has equity impact.

### **Bond Issue Parameter Resolution/Debt Issue**

Lindahl was not able to contact Rachel Hanson at CoBank, but he will have information for the September Board meeting.

### **Retail Rates**

The storm adder will remain in effect.

## **POLICIES AND RESOLUTIONS**

**Policy E-19: Drug Free Workplace; Policy E-19A: Drug and Alcohol Testing (with name changes); Policy E-19B: Drug and Alcohol Testing; Policy E-20: Safety Policy; Policy E-20A: Safety and Injury Prevention Program (with updates to names of Committee members); Policy E-20B: Emergency Management/Evacuation Plan; Policy E-20C: Hazard Communication Plan; Policy E-20D: Bloodborne Pathogen Program; Policy E-20E: Hearing Conservation Program; Policy E-20F: Powered Industrial Trucks; Policy E-20G: Fire Prevention Plan; and Policy E-20H: Energy Control (Lock-out/Tag-out Program).** A motion was made by Gortemaker and seconded by Morgan to readopt Policy E-19, Policy E-19B, Policy E-20, Policy E-20B, Policy E-20C, E-20D, E-20E, E-20F, E-20G, and Policy E-20H, with no recommended changes and Policy E-19A and Policy E-20A, with the recommended changes. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

Morgan asked about the Director Compensation Policy and if there was a need to amend the policy for compensation for virtual meetings. Following discussion, the Board would like the intent to make virtual meetings count as regular meetings. The policy will be reviewed, changes made, and brought back for approval at the September Board meeting.

## **POWER SUPPLY REPORTS**

### **Tri-State Board Meeting**

Morgan apologized for lack of some of the information in his report due to not having in-person Board meetings. He reported that the virtual Annual meeting was held and was well attended. Morgan was complimented on his Treasurer report that he presented at the virtual Annual meeting.

Morgan reported that so far, there is no power rate increases for five years.

Both Morgan and Lindahl answered questions and discussion followed.

Gulbranson has been working on the partial requirement options at Tri-State and will present her findings at the September Board meeting. Lindahl and Gulbranson met with NPPD and reported. Questions and discussion followed.

Lindahl reported on the Tri-State FERC situation.

## **STRATEGIC ISSUES**

### **Infrastructure**

Gulbranson reported that the contractor vs employee work is still being considered.

### **Modern Energy**

Gulbranson reported that the Pacifica has arrived and is in the warehouse if any Director would like to view the car. She also reported that she is still researching solar projects but may put off looking at the community solar based projects due to the ongoing issues at Tri-State.

### **Customer Engagement**

Gulbranson reported that internally, a demo of the Customer Mobile App and Outage Call Handling App was viewed. In the 2020 large items budget there was \$14,000 approved for Mobile Service Orders. She would like to use that money for the Customer Mobile App, Outage Call Handling App, and an upgrade to billing statements. She does not anticipate the cost to be more than the current budgeted amount. She was informing the Board of the change in plans regarding the specifics on the plan to spend the money.

## **SAFETY ISSUES and SAFETY MEETING MINUTES**

The August 14, 2020, Safety Meeting Minutes were included in the Board book and reviewed by the Directors.

The August 14, 2020, Safety Committee Meeting Minutes were included in the Board book and reviewed by the Directors.

Reilly reported on the status of the bucket truck that was tipped over.

An RV hit the mailboxes located at the Wheat Belt driveway. It was reported to the Sheriff and the driver was caught.

## **CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS**

### **Major Outages**

Reilly commented on the two major outages as reported in the Board book. Also, an outage caused by the high side fuse failing at the Colton Substation. Irrigators were asked not to run for part of a day. A sprayer hit a line near Progress Rail and started a fire.

### **Construction, Maintenance & Operations**

Reilly reported that Chase Gaines, Sidney area lineman, will be leaving Wheat Belt.

### **FEMA/NEMA**

Reilly reported that we received payment in the amount of \$147,630.51 for the April 2018 storm and the five miles of changing 336 ACSR wire to 1/0 T2 wire, in the submitted Mitigation Plan.

### **Coldwater Creek Substation**

Reilly reported that the north circuit was energized on August 5<sup>th</sup>. He was able to watch the load on both the Coldwater and Covalt Substations when the load was switched, and 300 kW of losses were instantly removed from our overall load in that area. With the new substation, substantial savings will be seen during a heavily loaded month.

**A lunch break was taken at 11:36 a.m.**

**The meeting resumed at 12:00 p.m.**

The meeting resumed at Noon for an Executive Session with Jason Gray.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

An executive session was called by Moffat at 12:03 p.m. to discuss the Colorado PUC legal matter; FERC legal matter; and wholesale power contract options. Zimmerman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

Lindahl, Strommen and Gulbranson remained and Morgan left the Executive session at 12:03 p.m. and returned at 1:11 p.m.

A motion was made by Gortemaker to resume the meeting at 1:11 p.m. Zimmerman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

### **Colorado PUC Intervention and Protest**

Morgan reported.

### **Cold Storage Facility/Land**

Bids were presented to the Directors under separate cover and reviewed. Reilly

reviewed the bids and answered questions. Following questions and discussion, a motion was made by Moffat to approve the bids from Wieser Construction and Russell Construction for a steel building as presented in the proposal of bid options, with Lindahl and Reilly having the authority to accept the best value bid of the two, after deficiencies are addressed.

## **CORPORATE SERVICES REPORT**

### **General**

Gulbranson reported that during the parking lot work, one of the walls of the crew room was damaged. We have signed a proposal with a contractor to repair the damages.

### **Customer Engagement**

#### **Rate Adder**

Gulbranson reported that the rates have been modified and tested in preparation for the September 1<sup>st</sup> billing.

### **Irrigation Write-off Requests**

Chaon has contacted the Time of Use customers who previously requested write-offs. She is waiting to hear back regarding documentation.

Gulbranson asked the Board for approval for an irrigation testing write-off for:

Account 2706, Location 02670, in the amount of \$653.43. This is a TOU account tested on peak with proof of testing. A motion was made by Morgan to approve the irrigation testing write-off in the amount of \$653.43. Zimmerman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

### **Marketing**

Gulbranson reported that community events have been cancelled. We are doing more radio advertising. She reported that they have added South Platte School in Big Springs to the schools we are supporting.

### **Human Resources**

Currently there are 27 employees.

Gulbranson and Chaon are working on a retirement policy to present at the September Board meeting.

### **Bank of America Corporate Officer/Authorized Personnel Change**

Gulbranson reported that Wieser's name needed to be removed and Gulbranson's added to the credit card account as the card representative. A motion was made by Gortemaker to remove Wieser and add Gulbranson as the signatory representative. Smith seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried. Gulbranson stated that the credit card company also needed a signed letter along with a copy of the Board Minutes from the meeting and obtained the appropriate signatures on the letter.

### **Village of Lodgepole**

NPPD entered into an O&M Agreement. A letter was sent to the Village again sending options for a power supply proposal agreement.

### **METERING, INFORMATION and TECHNOLOGY**

Weeda reported that we have reached the half-way point with the AMI system deployment.

Weeda mentioned a reminder for those directors leaving the Board this year, that on the last day of service, the I-pads will need to be wiped of all Wheat Belt data.

### **FUTURE MEETINGS, TRAINING & ARRANGEMENTS**

The NREA Annual meeting is scheduled to be a hybrid meeting. Each system will receive five tickets to attend in Kearney and the meeting will be streamed.

The NRECA Regional Meeting will be virtual. There is a fee for the general sessions. Directors will need to let Peterson know if they want to listen to the general sessions. The cost is \$275/person.

The Rural Broadband task force is meeting in person.

The NRECA Annual Meeting will be a virtual meeting to be held in February 2021.

### **Election of Delegates & Other Organizational Items**

**NRECA** – Currently Fehringer is the Voting Director and Morgan is the Alternate Delegate. Discussion followed and the Delegates will remain the same.

**The next regular Board meeting will be Friday, September 25, 2020, beginning at 8:30 a.m.**

**AUGUST BOARD MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the President declared the meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Bernard G. Fehringer, President

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Brian Moffat, Secretary

Due to the unexpected death of Bernard G. Fehringer on September 22, 2020, Wheat Belt Vice President, Brian Zimmerman, signed the approved, August 28, 2020, Board Meeting Minutes.

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Brian Zimmerman, Vice President