

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

**SEPTEMBER 25, 2020**

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Wheat Belt Public Power District was called to order by Vice President Brian Zimmerman, at 8:30 a.m., Friday, September 25, 2020, at the District Headquarters, 11306 RD 32, Sidney, Cheyenne County, Nebraska.

**ROLL CALL**

The following Directors were present:

Mike Blomenkamp  
Moe Moffat  
Doug Smith

John Gortemaker  
Stuart Morgan  
Brian Zimmerman

Also present were Tim Lindahl, General Manager; 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.

Vice President Brian Zimmerman declared a quorum present.

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

Vice President Zimmerman asked for a minute of silence in memory of Board President Bernard Fehringer, who passed away unexpectedly on September 22, 2020.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Smith made a motion to approve the September 25, 2020, Agenda as presented. Gortemaker 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, September 9, 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. Moffat seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

### **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Kendra Strommen – Attorney

Marcus Milanuk – director candidate

Members of the Employee Advisory Committee: Tom Mathine, Rollie Waite, and Chris Schilz

### **APPROVAL OF AUGUST 28, 2020, BOARD MINUTES**

Zimmerman announced that with no corrections to the August 28, 2020, Board Meeting Minutes, they would stand approved as published.

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

June Katen arrived at 8:45 a.m. to voice her opinion on the rates and her bills. Lindahl and Directors addressed her questions and explained the rate process. Katen asked for a copy of the Budget and her billing information. Lindahl said copies would be provided to her.

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

Lindahl began with:

Lindahl placed information on the Directors' tables regarding appointing members to fill positions, such as those held by Smith and Fehringer. Discussion was held concerning having a five-member Board until the new year. Strommen will check the Bylaws to see how many members have to be maintained on the Board. There are now two, two-year terms to be filled in the South District.

### **Legislative & Regulatory**

Lindahl indicated that work has begun on the next State Broadband Task Force report, which will be due in December of 2021.

### **Financials**

The Financial Report was presented under separate cover.

Lindahl reviewed his "dashboard" and the projected and budgeted expenses.

## **Legal**

The NRECA Legal Reporting Service Report was included in the Board book.

## **Covid-19 Update**

Lindahl reported that we are in Stage 4 of reopening in our area. We are allowing people in the office with masks optional. A policy is in place if there should be a significant outbreak.

## **Other**

Lindahl reported that work continues on the Air Force project and we are coordinating with NRECA on the best route going forward.

An article regarding the Endangered Species Act was included in the Board book. Wheat Belt is a member of NESARC.

Lindahl showed data on his personal plug-in hybrid vehicle. He showed significant information on usage and will compare usage to the plug-in hybrid vehicle Wheat Belt is leasing and will continue to report his analysis on the two vehicles.

**A break was taken at 9:51 a.m.**

**The meeting resumed at 10:00 a.m.**

## **BUDGET**

### **Long Term Financial Forecast**

Lindahl explained his financial forecast that is on his internal website/dashboard. The numbers can be modified by the Directors if desired. Questions and discussion followed.

### **Budget Policy F-2**

The Policy is designed to permit Wheat Belt to achieve margins, and to maintain a sound financial position. Lindahl asked the Directors what criteria are needed to meet the requirements? Morgan reported that equity should be a target of 65%, a maximum of 80% and a minimum of 50%. Lindahl was asked to bring back a one-percent increase on rates for a basis.

### **2021 Employee Wages and Benefits**

Chaon presented the Employee Advisory Committee members' analysis report.

Chaon reported that there was no increase in medical insurance for 2021, and the Committee supports the HSA idea. Chaon reported that safety figures were included in the packet for information only.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

An executive session was called by Gortemaker at 11:12 a.m. to discuss the General Manager's Review; Employee Wage and Benefits; and the FERC status. Moffat seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

Lindahl, Strommen and Milanuk remained. Lindahl left the meeting during the General Manager's Review and then returned to the Executive Session. Morgan left the Executive session at 11:47 a.m. and returned at 12:09 p.m.

A motion was made by Gortemaker to resume the meeting at 12:09 p.m. Moffat seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

**A lunch break was taken at 12:10 p.m.**

**The meeting resumed at 12:45 p.m.**

### **2021 Employee Wage and Benefits**

Moffat made a motion that the employee benefits remain the same and grant a 2.5% wage increase for all the employees. Gortemaker seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

### **2021 General Manager Wage**

A motion was made by Gortemaker and seconded by Morgan to grant Lindahl a 2.5% wage increase, and benefits will remain the same. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

### **HEALTH REIMBURSEMENT/HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNT**

Gulbranson reported to the Board on the reasoning behind the change. The change would be for all eligible employees. Following questions and discussion, a motion was made by Morgan to accept the change from an HRA plan to an HSA plan to go in to affect January 2021. The HRA plan will remain for the employees and Directors who are not eligible to contribute to an HSA. Moffat seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

### **RETIREMENT POLICY E-37 and POLICY D-2 – DIRECTOR INSURANCE**

Lindahl and Gulbranson presented the reasoning for the new Policy E-37. There was not a clear retirement plan/procedure. The presented policy clarifies the

procedures/options. They explained the analysis that Gulbranson obtained. Questions and answers followed. The Board will consider the Retirement Policy, Director Insurance Policy, PTO Policy and Employee Insurance Policy for a month and discuss them again at the October Board meeting.

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

Lindhahl explained the CoBank bonding program, the underwriting fees and the bond issuance. Following discussion, a motion was made by Smith to commit money to complete the underwriting process, with a four-year drawdown, and the maximum to be borrowed would be \$16M with a timeframe of four years. Gortemaker seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Yea: all present. Motion carried.

### **Retail Rates**

The storm adder will remain in effect.

### **FERC INTERVENTION**

Moffat made a motion to appoint Brian Zimmerman as the Board legal liaison in place of Fehringer. Gortemaker seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

### **POLICIES AND RESOLUTIONS**

#### **Policy E-24: On- Call Compensation.**

The Employee Advisory Committee requested a significant change to the Policy. The changes were not provided enough in advance to complete a legal and comparable study and the policy will be introduced again at the October Board meeting.

**Policy E-22: Smoking Policy; Policy E-25: First Aid and CPR Certification; Policy E-26: Suggestion Plan; Policy E-27: Employee Behavior; and Policy E-28: Grievance Procedure.** A motion was made by Gortemaker and seconded by Smith to readopt Policy E-22, Policy E-25, Policy E-26, Policy E-27, and Policy E-28, with no recommended changes. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

#### **Policy D-1: Director Compensation & Expense Report Approval**

Changes were made to allow for payment for participation in virtual meetings and ratify past virtual meetings back to March to be paid. There was also a punctuation change. A motion was made to readopt **Policy D-1** with the appropriate changes by Smith and seconded by Gortemaker. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

**Policy E-21: Harassment** (grammatical changes); **Policy E-23: Return To Work** (grammatical changes); **Policy E-29: Guidelines for Discipline and Termination** (spelling error correction). A motion was made by Gortemaker and seconded by Smith to readopt Policy E-21, Policy E-23, and Policy E-29 with the appropriate changes. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

## **POWER SUPPLY REPORTS**

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

Morgan reported that FERC has accepted the Tri-State buydown methodology. If anyone wants out, they have to pay their fair share. Tri-State will have a special Member Meeting in November or December.

### **Basin Report**

Basin announced their Annual Meeting will be virtual.

## **STRATEGIC ISSUES**

Gulbranson reported that it has been a quiet month and had nothing new to report.

## **MEETING REPORTS**

### **NREA Legal Seminar**

Lindahl and Gulbranson attended the meeting and reported.

### **Rural Broadband**

Lindahl reported on the Broadband Task Force and also reported earlier in the meeting.

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

The September 11, 2020, Safety Meeting Minutes were included in the Board book and reviewed by the Directors.

Borges commented on the quick drain installed by a mechanic on Unit 25. Waite also reported and discussed what happened, and that the quick drain will be removed from the truck.

Borges reported on the Team Building exercise held at the Safety Meeting.

## **CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS**

### **Major Outages**

Borges reported that there were no major outages for the month of September.

### **Coldwater Creek Substation**

Borges reported that the south circuit of the new sub was energized on September 15<sup>th</sup>. The potato plant was switched onto the new Coldwater Creek Substation.

### **Cold Storage Building**

The contracts have been signed with Russell's Excavation and the dirt work has begun.

## **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 approximately 20 calls and a couple of e-mails were received.

## **METERING, INFORMATION and TECHNOLOGY**

Weeda mentioned that the UNL Med Center had been hacked as were other medical facilities.

## **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. Directors were directed to contact Peterson if they wish to attend. Spouses count for tickets.

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.

**Election of Delegates & Other Organizational Items**

**CFC District 7** – A Meeting Official Mail Ballot needed to be signed. Currently Fehringer and Morgan were the voting, and alternate delegates. A motion was made by Moffat to appoint Morgan as the voting delegate and Moffat as the alternate voting delegate. Smith seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

**Basin Electric** – The current voting and alternate delegates were Morgan and Fehringer. A motion was made by Morgan to appoint Morgan as the voting delegate, and Gortemaker as the alternate voting delegate. Smith seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

**Tri-State G & T** – The current voting and alternate delegates were Morgan and Fehringer. A motion was made by Smith and seconded by Moffat to appoint Zimmerman as the alternate voting delegate. Roll call vote: Yea: All present. Motion carried.

**The next regular Board meeting will be Friday, October 23, 2020, beginning at 8:30 a.m.**

**SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the President declared the meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Brian Zimmerman, Vice President

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Brian Moffat, Secretary

Following adjournment of the September 25, 2020, Board Meeting, a reception was held for Doug Smith to congratulate him on his retirement after 27 years of service to the Wheat Belt PPD Board.