

## APPROVED REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS - WHEAT BELT PPD JUNE 25, 2021

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Wheat Belt Public Power District was called to order by President Brian Zimmerman, at 8:30 a.m., Friday, June 25, 2021, at the District Headquarters, 11306 RD 32, Sidney, Cheyenne County, Nebraska.

#### ROLL CALL

The following Directors were present:

Sean Blackburn  
Jennifer Eckhardt  
Brian Moffat  
Brian Zimmerman

Toni Blomenkamp  
Marcus Milanuk  
Stuart Morgan

Also present were Lacey Gulbranson, General Manager and Manager of Corporate Services; Carolyn Hostetler, Chief Financial Officer; Earl Reilly, Operations Manager; Ryan Borges, Staking Engineer; Jim Weeda, Technology Manager; Kelli Chaon, Customer Engagement Manager; Liz Skov, Accountant; and Valerie Richards, Accounting Specialist.

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

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

President Brian Zimmerman declared a quorum present.

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

#### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Morgan made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. Blackburn seconded the motion. Roll call vote: **Yea: Moffat, Milanuk, Blomenkamp, Eckhardt, Morgan, Blackburn, Zimmerman. Nay: None.** Motion carried.

#### NOTICE OF MEETING

Notice of the meeting was by publication in the Sidney Sun-Telegraph on Wednesday, June 16, 2021, Legal Notice #L21-361, and proof of publication showing such notice as published is attached and thereby made a part of these

Minutes. Milanuk made a motion to waive the reading of the meeting notice. Blackburn seconded the motion. **Roll call vote: Yea: Morgan, Moffat, Milanuk, Blomenkamp, Zimmerman, Blackburn, Eckhardt. Nay: None.** Motion carried.

## **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Kendra Strommen, Attorney and Jamie Weingart, JNW Consulting.

## **Public Hearing & Comment Period**

No one appeared before the Board.

## **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT UPDATE, JNW Consulting**

Jamie Weingart reported.

## **APPROVAL OF MAY 28, 2021, BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

A motion was made by Blackburn to waive the reading and to approve the May 28, 2021 Board Minutes as published. Morgan seconded the motion. Roll call vote: **Yea: Zimmerman, Blackburn, Eckhardt, Morgan, Blomenkamp, Milanuk, Moffat. Nay: None.** Motion carried.

## **APPROVAL OF JUNE 5, 2021, SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

A motion was made by Milanuk to waive the reading and to approve the June 5, 2021, Special Board Meeting Minutes as published. Moffat seconded the motion. Roll call vote: **Yea: Morgan, Moffat, Milanuk, Blomenkamp, Zimmerman, Blackburn, Eckhardt. Nay: None.** Motion carried.

## **BOARD EDUCATION**

Gulbranson conducted a Financial Workshop. She reviewed the power bill and discussed generation demand vs transmission demand and mills per kwh. The transmission and generation load factor were also discussed. Questions and discussion followed.

## **GENERAL MANAGER SEARCH**

Congratulations and “condolences” were extended to the new General Manager, Lacey Gulbranson, by Board President, Brian Zimmerman. Zimmerman thanked the committee for all of their work. Eckhardt asked about updating the current policy on the procedures for hiring a general manager. Gulbranson and Chaon will add resource information for the interview process, questions, etc. for further reference for the Board members use in the future. Committee Minutes were

provided in the Board book. Chaon reported that Mr. Kool was reimbursed for his expenses.

### **GM ONBOARDING COMMITTEE**

Gulbranson included a 90-120 Day Plan for transition into the formal role of General Manager in the Board book. Gulbranson asked for a committee to be established whereby guidance could be given and the building of a relationship with the Board could commence. The volunteers for the Onboarding Committee were: Milanuk, Eckhardt and Morgan. Strommen reminded the Committee that reports would need to be given to the Board following the Committee meetings, and the Board could go into Executive Session to discuss the reports if needed. It was decided the Committee would meet quarterly.

**A break was taken at 9:47 a.m.**

**The meeting resumed at 9:56 a.m.**

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

Gulbranson began with thanking the Board for the opportunity to serve them in the General Manager position. Gulbranson is conducting one-on-one meetings with all the employees for general feedback.

Gulbranson welcomed Valerie Richards, the replacement for retiring Deb Schlaman, in the Accounting Specialist position.

### **Legislative and Regulatory**

NREA's Summary of this year's Nebraska Legislative session was included in the Board book.

NRECA sent a booklet of Resolutions they plan to adopt at the Annual Meeting next year.

### **Legal**

The NRECA's Legal Reporting Service was included in the Supplemental Board book.

### **Financials**

The Financial report was distributed under separate cover.

Debt service coverage and bonds were discussed by Gulbranson. Gulbranson reported that she had spoken with Jay Spearman concerning the

storm adder. He stated that there are other options available without doing the adder and she outlined the options for the Board.

Discussion was held concerning interest rates. The Board asked that Spearman attend the July Board meeting via teleconference for an update on interest rates, bonding, etc.

### **Other**

External affairs were discussed at the May Board meeting. Gulbranson will leverage Strommen on the legislative items with staff, etc., with additional fees being charged, but does not feel a new hire will be needed. Strommen will report to the Board as needed and her time to attend events will be determined at a later date.

Gulbranson reported that two employees are scheduled to be on short term disability beginning in July. Morgan asked if the workload was being taken care of. Gulbranson explained the shift in duties and that an intern was hired for 600 hours.

Gulbranson reported that with less miles put on the trucks due to the new Gridstream metering system, the purchase of a new truck included in the 2021 Large Items Budget, will be postponed.

Blomenkamp asked a question concerning the new outage App and Chaon responded. There are currently 26 users and the App is not fully implemented and explained the progression of the Apps usage.

Blackburn asked for an explanation on the new delinquent dates. Gulbranson and Chaon explained the disconnect procedures and the updating of the operating policy when a bank error is made.

### **Executive Session**

An Executive Session was called at 10:28 a.m. by Moffat to discuss a FERC legal matter and personnel matters. Blackburn seconded the motion. Roll call vote: **Yea: Blomenkamp, Zimmerman, Blackburn, Moffat, Eckhardt, Morgan, Milanuk. Nay: None.** Motion carried.

Gulbranson and Strommen remained for the Executive Session. Morgan left the meeting at 10:28 a.m. and returned at 10:50 a.m. Gulbranson left the meeting at 11:05 a.m. and returned at 11:15 a.m.

A motion was made by Milanuk and seconded by Eckhardt to resume the meeting at 11:16 a.m. Roll call vote: **Yea: Eckhardt, Morgan, Moffat, Milanuk, Blomenkamp, Zimmerman, Blackburn. Nay: None.** Motion carried.

## **FERC INTERVENTION, PROTESTS AND SETTLEMENT**

A motion was made by Milanuk and seconded by Blomenkamp to intervene on the FERC docket EL21-75-000 CTP Methodology Order to Show Cause. Roll call vote: **Yea: Moffat, Milanuk, Blomenkamp, Zimmerman, Blackburn, Eckhardt. Abstain: Morgan. Nay: None.** Motion carried.

A motion was made by Moffat and seconded by Eckhardt to extend Gulbranson a \$10,000 bonus for her time as acting Interim General Manager. Roll call vote: **Yea: Blomenkamp, Zimmerman, Blackburn, Moffat, Eckhardt, Morgan, Milanuk. Nay: None.** Motion carried.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE**

Gulbranson reviewed key elements of the report in the Board book.

Gulbranson reported on the CFC meeting in San Antonio. The three-year Strategic Plan will need to be addressed in 2022. CFC's Strategic Planning service is available in January. Following discussion, the Directors agreed to try for January 20 and 21, 2022, to conduct Strategic Planning to be held at WBPPD. Outside locations options will be considered.

Gulbranson reported on a distribution generation project in conjunction with Tri-State. A modern energy perspective to do a small solar garden on the WBPPD facility to offset the headquarters usage is under consideration. She is looking into costs for 2022 budgeting purposes.

## **Infrastructure**

Borges is working on staking to get contractor bids for the 2021 Work Plan items. Borges reported that he met with RVW, the company Wheat Belt uses for the mapping software. They offer bidding services. Borges will contact some of their customers for references as to quality of work and timeliness. He will be exploring options.

## **Customer Engagement**

Chaon and Gulbranson will be attending the CSA's (Central Services Association, the parent company of our current software provider) Annual Meeting and User Conference, the end of June 2021. The purpose is to understand the broader offering to determine if they are a viable solution moving forward, or if we need to be looking elsewhere.

## **POWER SUPPLY REPORTS**

### Tri-State Board Meeting

Morgan discussed his report which was included in the Board book. Questions and discussion followed. The Annual Meeting will be held in August and will be presented in person and virtually.

### MEETING REPORTS

The reports in the Board book were reviewed.

Gulbranson commented on the CFC Summit she attended. She explained to the Directors, the tools that are offered by CFC such as a line of credit, and other borrowing opportunities, the KRTA (Key Ratio and Trend analysis) reports, strategic planning and financial forecasting.

### POLICIES AND RESOLUTIONS

**Policy D-9: Electronic Communications:** Strommen reported on the Policy concerning committees acting as a sub-group from the Board, and substantial communications that need to be in an open public forum. She recommended that we change how we operate or change the policy. Weeda will look into updating licensing for the e-mail accounts for the Board and will bring back information at the July Board meeting.

**Policy E-1: Employment Policies; E-3: Holidays; Policy E-9: Physical Examination; and Policy E-10: Code of Ethics.** A motion was made by Milanuk to readopt Policies E-1, E-3, E-9, and E-10, with no recommended changes. Moffat seconded the motion. Roll call vote: **Yea: Morgan, Moffat, Milanuk, Blomenkamp, Zimmerman, Blackburn, Eckhardt.** Nay: None. Motion carried.

**Policy E-2: Paid Time Off (PTO):** (updated for clarification purposes); **Policy E-4: Uniforms and Safety Equipment:** (updated to reflect current practices); and **Policy E-6: Educational Courses: (updated to include linemen certifications).** A motion was made by Milanuk to approve Policy E-2, E-4 and E-6, with the recommended changes. Moffat seconded the motion. Roll call vote: **Yea: Zimmerman, Blackburn, Eckhardt, Morgan, Blomenkamp, Milanuk, Moffat.** Nay: None. Motion carried.

**Policy E-7: Expenses:** (mileage was moved out of Policy E-8 into Policy E-7 and removed a paragraph to reduce confusion). **Policy E-8: District Vehicles:** (mileage was moved out of this Policy and into Policy E-7). A motion was made by Milanuk and seconded by Blackburn to approve Policy E-7 and Policy E-8 with the recommended changes. Roll call vote: **Yea: Blomenkamp, Zimmerman, Blackburn, Moffat, Eckhardt, Morgan, Milanuk.** Nay: None. Motion carried.

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

The June 11, 2021, Safety Meeting Minutes were included in the Board book and were reviewed. Training: NREA JT&S Todd Pfeil, Work Area Protection.

A pie chart of incidents and near misses (reported) from 2018-2021 was presented in the Board book for discussion purposes. Equipment malfunction was reported at 23% and a question was raised about preventative maintenance. Reilly will research the incidents and report at the July Board meeting.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

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

Reilly reviewed the report in the Board book. The June 3<sup>rd</sup> outage was discussed, and a claim has been filed with Federated. A letter had been sent to a customer who hit two poles in two days indicating that we were going to bill him for the damages created by the second incident. Reilly responded that we do not have easements for the poles on his property. Borges explained the contract process. Strommen will research the situation and report at a later date.

### **Engineering & Construction Report**

Borges reviewed his report in the Board book. Pole testers are scheduled to begin the annual inspections in July and will GPS every pole this year.

## **CORPORATE SERVICES REPORT**

### **Customer Engagement**

Gulbranson reported that we continue working towards implementing the 16<sup>th</sup> due date beginning in July.

### **Consideration of Irrigation Write-offs**

Gulbranson asked for irrigation write-offs in the amount of \$2,612.70.

Account 48400 - \$694.16

Account 49432 - \$629.74

Account 94782 - \$646.21

Account 94833 - \$642.59

A motion was made by Morgan and seconded by Moffat to approve the irrigation write-offs in the amount of \$2,612.70. Roll call vote: **Yea: Eckhardt, Morgan, Moffat, Milanuk, Zimmerman, Blackburn. Nay: None. Abstain:**

**Blomenkamp.** Motion carried.

Gulbranson reported that we still have someone interested in the West warehouse. Following discussion, it was the consensus of the Board to put the property out for bids with the right to refuse any offer.

**Formal Settlement from Tri-State on the FERC Rate**

Gulbranson reported that once the state rate settlement is finalized, she will bring back the DG-1 Rate Schedule for revision.

**METERING, INFORMATION and TECHNOLOGY**

Weeda reviewed his IT, Metering and Security report in the Board book.

Weeda reported on an email scam reported by a Wheat Belt customer, asking her to give information on her bills. The scam was reported on KOGA radio also. Weeda made it clear we do not solicit information in that format.

**FUTURE MEETINGS, TRAINING & ARRANGEMENTS**

If any of the Directors wish to attend the NREA Board meeting in Scottsbluff, they were directed to contact Weigle.

**BOARD ORIENTATION TRAINING SESSION**

Gulbranson presented a training session on Finances to the Board.

**The next Board meeting will be Friday, July 23, 2021, beginning at 8:30 a.m.**

**JUNE BOARD MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the President declared the meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m. Board orientation training followed the adjournment.

ATTEST:

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Brian Zimmerman, President

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Brian Moffat, Secretary



