

## APPROVED REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS - WHEAT BELT PPD JULY 23, 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, July 23, 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; Jason Weigle, Business Support Analyst; 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

Blackburn made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. Milanuk 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, July 14, 2021, Legal Notice #L21-434, 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. Moffat seconded the motion. **Roll call vote: Yea: Morgan, Moffat, Milanuk, Blomenkamp, Zimmerman, Blackburn, Eckhardt. Nay: None.** Motion carried.

### **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Attorney Kendra Strommen was introduced. Jay Spearman from Piper Sandler & Co. was scheduled to attend via teleconference at 9:30 a.m.

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

No one appeared before the Board.

### **APPROVAL OF JUNE 25, 2021, BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

A motion was made by Morgan to waive the reading and to approve the June 25, 2021, Board Minutes as published. Eckhardt seconded the motion. Roll call vote: **Yea: Zimmerman, Blackburn, Eckhardt, Morgan, Blomenkamp, Milanuk, Moffat. Nay: None.** Motion carried.

### **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT UPDATE**

Gulbranson provided an update on JNW Consulting's efforts to support Wheat Belt's management and employees.

### **BOARD EDUCATION**

Gulbranson provided an overview of materials which will be included in the upcoming annual wage packet review conducted by the Board in September.

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

Gulbranson reviewed her 90-120 Day Plan and discussed the status of her onboarding efforts into the General Manager role. She had completed the one-on-one meetings with each employee and highlighted the key findings. The Manager of Corporate Services position has been posted and one interview has been conducted. The Onboarding Committee will meet in August.

She reviewed the PCB program ongoing at Wheat Belt and how a request from an employee to work on this program might require staffing changes. Gulbranson and Reilly will provide more information at the August Board meeting.

### **Legislative and Regulatory**

Gulbranson and Strommen discussed a plan moving forward concerning her time and assistance. For the first year, she will be paid by the hour and for her actual expenses (travel, etc.). Next year they will reevaluate and look at modifying the retainer to accommodate.

### **General Manager Search Process**

Gulbranson and Chaon reviewed their draft of the GM Selection Procedure in Board Policy D-4A. The new Policy will be provided in the August Board packet for review and approval.

### **Other**

The west warehouse (Quonset in Sidney) was cleaned out. Notice was submitted to the paper on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. Bids will be accepted until August 26th at 4:00 p.m. At the August 27<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, the bids will be opened at 9:00 a.m. in the Board room.

### **Financials**

The Financial report was distributed under separate cover.

Gulbranson reviewed the financial report. She discussed the transitions ongoing with financial personnel. She discussed the increase in power supply mill rates and the impact this change has had on Wheat Belt's standby electric rates. She reviewed the current income and expense balances and expected trends over the next few months. She finished by discussing her analysis of borrowing and bonds and how interest rate changes might affect rates and interest paid.

Gulbranson attended the Tri-State Managers meeting and reported.

**A break was taken at 9:24 a.m.**

**The meeting resumed at 9:30 a.m.**

The teleconference with Jay Spearman began at 9:32 a.m. He presented an interest rate update and the forward-looking information from the Federal Reserve.

The meeting resumed at 9:40 a.m.

Gulbranson will provide more information regarding the potential pros and cons of issuing bonds at the August Board meeting.

Borges discussed the Four-Year Work Plan and the current status.

### **Executive Session**

An Executive Session was called at 9:43 a.m. by Milanuk to discuss the status of Wheat Belt's FERC interventions, protests, and settlement. 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 9:43 a.m. and returned at 10:28 a.m.

A motion was made by Moffat and seconded by Eckhardt to resume the meeting at 10:28 a.m. Roll call vote: **Yea: Eckhardt, Morgan, Moffat, Milanuk, Blomenkamp, Zimmerman, Blackburn. Nay: None.** Motion carried.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE**

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

CFC's Strategic Planning service asked if it would be possible to move the meeting dates to Wednesday and Thursday, January 19-20. The Directors agreed to the date changes.

### **Infrastructure**

Borges reported on a completed project.

### **Modern Energy**

Gulbranson visited with Tri-State regarding a solar project. Tri-State provided three options for consideration which were included in the Board book. She will work to see what a net metering project would cost to install at the Wheat Belt headquarters and provide figures to the Board at the August Board meeting.

### **POWER SUPPLY REPORTS**

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

Morgan reviewed his report which was included in the Board book. Questions and discussion followed. Tri-State did submit a new contract termination payment methodology analysis to FERC. 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.

Weigle reported on the **SEPA DER Fundamentals Bootcamp** which he attended virtually. An article was provided in the supplemental Board book that effectively covered the course in a short article.

Gulbranson reported on the **Central Service Association (CSA) Annual meeting, which is the parent company of PCS** that she and Chaon attended. PCS representatives will be coming to Wheat Belt to assist employees on certain modules that they provide. CSA has a meter data software which Gulbranson feels would be beneficial to Wheat Belt because analytics are already built in. Gulbranson will visit other systems that use other software providers to obtain further information.

Gulbranson attended the **Tri-State CEO Committee Meeting** and reported. Discussions were held concerning organized market on the west side and the southwest power pool side; FERC and Class A rate settlements; contract termination pricing; and rebate program changes.

Weeda attended a **Cyber Security Conference** in Denver and reported.

## **POLICIES AND RESOLUTIONS**

**Policy D-9: Electronic Communications:** Weeda reported on the pricing to update licenses. The Policy will be updated to reflect revisions once Google upgrades are completed.

**Policy E-11: Employment of Relative; Policy E-12: Cell Phone Use in Vehicles; Policy E-13: Separation of Service; Policy E-14: Theft from the District; Policy E-15: Electrician's License; and Policy E-17: Equal Employment Opportunity.** A motion was made by Milanuk to readopt Policies E-11, E-12, E-13, E-14, E-15, and E-17, with no recommended changes. Blackburn seconded the motion. Roll call vote: **Yea: Morgan, Moffat, Milanuk, Blomenkamp, Zimmerman, Blackburn, Eckhardt.** Nay: None. Motion carried.

**Policy E-16: Employee Recognition:** (wording change for clarification purposes). **Policy E-18: Insurance for Full Time and Part Time Employees:** (wording changes for clarification purposes). A motion was made by Milanuk and seconded by Moffat to approve Policy E-16 and Policy E-17 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 July 14, 2021, Safety Meeting Minutes were included in the Board book and were reviewed. Training: Cyber Security Training was presented by Weeda, and Burt Radcliffe presented HIPPA Training for the managers and foremen.

Blomenkamp attended the meeting and reported on the cyber security training.

Gulbranson reported on the Incidents and Near Miss 3-Year Update and reported that 40% of the incidents could have been prevented.

Strommen reported on State Statute concerning easements recorded or not recorded and explained prescriptive easements. She will contact the customer to obtain easements.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

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

Reilly reviewed the report in the Board book and reported on the monthly activities.

### **Engineering & Construction Report**

Borges reviewed his report in the Board book. Pole testing will begin in August, south and east of Sidney. The permit to construct new line on the State ROW west of Lisco has been received.

## **CORPORATE SERVICES REPORT**

### **Customer Engagement**

Gulbranson reported that the 16<sup>th</sup> due date on the customers' statements has been implemented. Disconnect procedures change the end of the month which consists of being subject to disconnect at 9:00 a.m. on the day of disconnect.

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

Gulbranson and Chaon presented one irrigation testing write-off for Board consideration. Following discussion on the circumstances, the Board decided to not consider the request for write-off as the situation does not meet the scope and intent of the irrigation write-off policy.

## **METERING, INFORMATION and TECHNOLOGY**

Weeda reviewed his IT, Metering and Security report in the Board book. Weeda reported that since the last update, 66 meters were installed and seven routers. The final equipment order was placed and confirmed at a cost of \$424,264.63. Lead times for the meters and equipment is between 24-30 weeks.

**OTHER**

It was reported that the headquarters building has a moisture problem that will need to be addressed.

Gulbranson reported that Bartels is working on customer accounts. A lesson on liens will be given by Strommen which will help with the customer records. Bartels is still working on analytics on customer accounts and will report at a later date.

Reilly reported that the overhead training will be coming up and the new directors are invited to attend if they would be interested. September 1<sup>st</sup> would be the best day to attend.

**FUTURE MEETINGS, TRAINING & ARRANGEMENTS**

Weigle reported on the upcoming meetings.

**ELECTION OF DELEGATES & OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL ITEMS**

Weigle stated that NREA is looking for nominations for statewide standing committees and explained that there is information in the supplemental folder listing all of the committees. Milanuk explained to the Board about the various committees that are discussed at the NREA meeting in Scottsbluff.

**The next Board meeting will be Friday, August 27, 2021, beginning at 8:30 a.m. A photographer will be present for photographers prior to the September meeting.**

**JULY BOARD MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the President declared the meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

ATTEST:

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Brian Zimmerman, President

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Brian Moffat, Secretary

