



**Summary of Board Minutes**

**January 28, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative (“FMEC”) took place at FMEC’s headquarters office, located at 3366 Bridge Avenue, Albert Lea, MN 56007, on Tuesday, January 28, 2025.

All board members were present for this meeting.

Dennis Anderson, Vice Chair	District 1
Jay Neitzell	District 2
Steve Garbisch, Treasurer	District 3
Richard Schaufler	District 4
Frank Fryer, Secretary	District 5
Matt Maras	District 6
Jack Korman, Chair	District 7
Bill Trygstad	District 8
Larry Irvine – Joined Remotely	District 9

**Call To Order:** Jack Korman, FMEC Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Agenda Approval:** Chair Korman called for any additions or edits to the agenda. Hearing none, the board voted to approve the agenda for the monthly meeting on January 28, 2025, as presented.

**Safety Share:** Jay Neitzell, District 2, provided an update on tasks that need to be done safely as we prepare for spring weather. Being prepared is best practice in general. Jim Krueger emphasized the importance of always using three points of contact when getting in and out of vehicles.

**Governance:** Political Action Campaigns play a vital role in advocating for the interests of electric cooperatives. Our legislators must be well-informed about the policies that significantly affect our industry. To further this mission, each Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative director is strongly encouraged to contribute to both America’s Electric Cooperative PAC and the Rural Electric Political Action Committee (REPAC). By making these donations, we can empower our representatives to understand and support the critical issues impacting our cooperative community.

**The board entered into Executive Session at 8:12 a.m.**

During the Executive Session, Jim Krueger briefed the board on pending litigation involving Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative.

**The board left the Executive Session at 8:24 a.m.**

**Strategic Planning:** Jim Krueger will partner with Matt Gilley from GreatCo-ops to find a suitable date in 2025 for an important Strategic Planning Event. This event will outline the cooperative’s vision and objectives, ensuring all team members are aligned and prepared to move forward effectively.

**Member Satisfaction Survey:** Mary Nelson, the Director of Cooperative Relations, reviewed our recent Member Satisfaction Survey scores. This information helps us improve our services and build better relationships within the cooperative membership.

**NRECA BLC Training:** The value of bringing NRECA in-house to provide group training was discussed. For now, if board members want to pursue additional educational courses, they should bring it up at a board meeting for formal approval.

**Approval of the Consent Agenda:** The motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented was passed. This includes the approval of the prior monthly board minutes, the approval of new members, the authorization for payments to estates, the acceptance of the audit committee and treasurer's reports, and the safety and management team reports.

**General/Strategic Discussion:** The topics below were discussed, and no action was taken.

- Data centers are starting to establish themselves in cooperative service areas. These facilities consume significant electricity, making thorough planning essential before opening accounts. DPC's VoltWrite AI tool could benefit this planning process, but further testing is needed to verify its effectiveness.
- Nuclear legislation was discussed, and we will meet with local legislators on February 18 to address this critical issue.
- Bryan Skogheim updated his report regarding two businesses with delinquent outstanding loans and their missed monthly payments.
- Albert Lea Healthcare Coalition is collaborating with a local business to find an employee care clinic location.
- Judy Jensen shared details about the OSHA 300A report for the 2024 calendar year.
- Asplundh Tree Service is currently trimming trees southwest of Albert Lea. They also focus on member-driven Service Orders (SOs) and trim specific areas to assist the FMEC line crews. In addition, Scott Sheely was promoted to the open Working Foreman position on January 21.
- FMEC IT employees have been monitoring our VPN tunnels over the last few months and found that from December 1, 2024, to January 15, 2025, we had approximately 10,000 failed connections.

**Director Reports:** Bill Trygstad updated the board on the DPC meetings he attended since the December board meeting. DPC is working toward more educational opportunities in 2025.

- The DPC District Meeting will be held on February 11 at FMEC in Albert Lea.
- Bill noted that if he has any executive discussions in DPC's Executive Session portion on their agenda, he needs to discuss them in the FMEC Executive Session.
- The DPC year-end financial reports were reviewed.

**MREA Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws:** Individual polling was conducted to gauge interest in supporting the changes to MREA's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. Six directors voted against supporting the changes, one said yes, and two were neutral.

**MREA District 6 Director:** The Majority ruled that FMEC will vote for Tracy Lauritzen as the MREA District 6 board member.

**FMEC Financials:** Jim Krueger reviewed the FMEC financial reports for December 2024, and the Commercial & Industrial Usage Comparison and Year-to-Date Usage reports.

**Write-Offs:** Motion carried to write off the uncollectible accounts totaling \$18,547.47 for January through June 2024.

**Inventory Adjustments:** A motion was carried out to approve the 2024 inventory adjustments totaling \$32,860.73.

**Distributed Generation Reports:** Bryan Skogheim reviewed the 2024 DG reports.

**Subsidiary Reports:** Jim Krueger reviewed the Subsidiary Reports with the board of directors, including MN Three, LLC, Southern Minnesota Electric Cooperative (SMEC), Heartland Security Services, and the FMEC Open Loan Balances.

**Operation Round-Up:** The 2024 Operation Round-Up program was discussed. 148 organizations were awarded grants totaling \$101,893.00.

**Policy Reviews:** The below policies were reviewed with no changes.

- 1.006 – Records Management
- 1.009 – Ethics & Conflict of Interest
- 2.005 – President & CEO Succession Planning
- 4.019 – Identity Theft Prevention

**Policy Amendments:** Motion carried to amend the below policies.

- 5.904 – Cogeneration and Small Power Production
- 5.Rider CIP

Work Orders #1297 & #991224 and Special Equipment #619 were presented to the Treasurer for signatures.

A motion was carried out to adjourn this meeting at 12:17 p.m.

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Frank Fryer, Secretary