Minutes of Annual Meeting

Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. August 26, 2020

The 2020 Annual Meeting of the members of Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Wheatland or Cooperative) was held on August 26, 2020, at the Caldwell Community Building, 119 E. First, Caldwell, Kansas, at 12:30 p.m. CDT. The meeting was held pursuant to notice provided to each member of Wheatland. Board Chairman, Woody Barnes, announced that the annual meeting of the members was being simulcast at all other Wheatland office locations. Bruce W. Mueller, Wheatland’s CEO/General Manager, discussed the extra precautions taken in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, pursuant to Wheatland policy, every meeting starts with a safety tip, “keep walkways and hallways free of debris, clutter and obstacles to avoid slips, trips and falls. Clean up spills immediately after they take place. Filing cabinets and desk drawers should be kept shut when not in use. Cover cables and cords properly if they need to be in a walkway.” The luncheon began at 11:30 a.m. Charles Ayers, former Board of Trustees member, and first ballot Hall of Fame inductee to the Kansas Cooperative Hall of Fame, presented an invocation.

William Barnes, Board President, served as Chairman throughout the meeting. The Chairman called to order the 72nd Annual Meeting and welcomed all members and guests. Chairman Barnes introduced the Trustees and their spouses. Mueller introduced the executive staff of Wheatland and special guests in attendance to include: United States Congressman from the 4th District, Ron Estes; Stuart Lowry, President and CEO of Sunflower Electric Power Corporation; and Leslie Kaufman, Vice President of Government Relations and Legal Counsel for Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. At that time, a color guard comprised of Lieutenant Commander Marshall Love of the United States Navy and Sergeant First Class Fred Leis of the United States Army presented and posted the colors. The membership then recited the Pledge of Allegiance which was followed by the playing of the National Anthem.

Chairman Barnes announced there were 227 members present in person at the meeting and 38 members present by proxy. Those members present by proxy were reported and posted to the members by the Wheatland staff. The cooperative membership exceeds 1,000 members, and therefore, 50 members or more constitutes a quorum. A quorum was announced by Chairman Barnes.

The Chairman again presented that the official Notice of the Annual Meeting, the Affidavit of Mailing, and the Certificate of Membership would be read to the members verbatim. However, upon motion made by the members from the floor, it was seconded and passed by unanimous vote to waive the formal reading of the Official Notice of the Annual Meeting, the Affidavit of Mailing, and the Certificate of Membership. Jim McVay, General Counsel for Wheatland, summarized the Official Notice of the Annual Meeting, the Affidavit of Mailing, and the Certificate of Membership.

The 2019 Annual Meeting minutes were provided to the membership when registering at the meeting. Chairman Barnes presented that the 2019 Annual Meeting minutes would be read to the membership. However, upon motion made from the floor to dispense with the reading of the 2019 minutes and to approve them as presented, it was seconded and passed by unanimous vote. The reading of the previous minutes was, therefore, waived. There were no additions or corrections to the minutes, and they were approved and adopted by unanimous vote.

Thereafter, a video presentation was made to the members by Radona Smythe, Wheatland’s Director of Finance. She presented the Financial Report/Treasurer’s Report, which was also published in the August issue of the Kansas Country Living magazine and was mailed to each of the members, along with the official Notice of the Meeting. Once Radona finished her report, the Chairman asked the members if there were questions relative to her report. The Chairman announced that he would entertain a motion to accept the report as mailed to each member of the Cooperative. Upon motion made, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote, the Financial Report/Treasurer’s Report was approved and adopted.

Mueller began a video-presentation to the members and stated that all area Wheatland offices were participating in the annual meeting by video conference. All Wheatland members attending the concurrent annual meeting at each district office were permitted to vote and participate fully. Mueller presented on Wheatland’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic and safety measures to protect employees and members. Mueller also discussed the early retirement of capital credits in the form of billing credits to help members get through these trying times.

Rick Klaus, Director of Operations, then discussed Wheatland’s efforts to enhance construction, safety, and reliability in District 7. These efforts included the building of new 138kV transmission facilities and several new substations. Jevin Kasselman, the Director of IT/Broadband, informed the members of all activities to secure Wheatland cybersecurity and Wheatland’s IT system. Alli Conine, Manager of Member Services and Corporate Communications, provided the members with a summary of all Wheatland’s efforts to stay connected and communicate with its members.

Mueller then concluded the video presentation with the 2019 Wheatland highlights. He discussed rate issues and the relationship between member rates and transmission cost allocations at the SPP. Mueller explained how shifting the cost allocation will save Kansas ratepayers money in the future. He also informed the members of the Kansas legislature’s SB 69 rate study and its results. He also highlighted the fact that Wheatland has current plans to implement another capital credit retirement in December barring any unforeseen circumstances. He then closed with a safety discussion of Wheatland’s commitment to zero contact injuries. After the video presentation, Mueller asked if there were any questions from the membership and there were none.

Trey Grebe, Wheatland’s Assistant General Manager, announced the cooperative’s winners for the Youth Tour programs. He explained that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Washington, D.C., trip was canceled. However, Wheatland was proud to award the two Youth Tour winners with a $1,000 scholarship. These awards were presented to Sadie Schmanke of Conway Springs High School and Leah Bowlby, of South Haven High School. Wheatland is also proud to sponsor the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. It was also canceled due to the pandemic. This year, the two students were awarded $1,000 scholarships. The two winners were Zoe Jerke, of Great Bend High School and Ryan Thompson of Syracuse High School.

Grebe then presented scholarships to high school seniors who are attending post-secondary education from the 13 schools in the Wheatland territory, and one at-large scholarship. This year, there are 13, $1,000 scholarships awarded to the following students:

1. Hope Casner – Argonia HS

2. Delaney Mayo – Caldwell HS

3. Audrey Bebermeyer – Chaparral HS

4. Victor Kunz – Conway Springs HS

5. Luke Maneth – Great Bend HS

6. Kamryn Youmans – Greeley County HS

7. Gracelyn Rupp – Holcomb HS

8. Tori Poe – Norwich Consolidated Schools

9. Madison Shapland – Scott Community HS

10. Rachel Turek – South Haven HS

11. Alex Moser – Syracuse HS

12. Johanna Ridder – Wichita County HS

13. Carson Linenberger – Garden City HS and

At-Large Winner

The service awards were also then announced by the Chairman to employees as follows:

40 Years – Randy Coleman

30 Years – James Zorn and Todd Nemechek

25 Years – Mike Olson, Bryan Mulligan and

Jana Harkness

20 Years – Chad Deniston, Randy Rogers, Colton Green and Mark Maier

15 Years – Darrin Campbell, Wade Grumbein and Radona Smythe

10 Years – Marcus Goebel and Brandon Ritchie

5 Years – Amanda Martinez, Cody Strecker, Rhei Thurman, Erin Carter and Alli Conine

Chairman Barnes then recognized Vic Case, who has been on the Wheatland Board of Trustees for over 12 years and is now retiring from his position. This was his last board meeting. Vic was lauded and thanked for his years of service by all the members present.

Chairman Barnes then inquired of the members whether there was any old business to come before the meeting. There was no old business to come before the meeting.

The Chairman then called for new business. There was no new business announced from the floor. The Chairman announced one item of new business. There were four Wheatland districts up for trustee elections. Jim McVay read the Nomination Committee Affidavit. The Nominating Committee was composed of Ed Cupp, Milan Reimer, Dale Wetzel, Marvin Graber, Robert Buerkle, Matt Hoisington, and Kim Miller. The Nominating Committee placed into nomination and selected the following candidates: Katie Eisenhour in District 1; Brady Harbin and Josh Young in District 2; Stacey Addison-Howland in District 4, and John Kleysteuber in District 5. McVay presented that all nominations were made by motion, seconded and passed by unanimous vote. The members were once again told that Trustee candidates could be nominated from the floor. The qualifications for the Office of Trustee were read to the membership verbatim from the Wheatland Bylaws.

Thereafter, the Chairman asked for nominations from the floor. At the end of the 60-second waiting period from the floor and awaiting any response from the remote locations, there are no nominations from the floor. Upon motion made and seconded, it was then passed by unanimous vote of the members to accept the slate of candidates from the committee on nominations for Districts 1, 4, and 5. Therefore, Katie Eisenhour of District 1, Stacey Addison-Howland of District 4, and John Kleysteuber of District 5 were elected to three-year terms as Wheatland trustees. This leaves District 2 as the only contested election.

Pursuant to the rules of the annual meeting and specified in the notice of the annual meeting to the membership published in Kansas Country Living, both Brady Harbin and Josh Young gave three-minute presentations on their desires and qualifications to be a Wheatland Trustee.

Thereafter, McVay informed the members to cast their ballots for the District 2 election. During the counting of ballots, a safety video presentation was made to the membership. A ballot counting committee was formed in each of Wheatland’s locations to count the ballots. The announcement and results of the election are as follows: Josh Young received 212 votes and Brady Harbin received 145 votes. Josh Young was elected for a three-year term as a member of the Board of Trustees of Wheatland from District 2.

After the new business results were announced, Chairman Barnes called for the retirement of the colors. Commander Love and Sergeant Leis retired the colors.

Thereafter, Chairman Barnes announced that Pat Thurman was the winner of the grand prize flat-screen television.

The Chairman also asked for and found that there was no additional new business to be presented at the meeting. The Chairman, Woody Barnes, ordered that the meeting be adjourned by motion made, seconded and carried at 2:23 p.m. CDT.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. McVay, General Counsel