

# Board Meets Burchard, Approves 2025 Rates



*Team SEMO's Dannett Cooper (right) introduced Savannah Burchard, the Cooperative's new Member Services Representative. Cooper also announced the Cooperative's updated business hours, now 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This adjustment reflects SEMO Electric Cooperative's commitment to meeting the needs of its members and subscribers. By opening earlier in the morning, the Cooperative aims to accommodate those who prefer conducting face-to-face business before their workday begins. Data gathered from member interactions indicated that the demand for earlier hours far outweighed the need for availability after 4:00 p.m.*



*Robbie Gilmer (left) and Ryan Jarrett shared their experiences assisting with power restoration efforts in Georgia following Hurricane Helene. From September 27 to October 19, eight linemen from SEMO Electric Cooperative worked 16-hour days to help restore power after the unprecedented damage caused by the storm, which left over 1.15 million electric cooperative members without electricity. During the recovery effort, the team received heartfelt thank-you notes from local elementary school children, a touching reminder of the community impact of their work. In times of crisis, electric cooperatives rely on a mutual aid system, where they support one another.*

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of SEMO Electric Cooperative, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as the "Cooperative") was held on Friday, November 15, 2024, at the office of the Cooperative in Sikeston, Missouri. The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m. by President Rick Faulkner. The following Directors were present: Faulkner, James Deneke, Carl Eftink, John Bledsoe, Myron Hawes, Tim Coppage, Carla Moore, Dicky Hanor, Keith Haynes, Dennis Fowler, Field LaPlant, and Von Priggel. Directors absent: none. Also present were Sean Vanslyke, CEO/General Manager; Megan McCord, Attorney for the Cooperative; Bryan Bacon, Regional Vice President of CFC; and staff members Chris Freed, Becky Ivester, Loyd Rice, Ron Montgomery, Dannett Cooper, Brad Milam, Amanda Burnett, Savannah Burchard, Angie Byford, Robbie Gilmer, and Ryan Jarrett. A prayer of invocation was offered by Director Carl Eftink.

The Chair asked for approval of the agenda. On motion made and passed, the agenda was approved. The Board considered its consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of October 24, 2024; new membership applications; membership cancellations; initial review of Policy 424 – RUS REDLG; and initial review of Policy 101 – Policy Origin and Approval. Ron Montgomery presented the monthly safety report on cell phone use while driving. Researchers have consistently linked texting or otherwise manipulating a cellphone to increased crash risk. Some studies, but not all, have also found that talking on a cellphone increases crash risk.

Gilmer and Jarrett reported on the work they and their co-workers did recently to help restore power for an electric cooperative in Georgia following Hurricane Helene. Cooper informed the Board of the upcoming changes to the Cooperative's operating hours, now set at 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and introduced new employee Burchard.

Under old business, the Board reviewed its schedule of meetings and confirmed registrations for attendance; approved Policy 421 – Member Attendance at Board Meetings; and conducted the initial review of Policy 422 – Prepaid Electricity Service. Under new business, the Board reviewed and discussed district updates. Burnett presented the draft 2025 budget and reviewed its assumptions. Burnett also presented the 2025 electric rates, which were approved by the Board. Overall, for a residential member using 1,400 kWh per month, the increase will be about \$12.50 per month or approximately 41 cents per day. For all rate adjustments, members can visit [gosemo.com/rates](http://gosemo.com/rates). Vanslyke reviewed and planned Board meeting dates for 2025 and informed the Board of a request for a donation to the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives Political Action Committee (AMECPAC). The Board approved a \$2,500 corporate contribution.

Burnett reviewed the financial summary for October 2024, including revenue and expense analysis and budget comparisons. Compared to the budget, year-to-date revenue is down 1.71%, expenses are down 6.25%, and power costs are up 1.92%. On motion made, seconded, and passed, the Board accepted the financial report. Rice presented information regarding a Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) grant application, which would provide funding for building fiber infrastructure in certain areas near the Cooperative's service territory. After the remaining staff members exited the meeting, the Board entered Executive Session to discuss legal and personnel matters. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:39 p.m.