

## **Mercer County Commission Minutes June 5, 2024**

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m. by Chairman Gene Wolf. Present were Commissioners Liza Taylor, Travis Frey, Rick Bauman, Auditor Carmen Reed, and Dan Arens of the Hazen Star. Jamee Folk was absent. Others present during portions of the meeting were Treasurer Dawn Grannis, States Attorney Todd Schwarz, Road Superintendent Ken Miller, Tax Director/Land Use Administrator Jennifer Neumiller, Sheriff Terry Ternes, Interstate Engineer Charlie Hankins, Maintenance Supervisor Jim Albers, MCED President Beaver Brinkman, Hazen Community Development Director Buster Langowski, Vision Zero Coordinator Molly Schoen, Gwyn Bosch, Steve Guenther, Pam Guenther, Dale Jacobson. WRT Representatives included; CEO Troy Schilling, Aaron Wick, Samantha Iverson, Casey Blohm, and Beth Krause.

Pledge of allegiance was said.

Frey moved to approve the amended agenda. Bauman seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Frey moved to approve the May 15, 2024, minutes as presented. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Frey moved to approve all bills as presented. Bauman seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. The following bills were approved for payment: ADVANCED BUSINESS METHODS \$863.93; ANTELOPE CREEK TRUCKING INC. \$125,997.92; THE BEACON \$2,136.89; BEULAH JOB DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY \$1,084.33; BEULAH LUMBER CO \$70.97; BORNER, MATTHEW \$90.00; BRONSON'S MARKETPLACE \$5,844.74; LUCKYS TOWING AND REPAIR \$400.00; BUTLER MACHINERY CO \$1,808.57; CITY AIR MECHANICAL, INC. \$950.00; CITY OF BEULAH \$103.11; DAKOTA FIRE EXTINGUISHER INC. \$1,525.42; DIRECT MED \$491.59; ELECTION SYSTEMS & SOFTWARE INC. \$8,140.31; ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS INC. \$1,329.56; EMINETH PLUMBING \$1,107.00; ENERGY TECH SYSTEMS \$12,505.44; FIRESIDE OFFICE SOLUTIONS \$30.48; WEX BANK \$3,606.65; FREY, TRAVIS \$133.08; GALLS, LLC \$161.36; GOOD SOURCE SOLUTIONS \$575.00; GRINSTEINER, ALICE \$35.00; HAZEN MOTOR CO \$2,296.00; HAZEN WELDING \$224.80; AUTO VALUE \$215.05; INTERSTATE ENGINEERING INC \$4,412.50; JAY R'S AUTOBODY LLC \$6,350.00; JOHNSON, KATHY \$65.00; JONES CONTRACTORS, INC. \$4,858.00; KNUTSON, WANDA \$378.90; KRAUSE SUPER VALU \$219.27; LIGHT AND SIREN \$753.55; LIGNITE TIRE SERVICE \$4,250.08; LOMCO INC \$3,248.98; MELL, KYLE \$90.00; MERCER COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT \$2,161.04; MONTANA DAKOTA UTILITIES \$104.53; MORAST, SHILOH R. \$184.56; MULT SERVICES & CONTRACTING \$500.00; ND ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES \$189.00; ND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASS'N \$100.00; ND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION \$11.50; ND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES \$4,689.08; NDSU AG COMMUNICATION \$25.00; NELSON INTERNATIONAL \$1,075.75; NEUBERGER OIL COMPANY \$28,093.35; NEUMILLER, JEN \$405.35; NEWMAN SIGNS INC. \$270.00; NORTHERN SAFETY CO., INC. \$222.35; OFFROAD SOFTWARE, INC. \$2,025.00; PEHL, PAM \$113.90; POSTMASTER \$68.00; POSTMASTER \$154.00; LINDE GAS & EQUIPMENT, INC. \$241.72; RECORD KEEPERS LLC \$242.70;

ROOSEVELT PLACE HOTEL \$288.90; ROTH, KENT \$9.99; ROUGHRIDER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. \$175.00; SAKAKAWEA MEDICAL CENTER \$656.33; SCHEELS \$156.98; SENGER, SHANNAN \$116.58; ST ALEXIUS MEDICAL CENTER \$1,568.00; STERICYCLE, INC. \$21.40; STRAND, CANDY \$23.95; TAYLOR, LIZA \$342.46; TESKY, LEONARD \$185.00; THE GARDEN MILL LLP \$95.16; TOMCHUK, BRYAN \$86.00; TOWNEPLACE SUITES BY MARRIOTT \$321.00; TYLER TECHNOLOGIES INC. \$7,860.00; UNIFORM CENTER \$3,185.71; VERIZON WIRELESS \$1,676.32; VOLK, GINGER R. \$83.57; WESTERN STEEL BUILDERS INC. \$175.00; WOLF, GENE \$150.00; POSTMASTER \$200.00 (CHECK #s 50444-50520) TOTAL \$254,607.66.

MCED President Beaver Brinkman gave an update on the ongoing Next Move Group's Housing and Employee/Income studies and status of the Workforce Grant. Discussed possibilities of establishing an innovation and technology center in Mercer County. Talon/Travertine continue efforts to obtain permitting for a facility in North Dakota and Packet Digital/Badland Batteries are considering the building of a potential plant within the county, which is tied to mineral deposit extraction.

Tax Director/Land Use Administrator Jennifer Neumiller presented County Zoning Case #24-05-02, Dale and Susan Jacobsen, construction of a garage 2 feet from the property line, rather than the 10 foot setback required by zoning regulations in the residential zoning district. The site is Lot 40 in Lake Sakakawea Estates Subdivision located 2 miles NW of Pick City. Property affected is Lot 38, which is currently owned by Dale and Susan Jacobsen. Frey moved to accept County Zoning Case #24-05-02 as presented. Taylor seconded. Travis, Taylor, Wolf voted aye. Bauman voted nay. Motion carried.

Vision Zero Coordinator Molly Schoen presented information on Vision Zero Communities and the educational opportunities that are available.

Recessed at 10:09 a.m.

Reconvened at 10:12 a.m.

Interstate Engineer Charlie Hankins gave a review and recommendation on the Chip Seal bid letting. Due to a bid calculation error, it was recommended that all bids be rejected and this project be re-bid. Bauman moved to reject all Chip Seal bids received. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. No further action was taken.

Bauman presented the following proposals:

1. Terracon proposal for gravel site boring at two sites within Mercer County, one being north of Zap and the other is south of Beulah. Bauman moved to approve Terracon boring services proposal at a cost of \$6,700. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

2. County Road 18 culvert replacement project for \$12,901.83 by Jones Construction. Bauman moved to approve the County Road 18 culvert replacement project for \$12,901.83. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

3. Lake Shore Estates culvert replacement for \$12,746.05 by Jones Construction. Bauman moved to approve the Lake Shore Estates culvert replacement for \$12,746.05 by Jones Construction. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.
4. County Road 20 west, spread and compact aggregate project for \$31,029.67 by Jones Construction. This would fix soft spots in the roadway. No action taken
5. Sakakawea Estates Road repair project of installing a turn-a-round at end of road for \$70,887 by Jones Construction. No action taken.

Hankins agreed to check out the railroad east of Hazen due to rough roadway. Miller discussed the county ditch mowing schedule and it was agreed to begin mowing on July 15, 2024, starting with paved roadways. Road patching by Bechtold Paving will begin third week of June.

10:53 a.m. Equalization of Assessments Hearing was conducted by Tax Director/Land Use Administrator Jennifer Neumiller. Neumiller presented the following information to explain how values were assessed: This year sales prices were higher than our residential assessments resulting in the need for the values to be increased approximately 4 percent. There is no commercial increase this year due to sales. Ag land decreased an average of 3 percent. Vanguard assessors updated to a new 2020 pricing manual. Mercer County was one of the last counties to get updated with new prices. The original cost manual was from 2008. Most increases were to detached garages. Most properties saw slight increases while a few, not many saw decreases. Those properties with increases of more than 10 percent were mailed notices. Approximately \$7,000,000 in new construction was valued within the county, this number does include stuff that was missed over the years and some loss of exemptions. Mercer County currently has a total of 288 homestead credits and 65 veteran's credits. The total taxable value for the county went up 3.5 percent, resulting in a final taxable value of \$52,064,403. When asked for questions from the audience, Steve and Pam Guenther who live west of Pick City questioned why their overall value had gone up 45 percent. Neumiller explained that a partial assessment was done on their house and now the full assessment has been added to the overall value. No further comments or questions were heard from the public in attendance. Bauman moved to approve the Mercer County Equalization of Assessments, with the final taxable value of \$52,064,403 as presented. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

At 10:59 a.m. Chairman Wolf recused himself and turned meeting over to Vice Chairman Bauman, due to his WRT Board Membership. States Attorney Todd Schwarz described his concerns regarding the WRT billing dispute. Schwarz listed his frustrations with the new phone system installation and stated that this installation had interfered with the 911 system. WRT CEO Troy Schilling confirmed that if the WRT phone installation had been part of this 911 phone disruption, they would have been notified immediately by the state 911 database providers. Schwarz and Schilling agreed to meet in States Attorney's Office to review phone concerns after the conclusion of this meeting. No action was taken.

**RESOLUTION APPROVING AGREEMENT WITH THE COUNTY OF MERCER AND LEWIS & CLARK REGIONAL COUNCIL FOR PURPOSE OF REGIONAL LIVESTOCK PLANNING GRANT ACCEPTANCE**

WHEREAS the County of Mercer on behalf of its County Commission desires to enter into Agreement with the Lewis & Clark Regional Council to apply for a Regional Livestock Planning Grant which the County is eligible. The Agreement further provides the County with identification of suitable locations for rural economic development, including animal feeding operations, agricultural processing and storage facilities and other agriculture related development. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the County Board of Mercer, North Dakota as follows:

1. Following completion of the site analysis process the county will review county and township zoning and land use regulations. The county may update any zoning or land use regulations based on recommendations of site analysis process. Additionally, county will provide information to townships of said county so they may review and update zoning and land use regulations as they see fit. Frey moved to approve the Regional Livestock Planning Grant Resolution. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Bauman moved to approve the Hook, Line & Sinker On Sale Beer License #460 renewal. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Frey moved to approve a Risk Management Fund where premium refund monies could be used specifically for risk management. Bauman seconded. Folk was present via cell phone. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Frey moved to approve a wage increase for Alice Grinsteinner of \$10,000 for additional EM duties, which makes her annual salary \$75,000. To be effective upon acceptance of the additional EM duties. Taylor seconded. Frey, Taylor and Bauman voted aye. Wolf voted nay. Motion carried.

Bauman moved to accept Ron Crowley's letter of resignation, effective October 23, 2024. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Portfolio updates were given.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:59 a.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 20, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in the boardroom of the Mercer County Government Center in Stanton, North Dakota. The meetings can be viewed online at [www.mercercounty.com](http://www.mercercounty.com)

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gene Wolf, Chairman

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Carmen Reed, Auditor