

Mercer County Commission Minutes June 20, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Gene Wolf. Present were Commissioners Jamee Folk, Liza Taylor, Travis Frey, Rick Bauman, Auditor Carmen Reed, and Dan Arens of the Hazen Star. Others present during portions of the meeting were Treasurer Dawn Grannis, States Attorney Todd Schwarz, , Deputy Tax Director Jenny Dettmann, Sheriff Terry Ternes, Interstate Engineer Charlie Hankins, MCED President Beaver Brinkman, Beulah Park District Director Sonja Dutchuk, Solem Law Office Attorney Jennifer Gooss, HR Director Alice Grinsteinner, Home & Land Company Realtor Vickie Steiner, Carrie Miller, Ken Miller, Paul Sayler, Jay Seibel, Scott Kudrna, Casey Voigt, Clay Schulz, Bruce Kobilawsky, Susie Kobilawsky, Monica Isaak, DeAnn Braun, Jerald Isaak, Kevin Hafner, Bill Galvin, Sharon Moon, Carol Galvin, Rick Thompson, James Swenson, Darlene Swenson, Ralph Bieber, Erik Lindborg, Rita Loren, Charlene Bauman, and Delon Bauman.

Pledge of allegiance was said.

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

Frey moved to approve the June 5, 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: AICHELE, TIMOTHY \$41.54; ARMOR INTERACTIVE \$2,461.00; THE BEACON \$7.95; BEULAH LUMBER CO \$28.90; BOSCH, GWYN \$38.86; CITY OF BEULAH \$60.90; CITY OF GOLDEN VALLEY \$29.75; CITY OF STANTON \$7,459.69; COBBLESTONE INN & SUITES \$288.90; CORE FACILITY SOLUTIONS \$74,902.00; WESTERN PLAINS PUBLIC HEALTH \$4,217.42; D & E SUPPLY CO INC. \$2,272.85; DIRT PRO SERVICES \$165.00; ELECTION SYSTEMS & SOFTWARE INC \$318.55; FARMERS UNION OIL CO \$3,433.00; FARMERS UNION SERVICE ASSOCIATION \$940.00; FIRESIDE OFFICE SOLUTIONS \$865.30; FOLK, JAMEE \$312.98; FREEDOM TRUCK CENTER \$97.20; FREY, TRAVIS \$100.92; HANSON, DONNA \$37.52; HAZEN HEALTH PHARMACY \$94.97; HAZEN HARDWARE HANK \$290.83; HAZEN MOTOR CO. \$14.00; HAZEN STAR \$150.00; HOFFNER, GORDON \$56.28; HOFFNER, KAREN \$28.14; INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT \$5,621.74; INTERSTATE ENGINEERING INC \$23,100.00; ISTATE TRUCK CENTER \$1,580.91; J & M HARDWARE INC. \$125.74; J-S SANITATION \$82.00; JOHNSON CONTROLS \$3,175.00; KARGES, CATHERINE \$22.11; KIESLER POLICE SUPPLY \$241.96; KRAUSE SUPER VALU \$37.94; LAKE VIEW SERVICE, LLC \$15,390.00; LANGOWSKI, GONTRAN \$284.75; LANGUAGE LINE SERVICES \$582.84; MARQUART, ANDREW \$720.00; RELX INC., DBA LEXISNEXIS \$443.96; MCLAUGHLIN, JENETTE \$17.42; MCLEAN COUNTY SHERIFF \$3,675.00; MERCER COUNTY LANDFILL \$507.15; MERCER COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT \$587.84; MIDCONTINENT COMMUNICATIONS \$176.54; BRODKORB, VICKIE \$1,073.99; NAPA \$867.54; NDCHCA \$100.00; ND ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES \$138.16; OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL \$1,835.00; ND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION \$4,048.72; ND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION \$11.50; NDEMA \$50.00; NDSWRA \$135.00; NELSON INTERNATIONAL \$4,586.36; QUADIANT FINANCIAL USA, INC. \$3,000.00; NEUBERGER OIL COMPANY

\$2,340.24; NORTHWEST TIRE AUTO SERVICE INC. \$292.96; PFLIGER, METTA \$188.53; PHARMCHEM, INC. \$433.65; POITRAS, RACHEL \$149.00; PUMP SYSTEMS INC. \$51.53; QUILL OFFICE PRODUCTS \$185.93; ROUGHRIDER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. \$713.24; RUD PROPANE LLP \$3,391.98; RUSH, ZEELY \$18.76; S & M LAWN SERVICE \$405.00; SEIFERT, BRADLEY Q \$329.90; SOUTHWEST WATER AUTHORITY \$58.57; STERICYCLE, INC. \$21.40; THE HUB CONVENIENCE STORES, INC. \$216.77; VERIZON WIRELESS \$491.10; VOLK, GINGER R. \$153.75; WEST RIVER TELECOMMUNICATIONS \$495.00; ND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION \$11.50; WEST RIVER TELECOMMUNICATIONS \$3,060.52; ND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION \$11.50; WEST RIVER TELECOMMUNICATIONS \$15,252.39 (CHECK #s 50542-50620) TOTAL \$199,206.84.

Sonja Dutchuk with the Beulah Park District discussed a potential Walking Path Project for the Beulah Bay Area, that would be separate from the roadway, but within the county owned right-of-way. Dutchuk requested approval from the commission to use this county owned right-of-way to move forward with this project. Bauman moved to approve the usage of the county right-of-way for the Beulah Bay walking path. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

MCED President Beaver Brinkman requested the commission to consider approving three (3) mills for the MCED for funding a countywide JDA. These three (3) mills will provide \$100,000 to be split between the Hazen, Beulah, and Stanton JDAs and \$50,000 for the MCED. The goal is to have all four entities work together to create economic development within Mercer County, along with all the cities. Brinkman will provide a written formal request next week to the Auditor's office. No action was taken by the board.

At 9:50 a.m. Frey recused himself.

Deputy Tax Director Jenny Dettmann and Interstate Engineer Travis Frey presented County Zoning Case #24-05-01, Bruce Kobilansky, rezone from Ag to Commercial and a Conditional Use Permit for a proposed RV park and storage unit. States Attorney Todd Schwarz stated that legally the Water Board needs to approve this case before commission can make a decision. Folk moved to postpone commission decision until the Water Resource Board's approval of County Zoning Case #24-05-01. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Recessed at 10:08 a.m.

Reconvened at 10:14 a.m.

Bauman moved to approve the County Township Mileage Certification as presented. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Interstate Engineer Charlie Hankins gave an update on the Airport Road and the County Road 20 bridge projects. County Road 20 bridge project has a three-to-four-week actual worktime and estimated bridge to be back in use by Fall 2024. Auditor Carmen Reed and Treasurer Dawn Grannis asked that the commissioners discuss projects they want included in the preliminary 2025 budget at the July 3, 2024, meeting. This will ensure that the entire board is aware of all items included in the preliminary 2025 budget above and beyond the department head requests. This preliminary budget information along with copies of all

departmental budgets will be given to the commission at the July 17, 2024, meeting in preparation for the budget hearings that will take place on Monday, July 22, 2024, starting at 9 a.m.

HR Director Alice Grinsteinner discussed 2025 budget items. Commission requested to include full coverage on Health, Vision, and Dental for preliminary budget. Grinsteinner discussed the commissioner job description and five (5) new updated policies, that she had mailed out to the commissioners before the meeting. New policies included, exempt employee pay deductions, mileage reimbursement, and a commission conflict policy. Wage study and pay raises across the board were discussed. Grinsteinner will get the average COLA wage increase calculated and sent out to all department heads for budgeting purposes. Grinsteinner is suggesting county switch to the NDPers Life Insurance plan that will provide \$12,000 life insurance for all county employees with the county paying \$0.27 per employee per month. Additional insurance can be purchased by the employee at the employee's expense. Presently, employees that choose to take Guardian Life insurance pay \$2.18/month for a single plan. Due to time constraints, the HR update was temporarily suspended.

Sakakawea Estates Association President Rick Thompson and Bill Galvin discussed potential road improvements and maintenance options for the Sakakawea Estates Road that would keep the road as gravel, improve drainage and install a cul-de-sac for a better turn around at the east end of this road and would not need a special assessment district established. Estimated costs are around \$100,000. Thomson and Galvin have been and will continue working with Bauman and Interstate Engineer Charlie Hankins in gathering final details for a commission decision on this road improvement project.

11:26 a.m. Ken Miller appealed his termination from the County Road Superintendent position by Commissioner Bauman and HR Director Alice Grinsteinner on June 10, 2024. Upon completion of Miller's appeal, State's Attorney Todd Schwarz stated that appointed department heads are supervised by an individual portfolio holder designated by the commission. This commission with the appeal has to decide to either approve or overturn the decision of this portfolio holder. The commission can also gather additional information if requested. Frey moved to reinstate Ken Miller as County Road Superintendent. Taylor seconded. Frey and Taylor voted aye. Bauman, Folk, and Wolf voted nay. Motion failed.

Recessed at 11:57 a.m.

Reconvened at 12:02 p.m.

Solem Law Attorney Jennifer Gooss presented and discussed an updated Pebble Beach Trail Variance Approval and Agreement with the board. Frey moved to approve the Variance Approval document as presented. Folk seconded. Frey and Folk voted aye. Taylor, Bauman, and Wolf voted nay. Motion failed. Due to commission road safety concerns regarding these variance requests, this item was put on the July 3, 2024, meeting agenda at 10:30 a.m.

State's Attorney Todd Schwarz stated the motion of reinstating Mr. Miller was denied and as it stands the termination of Mr. Miller stands.

HR update resumed. Grinsteinner requested an EM wage increase from \$10,000 to \$20,000 per year, which will make her HR/EM annual salary \$85,000. Frey moved to offer Alice Grinsteinner the combined HR/EM position at an annual salary of \$85,000, effective upon acceptance of the position. Taylor seconded. Frey, Taylor, Folk, and Bauman voted aye. Wolf voted nay. Motion carried. Taylor left meeting at 12:41 p.m.

Grinsteinner discussed the issuing of credit cards to department heads and she is working on the county credit card policy and an employee cardholder agreement. Update was given on status of open and filled positions within the county. Landfill Director Candy Strand is requesting to add a temporary worker position. Folk moved to approve adding a temporary worker position at the Landfill. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Requested temporary wage increases for Elroy Opp, as Interim Road Superintendent & Dennis Olheiser as Interim Assistant Road Superintendent until the Mercer County Road Superintendent position if permanently filled. Folk moved to approve a temporary \$3 per hour raise to both Elroy Opp as interim road superintendent and Dennis Olheiser as interim assistant road superintendent until the road superintendent position is filled, effective today. Bauman seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Grinsteinner and Schwarz requested commission to consider taking July 5th as a holiday. No action was taken.

Frey moved to pay the WRT \$9,450 installation charge that has been completed. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Bauman moved to approve the May Sheriff's fees of \$73,524.13. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Bauman moved to approve the Dakota Walleye Classic Beer/Liquor License #461. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Folk moved to re-appoint Martha Anderson to the McLean-Mercer Regional Library Board. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Folk moved to re-appoint Travis Frey to the McLean-Mercer Regional Library Board. Bauman seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Portfolio updates were given.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 1:19 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 3, 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

Approved: _____
Gene Wolf, Chairman

Attest: _____
Carmen Reed, Auditor