

**Mercer County Commission Minutes
March 3, 2026**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Rick Bauman. Present were Commissioners Jamee Folk, Gene Wolf, Casey Voigt, Auditor Carmen Reed, and Dan Arens of the Hazen Star. Others present during the meeting were Sheriff Terry Ternes, States Attorney Todd Schwarz, Deputy Auditor Mark Erhardt, HR/EM Director Alice Grinsteinner, Treasurer Dawn Grannis, Tax Director/Land Use Administrator Jennifer Neumiller, Building Maintenance Supervisor Jim Albers, Assistant Highway Superintendent Dennis Olheiser, Highway Department Administrative Assistant Rachel Grimm, Moore Engineer Jim Jackson, Next Era Representatives Melissa Hochmuth, Kristy Smith, and Stephanie Morales, Crowley Fleck Representative Casey Furey, ND State Representative Bill Tveit, Travis Jordan, Travis Frey, Jesse Krieger, Chris Renner, Joe Grannis, Stacie Kruckenberg, Kimbell Banks, Signe Snortland, Linette Irwin, Patrice Tunge, Benda Cook, Lori Hammer, Carla Eng, Curtis Eng, Cody Didier, Robert Berger, Chansey Jewell, Brandon Windhorst, Sheila Roth, Wes Klein, Mike Berg, Jeffery Foster, Darlene Foster, Brian Schier, Dwight Berger, Chris Hollen, R. Watterud, David Lundstrom, Liz Lundstrom, Shannon Sailer, Korrine Sailer, Retha Matten, Duane Miller, and Darwin Knutson.

Pledge of allegiance was said.

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

Folk moved to approve the February 18, 2026 regular meeting minutes as presented. Voigt seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Voigt moved to approve the February 25, 2026 special meeting minutes as presented. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Bauman called for nominations for vacant commission seat. Voigt moved to appoint Travis Jordan. No second heard, motion died. Folk moved to appoint Chris Renner. No second heard, motion died. Wolf moved to appoint Steven Guenthner. Voigt seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Guenthner took the oath of office.

HR/EM Director Alice Grinsteinner presented the Paylocity proposal to update the county payroll and HR processes.

Folk moved to approve the bills as presented. Voigt seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. The following bills were approved for payment: INTERSTATE ENGINEERING INC \$3,678.92; LINDE GAS & EQUIPMENT, INC. \$589.24; ARMOR INTERACTIVE \$6,268.11; ASKIM, CRAIG \$313.20; BAKER, ADAM \$247.97; BERG, MICHAEL \$33.35; BEULAH ND HARDWARE \$46.97; BISMARCK HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER \$545.00; BUTLER MACHINERY CO \$11,236.51; C & L BACKHOE SERVICE \$3,500.00; CENTER MACHINE INC \$345.00; CHARM-TEX, INC. \$4.90; CITY AIR MECHANICAL, INC. \$8,495.00; CITY OF GOLDEN VALLEY \$29.75; D & E SUPPLY CO INC \$1,020.43; FARMERS UNION OIL CO \$709.50; FIRESIDE OFFICE SOLUTIONS \$731.64; FLEMMER, RYAN \$111.65; GALLS \$213.43; HAZEN HARDWARE HANK \$35.45; HAZEN HEALTH PHARMACY \$145.87; HAZEN STAR \$201.00; HAZEN WELDING \$55.00; INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT \$7,589.32; J2 Studio \$925.00; JOHNSEN TRAILER SALES, INC. \$566.34; LARA, MICHEAL \$90.00; MIDCONTINENT COMMUNICATIONS \$192.80; NAPA \$428.36; ND WEED CONTROL ASSOCIATION \$285.00; NEUBERGER OIL COMPANY \$5,082.62; NORTH DAKOTA ENVELOPE COMPANY \$861.30;

NORTHWEST TIRE AUTO SERVICE INC. \$3,552.01; OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL \$1,385.00; PFLIGER, METTA \$187.78; PHARMCHEM, INC. \$287.55; POSTMASTER \$171.60; QUADIENT FINANCE USA, INC. \$2,000.00; REDWOOD TOXICOLOGY LABORATORY \$51.12; ROUGHRIDER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC \$1,197.37; RUD PROPANE LLP \$2,014.48; SAILER, SHANNON \$29.00; SAKAKAWEA MEDICAL CENTER \$152.18; SCHEID, RICHARD \$13.05; SCHLENDER, SCOTT \$26.10; SEIFERT, BRADLEY Q \$353.10; SOUTHWEST WATER AUTHORITY \$57.97; STERICYCLE, INC. \$22.90; THE HUB CONVENIENCE STORES, INC. \$10.78; TYLER TECHNOLOGIES \$2,250.00; VANGUARD APPRAISALS INC. \$38,605.90; VERIZON WIRELESS \$492.37; WEST RIVER TELECOMMUNICATIONS \$2,459.89; CITY OF BEULAH \$115.96; GRINSTEINER, ALICE \$162.55. (TOTAL: \$236,477.35)

Darwin Knutson information regarding Mercer County Statutory requirements.

Tax Director/Land Use Administrator Jennifer Neumiller presented the following:

- SRF Consulting Senior Director Scott Harmstead via phone explained the SRF Consulting MOU Proposal. Voigt moved to approve the SRF Consulting MOU Proposal as presented. Wolf seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.
- Wolf moved to close the regular meeting and open the Public Hearing for the Second Reading to Amend Mercer County Zoning Ordinance. Guenther seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Neumiller conducted the 2nd Reading to Amend Mercer County Zoning Ordinance: Chapter 1, Section VIII-Definitions: Definitions added for Data Center & Digital Asset Mining, Chapter 3, Section IV-Industrial District: Data Center listed as a conditional use, and Chapter 7, Section 1-Statutory Authorization -Requires NDCC Chapters update. Voigt moved to close the Public Hearing and open the regular meeting. Wolf seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Recessed at 9:45 a.m.

Reconvened at 10:06 a.m.

The Public Hearing for the 3rd Reading to Amend Mercer County Zoning Ordinance: Chapter 1, Section VIII-Definitions: Definitions added for Data Center & Digital Asset Mining, Chapter 3, Section IV-Industrial District: Data Center listed as a conditional use, and Chapter 7, Section 1-Statutory Authorization -Requires NDCC Chapters update was set for the next regular meeting on March 18, 2026 at 9:45 a.m.

Michael Berg, Wes Klein and ND State Representative Bill Tveit were among the many Mercer County residents who conveyed their concerns regarding the Nextera Energy Resources (NEER) and Basin Electric Cooperative purposed data center project. NEER Project Director Stephanie Morales also spoke. The residents asked the Board to put a moratorium in place until zoning ordinances and public policy were better established to ensure that local control could be maintained. States Attorney Todd Schwarz was present and part of this discussion. Folk moved to put a 1-year moratorium on data centers being permitted. Guenther seconded. Folk, Guenther, and Voigt voted aye. Wolf and Bauman voted nay. Motion carried.

Recessed at 11:19 a.m.

Reconvened at 11:24 a.m.

Building Maintenance Supervisor Jim Albers and Deputy Auditor Mark Erhardt presented an update on the status of the recently purchased Beulah Building (Roughrider RV Property) and asked for direction and budgetary restraints.

2025 Budget Amendments were presented by Auditor Reed. Wolf moved to approve the following 2025 Budget Amendments: General Fund Miscellaneous -\$201,718.55 over

appropriations due to Commission approved expenditures. Commission Board Member Bauman -\$785.99 due to 2024 reimbursements paid in 2025, Clerk Of Court -\$7,430.81, due to uncontrolled legal court fees, Recorder -\$7,132.67, due to approved wage bump up, Sheriff Temporary Deputy -\$37,640.64 due to temporary deputy work, and NDSU Extension Agent -\$15,122.21 due to NDSU's new budget year starts in July and agents got wage increases. Voigt seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Portfolio Updates were given.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:44 a.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the boardroom of the Mercer County Government Center in Stanton, North Dakota. Meetings can be viewed live at <https://www.youtube.com/@MercerCo>

Approved: _____
Rick Bauman, Chairman

Attest: _____
Carmen Reed, Auditor