

**Mercer County Commission Minutes
May 6, 2026**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Rick Bauman.

Present were Commissioners Jamee Folk, Steve Guenther, Gene Wolf, Casey Voigt, Auditor Carmen Reed, and Dan Arens of the Hazen Star. Others present during the meeting were Sheriff Terry Ternes, Treasurer Dawn Grannis, Tax Director/Land Use Administrator Jennifer Neumiller, HR/EM Director Alice Grinsteiner, Assistant Highway Superintendent Dennis Olheiser, Deputy Auditor Mark Erhardt, Moore Engineer Tom Weigel, Mercer County Planning & Zoning Board Chairman Mike Eslinger, NextEra Representatives Melissa Hochmuth, Stephanie Morales, Melissa Brooks, Kristy Smith, Basin Electric Power Cooperative Representatives John (Jack) Schuh, Erin Laverdure, Western Dakota Energy Association Executive Director Alison Ritter, Joe Grannis, Kevin Irwin, Linette Irwin, Lori Hammer, Wayne Windhorst, Brandon Windhorst, Michael Berg, Weston Berg, Duane Miller, Glenda Miller, Traci Knopik, Dallas Maas, Brenda Cook, John Phillips, Steve Hintz, District 33 Representatives Kimbell Banks, Signe Snortland, Sheila Roth, Jesse Schiferl, Patricia Tunge, Cody Didier, Kevin Hafner, Liz Lundstrom, Nancy Evanoff, ND Department of Water Resources, Reice Haase, ND Department of Environmental Quality Representatives Dave Glatt, Marty Haroldson, and Jim Semerad.

Pledge of allegiance was said.

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

Folk moved to approve the April 15, 2026 regular meeting minutes as presented. Voigt seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Voigt moved to approve the April 28, 2026 special meeting minutes as presented. Guenther seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

HR/EM Director Alice Grinsteiner presented the Nationwide 5ForLife Plan that provides additional retirement options for qualified employees. Voigt moved to approve the Plan as presented. Guenther seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Grinsteiner presented information regarding the total burn ban verses the burn ban restrictions based off the North Dakota Fire Danger Rating map. Folk moved to lift the total burn ban and approve the burn ban based off the North Dakota Fire Danger Rating map as presented. Voigt seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Landfill Director Candy Strand has requested approval of hiring parttime help. Folk moved to approve the landfill to hire a parttime person to help with picking up blowing garbage. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Duane Miller presented a petition to control engine brake noise with 26 signatures and a draft engine brake ordinance for consideration. Currently, Mercer County does not have an engine brake ordinance in place. Wolf moved to have the Commission Board request the State DOT to put engine brake signs at the corner of the Cross Roads, (Hwy 200 (45th AV NW)/Hwy 200A). Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Mercer County Planning & Zoning Board Chairman Mike Eslinger gave a subcommittee update.

ND Environmental Quality Director Dave Glatt gave an overview of data center water usage and responsibilities of the state, local and data center entities.

Recessed at 10:09 a.m.

Reconvened at 10:17 a.m.

Mercer County Resident Linette Irwin gave a statement on the new data center industry coming into our county and asked the commission board the following: Do not rezone agricultural land to industrial until a full framework is in place. That includes an applicant funded analysis of environmental, social, and economic impacts of a hyperscale data center project. This study should be done by an independent contractor under contract with the county. Appropriate public hearings should occur before the analysis. Reports should be written for the public to review and public comments should be in the final document.

Moore Engineer Tom Weigel presented the 45th pavement extension project which has been awarded a \$500,000 rural infrastructure grant and has obtained \$860,000 in private funding. Total project cost is \$1,360,000. Guenther moved to approve moving forward with the design of the 45th pavement extension project conditional upon a formal agreement for the private funding. Wolf seconded. Guenther, Wolf, and Bauman voted aye. Folk and Voigt voted nay. Motion carried.

Assistant Highway Superintendent Dennis Olheiser presented information on the Walk n Roll Packer purchase of \$32,740. Voigt moved to approve the Walk n Roll Packer purchase as presented but not to exceed \$35,000. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Folk moved to approve the Hazen Golf Course Annual Liquor License as presented. Guenther seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Folk moved to approve the Hazen Winter Sports Association Gaming Site Authorization as presented. Voigt seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Folk moved to approve the Recorder March revenues of \$4,556.60 as presented. Voigt seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

No Public comments were heard.

Auditor Carmen Reed presented the Inspectors for Election Day Board and Absentee Board. Folk moved to approve Donna Hanson as Election Day Board Inspector and Fred Stern as Absentee Board Inspector. Guenther seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Tax Director/Land Use Administrator Jennifer Neumiller requested to hire a compliance officer and states she has some monies available within her current budget. Board requested more information on this new hire request.

Voigt made a statement to address concerned citizens regarding data center that explained the processes of the commission and the planning and zoning boards. Portfolio updates were given.

Folk moved to approve the bills as presented. Guenther seconded. All voted aye.

Motion carried. The following bills were approved for payment: ADVANCED BUSINESS METHODS \$1,774.10; AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES \$1,040.00; ASKIM, CRAIG \$446.08; AUTO VALUE \$33.98; BEULAH JOB DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY \$1,196.67; BEULAH LUMBER CO \$72.99; BEULAH ND HARDWARE \$278.40; BRONSON'S MARKETPLACE \$7,235.54; BUTLER MACHINERY CO \$12,301.51; CAPITAL I INDUSTRIES INC. \$3,803.89; CHARM-TEX, INC. \$1,120.22; COLONIAL RESEARCH CHEMICAL CORP. \$1,186.37; D & E SUPPLY CO INC \$952.83; DAKOTA AWARDS, INC. \$26.99; DIRECT MED \$17.82; DONOVAN & KAFFAR PLLP \$427.50; ELECTION SYSTEMS & SOFTWARE INC \$5,433.79; ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS INC \$1,554.06; EVERSPRING INN AND SUITES \$220.00; FARM & HOME PUBLISHERS, LTD.

\$150.00; FARMERS UNION SERVICE ASSOC. LTD \$897.00; HAZEN HARDWARE HANK \$230.92; HAZEN HEALTH PHARMACY \$215.09; HAZEN WELDING \$159.55; ISTATE TRUCK CENTER \$282.43; J-S SANITATION \$50.00; KRAUSE SUPER VALU \$25.73; LEXIS NEXIS MATTHEW BENDER \$278.86; LINDE GAS & EQUIPMENT, INC. \$621.69; LUCKYS TOWING AND REPAIR \$550.00; MATTHEIS, BARBARA \$126.18; MERCER COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT \$6,892.13; MERCER COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT \$136.10; MIDCONTINENT COMMUNICATIONS \$149.53; MIDWEST DOORS OF DICKINSON, INC \$226.00; MONTANA DAKOTA UTILITIES \$115.15; MOORE ENGINEERING \$50,659.78; MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS \$31,820.00; MUL T SERVICES & CONTRACTING \$600.00; NAPA \$2,055.71; ND ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES \$11,031.18; ND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION \$2,703.17; NDSU AG COMMUNICATION \$25.00; NEUBERGER OIL COMPANY \$20,610.87; NEUMILLER, JEN \$180.53; North Central International, LLC \$439.16; PFLIGER, METTA \$60.00; POSTMASTER_66229 \$78.00; POSTMASTER_66235 \$53.00; PROSOURCE SPECIALTIES LLC \$2,055.00; RDO EQUIPMENT CO. \$239.24; ROOF RESCUE \$8,889.93; ROUGHRIDER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE,INC \$175.00; RUD PROPANE LLP \$7,708.68; S & M LAWN SERVICE \$405.00; SOUTHWEST WATER AUTHORITY \$57.97; STERICYCLE, INC. \$24.50; T-MOBILE USA, INC \$87.34; THE HUB CONVENIENCE STORES, INC. \$108.19; TOMCHUK, BRYAN \$110.00; TYLER TECHNOLOGIES \$180.00; UNIFORM CENTER \$1,020.90; VERIZON WIRELESS \$618.63; WEST RIVER EQUIPMENT \$254.75; WEST RIVER TELECOMMUNICATIONS \$5,454.66; WEX BANK \$68.25; WORKFORCE SAFETY & INSURANCE \$250.00; CITY OF BEULAH \$123.61; ESLINGER, MIKE \$408.90; GRINSTEINER, ALICE \$883.20; Peters, Paula \$549.60; RENNER, CHRIS \$421.55. (TOTAL: \$200,640.40)

Wolf moved to raise the County Road Department spending limit to \$10,000. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:32 a.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, 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