

Mercer County Commission Minutes August 16, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Travis Frey. Present were Commissioners Jamee Folk, Gene Wolf, Liza Taylor, Auditor Carmen Reed, and Dan Arens of the Hazen Star. Rick Bauman was absent. Others present during portions of the meeting were Hazen Community Development Director Buster Langowski, Beulah City Economic Development Director Beaver Brinkman, NextEra Representatives Clay Cameron, Tony Reiss, Mike Knuth, Sara Montone, and Wayne Bertsch, State's Attorney Todd Schwarz, Chief Deputy Mark Schmitt, Ashley Miller, Darwin Knutson, and Marvin Schwehr.

Frey requested to add the following items to the agenda under other items; Social Services Building update, storm follow-up regarding the tree issue, reassignment of emergency management and human resources positions, and Vanguard discussion. Folk made motion to approve the amended agenda. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion passed.

Wolf made a motion to accept the August 2, 2023, minutes as presented. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Wolf made motion to accept the August 9, 2023, minutes as presented. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Folk made a motion to approve bills as presented. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. The following bills were approved for payment. ACTION MOTOR SPORTS \$550.53; ARMOR INTERACTIVE \$1,881.00; ASKIM, CRAIG \$336.62; THE BEACON \$713.71; BI, INCORPORATED \$15.25; BOSCH, GWYN \$33.00; BUTLER MACHINERY CO \$1,777.23; CITY OF BEULAH \$96.94; CITY OF GOLDEN VALLEY \$29.75; CITY OF STANTON \$9,328.20; COLONIAL RESEARCH CHEMICAL CORP. \$507.88; WESTERN PLAINS PUBLIC HEALTH \$4,140.76; D & E SUPPLY CO INC. \$991.67; DAKOTA FIRE EXTINGUISHER INC. \$488.40; DIRT PRO SERVICES \$165.00; EIDE FORD LINCOLN \$252.93; ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS INC. \$1,200.00; FARMERS UNION OIL CO. \$4,306.99; FARMERS UNION OIL CO. \$1,917.66; FIRE EXTINGUISHING SYSTEMS INC. \$349.90; WEX BANK \$2,716.69; FLOOD, GARY \$10.50; FREY, TRAVIS \$158.90; GALLS, LLC \$22.68; HAZEN HEALTH PHARMACY \$87.52; HAZEN MOTOR CO. \$1,103.70; HAZEN STAR \$478.60; HEART RIVER STABLES \$3,190.00; AUTO VALUE \$889.11; INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT \$5,487.34; J & M HARDWARE, INC. \$29.52; JARRARD, SHEREE \$89.00; KIM'S APPLIANCE SERVICE, INC. \$487.15; LANGOWSKI, GONTRAN \$66.00; LANGUAGE LINE SERVICES \$180.00; RELX INC. DBA LEXISNEXIS \$199.00; MERCER COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT \$633.43; MIDCONTINENT COMMUNICATIONS \$170.24; NAPA \$1,766.84; WESTERN DAKOTA ENERGY ASSOCIATION \$500.00; NDCEL \$50.00; ND ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES 911 \$859.67; OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL \$1,665.00; ND DEPT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY \$1,500.00; ND DEPT OF HUMAN SERVICES \$514.23; NDSU \$150.00; NDSU EXTENSION SERVICE \$16,390.85; NEUBERGER OIL COMPANY \$5,656.15; NORTHWEST TIRE AUTO SERVICE INC \$547.96; PAT MCCARTHY PRODUCTIONS, INC. \$450.00; PFLIGER, METTA \$277.21; PHARMCHEM, INC. \$270.55; POSTMASTER \$478.00; LINDE GAS & EQUIPMENT, INC. \$211.70; ROUGHRIDER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. \$812.66; SAKAKAWEA

MEDICAL CENTER \$20.48; SCHEELS \$119.92; SCUBA ONE INC. \$2,308.00; SEIFERT, BRADLEY Q. \$180.64; SOUTHWEST WATER AUTHORITY \$59.21; STAPLES CREDIT PLAN \$729.52; STERICYCLE, INC. \$20.00; STRAND, CANDY \$8.50; TAYLOR, LIZA \$50.00; THE HUB CONVENIENCE STORES, INC. \$125.29; TRUENORTH STEEL \$2,409.30; UNIFORM CENTER \$1,135.34; VERIZON WIRELESS \$41.88; WEST MARINE PRO \$37.44; WEST RIVER TELECOMMUNICATIONS \$3,498.86; MOUNTAIN PLAINS YOUTH SERVICE \$4,000.00. (TOTAL \$91,928.00)

Hazen Community Development Executive Director Buster Langowski, Beulah City Economic Development Director Beaver Brinkman and Commission Chairman Frey discussed economic development possibilities that would benefit the county as a whole, not just limited to the cities. Looking at requesting county to mill to support this program, due to recently losing other sources that have been used for financial support.

NextEra Resources Project Developer Clay Cameron updated the commission on the transmission line that will be coming through Mercer County as part of the Oliver Four Winds Project. Presently working with Cyndi Zueger and the Planning and Zoning Board for a conditional use permit.

Recessed at 9:53 a.m.

Reconvened at 10:00 a.m.

Darwin Knutson, Mercer County resident discussed his concerns as a taxpayer regarding budget spending.

Folk made a motion to accept the Recorder's June fees of \$7,568 and August fees of \$4,889.95. Taylor seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried. Wolf made a motion to accept the updated in-state travel reimbursement rates for meals that went into effect as of August 1, 2023. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Discussed the August 1, 2023 severe weather that caused a lot of tree damage to lake cabin sites and possible ways county resources may be used to aid in clean up.

The purchaser of the Social Services building has indicated that he will be in to pay and take ownership the week of August 24, 2023.

Vanguard was discussed and tabled to the September 6, 2023 meeting.

Jon Schields' bridge located northwest of Golden Valley was discussed with State's Attorney Todd Schwarz, who will review the contract. This item was tabled to the September 6, 2023 meeting.

Taylor made a motion to accept the Tyler financial software contract. Wolf seconded. Tyler financial software was discussed with State's Attorney Schwarz, who will review the contract. Board will wait until contract is reviewed. Wolf made motion to state "after the State's Attorney's final approval." Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Amended motion carried. Requested approval of main motion to approve with amendment as stated. Wolf made a motion to table the main motion until the next meeting. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Wolf made motion to accept the Mercer County Sheriff's Coroner Memorandum of Understanding as presented. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Taylor made motion to accept the Mercer County Sheriff's Medical Director Memorandum of Understanding as presented. Wolf seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Board discussed the 2024 budget and received copies of all department head original budget request documents. Taylor made a motion to hold the public hearing for the budget on Tuesday, September 12, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. here in the boardroom of the Mercer County Government Center in Stanton. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Portfolio updates were given.

Wolf made a motion to reassign the emergency management position to the Sheriff's department. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Board discussed HR position.

Auditor requested to have HR representative present during executive session.

Wolf made a motion to deny the auditor's request for an HR representative during the executive session. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Chairman Frey called for a motion to enter into executive session for consultation with the State's Attorney regarding ongoing legal matters. Wolf made a motion to close our regular meeting and go into executive session for consultation with the State's Attorney for ongoing legal matters. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Executive session commenced 11:25 a.m. and was attended by the Board of Commission, State's Attorney and Auditor.

Executive session adjourned at 1:12 p.m.

Chairman Frey stated that the commission sought legal advice from the State's Attorney on pending claims and grievances filed against the county. Board will be taking no action at this time during the regular meeting.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 1:13 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for August 16, 2023, 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.mercercountynd.com

Approved: _____
Travis Frey, Chairman

Attest: _____
Carmen Reed, Auditor