

**Mercer County Commission Minutes
April 3, 2024**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Vice Chairman Rick Bauman. Present were Commissioners Jamee Folk, Liza Taylor, Travis Frey, Auditor Carmen Reed, and Dan Arens of the Hazen Star. Gene Wolf was absent. Others present during portions of the meeting were Treasurer Dawn Grannis, States Attorney Todd Schwarz, Mercer County HR Director Alice Grinsteinner, Road Superintendent Ken Miller, Maintenance Supervisor Jim Albers, Sheriff Terry Ternes, Landfill Director Candy Strand, Houston Engineering Sherwin Wanner, Interstate Engineer Charlie Hankins, Home and Land Company Real Estate Agent Vicky Steiner, Sundre, Sand & Gravel Representative Joe Mayer, Neuberger Oil Representative Doug Neuberger, Jennifer M. Gooss, Jeff Gooss, Ashley Hill, Joe Fouly, and Joe Grannis.

Pledge of allegiance was said.

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

Frey moved to approve the March 21, 2024, minutes as presented. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Folk moved to approve the March 21, 2024, special minutes as presented. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Folk moved to approve bills. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. The following bills were approved for payment: ADVANCED BUSINESS METHODS \$3,553.03; BAKER, ADAM \$726.09; BEULAH JOB DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY \$1,084.33; BEULAH LUMBER CO \$29.62; BOSCH, GWYN \$257.28; BRONSON'S MARKETPLACE \$6,482.81; BUTLER MACHINERY CO \$745.49; ELAN FINANCIAL SERVICES \$3,385.35; CHARM-TEX, INC. \$724.04; CITY OF BEULAH \$94.62; DOOLEY ENTERPRISES INC. \$1,022.63; ELECTION SYSTEMS & SOFTWARE INC. \$22.00; ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS INC \$1,329.56; ERHARDT, MARK \$101.84; ERVIN, JUDITH \$1,185.00; FIRESIDE OFFICE SOLUTIONS \$54.11; WEX BANK \$2,720.85; GRINSTEINNER, ALICE \$75.71; HAZEN HARDWARE HANK \$78.91; HAZEN STAR \$177.00; INTOXIMETERS INC. \$300.00; J & M HARDWARE, INC. \$30.38; KALONICK, SHEILA \$3,900.00; KRAUSE SUPER VALU \$137.73; DONOVAN & KAFFAR PLLP \$6,276.29; LIGHT AND SIREN \$287.00; LIGNITE TIRE SERVICE \$590.64; MERCER COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT \$1,635.34; MONTANA DAKOTA UTILITIES \$105.27; NDAAO \$50.00; ND SHRM STATE COUNCIL \$425.00; NDSU EXTENSION - MCLEAN COUNTY \$154.50; NELSON INTERNATIONAL \$401.47; NEUBERGER OIL COMPANY \$800.92; NIELSEN, BRADLEY \$885.26; ODP BUSINESS SOLUTIONS, INC. \$252.85; PFLIGER, METTA \$60.00; PHARMCHEM, INC. \$309.75; PCCS, INC. \$3,732.00; LINDE GAS & EQUIPMENT, INC. \$232.47; RDO TRUCK CENTERS \$80.58; RUD PROPANE LLP \$5,391.90; SAKAKAWEA MEDICAL CENTER \$200.00; SCHEELS \$319.86; SENGER, SHANNAN \$144.65; SOUTHWEST WATER AUTHORITY \$57.91; SWANSON, ARLAN A. \$550.00; TOWER COMMUNICATIONS INC \$555.00; VANGUARD APPRAISALS INC. \$1,925.00; VERIZON WIRELESS \$1,291.75; WESTLIE MOTOR COMPANY \$50,000.00;

WORKFORCE SAFETY & INSURANCE \$250.00; BEULAH LUMBER CO \$45.00; ND SECRETARY OF STATE \$46.00. (CHECK #s 50086-50139) TOTAL \$105,274.79.

Frey moved to approve the July 2023 through February 2024 Sheriff Fees of \$322,569.14. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Frey moved to add Michelle Garrett, Deputy Treasurer, to the Union State Bank checking account and the Bank of North Dakota checking account. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Treasurer Dawn Grannis presented the updated park in lieu fund total of \$117,920.96 that needed to be reimbursed from the general fund. Frey moved to set the total parks in lieu fund amount to be reimbursed at \$117,920.96. Taylor seconded All voted aye. Motion carried. Frey moved to reimburse \$117,920.96 into the parks in lieu account from the coal conversion shortfall monies. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Jeff Gooss requested \$25,000 from the parks in lieu fund for an ADA compliant wheelchair ramp structure for Beulah Bay, which has a total cost of \$65,000. Frey moved to allocate \$25,000 to the Lignite Veterans Memorial Park Foundation to be used for the purchase and installation of an ADA compliant wheelchair ramp structure for Beulah Bay. Folk seconded. Frey, Folk, and Taylor voted aye.

Bauman voted nay. Motion carried. Gooss requested an additional \$35,000 for next year's project of installing this same type of wheelchair ramp at Hazen Bay. Frey requested that \$35,000 be budgeted in the 2025 preliminary budget for the parks In lieu fund.

Houston Engineering Sherwin Wanner gave the commission an update on the April 1, 2024, landfill capping project bid and recommended Northern Improvement Company out of Bismarck, who was the low bidder for \$270,915.87. Folk moved to accept the Northern Improvement Company bid of \$270,915.87 for the landfill capping project. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

At 10:00 a.m., Frey moved to close the acceptance of bids for the Mercer County Highway department annual bid letting. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Road Superintendent Ken Miller opened all bids and will bring recommendations to the commission for approval at the next meeting. Miller requested permission to receive bids until 10:00 a.m. (CT) on May 1, 2024, for one 2024 or newer motor grader. Frey moved to grant permission for county to receive bids until 10:00 a.m. (CT) on May 1, 2024, for one 2024 or newer motor grader. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Interstate Engineer Charlie Hankins updated the commission on the closeout of the Shields Bridge project that included a change order for tree removal and a temporary fence removal, which is a state participating cost that meets the 80/20 cost share. A nonparticipating contractor cost of \$6,641.19 for clearing and grubbing work was added but did not qualify for the 80/20 state cost share. Frey moved to approve the change order as presented, to include the nonparticipating cost of \$6,641.19. Bauman seconded. Frey moved to amend the motion by removing the nonparticipating portion. Bauman seconded amendment. All vote aye on amendment. Motion carried. All voted aye on amended motion. Motion carried.

Commission requested Miller to obtain letter of explanation from the contractor regarding the nonparticipating charge of \$6,641.19, as advised by States Attorney Todd Schwarz. Item was placed on the April 17, 2024, agenda. Beulah shop heater item was placed on next agenda. The airport road and County Road 20 projects were discussed and both projects are moving forward as scheduled. Frey moved to approve advertising for bids on the airport road project with bid closing at 9:00 a.m. and bid openings at 10:00 a.m. on May 1, 2024. Taylor seconded. Frey, Taylor, and Folk voted aye. Bauman voted nay. Motion carried.

Recessed at 10:39 a.m.

Reconvened at 10:45 a.m.

Mercer County HR Director Alice Grinsteinner updated the board on HR activities. Frey moved to approve the NDPERS contributions as outlined for Jim Albers' retirement pending NDPERS review. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Folk moved to appoint Grinsteinner as the backup Risk Manager. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. States Attorney Todd Schwarz advised the commission to disband the policy committee since we now have an HR department and it would be a duplication of efforts. Frey moved to disband the policy committee. Bauman seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Frey moved to freeze all wages at the county level. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Taylor made a motion to change the authorization of protected health information for health, dental, and vision insurance from the Auditor/Deputy Auditor to our Human Resources Director. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Folk made a motion to waive the hourly requirements to meet health, dental, and vision insurance coverage for a national guard employee. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Sheriff Terry Ternes updated the commission regarding various vacant and filled positions, radio status and insurance payments for our damaged law enforcement vehicle. Home and Land Company Real Estate Agent Vicky Steiner discussed the Pebble Beach access options. Steiner will work with her client, Jim Kasper, to create a proposal, which will be reviewed by the States Attorney, who will present this proposal to the commission.

Portfolio updates were given.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:08 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 17, 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: _____
Rick Bauman, Vice Chairman

Attest: _____
Carmen Reed, Auditor