

Mercer County Commission Minutes January 7, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Gene Wolf. Present were Commissioners Rick Bauman, Jamee Folk, Mark Pierce, Casey Voigt, Auditor Carmen Reed, and Dan Arens of the Hazen Star. Others present during the meeting were Sheriff's Deputy Christopher Waller, Chief Deputy Mark Schmitt, Deputy Auditor Mark Erhardt, HR/EM Director Alice Grinsteiner, Highway Superintendent Elroy Opp, Assistant Highway Superintendent Dennis Olheiser, Treasurer Dawn Grannis, Maintenance Supervisor Jim Albers, NDSU Extension Agent Craig Askim, Tax Director/Land Use Administrator Jennifer Neumiller, Coal Conversion Counties Chairman John Phillips, Western Dakota Energy Association Executive Director Alison Ritter, Lignite Energy Council Representatives Jonathan Fortner and Retha Mattern, Coyote Creek Mine Representatives Jeremy Eckroth and Donn Steffen, and Coteau Freedom Mine representative Darren Hellman. Pledge of allegiance was said.

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

Voigt moved to approve the December 17, 2025 regular meeting minutes and the December 30, 2025 special meeting minutes as presented. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Wolf turned meeting over to Auditor Carmen Reed to reorganize the board for 2026. Reed called for nominations for Chairman. Voigt nominated Bauman for Chairman. Reed called for any other nominations. Pierce nominated Wolf for Chairman. No further nominations heard. Voigt voted Bauman, Bauman voted Bauman, Wolf voted Wolf, Pierce voted Wolf, and Folk voted Bauman. Bauman is new Chairman.

Reed turned meeting over to new Chairman Bauman. Bauman called for nominations for Vice Chair. Pierce nominated Wolf. Bauman nominated Folk. Voigt voted Folk, Bauman voted Folk, Wolf voted Wolf, Pierce voted Folk, and Folk voted Folk.

Wolf moved to approve the NDCC 44-04-20.1 Public Comment Policy as presented and a time will be allotted at the end of every agenda going forward. Voigt seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Sheriff's Deputy Christopher Waller presented the bidding information regarding the purchase of sheriff's new vehicles. Voigt moved to approve the purchase of new vehicles as presented for a total of \$180,000. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Pierce moved to approve putting the old transfer van up for bids. Wolf seconded. All vote aye. Motion carried.

Maintenance Supervisor Jim Albers presented updated skid steer quotes. Item was placed on the January 21, 2026 agenda.

Folk moved to put landfill payment of \$4,500 for old mower into Building Fund 2101. Pierce seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Voigt moved to approve the landfill easement agreement between Mercer County and Ryan Wolf as presented. Pierce seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

NDSU Extension Agent Craig Askim gave his end of year report.

Recessed at 9:55 a.m.

Reconvened at 10:01 a.m.

The County Taxes Coal Severance Tax History was discussed. Members of the audience that spoke included Coal Conversion Counties Chairman John Phillips and Lignite Energy Council Representative Jonathan Fortner.

Folk moved to approve the November Recorder Revenues of \$4,011.80. Pierce seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Pierce moved to approve the Sheriff's revenues for July, October, November, and December, 2025 in the amount \$125,313.94. Wolf seconded. All vote aye. Motion carried.

Chief Deputy Mark Schmitt presented the Youthworks program and Youth Shelter agreement that aids the Sheriff's office in providing for juveniles that need to be housed overnight.

Treasurer Dawn Grannis and States Attorney Todd Schwarz requested approval to request bids on the new financial software conversion audit. Solicitation for this

audit will be made and applications will be presented to the Board for final approval.

Wolf moved to approve the new state mileage rate of \$0.725 as of January 1, 2026. Voigt seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Wolf moved to approve the "Conflict of Interest" policy as presented. Pierce seconded.

Wolf and Pierce voted aye. Folk, Voigt, and Bauman voted nay. Motion failed. Recessed at 11:03 a.m.

Reconvened at 11:07 a.m.

Tax Director/Land Use Administrator Jennifer Neumiller gave an update on the progress of the ordinance rewrite. Wolf moved to cancel the Planning & Zoning Public Hearing that was set for 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 15, 2026, in the Mercer County Government Building Board room in Stanton, due to set backs on the ordinance rewrite. Voigt seconded. All vote aye. Motion carried. SRF Consulting Group has been retained to review the ordinance rewrite on January 20, 2026.

Portfolio updates were given.

Pierce moved to approve all bills as presented. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. The following bills were approved for payment: ASKIM, CRAIG \$16.80; BRONSON'S MARKETPLACE \$9,958.75; BUTLER MACHINERY CO \$25,993.30; CITY AIR MECHANICAL, INC. \$875.36; CITY OF GOLDEN VALLEY \$29.75; CITY OF STANTON \$6,795.82; D & E SUPPLY CO INC \$845.42; DIRT PRO SERVICES \$165.00; DOWNTOWN GAS AND AUTO \$194.00; ENTZE, CINDY \$14.00; FIRESIDE OFFICE SOLUTIONS \$76.32; HAZEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE \$50.00; HAZEN HEALTH PHARMACY \$138.67; HAZEN MOTOR CO \$108.95; INTERSTATE POWER SYSTEMS, INC. \$18,045.97; KRAUSE SUPER VALU \$203.49; LINDE GAS & EQUIPMENT, INC. \$285.33; LITTLE FALLS MACHINE INC \$385.57; LUCKYS TOWING AND REPAIR \$1,000.00; MERCER COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT \$1,704.43; MONTANA DAKOTA UTILITIES \$115.70; NAPA \$1,037.67; ND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION \$33,857.46; NEUBERGER OIL COMPANY \$1,807.82; ODP BUSINESS SOLUTIONS INC. \$83.98; PEHL, PAM \$13.72; PFLIGER, METTA \$135.10; PHARMCHEM, INC. \$255.60; RDO EQUIPMENT CO. \$2,291.00; ROUGHRIDER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC \$175.00; SOUTHWEST WATER AUTHORITY \$57.97; Stein's Inc \$512.41; STERICYCLE, INC. \$22.90; THE BEACON \$793.16; UNIFORM CENTER \$507.95; VANGUARD APPRAISALS INC. \$59,895.10; VERIZON WIRELESS \$126.53; VOIGT, CASEY LEE \$50.40; WESTERN PLAINS PUBLIC HEALTH \$4,510.30; WEX BANK \$554.23; WORKFORCE SAFETY & INSURANCE \$250.00; ARMOR INTERACTIVE \$2,606.00; BEULAH JOB DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY \$1,196.67; Blue Hawk Audio Video \$22,347.05; CNA SURETY \$150.00; COAL CONVERSION COUNTIES \$6,508.00; DAKOTA AWARDS, INC. \$24.99; ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS INC \$1,287.06; HAZEN FIRE DEPARTMENT \$9,500.00; LAKE COUNTRY CHEVROLET \$110,792.00; LEWIS & CLARK REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT \$7,009.02; MERCER COUNTY FAIR ASSOCIATION \$75,000.00; MERCER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY \$5,000.00; ND AUDITORS & TREASURERS ASSOCIATION \$500.00; ND COUNTY RECORDERS ASSOCIATION \$500.00; OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL \$1,050.00; STARK COUNTY \$15,000.00; TOWER COMMUNICATIONS INC \$555.00; TYLER TECHNOLOGIES \$43,369.99; VISION WEST ND \$800.00; CITY OF BEULAH \$101.41; GRINSTEINER, ALICE \$319.20. (TOTAL: \$611,365.54)

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:33 a.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 21, 2026, 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: _____
Rick Bauman, Chairman

Attest: _____
Carmen Reed, Auditor