

Mercer County Commission Minutes February 7, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Gene Wolf. Present were Commissioners Jamee Folk, Liza Taylor, Travis Frey, Rick Bauman, Auditor Carmen Reed, and Dan Arens of the Hazen Star. Others present during portions of the meeting were Maintenance Supervisor Jim Albers, Beulah City Assessor Heidi Hamelton, Landfill Director Candy Strand, Treasurer Dawn Grannis, Road Superintendent Ken Miller, Sheriff Terry Ternes, States Attorney Todd Schwarz, Beulah City Economic Development Director Beaver Brinkman, Summit Carbon Solutions Representative Amanda Hoffer, Western Plains Public Health Representative Erin Ourada, Jack Schwab, and Ashley Hill.

Pledge of allegiance was said.

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

Frey moved to approve the January 17, 2024, minutes with the following amendment, add "contracted" County Engineer on page two.

Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Bauman moved to approve bills. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

The following bills were approved for payment: ADVANCED BUSINESS METHODS \$891.84; ACCURATE CONTROLS, INC. \$32,610.13; ASKIM, CRAIG \$122.61; BAKER, ADAM \$3.99; THE BEACON \$1,396.00; BEULAH DRUG \$70.00; BEULAH JOB DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY \$1,084.33; BRONSON'S MARKETPLACE \$6,990.43; LUCKYS TOWING AND REPAIR \$900.00; CAP FLEET UPFITTERS, LLC \$3,132.00; CAPITAL TROPHY INC. \$107.50; ELAN FINANCIAL SERVICES \$1,309.23; CENTER MACHINE INC \$903.56; CHARM-TEX, INC. \$150.54; CITY AIR MECHANICAL, INC. \$375.00; CITY OF BEULAH \$97.58; CITY OF GOLDEN VALLEY \$29.75; CITY OF STANTON \$6,271.79; WESTERN PLAINS PUBLIC HEALTH \$4,465.85; D & E SUPPLY CO INC. \$1,440.52; DACOTAH PAPER CO. \$172.06; DIRT PRO SERVICES \$165.00; ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS INC. \$1,329.56; FARGO GLASS & PAINT COMPANY \$3,672.03; FARMERS UNION OIL CO \$543.94; WEX BANK \$2,906.12; FORCE AMERICA DISTRIBUTING LLC \$16.12; FREY, TRAVIS \$80.82; HAZEN HEALTH PHARMACY \$549.47; HAZEN HARDWARE HANK \$94.92; HAZEN MOTOR CO \$1,158.57; HAZEN STAR \$185.00; HAZEN WELDING \$25.20; HEART RIVER STABLES \$2,830.00; AUTO VALUE \$334.17; INTERSTATE ENGINEERING INC \$67,978.00; J & M HARDWARE, INC. \$457.59; J-S SANITATION \$31.00; KRAUSE SUPER VALU \$27.05; M & B RENTALS LLP \$675.00; RELX INC. DBA LEXISNEXIS \$205.00; MCLEAN COUNTY SHERIFF \$1,875.00; MERCER COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT \$2,019.21; MID-STATE ORGANIZED CRIME INF CENTR \$150.00; MIDWEST DOORS OF DICKINSON INC \$220.37; HILL, ASHLEY \$62.53; BRODKORB, VICKIE \$900.23; MONTANA DAKOTA UTILITIES \$128.33; MUL T SERVICES & CONTRACTING \$425.00; NAPA \$2,747.08; ND ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES \$573.30; NDLTAP \$300.00; ND COUNTY RECORDERS ASSOCIATION \$400.00; NDACTVSO \$50.00; NDSU AG COMMUNICATION \$120.00; NEUBERGER OIL COMPANY \$709.00; NORTHERN TRUCK EQUIPMEINT CORP. \$344.27; ODP BUSINESS SOLUTIONS INC. \$123.51; ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE \$80.00; PFLIGER, METTA \$146.87; PHARMCHEM, INC. \$1,963.79; LINDE GAS & EQUIPMENT, INC. \$406.51; RDO EQUIPMENT CO. \$180.49; REDWOOD

TOXICOLOGY LABORATORY INC. \$81.92; ROUGHRIDER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. \$175.00; RUD PROPANE LLP \$6,017.85; SCHWARZ, TODD \$307.50; SOUTHWEST WATER AUTHORITY \$55.97; STRAND, CANDY \$190.16; SWANSTON EQUIPMENT \$1,209.25; THE PAINTERS, INC. \$440.00; UNIFORM CENTER \$359.44; VERIZON WIRELESS \$696.01; VOLK, GINGER R. \$106.39; WIELER, TANYA \$5,500.00 (CHECK #s 49719-49793) TOTAL \$174,854.25.

Maintenance Supervisor Jim Albers requested to put a three phase air compressor that was purchased in 2011 up for sale and no longer needed in any county department. Frey moved to put the air compressor ad for bids in newspaper for two weeks and set bid opening for March 6, 2024, at 9:30 a.m. Successful bidder is required to pick up unit within one week of sale. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Beulah City Economic Development Director Beaver Brinkman gave a Mercer County Economic Board update. Potential new business interest at the transload facility. Working with "Next Move Group" to develop pricing for a countywide housing, employee, rail, marketing strategy and promotional material that can be used by all city/county entities to promote business and the community. Looking at possibly sponsoring a Ukraine family through workforce opportunities U4U program sponsored by the North Dakota Office of Legal Immigration. Should know this week if we have received a work force development grant of \$100,000.

Beulah City Assessor Heidi Hamelton requested a better understanding of why the commission decided to keep joint control of the extra territorial (ET) area. It was agreed that this topic will be put on the Mercer County Planning and Zoning meeting on Thursday, February 15, 2024. Beulah City Economic Development Director Beaver Brinkman stated that this area is joint controlled and is under the requirements of the city as well as the county, so building permits are required for all residents that live in this area.

Road Superintendent Ken Miller presented the 2024 spring load restrictions. Bauman made a motion to approve the 2024 spring load restrictions with the following change on Class #2 (6 ton per axle – 80,000 lbs. max). Frey seconded. Bauman moved to amend motion to read Class #2 (6 ton per axle – no weight limit). All voted aye. Amended motion carried. All voted aye. Original motion carried.

The board recessed at 10:13 a.m.

The board reconvened at 10:19 a.m.

Jack Schwab gave an update on the Deputy Paul Martin memorial project. Looking for volunteers to help and ideas for what would best honor Paul. Deputy Martin's widow is aware and in favor of this memorial project.

Sheriff Terry Ternes presented a letter and the returned \$12,000 check from McLean County. McLean County thanked Mercer County for the generous donation, but declined and hoped that we would use this money for officer safety. Ternes stated that he would like to request they use the monies to purchase the Open Fox program that is run through State Radio and offers higher safety to all law enforcement through an internet link in each vehicle. Ternes also requested the County to pay for a Deputy escort for Deputy Martin's

Widow at the Washington D.C. Memorial event during National Police week. The 2023 jail inspection received a 99% score and credit goes to Sheriff personnel and the building maintenance department. This report is available upon request at the Sheriff's office. Still have two vacant positions, a jailer/dispatch position and deputy position. Taylor moved to allow the Sheriff's Office to use the \$12,000 returned from Mclean County for the purchase of the Open Fox program. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Folk moved to approve covering the travel, hotel, and meal expenses for the deputy escort to Washington D.C. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Western Plains Public Health Representative Erin Ourada presented information regarding the legal options available to spend opioid funds received by the county. Ourada will get more information emailed to commission and this item was put on next meeting agenda.

Board agreed to establish a wage committee with the following members, appointed commissioners Frey and Wolf, HR in an advisory role and five employees that will be chosen through the policy committee. Frey moved to have all committee applications sent to Gwyn Bosch, Chairman of Policy Committee by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 16, 2024, for the policy committee to meet on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, to make with recommendations to the board at the February 21, 2024 meeting. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Folk moved to accept the EM job description as presented, get it posted with an application deadline of March 1, 2024. Taylor seconded. All voted aye.

Folk made a motion to approve the Morton/Mercer Mutual Aid Agreement - County to County. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Frey moved to allocate \$15,000 to the Mercer County Fair Board to assist in their building loan payment. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Travis moved to refund back into the Parks in Lieu account the amounts of \$123,315.96 and \$2,955 from the general fund. Bauman seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Commission addressed health insurance questions that had been received from employees. Health insurance expense coverage will be reviewed at 2025 budget time and decisions will be made before open enrollment in fall, 2024.

Frey made a motion to move the March 20, 2024 meeting to March 21, 2024 as a regular meeting, due to lack of a quorum. Bauman seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Majority of commission will be attending the NDCCA meeting, a county commission conference.

Discussion regarding the NDSU Extension mill levy question on the ballot. Bauman made motion to raise the extension service mill levy to 4 mills with wording to come. Frey seconded. Bauman moved to rescind this motion. Item was put on the February 21, 2024, agenda.

Frey moved to approve Bank of North Dakota, Union State Bank, Capital Credit Union and Multi-bank Securities Inc. as depositories for public funds held by Mercer County. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Landfill capping project bid opening will be February 28, 2024, at 10:30 a.m. in the commission room. Bid recommendations will be presented to the commission on March 6, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. for approval.

Folk moved to approve the Hazen Golf Course annual on sale beer/liquor license No. 462 renewal. Taylor seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Frey moved to accept the resolution and payment of \$5 from the City of Stanton for properties SS14484010522A, SS14484012812, SS14484020201, SS14484020203, and SS14484020210. Bauman seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Folk made a motion to put the payroll discussion on the policy committee agenda for February 20, 2024, meeting. Taylor seconded. Folk, Taylor, Frey and Bauman voted aye. Wolf voted nay. Motion carried.

Policy updates were presented by Wolf and added to next agenda.

Portfolio updates were given.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:28 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for February 21, 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.mercercountynd.com

Approved: _____
Gene Wolf, Chairman

Attest: _____
Carmen Reed, Auditor