

Mercer County Commission Minutes March 6, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Gene Wolf. Present were Commissioners Jamee Folk, Travis Frey, Auditor Carmen Reed, and Dan Arens of the Hazen Star. Liza Taylor and Rick Bauman were absent. Others present during portions of the meeting were Maintenance Supervisor Jim Albers, Landfill Director Candy Strand, Treasurer Dawn Grannis, States Attorney Todd Schwarz, Mercer County Economic Development Chairman Beaver Brinkman, Mercer County HR Director Alice Grinsteiner, Houston Engineering Sherwin Wanner, Clerk of Court Wanda Knutson, State District Court Administrator Donna Wunderlich, Interstate Engineer Charlie Hankins, Deputy Tax Director Jennifer Neumiller, Policy Committee Chairman Gwyn Bosch, and Home and Land Company Real Estate Agent Vicky Steiner.

Pledge of allegiance was said.

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

Frey moved to approve the February 21, 2024, regular minutes as presented. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Folk moved to approve the February 21, 2024, special minutes as presented. Frey 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 \$1,084.05; THE BEACON \$177.00; BEULAH DRUG \$259.14; BEULAH JOB DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY \$1,084.33; BOBCAT OF MANDAN INC. \$713.64; BRONSON'S MARKETPLACE \$5,781.14; LUCKYS TOWING AND REPAIR \$500.00; ELAN FINANCIAL SERVICES \$2,463.91; CITY OF STANTON \$6,449.71; COLONIAL RESEARCH CHEMICAL CORP. \$515.01; COMPUTER PROJECTS OF IL., INC. \$2,970.00; WESTERN PLAINS PUBLIC HEALTH \$4,015.05; D & E SUPPLY CO INC. \$812.80; DIRT PRO SERVICES \$165.00; DISCOUNTCCELL, LLC \$7,746.00; ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS INC. \$3,876.92; FARMERS UNION OIL CO \$75.25; FARMERS UNION SERVICE ASSOCIATION \$519.00; FIRESIDE OFFICE SOLUTIONS \$17.98; WEX BANK \$1,915.20; GALLS, LLC \$141.45; GREAT PLAINS TOWERS, INC. \$400.00; HAZEN HEALTH PHARMACY \$313.08; HAZEN HARDWARE HANK \$220.83; HAZEN MOTOR CO. \$41.08; HAZEN STAR \$232.00; HIRSCH FLORAL \$48.00; KNIFE RIVER VETERINARY CLINIC \$12.00; KRAUSE SUPER VALU \$167.57; LANGUAGE LINE SERVICES \$93.50; M & M DISTRIBUTION LLC \$688.98; MERCER CO AMBULANCE \$300.00; MERCER COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARMENT \$1,734.28; MIDCONTINENT COMMUNICATIONS \$170.24; MONTANA DAKOTA UTILITIES \$115.92; ND APCO ASSOCIATION \$900.00; ND ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES 911 \$36.26; ND CLERK'S ASSOCIATION \$100.00; ND SHERIFF'S & DEPUTY ASSOC. \$500.00; NEUBERGER OIL COMPANY \$2,273.92; PENGUIN MANAGEMENT, INC. \$5,400.00; PHARMCHEM, INC. \$681.45; POSTMASTER \$72.00; POSTMASTER \$163.20; LINDE GAS & EQUIPMENT, INC. \$246.51; ROUGHRIDER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. \$175.00; RUD PROPANE LLP \$5,772.22; SOUTHWEST WATER AUTHORITY \$60.50; SWANSTON EQUIPMENT

\$6,250.00; THE HUB CONVENIENCE STORES, INC. \$91.94; UNIFORM CENTER \$1,868.42; VERIZON WIRELESS \$829.87; WIEDRICH, WARREN \$521.52; WOODWORTH LAW OFFICE, PLLC \$75.00; MOUNTAIN PLAINS YOUTH SERVICE \$8,000.00 (CHECK #s 49894-49949) TOTAL \$79,838.63.

Folk moved to approve duplicate warrant #54489 for \$526.56 to Title Team. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Frey moved to remove Alice Grinsteinner as a signature holder from all bank accounts that are required as the deputy treasurer. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

At 9:30 a.m. Frey moved to close the acceptance of bids for the air compressor. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. One bid was received from Jason Anderson for \$117.67. Folk moved to accept the bid from Jason Anderson for \$117.67. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Mercer County Economic Development Chairman Beaver Brinkman gave a countywide economics activity update which included the City of Beulah was one of eight coal communities that received a \$100,000 grant from the Department of Energy (DOE). A requirement of this grant is development of a plan showing how our community will remain vibrant, retain the current work force, diversify, and train the new workforce. This plan will be the criteria for which grant programs will be created throughout the United States. The US treasury currently has \$62 billion allocated for these coal community grants. Economic boards across the county, to include Beulah and Hazen, are planning to utilize the Next Move Group to assist in writing the plan and completing the housing and income study. \$50,000 from the DOE grant and \$25,000 from Beulah JDA has been allocated for this project. Brinkman is requesting Mercer County to provide \$25,000 to pay for one quarter of the \$102,000 Next Move Group fee with any difference being made up with grant funds. Frey moved to approve the \$25,000 allocation to MCED for the housing and income study grant writing support. Folk seconded. Frey and Wolf voted aye. Folk voted nay. Motion carried.

Policy Committee Chairman Gwyn Bosch presented the updated Policy 403 Paydays for the first reading. Wolf read the updated policy portion that states, "Mercer County will require all employees to sign up for direct deposit effective July 1, 2024." No written comments have been received. Second reading will be held on March 21, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

The board recessed at 9:47 a.m.

The board reconvened at 9:58 a.m.

Mercer County HR Director Alice Grinsteinner presented an update and budget regarding the HR position. Frey moved to approve the HR budget of \$78,650 as presented. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Frey moved to give HR access to the following benefits, NDPERS, Blue Cross Blue Shield (Vision and Dental), Aflac, Guardian Life, Nationwide, and Tru Stage (Cuna). Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Folk moved to extend the application for the EM position until March 20, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Review of the EM applicants was set for March 21, 2024, at 9:45 a.m.

Frey moved to approve a county cell phone for the HR Director. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Home and Land Company Real Estate Agent Vicky Steiner representing land owner James Kasper, requested approval of a preliminary plat showing a split of Kasper's 5-acre lot into 2 and 3 acre lots with a legal description of Tract 2A located in the NW1/4, T146N, R87W of the 5th Principal Meridian, Mercer County, North Dakota. Once approved the plat will get recorded then it will go back to Planning and Zoning for variances. Frey moved to approve the preliminary plat as presented showing the 5-acre lot split of 2 and 3 acre lots, with a legal description of Tract 2A located in the NW1/4, T146N, R87W of the 5th Principal Meridian, Mercer County, North Dakota. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Steiner stated that the main Pebble Beach access goes through this parcel of land and Kasper would like to offer the county the option to acquire public access to Pebble Beach with options of a 99-year lease or purchase. Requesting a decision by the board of a "yes" or "no" on interest to acquire this access by end of March 2024. This item was put on the next agenda under "other business."

Houston Engineering Sherwin Wanner reported that no landfill capping project bids were received at the February 28, 2024, bid opening. Wanner is requesting approval to rebid this project with electronic bidding option and push back the project completion date to October 15, 2024. Folk moved to approve rebidding of the landfill capping project with bid opening on April 1, 2024, at 11:00 a.m., completion date of October 15, 2024, and include the state electronic bidding option for contractors. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Landfill Director Candy Strand updated commission on repairs needed for the landfill loader and requested approval of the \$3,770 repair cost quote. Folk moved to approve the cost quote of \$3,770 to repair the landfill loader. Frey seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Clerk of Court Wanda Knutson and State District Court Administrator Donna Wunderlich discussed the biannual clerk of court district service agreement options. Item was placed on March 21, 2024, agenda at 10:30 a.m.

Highway Department request for approval of the updated purchase agreement of 32 tons of MC-3000 cutback asphalt cement at \$950 per ton, with a total expense of \$30,400. Frey moved to approve the updated purchase agreement for the MC-3000 cutback asphalt cement as presented. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Interstate Engineer Charlie Hankins gave an update on County Road 20 bridge, chip sealing, and paving road projects. Flex funding awards from the state should be out by end of March. Mercer County applied for flex funding for the airport road.

Portfolio updates were given.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 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.mercercounty.com

Approved: _____
Gene Wolf, Chairman

Attest: _____
Carmen Reed, Auditor