

Mercer County Commission Minutes August 6, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Gene Wolf. Present were Commissioners Jamee Folk, Mark Pierce, Rick Bauman, Casey Voigt, Auditor Carmen Reed and Dan Arens of the Hazen Star. Others present during the meeting were Treasurer Dawn Grannis, States Attorney Todd Schwarz, HR/EM Director Alice Grinsteinner, Deputy Auditor Mark Erhardt, Sheriff Terry Ternes, Beulah Park District Director Sonja Dutchuk, Hazen Parks & Recreation Commissioner Matt LeMasters, Coyote Creek Mining Representative Jeremy Eckroth, David Straley, and Brad Erickson, NDSU Extension Agent Metta Pfliger, ND Geological Survey Geologist Levi Moxness, Tax Director Jennifer Neumiller, J2 Studios President James Devine, and Assistant Highway Supervisor Dennis Olheiser.

Pledge of allegiance was said.

Pierce moved to approve the amended agenda. Bauman seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Bauman moved to approve the July 17, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Pierce moved to approve the July 25, 2025 special meeting minutes with the correction of "not" to "no" in line 32. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Tax Director Jennifer Neumiller presented the application for temporary use permit #656, from ND Dept of Mineral Resources-Geological Survey, for drilling and coring 50 – 200-foot-deep test holes to determine the concentrations of critical minerals in lignite and claystone in and beneath the Bear Den Member of the Golden Valley Formation. The disturbance area is less than 2,500 ft² (0.06 acres), maximum sites per tract = 5, maximum project disturbance = 3.6 acres. All holes will be plugged and the drill sites reclaimed as per NDAC 43-02-01-14. ND Geological Survey Geologist Levi Moxness was present for questions.

Bauman moved to approve Temporary Use Permit #656 as presented. Pierce seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Voigt moved to approve the Utility Occupancy Application and Permit 1772(25) for Roughrider Electric Cooperative. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

HR/EM Director Alice Grinsteinner, Beulah Park District Director Sonja Dutchuk, and Hazen Parks & Recreation Commissioner Matt LeMasters discussed the Perry Weather system implementation, recurring costs, and added safety benefits that this system would provide for campers and residents in and around the Beulah and Hazen Bay areas. It was agreed that a payment plan would be developed regarding the Perry Weather System and brought back before the board for consideration.

Grinsteinner formally requested \$500 in funding for the Walking Challenge as part of the Mercer County Wellness Program, which gives us a 1% reduction of our insurance premiums, which equates to an estimated \$16,000 in projected savings

for 2026. Grinsteinner also presented the new state lodging rate of \$110/night, effective August 1, 2025. Folk moved to approve the new state lodging rate of \$110/night, effective August 1, 2025. Voigt seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

NDSU Extension Agent Metta Pfliger requested permission for the following out-of-state trips: (1) The National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) Annual Convention in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Focus is on nutrition, healthy aging, chronic disease, healthy families, child development, mental health, community development, food scarcity and finance. Total cost is \$2,030 with NDSU paying \$1,250 and County pays \$780. And (2) 79th Annual Leadership Conference (The Black Hills Recreation Leaders Laboratory) in Custer, South Dakota. Focus is on leadership and teambuilding. Cost to the County is \$465.00. Voigt moved to approve both the Grand Rapids, Michigan and Custer, South Dakota trips as presented. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Recessed at 9:43 a.m.

Reconvened at 9:53 a.m.

J2 Studios President James Devine reviewed a remodeling plan for the A1 Auto Repair building at 712 Co Rd 21 in Beulah. The next step will be to gather actual cost estimates and a detailed floor plan. Item was placed on the next meeting agenda.

Assistant Highway Supervisor Dennis Olheiser presented information regarding the Highway Department request to purchase a new set of cutting edges with a quote of approximately \$11,000. Folk moved to approve the Highway Department's purchase of cutting edges for approximately \$11,000. Pierce seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Folk moved to approve the June Recorder's Revenues of \$5,288.60. Bauman seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Folk moved to appoint Deanne Gierke and Kodelle Dunkley to the McLean – Mercer Regional Library Board. Pierce seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Treasurer Dawn Grannis informed the Board that the Treasurer's Official Payments Contract has been terminated and replaced by the Certified Payments option that is also connected to our website.

The 2026 Budget was discussed. The following changes were made: (1) Update EM Estimated 2026 Revenues from \$7,789.77 to \$37,000. (2) Put 911 salary of \$68,640 back into the Sheriff's budget, instead of the 911 fund. (3) Change General Fund cash reserve from \$1,500,000 to \$2,000,000, and (4) Increased General Fund retirement by \$9,000. Item was tabled.

Voigt recused himself. States Attorney Todd Schwarz stated that he had received information from Voigt regarding the Coyote Creek Road Resolution and gave Voigt the floor. Voigt stated he would provide the needed easement to the county for \$28,000 and no further easement is needed because it was deemed a "road by prescription." Information was discussed.

Recessed at 11:25 a.m.

Reconvened at 11:34 a.m.

Pierce moved to reject the offer of \$28,000 for easement as it is unreasonable. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. NACCO Representative David Straley stated that a resolution between the mine and the county still needs to

be agreed upon and noted that the lease agreement between the mine and landowner is a separate and private issue. The "Final Resolution of the 18 ST SW Road Easement" was placed on the August 20, 2025 agenda at 11:00 a.m. 2026 Budget was discussed and it was agreed that Reed will update new changes into the 2026 budget while vouchers are being reviewed. Portfolio updates were given.

Board reviewed vouchers. Folk moved to approve the bills as presented with the exception of the Hazen Hardware Hank bill for \$17.94. Pierce seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. The following bills were approved for payment: ADVANCED BUSINESS METHODS \$12,470.02; ARMOR INTERACTIVE \$270.58; ASKIM, CRAIG \$319.90; BABCOCK, AUSTIN \$252.90; BERG, MICHAEL \$32.20; BRONSON'S MARKETPLACE \$7,058.86; BYRNA TECHNOLOGIES, INC \$35.99; CENTER MACHINE INC \$467.80; CHARM-TEX, INC. \$244.70; CITY OF BEULAH \$411.90; D & E SUPPLY CO INC \$655.86; DALE SCHWALBE TRUCKING \$1,000.00; DANA SAFETY SUPPLY, INC. \$13,883.00; DIRT PRO SERVICES \$165.00; EIDE CHRYSLER \$1,073.70; ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS INC \$1,396.04; ENTZE, CINDY \$21.70; FIRESIDE OFFICE SOLUTIONS \$93.66; FITTERER OIL HAZEN LLC \$132.50; FLEMMER, RYAN \$14.00; FOLKERTS, JESSE \$255.08; HAZEN HARDWARE HANK \$148.78; HAZEN STAR \$1,800.00; ISTATE TRUCK CENTER \$259.02; KRAUSE SUPER VALU \$52.53; LIGNITE TIRE SERVICE \$704.84; LINDE GAS & EQUIPMENT, INC. \$277.44; M & B RENTALS LLP \$675.00; MATTHEIS, BARBARA \$23.20; MERCER CO AMBULANCE \$300.00; MERCER COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT \$1,260.18; MIDWEST DOORS INC \$438.00; MONTANA DAKOTA UTILITIES \$58.34; NAPA \$1,008.49; ND APCO ASSOCIATION \$180.00; ND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION \$672.22; ND DEPT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY \$50.00; NDSU EXTENSION SERVICE \$18,017.50; NEUBERGER OIL COMPANY \$34,322.04; North Central International, LLC \$1,200.48; NORTH DAKOTA ENVELOPE COMPANY \$268.25; NORTHERN PUMP & COMPRESSION INC \$10,400.00; NORTHWEST TIRE AUTO SERVICE INC. \$2,142.59; PALOMINO PRESS \$40.00; PEHL, PAM \$44.00; PETERSON, COLIN \$44.00; PHARMCHEM, INC. \$447.30; QUADIENT LEASING USA, INC. \$175.75; ROUGHRIDER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC \$175.00; SAILER, SHANNON \$28.00; SCHEID, RICHARD \$12.60; SCHLENDER, SCOTT \$25.20; STROUP INSURANCE & REALTY \$50.00; THE HUB CONVENIENCE STORES, INC. \$114.39; T-MOBILE USA, INC \$100.00; TROTTER CONSTRUCTION INC. \$446.00; TRUENORTH STEEL \$423.36; TYLER TECHNOLOGIES \$6,077.50; UNIFORM CENTER \$1,585.85; VERIZON WIRELESS \$168.46; VOLK, GINGER R. \$93.93; WALK-N-ROLL INC \$2,143.00; WESTERN DAKOTA ENERGY ASSOCIATION \$500.00; WESTERN PLAINS PUBLIC HEALTH \$4,491.60; WEX BANK \$6,831.87; GRINSTEINER, ALICE \$717.00; HAUGEN, COURTNY \$252.90. (TOTAL: \$139,502.00)

The updated 2026 Preliminary Budget was presented and discussed. Pierce moved to approve the 2026 Preliminary Budget as presented. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:18 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 20, 2025, 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