

# City of Mercer Council Minutes

January 11, 2024, at 7:00 pm

Interim Mayor Ken Thomsen called the meeting to order with Council Members Barb Stute, Gary Volochenko, Erika Lorenz and Randy Zinke and Tonya Wellington Auditor all present.

Ken Thomsen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ken Thomsen read the minutes from December 14, 2023. Barb Stute made the motion to approve the minutes with changes and Randy Zinke seconded. Barb Stute, Gary Volochenko, Erika Lorenz, and Randy Zinke voted Aye. Motion Carried.

Laura Fiedler with Mercer Community Center presented the Council with a list of events for last year and for upcoming events. Laura Fiedler will write a letter to be sent to the residents of Mercer and surrounding area to renew memberships. The fees for 2024 are: family memberships \$50.00, single memberships \$25.00. The fee for a full day rental is \$150.00. A half day rental fee is \$60.00. The membership application is located on the City of Mercer's website.

## Financial Report

Gary Volochenko made the motion to approve the Financial Report and Erika Lorenz seconded. Barb Stute, Gary Volochenko, Erika Lorenz, and Randy Zinke voted Aye.

Motion Carried.

## Bills

Randy Zinke made the motion approve the bills for the month and Gary Volochenko seconded. Barb Stute, Gary Volochenko, Erika Lorenz, and Randy Zinke voted Aye.

Motion Carried.

## Water Bills

Ken Thomsen talked with Ann Oberg from Rural Water if our past due date could be changed from the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month to the last business billing day for Rural Water. Ken also asked about having Tonya Wellington do the billing with McLean Sheridan Rural Water still doing the monthly meter readings. Ann Oberg stated that if the City of Mercer starts doing the monthly billing, it would also be responsible for doing the water readings. McLean Sheridan Rural Water would only come to do the reading for the water that the City of Mercer purchases each month. Gary Volochenko made the motion to have the due date for water bills changed to the last business day of the month and Barb Stute seconded. Barb Stute, Gary Volochenko, Erika Lorenz, and Randy Zinke voted Aye. Motion Carried.

## Park Minutes

Ken Thomsen read the park committee minutes.

On January 2, 2024, 7:00pm at Ginger' Bread House.

Attending: Tina Goven, Erika Lorenz, Kelly Murray, Jamie Meidinger, Victoria Goven by phone.

1. Bills Paid
  - a. Electric \$42.05
  - b. Water \$53.00
2. Account balance
  - a. Maintenance \$4,864.26
  - b. Project \$1,297.77
3. Sausage cook off
  - a. Sunday, February 4<sup>th</sup>
  - b. Noon-2:00pm
  - c. Contestants need to bring 150 1" pieces.
  - d. Contestants need to their own crockpot or roster to serve from
  - e. This will be a blind tasting using sheet to score.
  - f. The entries will be just for sausage.
  - g. Entry fee =\$10.00 per entry
  - h. Crown Entertainment to DJ
  - i. Chester's will set up at MCC.
  - j. Erika messaged MCC to reserve.
  - k. No ad in the Xtra this year
  - l. Erika will contact Turtle Lake about advertising on their lightboard.
  - m. Discussed the best way to break a tie.
  - n. Use toothpick flags with numbers for each entry
  - o. Discussed contacting sponsors and businesses for Chinese auction prizes.

## Burning Permit

Tonya Wellington has received the burning permit for the city tree dump. The Council will decide in the upcoming month on the best day to burn the city tree dump.

## Old Business

### Curb Stops

Erika Lorenz stated she has been in contact with Ulteig Engineering regarding a copy of the water project file. Ulteig is in the midst of moving all their paperwork into digital so it may take a while to get the information needed.

Megan Schlafman stated that Ranetta Star, USDA Community Programs Director, with the USDA Water and Waste Disposal Loan Grants Program stated that any non-used curb stops may be removed at the cost of the owner. The USDA has no position on residents removing curb stops. Megan Schlafman stated she did not receive paperwork to opt out of having a curb stop installed. Megan Schlafman would like proof that Schlafman's were sent the letter from the City because their shop property has a different address. Ken Thomsen stated that he will contact Ranetta Star and get the information needed.

Ken Thomsen stated that we cannot proceed at this rate. The City has an attorney's legal opinion that the proposed ordinance is valid. Ken Thomsen asked the Council what they would like to do moving forward.

Erika Lorenz stated the fiscally responsible thing to do would be to revise the current ordinance.

Randy Zinke stated that per the City's attorney the North Dakota Century Code the City could bill every lot within the city limits.

No action was taken as this time.

### **New Business**

Elections take place on June 11, 2024. Anyone interested in running for a council seat, or for mayor, needs to fill out paperwork and have it sent in by April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024. There will be paperwork available at Mercer City Hall. Open seats will be the mayoral position for the remaining two-year term, one council seat with a two-years term remaining, and two council seats with four-year terms.

Ken Thomsen stated that we received an email from Midwest Assistance on mapping the curb stops in Mercer.

Last fall the city had an offer from the Rural Water Association to map all of the curb stops in the city and buy a subscription for a mobile app. This offer was voted down. Midwest Assistance will come in and map the curb stops for free and give the city an accurate inventory of what curb stops have been installed and where their locations.

### **Adjourn Meeting**

Gary Volochenko made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Barb Stute seconded. Barb Stute, Gary Volochenko, Erika Lorenz, and Randy Zinke voted Aye. Motion Carried.