

City of Mercer Council Minutes

February 8th, 2024

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 January 11, 2024. Erika Lorenz made the motion to approve the minutes with changes made, and Gary Volochenko seconded. Barb Stute, Gary Volochenko, Erika Lorenz, and Randy Zinke voted aye. Motion Carried.

Financial Report

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

Bills

Barb Stute made the motion to 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

Tonya Wellington-Auditor will send out past due letters to accounts 11, 28 and 51 if not paid by February 15, 2024.

Park Minutes

Ken Thomsen read the Park Minutes for January. The Park Committee held a sausage cook off a Sunday, February 4th at the Mercer Community Center. There were six entries. First place was awarded to Bill Miller, second place to Mathew Notch & Anthony Korynna, and third place to Brian Goven. First place received \$100.00, second place \$50.00, and third place \$25.00.

Through very generous free will donations, a sponsor board, entry fees, Chinese auction, and a heads n' tails game the Committee will have raised approximately \$2300.00. This total is after a donation is made to the Mercer Community Center and other expenses are paid. Proceeds will be used for ongoing maintenance and future projects. The Park Committee would like to thank everyone who attended, entered, donated prizes, or sponsored this event. They are very grateful for your support.

Old Business

Ken Thomsen stated that the City of Mercer will be holding Elections on June 11, 2024. The positions available to be placed in the paper before March 9, 2024. Positions on the ballot will

be Mayor for the remaining two years of the term, one Council position for the remaining of two years of the term, and two Council position for full four-year terms. Forms are available at Mercer City Hall and the North Dakota Secretary of State website: Vote.ND.Gov. Candidates need to file by April 8, 2024, at Mercer City Hall no later than 4pm.

Tonya Wellington, Auditor, informed the council that we have received \$1625.00 for the new window at city hall from Turtle Lake Legion.

Tonya Wellington, Auditor, informed the council that Natalia Heck with Midwest Assistance Program would like to come the first week in June. Natalia Heck will be making a map of curb stops and shut offs for the City of Mercer and provide us with a digital copy for no cost.

Second Reading of the Water Ordinance

Ken Thomsen asked for a motion to hold off for the second water reading until the mapping of our curb stops are done in the first week of June.

Randy Zinke stated that we need to have Gerard Goven from Mclean Sheridan Rural Water and the city attorney at our next meeting. We had a two to one vote to hold the second reading of the new water ordinance and it did not get read. We are going to have to spend the money on attorney fees and have the lawyer at the next meeting. Residents with the issues can take it to him. Because the lawyer is going to tell them that we can legally charge the lots in town. We have people that are paying monthly, and we have other residents that are not paying.

Erika Lorenz was asked if we have heard back from Ulteig Engineering yet. Erika Lorenz stated she did talk to Ulteig and was told that they are migrating their paper files to digital. She did not have a time on when our records would be available.

Ken Thomsen asked for a motion to table the second reading at this time. Erika Lorenz made the motion table the second reading until we have further information. Randy Zinke asked if were setting a timeline for this process. Ken Thomsen stated that was under someone else's timeline until we got the records from Ulteig. Jason Meidinger asked if there was a problem with rewriting the ordinance and putting in a grandfather clause. Erika Lorenz stated that her thought was that we would grandfather the people that have come to the council expressing concerns until that property exchanges hands any way shape of form. Gary Volochenko seconded the motion.

There was a tie vote. Barb Stute voted No, Gary Volochenko voted Yes Erika Lorenz voted Yes and Randy Zinke voted no. Randy Zinke stated that technically Gary Volochenko can't vote due to a conflict of interest. Ken Thomsen stated that motion was only to table the ordinance, but when the new water ordinance is read, Gary will need to abstain from voting. Ken Thomsen asked Erika Lorenz to withdraw her motion. Erika Lorenz stated she withdraws her motion.

Ken Thomsen asked for a new motion. Erika Lorenz made the motion to table the second reading of the water ordinance until information is received from Ulteig engineering and

McLean Sheridan Rural Water, and mapping curb stops in completed. Gary Volochenko second the motion. Barb Stute and Randy Zinke voted No, Gary Volochenko and Erika Lorenz voted aye. The tie vote was broken by Ken Thomsen who voted aye. Motion Carried.

Tamara Schatz needs \$114.00 for renewing the city's domain name for five years for the Mercer City website. \$114.00 was added to the monthly bills to be paid.

Ken Thomsen would like our meeting April to be the same time as our tax equalization meeting. The meeting is set for April 22, 2024, at 7pm.

Gary Volochenko made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Erika Lorenz seconded the motion.