

Minutes for Regular City Meeting

August 14, 2025

Mercer City Hall at 7:00 pm

The meeting was called to order by Council Vice President, Randy Zinke at 7:00 pm and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Present: Gary Volochenko, Erika Lorenz, Randy Zinke

Absent: Mayor Lori Stute, Barb Stute

1. Council additions to agenda
 - a. Preliminary budget
 - b. Electronic payments to utilities

Erika Lorenz made a motion to accept the minutes from the regular meeting on July 10, 2025, and special meetings on July 21, 2025, and August 8, 2025, Gary Volochenko seconded. Zinke, Volochenko and Lorenz voted aye. The motion carried.

2. Financial Report:

No financials are available. Need to hire someone to re-create from the last approved financials which are March 2025.

3. Bills to be Paid:

Gary Volochenko made a motion to approve the bills for rural water, electric, internet, propane, and garbage collection, Erika Lorenz seconded. Zinke, Volochenko and Lorenz vote aye. The motion carried.

4. Water Bills:

Erika Lorenz has been collecting and recording water payments. She does not have sheets showing who is in arrears at this time. She made a bank deposit of the payment collected last week in the amount of \$3,870.75.

Erika Lorenz has contacted Ann Oberg at McLean Sheridan Rural Water to ask about doing the monthly testing. Copper/lead and RCTC bacterial testing were not received by NDDEQ For June or July. Ann will be in Mercer on the 21st to do the testing. Ann will also send out the required notices to city residents regarding testing that was not done.

5. Park Report:

No report

6. Community Center Project Report:

No report

Old Business

1. Chester's Tavern liquor license renewal for 2026:

Erika Lorenz made a motion to approve the renewal of the liquor license for Chester's Tavern from 12/31/2025 to 12/31/2026, Gary Volochenko seconded. Zinke, Volochenko, and Lorenz voted aye. The motion carried.

2. Our Savior's raffle permit:

Erika Lorenz made a motion to approve a raffle permit for Our Savior's Lutheran Church for their quilt raffle, Gary Volochenko seconded the motion. Zinke, Volochenko, and Lorenz voted aye. The motion carried.

3. Accept resignation from Council Member Barb Stute:

Gary Volochenko made a motion to accept the resignation of Council Member Barb Stute, Erika Lorenz seconded. Zinke, Volochenko, and Lorenz voted aye. The motion carried.

The council must wait 15 days before appointing someone to serve the remainder of the term, which is up in June of 2026 to allow for a petition to be received to run for the open seat if interested.

Gary Volochenko made a motion hold a special meeting on Friday, August 29, to appoint someone to the empty seat, excluding the receipt of a petition to run for the seat. Erika Lorenz seconded the motion. Zinke, Volochenko, and Lorenz voted aye. The motion carried.

New Business

1. Approve public comment policy:

A draft policy and comment cards were presented to the council. The city must approve a policy per actions passed by the legislature. Gary made a motion to accept the public comment policy, Erika Lorenz seconded. Zinke, Volochenko, and Lorenz voted aye. The motion carried.

2. Preliminary budget:

The city needs to approve a preliminary budget. The final budget is due to the County in October. Without a financial system, the only thing suggested was to use the current year's approved budget and carry the same budget forward for 2026 as the preliminary budget. Erika Lorenz will ask Midwest Assistance Program if they can come and help to update the preliminary budget into a budget to be finalized for next year to be approved at the September 11 budget hearing. Gary Volochenko made a motion to approve the preliminary budget.

3. Electronic payments to utilities:

Erika Lorenz asked the council to approve the use of electronic payments through Bravera Bank. The city does not have an auditor but still needs to pay its utility bills for water, electric, garbage pickup, and internet. Gary Volochenko made motion to set up electronic payments through Bravera, Erika Lorenz seconded. Zinke, Volochenko, and Lorenz voted aye. The motion carried.

Erika Lorenz will work with Bravera Bank to see if the payments can be set-up.

Public Comment

Kathryn Volochenko recommended asking the County Auditor for the valuations. Erika Lorenz said she has asked for a valuation from the County, she received a worksheet for the preliminary budget. Kathryn has submitted her resume for the position of Auditor.

Erika Lorenz made a motion to adjourn, Gary Volochenko seconded. Zinke, Volochenko, and Lorenz voted aye. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:43 pm.

Bills:

Waste Management \$1,190.25

Cenex (Propane for City Hall and water treatment plant) \$666.42

McLean Sheridan Rural Water \$1,842.50

NorDak North Publications \$307

WRT \$187.97

Ottertail \$628.55

ND Rural Water Systems Assoc. \$270

Randy Zinke (Board pay) \$138.50

Gary Volochenko (Board pay) \$138.50

Erika Lorenz (Board pay) \$138.50

Barb Stute (Board pay) \$138.50

Lori Stute (Mayor pay) \$462

NDRIF \$1,158