

City of Mercer Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 13, 2025 7:00 pm
Mercer City Hall

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ken Thomsen at 7:00 pm and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Council members present were:

Mayor Ken Thomsen, Auditor Kathrin Volochenko, Council Members: Dan Gardiner, Erika Lorenz, Gary Volochenko, Randy Zinke - a quorum was achieved.

Minutes from previous meeting(s):

Mayor Thomsen read the minutes from October 22nd, 2025, regular meeting. Council Member Lorenz made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Council Member Volochenko seconded. Vote was unanimous, M/C.

Financial Reports:

The 2025 Year-To-Date financial reports were presented by Mayor Thomsen & Auditor Volochenko. These reports were printed from the current Mercer City financial software program "Quicken". Auditor Volochenko stated that she had no problem in opening the program. Auditor Volochenko went on to say that the program went through a quick update and it had the option to download the data from the City Bravera accounts, Auditor Volochenko then performed the updates, and in the Quicken general ledger it did show all the transactions, monies both in and out up to that day that the update was performed. Auditor Volochenko went on to say that the total monies in all the separate accounts were correct; however the balances in the different city fund accounts may not be correct as she didn't set up those current city fund accounts, therefore, those numbers may not be accurate. There was no vote taken to approve the 2025 YTD financials. The current balances for each account as of the end of October are as follows:

- Acct. #0709 (general checking) - \$231,821.73
- Acct. #1784 (water project) - \$4117.52
- Acct. #1875 (sewer project) - \$.99
- Acct. #1532 (Memorial Park maintenance fund) - \$5139.09
- Acct. #1196 (Memorial Park project fund) - \$5696.83
- Acct. #8304 (New MCC savings) - \$6966.90
- Acct. #1360 (Old MCC savings) - \$6303.21
- Credit Card 6 #1795 - \$0.00
- Credit Card 7 #1803 (Bravera Visa) - \$-25.00 (credit)
- CD Acct. #5645 (MCC) - \$3862.90
- CD Acct. #5746 (Mercer City Sewer Reserve) - \$7783.69
- CD Acct. #20074 (Mercer City Celebration) - \$3622.38
- CD Acct. #5607 (Mercer City Street Fund) - \$2997.56

Auditor Volochenko stated that she was just beginning to transfer numbers over to the QuickBooks program and hopefully by the December meeting will have comprehensive and accurate reports.

Bills on “Auto Pay” and bills that need to be paid:

The individual bills were reviewed by the council. There was discussion on each bill and clarification if needed.

The roll call vote results to approve payment on the unpaid bills as presented were as follows: Council Member Gardiner yes, Council Member Volochenko yes, Council Member Lorenz yes, Council Member Zinke yes, M/C.

McLean Sheridan Water District Water Monthly Reports:

Discussion included specifically, water loss, unread meters and past due accounts. There was more discussion about the unread meters. Discussion included that there were a number of unread meters, in addition to accounts on that list, which do not have meters. It mentioned was there is city resident that does have a water maintenance background that is willing to help. However they go south for the winter and when they get back next spring, will help to obtain a grant to replace the meters.

Past due list: should only be two accounts now, Auditor Volochenko mentioned that she didn't get the payment worksheet turned in on time and that there are accounts at are indeed current, Auditor Volochenko went on to say that for anyone that has a past due amount on their bill to just subtract what had already paid and remaining amount will be the current balance.

Council Member Volochenko inquired about the cost of the water usage rate that was billed to the City of Mercer (City Hall). Discussion included if this is the city's' share of the basic service charge? *(The actual city hall usage is zero gallons as the city is charged for those gallons on the water loss side; emphasis by Auditor Volochenko)* or something else? Auditor Volochenko will call Ann Broussard on Monday for an explanation.

Water Loss Report:

18.11% loss for the month of October, or 28,400 gallons.

Was mentioned that perhaps water is being stolen in addition to some unread meters.

Mercer Memorial Park Report:

Council Member Lorenz announced that they will be putting up Christmas lights in the city park on Sunday November the 16th if anyone wants to join the park group. Current park bank account balances as of Oct. 29th 2025 are:

Acct. #1532 (park maintenance account) - \$5328.99

Acct. #1196 (money market) - \$5696.83

New Mercer Community Center Report:

Council Member Zinke reported that a savings account was opened on October the 6th 2025 with an opening deposit of \$4,000.00, with another deposit of \$2,966.90 on October 31st 2025 bringing the current balance to \$6,966.90. A public meeting will soon be scheduled by the end of November first part of December to present to the community, the plans and vision of the new MCC building, and to receive public comment.

As of today November the 13th, 2025 a Quit Claim Deed showing the transfer of ownership from the McClusky Farmer's Co-op Elevator to the City of Mercer was recorded with the McLean County Recorder. One of the stipulations of the McClusky Farmer's Co-op Elevator is that the building must be completed within seven years of today's recorded date of November 13th, 2025 or the MCC Committee will be forced to

forfeit the land back and everything attached to the premises to the McClusky Farmers Co-op Elevator. The original recorded deed will be emailed to the city very soon. Council Member Lorenz asked Auditor Volochenko if the funds for the bill from Moore Engineering for the platte survey were transferred from the (original) MCC fund back (reimbursed) into the City General Fund as the city had paid that bill back in January, February, March (estimated dates) as a motion was passed to do so. Auditor Volochenko said that she will check into it.

Mayor Thomsen suggested that the MCC effort as a whole needs to be community driven. Was suggested to hold a community meeting to get input from the community at large, was also suggested to talk to certain people that are more connected with a more diverse demographic of the community

Old Business:

Original MCC Building:

Council Member Lorenz mentioned that she had talked to the city attorney before and since it is public property that it cannot be sold by a realtor.

Need to decide as to what to do, discussion included having a sealed bid sale.

Was mentioned that there will need to be a survey done on the old MCC property to prove the boundary lines before it can be sold.

Motion made by Council Member Gardiner to have KLJ Engineering (<https://kljeng.com>) to conduct the survey, Council Member Zinke seconded,

The results of the roll call vote are as follows: Council Member Lorenz abstains (employee of KLJ), Council Member Gardiner yes, Council Member Volochenko yes, Council member Zinke yes. M/C. Council member Lorenz with contact KLJ Engineering to begin the survey process.

John Deere Tractor Rental:

Auditor Volochenko mentioned that she saw a possible "red flag" with the damage insurance coverage and that the city was maybe charged twice? Auditor Volochenko will call Gooseneck Implement in Harvey to get an answer.

The discussion moved to snow removal and the preparations as such.

Mayor Thomsen talked about the tax distressed properties that are going to be sold by McLean County on November the 18th, 2025.

Old MCC Building Power:

There was a motion made around last June to shut the power off and pull the meter, however it was never done and the average monthly bill is \$44.00. The council when on to reaffirm that the power needs to be shut off and the meter pulled. Auditor Volochenko will make the call to do so. Council Member Lorenz mentioned to we will need to move the propane tanks to another area as the city owns them and they will be needed for the new building.

New Business:

Auditor Volochenko talked about the new (used) laptop computer that the city won from a lottery conducted by the Midwest Assistance Program. She went on the say that the computer isn't super fast and doesn't have a lot of memory, however it is very adequate and is very happy with how it is working.

Old City Water Well Ownership Question:

Mayor Thomsen presented the information obtained by Auditor Volochenko showing that the former city ground water well that the city no longer has easement access nor

did the city ever own the water well. Discussion included this fact. A motion was made by Council Member Lorenz to cancel the ground water permit, Council Member Zinke seconded, roll call vote results were: Council Member Gardiner yes, Council Member Volochenko yes, Council Member Lorenz yes, Council Member Zinke yes, M/C.

Broken Bolts on Sewer Lift Station Access Plates:

Mayor Thomsen mentioned that after Auditor Volochenko was hired as, that she asked (husband) Council Member Volochenko to show her different parts of the city. At the sewer lift station Council Member Volochenko had noticed that the bolts that were used to lock the plates were broken or cut off. Mayor Thomsen then asked if it's something that needs to be repaired. The general consensus was "no", that no repairs are needed. Formal vote not required.

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF part of the COVID 19 rescue package) Compliance Report:

Kathrin spoke with Linda Lies and Linda walked Kathrin through the login process through login.gov, verified that the report was indeed completed and now Mercer City just needs to wait for an invite email to login and close out the SLFRF process in that money is all accounted for and spent.

Discussion included about being in compliance on public notification/notices for lack of water testing in a timely manner. Auditor Volochenko said that the notice is in the City Hall window.

Snow Removal Plan:

Discussion included where to push the snow and to mark certain manhole covers as they could be damaged by the large John Deere rental tractor.

City Auditor Progress Update:

Auditor Volochenko gave a report on the progress with the office and accounting ledger organization. Progress is being made and hopes to have everything in order by the December meeting.

Building Permit Application:

An application for a building permit from Darren Murray was received by Auditor Volochenko.

Council Member Gardiner made a motion to approve the building permit application, Council member Lorenz seconded, vote was unanimous, M/C. Permit number: #2025-1.

WRT Add & Remove Authorized Persons Form:

Auditor Volochenko talked about the WRT add & remove form. Added Mayor Thomsen, Auditor Volochenko and Council Member Lorenz, and removed former Mayor Stude. Form was mailed to WRT last week.

Scam Alert:

Auditor Volochenko received an email in the Mercer City email box "threatened to shut down the email account" if I didn't login and "accept the new terms of service". Auditor Volochenko did login to the main account and there was no such message.

Window and Insulation Estimate from Sheldon Laib:

Council Member Zinke asked Auditor Volochenko if she had seen an estimate, Auditor replied "no". Discussion followed about needing to request some gaming money.

Chains needed for Skid Steer:

Council Member Zinke mentioned that the old chains are worn out and new ones are needed. Discussion included as to where to buy them.

Door Opener of Machine Shop:

Council Member Volochenko mentioned that the shop needs a new door opener. Mayor Thomsen said that gaming proceeds could be used to pay for that and he will get an estimate right away.

Battery Tender for JD 3020:

Mayor Thomsen talked about needing a battery tender for the John Deere 3020 as it's not going to be used much, was mentioned that Harbor Freight has them for \$10.00.

There was no public comment:

Motion was made by Council Member Lorenz made a motion to adjourn, Council Member Volochenko seconded, vote was unanimous, meeting adjourned at 8:48pm.

Respectfully Submitted by: Kathrin Volochenko, Auditor, Mercer City
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