

Minutes for January 8th, 2026 Regular Mercer City Meeting Mercer City Hall at 7:00 pm

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Thomsen at 7:02 pm CST and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Present: Council Members Gary Volochenko, Erika Lorenz, Dan Gardiner, Randy Zinke
Auditor: Kathrin Volochenko

A quorum was established.

Minutes: Mayor Thomsen read the minutes from the December 11th 2025 regular meeting. Council Member Lorenz made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, Council Member Volochenko seconded, ayes all, M/C.

Financials: Mayor Thomsen presented the completed 2025 Profit & Loss (P&L) report and & Balance Sheet Standard, Mayor Thomsen also presented the 2026 Fiscal Year to Date (YTD) Profit & Loss (P&L) standard report & Balance Sheet standard city financials.

Auditor Volochenko noted that these reports reflect the completed financials in that the Water & Sewer Project Accounts that are required by the USDA and the Bank of North Dakota as a loan stipulation are now fully funded to date, and that the General Fund account has an adequate balance, which includes the Streets Fund accounts.

Auditor Volochenko suggested that a motion should be made to approve the transfer of funds from the general account to the water and sewer accounts.

Council Member Lorenz made a motion to approve the transfer of funds from the general fund account to the appropriate Water and Sewer Project Fund accounts.

Council Member Gardiner seconded roll call vote results; Council member Gardiner “aye”, Council Member Volochenko “aye”, Council Member Lorenz “aye”, Council Member Zinke “aye”, M/C.

Council Member Lorenz made a motion to approve all the financials as presented, Council Member Volochenko seconded, roll call vote results: Council member Gardiner “aye”, Council Member Volochenko “aye”, Council Member Lorenz “aye”, Council Member Zinke “aye”, M/C.

Auditor Volochenko mentioned the current available (remaining) balance in the Municipal Infrastructure Fund Bill (“operation prairie dog”) is \$17,345.20.

Bills: Mayor Thomsen presented the bills that need to be paid. Council Member Gardiner made a motion to approve the bills as presented, Council Member Lorenz seconded, roll call vote results: Council member Gardiner “aye”, Council Member Volochenko “aye”, Council Member Lorenz “aye”, Council Member Zinke “aye”, M/C.

Water Reports: Mayor Thomsen presented the water usage & various account reports. There was some discussion about the unread meters.

Park Report: Council Member Lorenz mentioned that the next Park Committee meeting will be on January the 12th.

New Community Center Project Report: Council Member Zinke reported that a meeting date hasn’t been set yet. There was discussion about the meeting date and the presentation itself. The date of January the 27th at 7:00 pm at the Mercer City Hall was agreed on.

Old Business:

1. Mayor Thomsen talked about an email received on December 26th was about the Evolv.Inc./Gov Card monthly charge of \$19.95 per month was a PCI DSS (Payment Card Industry/Data Security Standard) non-compliance fee. Mercer had been charged \$19.95 each month since August 29th 2025 x 4 months = \$79.80. A new PCI DSS Compliance Certificate was obtained on 12/26/2025 by Auditor Volochenko and is good for one year.
2. Mayor Thomsen mentioned that the 2026 City Election Cycle Candidate Petition packets are ready for anyone that chooses to run for a city office. Here was some discussion as to when the Mayoral election should take place. If it should coincide with the Presidential election cycle or continue historically to coincide with "mid-term elections. Mayor Thomsen asked Auditor Volochenko to inquire with the ND League of Cities in house attorney for an opinion.
3. Mayor Thomsen said that Midwest Doors of Bismarck is scheduled to install the shop door opener on January 29th 2026 for an estimated amount of \$1,619.00.
4. Auditor Volochenko talked about the city office organization to date and that the 2025 4th Qtr quarterlies will be completed during the coming week and that it's now just a matter of paper sorting and file organization.

New Business:

1. Mayor Thomsen mentioned that a new (updated) Bravera Bank credit card arrived in mail and has been activated through a new 3rd party bank sponsored portal.
2. Mayor Thomsen said that the first 2026 City Election notice has been published in the official city newspaper in the last issue of December 2025:
3. Mayor Thomsen talked about "Designating depository's requirement & Bond declaration; as required by NDCC21-04-13 the governing board of any public corporation, except the board of supervisors of any township and the school board of any common school district, at its regular meeting in January of each even-numbered year, shall assemble and examine all outstanding bonds"; the current bonds that are held by Mercer City are; NDIRF Blanket Bond, USDA Municipal Bond Loan #91-04, USDA Municipal Bond Loan #92-06 and Bank of North Dakota Bond #240 (120% coverage). "And require new bonds whenever necessary in order to comply with the provisions of this chapter. At such meeting, the board shall designate depositories of public funds in accordance with the provisions of this chapter." Currently such depositories declared are; Bravera Bank.
4. Mayor Thomsen said that the "Microsoft 365 Personal" subscription has been canceled by Auditor Volochenko and will end January, 16, 2026. Would otherwise be charged \$99.99 + \$5.00 (estimated) tax annually, Auditor Volochenko installed Microsoft Office Suite 2007 edition at no charge.

5. Mayor Thomsen mentioned that the printer was hacked into about a month ago as there were papers that were printed at random that had some odd code in the top margins. The main problem was that Auditor Volochenko had the printer on “Wi-Fi Direct” option. Auditor Volochenko did change the Wi-Fi password.

The WRT technicians came a few days later corrected/disconnected the printer and they did recommend a separate anti-virus program. Auditor Volochenko researched some pricing as follows;

- Norton is \$99.99 1st year, then auto renews @ \$179.99 - 5 Employees (foreign based)
- McAfee is \$29.99 1st year then auto renews @ \$124.99. - 5 devices – (foreign based)
- PC Matic is \$150.00 per year- 5 Devices – (US Based)

Council Member Lorenz made a motion to use PC Matic for the city anti-virus program; Council Member Zinke seconded, roll call vote results; Council Member Gardiner “aye”, Council Member Volochenko “aye”, Council Member Lorenz “aye”, Council Member Zinke “aye”, M/C.

6. Mayor Thomsen said that the current Quicken subscription will auto-renew January 16, 2026 for \$77.88 per year. Mayor Thomsen recommended that the city should keep the subscription as a backup. Council Member Lorenz said at least for another year. Council member Gardiner made a motion to keep the Quicken subscription for another year, Council Member Volochenko seconded the motion. Roll call results are; Council Member Gardiner “aye”, Council member Volochenko “aye”, Council Member Lorenz “aye”, Council Member Zinke “aye”, M/C.
7. Mayor Thomsen said that the city received an invoice for membership from the Coal Conversion Counties (McLean, Mercer and Oliver Counties) Council Member Zinke made a motion to join the Coal Conversion Counties(McLean, Mercer and Oliver Counties), council Member Volochenko seconded, roll call votes results are; Council Member Gardiner “aye”, Council member Volochenko “aye”, Council Member Lorenz “aye”, Council Member Zinke “aye”, M/C.
8. Mayor Thomsen said that there is training for O&M Waste Water Mgrs. (Waste Water Operators & Managers) available January 20th in Beulah, January 21st in Carrington & January 22nd in Kindred. Auditor Volochenko can sign anyone up if interested.
9. Auditor Volochenko visited with Grant at Bravera about an office scanner for batch deposits of checks: Was asking \$40.00 per month, which the Auditor challenged, Grant said that he could probably get reduced to \$5.00 per month + a capture fee of .05 per check. This would allow auditor to deposit checks without requiring a weekly drive to Bravera Bank in McClusky. Discussion included the

benefits in the ability to deposit multiple checks on a daily basis without having to drive 13 miles one way to the bank in McClusky.

10. Mayor Thomsen said that will discuss removing or deactivating accounts from the “unread meter” & “main” roster that don’t have a curb stop/meter next meeting.
11. Mayor Thomsen talked about ND DEQ (North Dakota Division of Environmental Quality) – 2026 Water sampling schedule, the 2026 Examination & Spring Training Classes packet. Mayor Thomsen read through the training schedule and added that we need to attend some classes, especially the waste water training.
12. Mayor Thomsen & Auditor Volochenko talked about the 2026 Mil Levy sheet. Auditor Volochenko talked about the fact that the mil levy sheet is the foundation for the Mercer City annual budget. Auditor Volochenko added that she will be starting on the budget beginning in February.
13. Council Member Zinke mentioned the “Road Boss” box scraper needs some work with the cutting edge and skids.

Public Comment:

No speaker cards were turned into the Auditor; therefore there was no public comment.

14. With no further business to discuss Mayor Thomsen asked for a motion to adjourn, Council Member Volochenko made a motion to adjourn, Council member Gardiner seconded, “ayes” all, M/C Meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm CST.