

# MERCER COUNTY COMMISSION MINUTES

November 19, 2025  
The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Gene Wolf.  
Present were Commissioners Rick Bauman, Jamee Folk, Mark Pierce, Casey Voigt, and Auditor Carmen Reed. Dan Arens of the Hazen Star was absent. Others present during the meeting were Deputy Auditor Mark Erhardt, Tax Director Jen Neumiller, Treasurer Dawn Grannis, Assistant Highway Superintendent Dennis Olheiser, Highway Department Administrative Assistant Rachel Grimm, Golden Valley City Council Kyle Lukenbach, RDO Equipment Representative Scott Owens, and Butler Machinery Representative Kasey Erickson. Pledge of allegiance was said.  
Voigt moved to approve the amended agenda. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.  
Folk moved to approve the November 3, 2025 joint meeting minutes as presented. Pierce seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.  
Bauman moved to approve the November 5, 2025 regular meeting minutes as presented. Voigt seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.  
Folk moved to approve the November 6, 2025 special meeting minutes part one as presented. Bauman seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.  
Folk moved to approve the November 6, 2025 special meeting minutes part two as presented. Voigt seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.  
Pierce moved to approve proceeding forward to complete the land use map update with Moore Engineering's quote of \$2,000. Folk seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.  
Tax Director Jennifer Neumiller informed the Commission that Jesse Schiferl has resigned from the planning and zoning board and his term ends June, 2026.  
Golden Valley City Council Member Kyle Lukenbach requested \$17,500 to help build a pavilion at the Golden Valley City Park. Voigt moved to approve \$15,000 from the Parks-In-Lieu fund, paying half now and then the remaining once project is completed. Pierce seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.  
The purchase agreements for the Roughrider RV Park location, 6071 Hwy 200, Beulah from R&R Properties LLP and the J2 Studio renovations fee proposal were discussed. Folk moved to approve both R&R Properties LLP purchase agreements, one for \$101,000 to be paid in December, 2025 and second one for \$499,000 to be paid in February, 2026. Bauman seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. Bauman moved to approve the J2 Studio Renovation Fee Proposal, which included estimated costs of (1) \$5,950 per hour for Architect, (2) Estimated total of \$500 for printing and office expenses, and (3) \$110 J2 Studio-mileage per trip. Voigt seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.  
Folk moved to approve the October Recorder Revenues of \$7,396.00. Bauman seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.  
The December 3, 2025 regular commission meeting will be held at the County Museum starting at 8:00 a.m.  
Voigt moved to approve offering the following foreclosed properties of ZZ14489040006, ZZ14489090508, and ZZ14489200003, back to their respective city of Zap for \$1.00 per platted parcel and clear the property taxes on them. Pierce seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.  
Recessed at 9:52 a.m.  
Reconvened at 10:00 a.m.  
Assistant Highway Superintendent Dennis Olheiser and Highway Department Administrative Assistant Rachel Grimm opened the Motor Grader Bids from RDO Equipment and Butler Machinery. Olheiser

requested to review the bids. Bauman moved to postpone final bid decision until the next meeting. Voigt seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.  
Voigt moved to approve the Federal Aid Maintenance Certification as presented. Bauman seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.  
Folk moved to approve the Montana-Dakota Utility Permit #1775 (25) as presented. Voigt seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried.  
Portfolio updates were given.  
Folk moved to approve all bills as presented. Voigt seconded. All voted aye. Motion carried. The following bills were approved for payment: AED EVERYWHERE \$128.43; ARMOR INTERACTIVE \$2,606.00; BERG, MICHAEL \$32.20; BLUE 360 MEDIA, LLC \$253.89; BOESHANS, JAYME \$28.00; BRODKORB, VICKIE \$959.04; CHARM-TEX, INC. \$65.40; CITY OF GOLDEN VALLEY \$7,529.75; COMPUTER EXPRESS \$4,787.98; DAKOTA POWER HYDRAULICS \$1,500.72; DEMELLO, ZACHARY \$126.00; DONOVAN & KAFFAR PLLP \$25,036.50; FARMERS UNION OIL CO \$2,787.99; FARMERS UNION OIL CO \$22.10; FITTERER OIL HAZEN LLC \$341.57; FLEMMER, RYAN \$14.00; GIERKE, GARY \$51.80; GRANNIS, DAWN \$30.15; HAZEN MOTOR CO \$63.00; HAZEN STAR \$564.87; HOUSTON ENGINEERING INC \$6,124.50; INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT \$6,171.25; JOHNSEN TRAILER SALES, INC. \$422.12; KNUTSON, WANDA \$332.00; LANGUAGE LINE SERVICES \$180.00; LIGNITE TIRE SERVICE \$1,256.00; LUCKYS TOWING AND REPAIR \$650.00; M & B RENTALS LLP \$675.00; MERCER COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT \$322.84; MERCER COUNTY TREASURER \$40,591.17; MIDCONTINENT COMMUNICATIONS \$183.17; NAPA \$214.47; ND ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES \$11,960.00; ND ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES \$63.00; ND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASS'N \$1,725.00; NDAE4-HYW %JILL MURPHY \$100.00; NDEAFCS \$125.00; NDSU AG COMMUNICATION \$80.00; NEUBERGER OIL COMPANY \$2,441.80; North Central International, LLC \$380.11; NORTHWEST TIRE AUTO SERVICE INC. \$1,507.84; OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL \$206.25; P O S T BOARD \$495.00; PFLIGER, METTA \$1,025.50; PLATINUM MOTOR SPORTS INC \$4,884.00; QUADIENT FINANCE USA, INC. \$2,000.00; ROUGH RIDER INDUSTRIES \$456.32; ROUGHRIDER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC \$818.19; S & M LAWN SERVICE \$390.00; SAILER, SHANNON \$28.00; SAKAKAWEA MEDICAL CENTER \$852.23; SCHEID, RICHARD \$12.60; SCHLENDER, SCOTT \$25.20; SEIFERT, BRADLEY Q \$297.04; SOUTHWEST WATER AUTHORITY \$57.28; TAYLOR PRINT & VISUAL IMPRESSIONS \$6,250.00; Tyler Business Forms \$990.36; TYLER TECHNOLOGIES \$1,015.00; UNIFORM CENTER \$2,463.89; VERIZON WIRELESS \$492.37; WALD FENCING & SUPPLIES \$57.80; WEST RIVER TELECOMMUNICATIONS \$2,488.43; WESTERN PLAINS PUBLIC HEALTH \$4,592.40. (TOTAL: \$152,332.52)  
There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:36 a.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 3, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. in the Mercer County Historical Society Museum, 108 7th ST NE in Beulah, North Dakota. The meetings can be viewed online at [www.mercercountytnd.com](http://www.mercercountytnd.com).  
Approved: Gene Wolf, Chairman  
Attest: Carmen Reed, Auditor

(12-11-2025)

# New life and new look for a local Christmas tradition

BY DANIEL ARENS

What better way to welcome the Christmas season than by taking in classic and sacred Christmas music from area singers? The Knife River Chorale returns this weekend, telling the story of Christmas and the reason for the season. But the return also comes with some changes.  
The chorale performances, long held in Hazen, will be in Beulah this year. The two concerts will be held at the Beulah Middle School Auditorium. Times are Dec. 13 at 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 14 at 3 p.m.  
In addition to the change in venue, the chorale is also introducing a new holiday

cantata. This Christmas medley will feature a variety of hymns and carols put together, with several narrators and accompanying piano music taking the story of Jesus' birth and telling it in a new way.  
The latter half of the concert features three additional Christmas songs, including both a men's piece and a women's piece.  
The concert is free for all to attend. A freewill offering will be taken during intermission at each performance.  
Come out amid the winter scenery and take time this busy Christmas season to slow down, enjoy great music and remember the full significance of the holiday we are soon to celebrate.



FILE PHOTO BY KRIS PILLAR

The Knife River Chorale, pictured here from a performance last year in Hazen. This year, the chorale will hold its Christmas concerts in Beulah at the middle school auditorium there, with performances at 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 13 and 3 p.m. on Dec. 14.

# School spirit in the holiday season

BY DANIEL ARENS

Hazen administrators are finding ways to balance learning, fun and a positive school culture as Christmas and the end of the first semester fast approach.  
During a school board meeting Dec. 8, Hazen Middle School Principal Paul Richter talked about finals coming up next week for students.  
“I have a lot of students coming up to check with me if they are exempt from finals,” Richter told the board.  
But test exemption does not mean school exemption, and Richter said he is working on finding ways to keep those students who are exempt from tests busy, while also recognizing and awarding them for their achievements.  
Richter said there will be Christmas movies playing in the school's main room. He added that he is also looking at incorporating other activities like having kids be able to cook in order to give them something to do if they are exempt from multiple tests and start getting sick of movies.  
Richter is incorporating as many dress-up days and themes into the calendar as possible, with Christmas themes going on currently and candy canes handed out to those who dress up.  
“It makes me happy to see that middle schoolers can still be motivated by receiving a candy cane,” Richter said.  
“I want to thank you for thinking outside the box and really building a community over there in the middle school,” School Board Chair Brian Nolan said. The other board members agreed, saying it is nice to see the middle school getting its own culture.

The board members also talked about attendance, with ways to recognize students who have perfect attendance in different school buildings.  
Hazen School District Superintendent Ken Miller said the calendar committee is still finalizing the plans for the 2026-27 school year calendar. He said the plan is to present this to the school board at the board's January meeting.  
While the school board and calendar committee are already looking ahead towards the next year, the current year is bringing challenges. On Dec. 10, the day this paper went to press, the Hazen School District canceled school in advance of the expected freezing rain, ice and high winds, with snow anticipated later in the week.  
This is the second day that Hazen has canceled school for the day, after a snowstorm caused the district to cancel on Nov. 25. Hazen has two snow days built into its calendar for the current school year; both of these will now be needed. And, with winter not even officially here yet, further inclement weather days will either need to be forgiven or made up at the end of the school year.  
Miller and the board members briefly addressed the topic at the Dec. 8 meeting (prior to Tuesday's cancellation decision being made). Miller said they would have to wait and see, addressing issues as they come up.  
In other business, the Hazen School Board:

- unanimously approved all bills and financial statements,
- unanimously approved the school

See **SCHOOL** on page 14

**ABBREVIATED NOTICE OF INTENT TO RE-ENTER AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NORTH DAKOTA HIGHWAY PATROL AND THE THREE AFFILIATED TRIBES RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT MUTUAL AID**  
TAKE NOTICE that the North Dakota Highway Patrol will hold a public hearing concerning the agreement upon the request of any resident of the county in which the notice is published if the request is made within thirty days of the publication of the notice.  
To request a public hearing or to obtain a copy of the proposed agreement contact the North Dakota Highway Patrol at 600 E Boulevard Avenue Department 504, Bismarck, ND 58505 or by calling 701-328-2447.  
Dated this 28 day of November, 2025.  
Colonel Daniel Haugen

STAY INFORMED READ  
YOUR PUBLIC NOTICES.