

CITY OF CENTER CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

February 18, 2026
 3:00 p.m.
 Betty Hagel Memorial Civic Center and via Microsoft Teams
 Meeting called to order at 3:05 p.m. by Council President Troy Hatzenbihler.
 Members Present:
 Troy Hatzenbihler
 Lisa Gusewelle
 Eric Casson (arrival and status addressed during meeting)
 Also Present:
 Jen Gooss, City Attorney
 Keith Reuther, Public Works Superintendent
 Moore Engineering representatives AJ Tuck and Michael Gorder
 RaShell Simenson, City Auditor
 City residents
 Quorum and Opening
 At the start of the meeting, two council members were present. Lisa Gusewelle inquired of City Attorney Jen Gooss whether the meeting could proceed. Attorney Gooss advised the council to begin the meeting in the normal course.
 Approval of Agenda
 Lisa Gusewelle moved to approve the agenda with Moore Engineering moved to the top.
 Troy Hatzenbihler seconded.
 Motion carried.
 Moore Engineering – Water Model and Project Discussion
 AJ Tuck and Michael Gorder presented findings from the City's water model report, including:
 • Purpose of the report
 • Findings of the water model
 • Project alternatives
 • Funding considerations
 Key Findings
 • The ground-level water tank allows water to remain in storage for up to 11 days. Industry standards recommend water turnover within 5 days.
 • Moore Engineering recommended demolition of the ground-level water tank. Estimated demolition cost: approximately \$50,000.
 • The elevated water tower has not received major upgrades since construction and requires rehabilitation. Estimated tower rehabilitation cost: approximately \$550,000.
 • Current fire flow in the southwest commercial area is approximately 801 gallons per minute. Recommended commercial fire flow is 1,000 gallons per minute or greater.
 • Current infrastructure includes aging asbestos cement pipe estimated at approximately 75 years old.
 Alternatives Presented
 Alternative 1
 • Install 8-inch crossing from Market Street to Oliver Avenue and into the commercial area.

- Improve fire flow to approximately 1,135 gallons per minute.
- Estimated cost: approximately \$1.5 million.
- Fastest option to complete.

Alternative 2
 • Includes Alternative 1 improvements plus an 8-inch trunk line from the water tower south of the school through Main Street into the industrial area.
 • Replacement of aging water main from 6-inch to 8-inch.
 • Epoxy sewer lining for clay tile sewer.
 • Improves fire flow to approximately 1,206 gallons per minute.
 • Estimated total project cost: over \$4 million including legal, engineering, and contingencies.
 • Recommended by Moore Engineering.
 Funding discussion included potential 60 percent cost share from DWR for eligible items. Rehabilitation, OSHA improvements, coatings, and demolition are not eligible. Estimated loan portion under Alternative 2 would be approximately \$2.2 million over 30 years at 2 percent interest. Estimated user cost impact: approximately \$26 to \$27 per month per user.

Alternative 3
 • 10-inch trunk line to industrial area.
 • Improves fire flow to approximately 1,427 gallons per minute.
 • Considered cost prohibitive and not recommended.
 Additional discussion included the upcoming water depot project, system pressure requirements of 20 psi minimum, potential rate increases or special assessments, and the aging condition of infrastructure.
 No formal action was taken on project alternatives. Council indicated further discussion would be held at future meetings.
 Rescind Resignation – Eric Casson
 Discussion occurred regarding Eric Casson's previously submitted resignation. Attorney Gooss stated that under Attorney General opinion, a resignation becomes effective upon acceptance or appointment of a successor. It was determined the resignation was effective.
 Eric Casson addressed the council and public, rescinded his resignation request, and issued a public apology to city residents and city employees. He stated his intention to serve through June.
 Discussion regarding council portfolios occurred but was not on the agenda. No action was taken.
 Resignation of Mayor
 Lisa Gusewelle moved to accept the resignation of Mayor John Lee.
 Eric Casson seconded.
 Vote: Lisa – yes; Eric – yes; Troy – yes.
 Motion carried.
 Mayor Appointment

Under North Dakota Century Code, the council discussed appointment of a mayor for the unexpired term.
 Troy Hatzenbihler moved to appoint Eric Casson as mayor.
 No second.
 Troy Hatzenbihler moved to appoint himself as mayor.
 No second.
 Eric Casson moved to appoint Lisa Gusewelle as mayor for the unexpired term.
 Troy Hatzenbihler seconded.
 Vote: Eric – yes; Troy – yes; Lisa – yes.
 Motion carried.
 Following the meeting, Attorney Gooss provided clarification that state statute requires a 15-day period before appointment. A memorandum was later issued and publicly shared indicating that the appointment must comply with the statutory waiting period.
 Council President
 Troy Hatzenbihler resigned as Council President and moved to appoint Lisa Gusewelle as Acting Council President.
 Eric Casson seconded.
 Vote: Eric – yes; Lisa – yes; Troy – yes.
 Motion carried.
 Resignation of City Auditor
 RaShell Simenson announced her resignation and thanked the council and city for the opportunity to serve.
 Financial Signatures
 Lisa Gusewelle moved to remove John Lee from city financial accounts and to add Troy Hatzenbihler as an authorized signer.
 Eric Casson seconded.
 Vote: Lisa – yes; Eric – yes; Troy – no.
 Motion carried.
 Lisa Gusewelle moved to remove RaShell Simenson from city financial accounts.
 Eric Casson seconded.
 Vote: Eric – yes; Lisa – yes; Troy – yes.
 Motion carried.
 Attorney Gooss recommended waiting to add additional signers until a new auditor is appointed.
 Attorney Fees
 City Attorney Jen Gooss advised the council that legal hours for February exceeded the standard 6–8 hours per month due to council matters and resignations. March billing will reflect additional time consistent with the contract.
 Additional Business
 • Extending office help hours: Tabled.
 • Retention bonuses: Tabled.
 • Housing Authority contract: Awaiting signatures from purchasing party; contract located in office.
 Adjournment
 Meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m. by Acting Council President Lisa Gusewelle.
 (02-26-2026)

NOTICE OF SUMMONS

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA IN DISTRICT COURT COUNTY OF OLIVER SOUTH CENTRAL JUDICIAL DISTRICT FIRST INTERNATIONAL BANK & TRUST, PLAINTIFF,
 VS.
 PROPERTY PRO HOLDINGS, LLC, ANY PERSON IN POSSESSION, AND ALL PERSONS UNKNOWN CLAIMING ANY ESTATE OR INTEREST IN, OR LIEN OR ENCUMBRANCE UPON THE REAL ESTATE DESCRIBED IN THE COMPLAINT, DEFENDANTS.

existing or subsequently erected or affixed buildings, improvements and fixtures; all easements, rights of way, and appurtenances; all water, water rights, water permits, and watercourses (including stock in utilities with water or irrigation permits or rights); and all other rights, royalties, and profits relating to the real property, including without limitation all minerals, oil, coal, gravel, clay, scoria, gas, geothermal and similar matters located in Oliver County, State of North Dakota, and described as follows: LOT 1, BLOCK 2, MUTCHLERS (A/K/A MUTCHLER'S) ADDITION TO THE CITY OF CENTER, OLIVER COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA

SUMMONS
 THE STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANTS:
 [¶1.] YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to appear and defend the Complaint in this action which is herewith served upon you or will be filed with the Clerk of this Court, by serving upon the undersigned an answer or other proper response within twenty-one (21) days after the service of this Summons upon you, exclusive of the date of service. If you fail to do so, judgment by default will be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.
 [¶2.] YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that this action relates to the foreclosure of a real estate mortgage upon the following described real property, together with all

Dated February 24, 2026.
 Pearce Durick PLLC
 Quinn P. Fylling, ND#06744
 QPF@pearce-durick.com
 Orrin J. Burch, ND#09730
 OJB@pearce-durick.com
 314 East Thayer Avenue
 P.O. Box 400
 Bismarck, ND 58502-0400
 (701) 223-2890
 ATTORNEYS FOR PLAINTIFF FIRST INTERNATIONAL BANK & TRUST
 (02-26-2026)(03-05-2026)(03-12-2026)

CENTER FFA STUDENTS BRING BACK HARDWARE IN COMPETITION



SUBMITTED PHOTO | REBECCA SCHMIDT

A few students from the Center-Stanton's FFA chapter returned from their competition at the Roughrider Judging Contest in Dickinson with some awards last week. Pictured are, from left, Paisley Kitzmann, who finished just one point away from earning a bronze medal; Rachel Schmidt, who earned a silver; and Kallen Albers, who won a bronze medal. Center FFA Advisor Rebecca Schmidt said her group is set to compete in several regional competitions over the next few weekends leading up to the FFA's state Winter CDEs, which will be held at Dakota State Fair Center in Minot, Monday, March 23.

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW...

HA Oliver County North Dakota Limited Editions

Up to \$288 off + FREE Shipping

SALE

Go to your favorite local gun shop OR Order directly from: HISTORICAL ARMORY, INC. Call 1-877-484-0179 www.HistoricalArmory.com/oliver-nd

Fantastic as a family heirloom, keepsake or community fundraiser. (Personalization Available)

Henry Golden Boy H004 Limited Edition of 25
 Also on .22 Classic H001-22 .30-30 Brass Side Gate Buy 1 or Buy all 3!

RUGER 1911
 SALE ENDS MAR 15, 2026

Historic Oliver County North Dakota

Thank you for reading the Center Republican