

HAZEN CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

May 18, 2026

Hazen City Hall

Present: President Schiferl, Commissioner Folkerts, Commissioner Stern and Commissioner Wiedrich (telephonically).

Absent: Commissioner Haack

Others Present: Debbie Rahn, PW Director Brousseau, Grant Dockter (Moore Eng), Buster Langowski, Darren Mund, HCD Director Heier, Chief Wolff, Attorney Kaffar, and Auditor Erhardt.

President Schiferl called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

President Schiferl led the pledge of allegiance and said the prayer.

Minutes: Commissioner Folkerts moved to suspend the reading and approve the minutes of the May 4th meeting, as presented, second by Commissioner Stern. Motion unanimously approved.

Agenda: Commissioner Folkerts moved to approve the agenda, as presented, second by Commissioner Stern. Motion unanimously approved.

CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY AND ENGINEER

Engineer's Report: Grant Dockter, Moore Engineering, stated the engineers are still seeking options for the repairs in Expedition Estates. Regarding the sewer project, lining and manhole rehab has been completed with the engineer planning to review this work soon. Mr. Dockter presented an application for payment submitted by CC Steel in the amount of \$185,085.00 for work completed through May 12th and recommended approval of the payment. Commissioner Folkerts moved to approve pay application #7 to CC Steel in the amount of \$185,085.00, second by Commissioner Stern. On roll call vote: Folkerts, "Aye", Stern, "Aye", Wiedrich,

"Aye", Schiferl, "Aye", motion carried. Mr. Dockter reported that paving the areas under the project and additional patching approved at the last meeting will start by the end of May or early June. Mr. Dockter and PW Director Brousseau measured additional areas discussed at the previous meeting and will have costs for these at the next meeting. The engineers are working through the final list for the water service line inventory and will have this completed soon. Mr. Dockter contacted Winkler Construction about concrete patching that has been approved and this will be taken care of this year at the cost quoted.

REQUEST OF CITIZENS

Street Closure-Auction – M. Kamm: The commission reviewed a request to close a portion of 4th Street NE on June 20th from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM for a household auction by Mary Kamm. Darren Mund assisted with the request and informed the commission, when asked, that this would affect one neighbor directly and they expressed no objection to the closure. Commissioner Folkerts moved to allow closure of the street on June 20th, as requested, second by Commissioner Stern. Motion unanimously approved.

INTRODUCTION, READING, AND APPROVAL OF ORDINANCES

Zoning Ordinance Amendments: The commission reviewed proposed changes to the city zoning ordinance as drafted and approved by the Planning & Zoning Committee. A public hearing was held on May 11, 2026, at 4:30 PM to hear any objections or comments on the proposed changes and none were received. Commissioner Wiedrich moved to adopt the proposed changes to the Planning and Zoning Ordinances as presented, second by Commissioner Stern. On roll call vote: Wiedrich, "Aye", Stern,

"Aye", Folkerts, "Aye", Schiferl, "Aye", motion carried. The amendments are adopted and will become effective upon publication.

APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS AND BUILDING PERMITS

Fireworks Sales Application – Memory Fireworks: The commission reviewed an application for permit to sell fireworks and the approval of the fire chief with final inspection to be conducted once products are in place at the water plant structure. Commissioner Wiedrich moved to approve the application and permit, as presented, second by Commissioner Folkerts. On roll call vote: Wiedrich, "Aye", Folkerts, "Aye", Stern, "Aye", Schiferl, "Aye", motion carried.

REPORTS

Water/Sewer/Garbage: Commissioner Stern informed the board that there are PTO problems on the International garbage truck and the issue was diagnosed by Freedom Truck Center with an estimated cost of \$8150.49 to replace the PTO pump, which cannot be repaired. Commissioner Folkerts asked about the possibility of machining the part and was advised this would not be possible. Commissioner Stern moved to approve the repairs as estimated by Freedom Truck Center in the amount of \$8150.49, second by Commissioner Folkerts. On roll call vote: Stern, "Aye", Folkerts, "Aye", Wiedrich, "Aye", Schiferl, "Aye", motion carried. The estimate included tire replacement and PW Director Brousseau indicated that he has replacement tires on hand.

Street/Cemetery: Commissioner Haack absent, no report. PW Director Brousseau had nothing to report at this time.

Finance/Busing/Library: Commissioner Folkerts had nothing to report at this time.

Police/Fire/Forestry: Commissioner Wiedrich asked about parking fees and directed the auditor to gather information from other communities. Chief Wolff had nothing to report. HCD: Antoinette Heier, HCD Director, informed the commission that the nail salon is operational and that a liquidation sale is scheduled at Bee's Café. Ms. Heier reported that West Dakota Lumber was a recipient of a business improvement grant and that other grants for storefront improvement and other business enhancements are still to be awarded.

President: President Schiferl had nothing to report at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gontran "Buster" Langowski addressed the commission regarding Expedition Estates and had a question regarding the options for repair of the sewer line. Mr. Dockter indicated that this work could be done by open cut (excavation), or trenchless processes with either being acceptable so long as the pipe meets specifications. Mr. Langowski also asked about the reported length of five-hundred feet (500') of repairs as he measured the distance from manhole-to-manhole around two-hundred eighty feet (280'). The map of the area was reviewed to identify which area was used to calculate the reported footage. Mr. Langowski encouraged the commission to look at all the options and not sit on the project, stating that it is important to move forward. Mr. Langowski suggested special assessing the cost of repairs with the special assessment committee having latitude on which lots to assess and what the benefit is to the area. Commissioner Wiedrich expressed doubt in trenchless processes repairing the sewer line satisfactorily as the road still appears to be sinking. No

action taken.

Approval of Bills and Financial Statements: Commissioner Folkerts moved to approve the bills and financial statements, as presented, second by Commissioner Stern. Pre-paid and bills approved for payment are as follows: MDU, 4426.97; Roughrider Electric Coop Inc, 4637.90; AED Everywhere, 158.65; API Garage Door Inc, 3298.00; Bank of ND, 141524.09; Beulah ND Hardware LLC, 138.97; Bloom'n House, 67.00; Catalis PWE, 4757.00; CC Steel LLC, 185085.00; Cenex, 4064.12; D&E Supply, 252.86; Dakota Supply Group, 1298.19; Donovan & Kaffar PLLP, 2430.00; Fastenal, 88.65; Fitterer Oil LLC, 54.75; Fuelman Fleet Program, 1240.13; Hazen Rural Fire Dept, 325.82; Hazen Star, 1012.85; Health Equity, 6.50; ITD, 157.80; Jim Block, 114.00; Krause's, 29.94; Loren Wiest, 975.00; Mandate Automotives, 153.92; Marco Technologies LLC, 277.36; Mercer Co Highway Dept, 9900.00; Mercer Co Treasurer, 993.50; New Pig Corp, 131.53; North Central International LLC, 80.17; Ronnie Blekestad Jr, 42.48; Rough Rider Industries, 662.78; Stamps.com, 22.49; The Hub, 762.79; UGPTI/NDLTAP, 100.00; Uniform Center, 36.00. On roll call vote: Folkerts, "Aye", Stern, "Aye", Wiedrich, "Aye", Schiferl, "Aye", motion carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:57 PM CT. The next regular meeting of the commission is scheduled for Monday, June 1, 2026, at 5:30 PM CT in the Commission Room of the Hazen City Hall.

Approved: Jesse Schiferl, President
Attest: Monte J. Erhardt, Auditor
(06-04-2026)

Shuffling and reshaping

BY DANIEL ARENS

As the Hazen School District continues to grapple with a large budget deficit, there have been changes with office personnel, busing and support staff pay.

"We are trying to absorb some positions to save money," Superintendent Ken Miller said during a school board meeting May 11.

These changes include having high school office administrative assistant Kim Nolan move to the high school library, with Jennifer Jones staying in the office. Miller said that business office employees Billie Jo Peterson and Lily Ward have stepped in to help with the transition.

On the transportation side, Miller said there was a breakdown of communication after a new bus manager came on board, leading to concerns in the district on busing. He said communication has improved since then, with Miller helping by taking on a morning bus route. He also added that the vice president of the company came up to Hazen in person and visited about option for hiring more full-time bus drivers and improving the bus fleet.

Miller then turned to pay increases for support staff in the district, saying the personnel and finance committee recommended the district look at a percentage increase comparable to how teacher and administrator increases are handled.

"I am asking the board for approval for a 3 percent increase with a 50-cent minimum," Miller said, adding the request also includes a freeze on starting wages for newly-hired employees. There are a couple of employees in the district who would see less than a 50-cent increase with the 3 percent raise, which is why Miller requested the minimum so those employees would be bumped up to the 50-cent mark.

School board member Steph Huber moved to approve the support staff pay increase and the freeze on hourly starting wages for new employ-

ees, with board member Laura Zingg seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

The issue of reclassifying nine-month hourly employees in order to offer full-time health insurance benefits with 90 percent coverage caused more discussion. Miller asked the board to consider approval of the reclassification, noting that, while custodians already qualify for benefits, employees like paras and cooks who only work hourly jobs during the school year and not in the summer do not qualify for health insurance benefits.

"Obviously, this is a very considerate and generous thing to do, but I'm wondering what the rationale is?" Board member Jen Wallender asked. She said it would be a big jump to essentially consider employees working the number of hours these employees do as full-time with access to those benefits, in particular as the district is looking to consolidate and absorb positions elsewhere.

Board chairman Brian Nolan said offering in-lieu-of benefits to these employees would be considerably more expensive to the district than offering insurance.

Wallender and Zingg said they wanted to get more information, looking at a more detailed breakdown in costs, comparisons of all hourly employees and comparisons with other school districts before acting on the proposal.

Wallender moved to table the discussion until a later date, with Huber seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

Several summer building projects were discussed at the meeting, including a boiler system, a facelift for the boys bathroom near the elementary school gym, replacing the carpet in the high school theater and replacing three boiler pumps.

There was more discussion on leaking with the elementary school roof. Miller said an inspection noted that the building and the roof do not always meet perfectly and there are gaps where masonry has broken off. When pipes are frozen, the water comes in through these gaps

when it cannot flow through the pipes.

Miller said this means the school district could look at sealing these gaps first before needing to replace the entire roof, adding the quote on this looks at extending the life of the roof by another five years.

Board member Marti Raad moved to approve the list of repairs, with Huber seconding. The motion passed unanimously. A fire panel system replacement in the middle and high schools was not included in the approval, as the board is still waiting for final prices on the electrical work before acting on a recommendation to proceed with this project or not.

The school board also heard first readings of several entirely new policies for the district, coming out of last year's legislative session and the North Dakota Century Code. These include protection for student victims of sexual offenses (much of this already in place from school policy but now being codified in the new policy), child safety liaison work group and mandatory training for staff training in working with child protective services, a military leave policy that waives the requirement for a 90-day leave of absence in order to join the military and a human trafficking and exploitation prevention and awareness education policy with staff, student and parent elements (and options for families to opt their kids out if they are uncomfortable with their students participating).

Huber moved to approve all of these policies for first readings, with Raad seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

In other business, the Hazen School Board:

- unanimously approved all financial reports,
- unanimously approved a one-year contract with a 3 percent salary increase for High School Principal Jacob Kraft, and
- heard administrative updates from each of the school administrators.

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