

City of Mercer Minutes April 16, 2020

Mayor Ron Schatz called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm with Council members Randy Zinke, Gary Volochenko, and Julie Wagner. Also in attendance Ashley Fiedler, Auditor, CPA, Harold, and AJ Tuck, Ulteig via conference call.

Councilmembers look over minutes. Julie Wagner makes motion to approve minutes, Gary Volochenko seconded it. Motion carried.

Finances were reviewed. Wagner makes motion to approve finances, Zinke seconded it. Motion carried.

Bills were reviewed. Councilmembers still question the bills for Scherbenske, and Ulteig. The city has 3 hydrants in town that don't work, one hydrant froze and the pin fell out. City is still dealing with water loss. The Scherbenske bill is regarding them coming up and digging up a curb-stop looking for a leak. Councilmembers didn't want that curb-stop dug up, they wanted Scherbenske to look on that line for a leak. Ward from ND Rural Water systems is planning to come and pressurize the hydrants, as well as keep looking for any leaks in the water lines. Scherbenske will be coming back to fix any roads from when they settled, ditches that need to be corrected, along with a few washouts in town. Volochenko makes motion to pay bills except for Scherbenske or Ulteig, Zinke seconded it. Roll call vote: Wagner-yes, Zinke-yes, Volochenko-yes. Motion carried

Old Business:

The City received a check from Dave Presser for \$380 on April 4th for the flooding in the Mercer Community Center. Presser has paid \$1,740 of the \$2,705 total bill. The judgement that the city has for this, lasts 10 years and draws 8.5% interest.

Update on Charlene Lelm's property. Ulteig and Lelm did settle on \$2,000 reimbursement for the curb-stop issue on her property.

Mercer is looking to have McLean County start doing the towns assessing. Todd Schreiner with McLean County joined to talk about the contract. Schreiner stated the city would be charged \$5 per residential parcel, \$5 per commercial parcel, and they have 77 residential, and 34 commercial parcels in their system. The total would be \$555 per year. Contract renewable each year. Council asked if they charge more for when they come out and assess properties. Schreiner said "that is the fee no matter how many times they come to assess any properties." Resident Ken Thomsen asked "if they will be coming out to reassess the town and equalize it so the taxes are fair?" The county will take possession of the record cards, and they don't anticipate any huge changes coming. But if a Councilmembers or auditor brings it to their attention that something may be lower than it should, they will come have a look. Their intentions are to be fair, and not raise everything. Volochenko makes motion to approve contract and have county take over as assessor, Wagner seconded it. Motion carried.

Resident DeAnn Jacobson had water leaks from the recent water project, which has resulted in some damage to her basement and to her landscaping. The city has been working with Scott NDIRF to file a claim for the basement damage. As of now, Jacobson will get quotes on the cost of her damages and get sent into Scott. She is really concerned about Scherbenske coming back and digging in her yard,

since they have ruined her landscaping, they've had to re-dig so many times. Jacobson has a water line in the back that Scherbenske used to supply other residents with water while they were putting in pipes. While Scherbenske was using the water line it froze and now it sprays water and leaks. Right now there is a shut off valve on it, but can't ever be used again until it's replaced. She would like to know who is going to fix all these issues on her property. May have to file a claim with Scherbenske's insurance to get her landscaping covered. City will keep in touch about all the damages.

Water bills for the month of March are pretty good. A letter was sent to Ed's Service stating he is 60 days past due and water will be turned off at the end of the month if payment isn't received. Otherwise, besides the normal 4 that haven't paid in months and their services are shutoff, everyone is up to date.

CPA Harold was present to give an update on City audit. Harold stated all the money is counted for, nothing is missing. Quicken is one of the tougher programs to use, which can cause issues. Once in a while something may get miss posted and the program doesn't catch it. We've fixed the miss postings and the cash the city has, has all been a counted for. The city has increased the balance over the years. With the cities balance you need to start looking at if you will be able to write a check if something goes wrong, instead of how the city will pay for this. With the USDA you have to put money in a dead account, called reserve accounts. Account will show you have the cash but it's not available, or to be spent on anything until loan is paid for. The city doesn't have a good source to pay for those reserves. Need to discuss should there be a number in the bank that could cover things. The money going into the reserve accounts is unfunded. Water fund will need help, city needs to look to help it. Council needs to look at either raising utilities or adding assessments.

Derek Fiedler has a building permit to put a shed on his property. Zinke approves building permit, Volochenko seconded it. Motion carried.

Wagner makes motion to adjourn meeting, Volochenko seconded it. Motion carried.

Bills to Pay

Ashley Fiedler - \$923.50

BHG - \$106.07

Gary Volochenko - \$69.26

IRs (Quarter) - \$665.55

Jobs Service (quarterly) -\$ 4.6

Julie Wagner - \$69.26

McLean Sheridan

(Water) \$917.99

(Billing) \$226.95

ND Department of Health - \$16.00

OtterTail - \$1,057.79

Randy Zinke - \$69.26

Ron Schatz - \$138.52

Scherbenske - \$2,200 (Work on West Railroad Street)

Ulteig - \$5,401.70

Walter Lipp - \$116.80

Waste Management - \$1,260.85

WRT - \$176.43