

Grande from Page 1

Representative Craig Headland stepped in as partners on targeted legislation to help save the district. Our bill was referred to by many legislators as ‘The Hope-Page Bill’ because of its obvious direct benefit to the Hope-Page School District. The road to passage was not an easy one, but the hundreds of hours spent meeting with legislators from around the state in person, on the phone, or testifying in Bismarck were all worth it when our bill language passed, because it meant the Hope-Page School District would have the ability to remain open.”

Grande went on to say that the process of working with the legislature was very time-consuming, but it was also very rewarding. He said that over the past few years, he has been blessed to continue receiving calls from legislators around the state as they sought advice on education-related topics.

“This gave me a great opportunity to help them better understand the policy implications of different pieces of legislation and to continue advocating for favorable bill language for the Hope-Page School District,” he said. “Some additional bill language was even included this last session that helped secure even more money for the school district. To fill that projected funding gap with property taxes alone, it would have required a district-wide vote to virtually double everyone’s property tax. Thankfully, this did not have to happen. To put this all into context, in 2022, the Hope-Page School District had the 115th highest mill levy (property tax) in the state. In 2025, the Hope-Page School District had the 118th highest mill levy in the state. Meaning, the school district successfully navigated arguably the worst financial situation in the state of North Dakota while increasing property taxes at a slower rate than the rest of the school districts in the state during that time frame. All of this while the district’s fund balances (how much cash the school has on hand) continued to grow to record-high levels, giving the school district even more financial flexibility and cushion for the future.”

Grande prides himself on being a really optimistic person, but he knew the odds were not in his favor.

“If you told me in 2022 that our district would be able to successfully navigate one of the worst financial situations in the

state while increasing our cash balances across the board and raising property taxes at a slower rate than the rest of the state, I would have thought you were crazy,” he said. “That was truly beyond the realm of what we thought was possible, but we are certainly thankful that it happened.”

Grande said that another major team win at the middle school/high school has been a complete reversal in the exodus of students that the school was seeing previously. He said that from 2020-2022, the school district was experiencing arguably the greatest student exodus in the state on a proportional basis. He explained that this was something that was compounding the already dire financial situation the school district was facing.

“Fortunately, this trend has completely reversed in the last three years, and we saw virtually no middle school/high school stu-

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dents leave the district,” he said. “To our delight, we have recently seen middle school/high school students open-enrolling/re-enrolling/enrolling into the district in high numbers. This is a tremendous testimonial to the great work the entire team has put into making this an attractive district for students.”

Grande said that he would be remiss if he did not mention the academic success of the district.

“These accomplishments are too numerous to list out individually, but many key statistics paint a picture of the stellar work and effort that our students, families, and team are doing,” he said. “Another highlight is the success of the various student organizations throughout the school district. A high number of our students are involved in four or more activities/school organizations. This is a credit to the students for their commitment and the school board and staff for their willingness to provide a wide range of opportunities for students in the district.”

Grande said that he sincerely hopes that these positive trends continue for the dis-

trict. He said that district leadership has all of the tools at their disposal to ensure that the financial health of the district remains strong, that enrollment continues to grow, and that the students in the district can continue to thrive academically.

“If they can continue to make good decisions, there is no reason why the future would be anything but glorious for the Hope-Page School District,” he said. “I am confident in the school board, administration, and the entire team, and I think the future looks great for the district.”

In addition to all of those hats, Grande was also known to get behind the wheel of a school bus on occasion.

“Yes, I had the opportunity to drive the bus fairly often during my time in the district,” said Grande. “Whether it was driving the bus to practices, games, field-trips, or filling in on a bus route, I always enjoyed it.”

So, what is next for Grande? He said that he wanted to let the school district know about his plans to transition out in February, so that they would have a very long runway to work with.

“It was really important to me to leave on great terms with the school district,” he said. “It is sad how rare it is for transitions to go smoothly these days, so I am thankful that this transition went as well as it did. There is a tremendous amount of positive momentum in virtually every category within the school district, and I am looking forward to seeing that continue from afar.”

At this time, Grande will continue in the education field. He has accepted a graduate school professor position. In this role, he will teach school finance and other education courses to prospective administrators. He will also have the opportunity to mentor future administrators as they pursue their master’s/doctoral degrees.

“In June, we welcomed our fourth boy into our family,” he said. “We are looking forward to spending time together, and we are excited to explore opportunities to do more ministry work as a family. I am excited

for both Heidi Kingston and Jonah Wolla to use their knowledge and passion to keep building on the positive momentum. A cool side note, I had a chance to give the keynote speech at the University of Mary Liffrig School of Education Graduation Ceremony when Jonah received his master’s degree, so I’m excited to pass the torch to a fellow University of Mary alumnus.”

Grande expressed that education is the ultimate team activity, so he thinks it is always important to give credit to the whole team. The team’s accomplishments are numerous, and collectively, he said that these accomplishments have helped to replace the uncertainty and fear that people shared in 2022 with hope that the district can not only survive but thrive in the future.

In closing, Grande said that he recently found some of his original notes that he took during his first month on the job, and he said that it is remarkable to see how far the district has come since that time.

“In 2022, there was a tremendous amount of turmoil over the co-op situation, and families were leaving the district in droves, the district was facing arguably the worst financial situation in the state, and there were legitimate questions about whether the district would be closing,” he said. “Fast forward to today, and the outlook is so much brighter on every front. The financial situation went from one of the worst in the state to one of the best. The middle school/high school went from students leaving in droves to students entering in droves, and the overall turmoil level in the district has dropped considerably. Pair that with some exceptional academic achievements/statistics, and these are all things that everyone in the district should be immensely proud of. We live in a day and age where certain people will try to spin everything in a negative light (regardless of where you are) so it is important to look at the positive things happening around you and not let those negative influences take control. The district is in great shape and there is a golden opportunity for it to stay that way if the correct decisions continue to be made. To the school board, staff, students, families, and community members. Thank you for your support during my time in the school district. The future is bright for the Hope-Page School District.”

PUBLIC NOTICES

REGULAR MEETING
(unapproved minutes, subject to change)

The Finley City Council met Monday, July 7th, 2025 at 7:00 PM at City Hall. Present were Mayor Brian Tuite and Council Members, Merle Ferry, Chad Aberle, and Tyler Midstokke present by phone was Tori Archer. Also, present Laurie Tuite, Steve Fiebiger and Izaak Bergstrom

The minutes of the last regular meeting were read and approved. Park Board Report was given by

Chad Aberle.

There was no sheriff report. Preliminary drawing on street project from Moore Engineering, Inc. was reviewed, discussed and tabled. No price was included and Moore would like to meet within a couple of weeks from city council meeting.

Izaak Bergstrom was present to discuss his curb and gutter repair and council informed him that repairs are on the way for him and Delphine Martin and the Finley drains and will be done before fall.

Finley Days committee Project contribution was discussed. It was moved by Aberle, seconded by Archer to approve to extra security and bathrooms in the amount of \$4,155.00. Motion carried.

Written formal complaints were addressed on over grown yards and snakes. Snake Away can be ordered on line through Amazon to help with the snake problem and it has been proven to work. Lawncare has been addressed prior to meeting.

New Public Comment Policy

was discussed. It was moved by Midstokke, seconded by Ferry to approve the policy for the City of Finley. Motion carried.

Lot purchase in Industrial Park for the Finley Farmers Elevator was tabled to next meeting.

Renewal of solid waste disposal & management agreement with Grand Forks Public Works was reviewed and discussed and it was moved by Aberle, seconded by Midstokke to approve the agreement. Motion carried.

Auditorium was discussed; Tuite will line up estimates from electricians and contractors by next meeting date.

It was moved by Midstokke, seconded by Archer to approve the bills. Motion carried.

-99239 Aflac.....	208.13
-99238 BRAVERA.....	1801.10
-99237 Heartland Payment Systems.....	33.50
-99236 STEELE COUNTY JDA.....	500.00
-99235 CITY OF FINLEY.....	26011.91
34695 Advanced Business Methods.....	143.33
34696 BRAGER DISPOSAL SERVICE.....	2646.50
34697 Colonial Life.....	153.52
34698 DAKOTA RURAL WATER DISTRICT.....	6646.85
34699 Grand Forks Utility Billing..	26.00

34700 Midco	37.50
34701 OTTER TAIL POWER CO.	2244.91
34702 STEELE COUNTY ...	1800.00
34703 THOMAS R. MOE.....	150.00
34721 ACME TOOLS.....	77.97
34722 BRAVERA	1063.45
34723 DIAMOND VOGEL PAINT	510.00
34724 FARMERS UNION INSURANCE.....	2855.00
34725 FINLEY FARMERS ELEVATOR	38.00
34726 Grand Forks Utility Billing..	40.00
34727 MLGC	446.66
34728 NEW CENTURY PRESS.....	133.28
34729 PB PYE BARKER	334.00
34730 TOWN & COUNTRY COOP ..	2563.51
34731 NILSON BRAND LAW463.50	
34735 FINLEY E.D.C.....	9289.98
34736 FINLEY PARK BOARD.....	1858.00
SALARIES	12915.10
There being no other business Ferry moved to adjourn at 7:45.	
Next city council meeting was set for Monday August 4th, 2025 at 7:00 PM at Finley City Hall	
SCP July 18, 2025, 346043 SHARON CITY COUNCIL MINUTES	
Sharon City Council Meeting was called to order by Kathy Sundeen at 6pm, July 14, 2025, sec-	

ond Monday, Sharon Community Building. Minutes were read motion by Lee to approve seconded by Sundeen. Present were Council Member Lee, Council Member Sundeen, Auditor Zentz and Fire Chief Chapman.

Old Business: Look at Electric rates, will stay the same for now. The City has a lease law, please put your dogs on a lease. Ordinance #26 states no livestock or Fowl are allowed in City limits you can receive a \$500.00 fine.

New Business: City Budget for review. Kristie Behm wants to know if she gets paid for the time she did the flower. Review and sign the paper work to dissolve the Fire Department. Buy dire to fill in the low spots around town.

Motion to pay bills by Lee seconded by Sundeen. Auditor 601.87, Rachel 735.30, NDLC 248.00, IRS 1,716.36, ND State tax 126.00, NCP 38.39, MLGC 147.39, L&P Payroll 601.87, Nodak, Minnkota 368.50, WAPA 2,23.25, W&S Payroll 401.25, DRWD 1,933.85, City of GF 26.00, NDRWA 540.00, Lizzy 98.00, Brager Disposal.

Motion to adjourn by Lee seconded by Sundeen. Next City Council Meeting is August 11th, 2025, 2nd Monday, Sharon Community Building. SCP July 18, 2025 356398



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