

Solemnity marks Memorial Day observance



"This is the nicest thing that Ellendale does." This comment was overheard from an older resident, expressing appreciation for the annual observance. As usual, this year's ceremony was very well attended, and all the elements of the ceremony were observed. Legion Commander Ross Seefeld (lower left) gave the oration. Charlie and Jacob Russell (above) raised the flag. Leader editor Ken Smith read the 749 names of local deceased veterans (photos by Ken Smith)

Guest column: hands off our high school sports

By Levi Bachmeier

A recent *Fargo Forum* opinion piece praised proposed state rules meant to ensure learning is the primary focus of any discussion involving a four-day school week. Not workforce challenges, facility access or imaginary cost savings. It went on to suggest that students would be better off if all sports were removed from our high schools. Academics cannot take a back seat to athletics or other activities, but removing them all together would harm the educational experience for students in North Dakota.

In every community across our state, athletics, music, speech, theater, FFA, robotics and countless other activities teach lessons that cannot be replicated in a classroom. Students learn discipline when they show up early for practice. They learn resilience after losses and humility after victories. They learn teamwork, leadership, accountability and how to work toward goals larger than themselves.

For many students, activities

are also their main connection to school. Participation reduces detentions while improving attendance, academic performance, and graduation rates. Academics and activities belong together: one should not be prioritized at the expense of the other. Let's care more about test scores, not less about scoreboards.

As a coach, I have seen young people learn to lead, to sacrifice and to persevere under pressure. Those experiences shape future teachers, business owners, military members, nurses, parents and civic leaders.

As for the assertion that schools can find better uses for the money being invested in activities, less than 3% of last year's public school expenditures went into co-curricular activities. If you did any activity in high school, did the experience result in at least 3% of your learning? Countless skills and values I rely on every day came from lessons built or reinforced on the football field, pole vault runway, or in a student council meeting. That's called a huge return on investment.



Bachmeier serves as North Dakota's superintendent of public instruction. (photo via ND Governor's office)

From the B in Minot to state track at the Bowl, activities bring North Dakotans of all ages together and help forge a shared sense of community identity and civic pride. That's why you'll only hear me refer to school-based activities as co-curriculars, not extra-curriculars. There's nothing extra about the lessons they teach our young people.

A Legacy of Care: 38 Years of Heart, Dedication & Pedals at BLC-Ellendale

Ellendale, ND — In a quiet town where everyone seems to know everyone, there's one familiar face who has become more than just a part of the landscape — he's become part of the soul of Ellendale.

For nearly four decades, Kelly Brady has been a steady, compassionate presence at BLC-Ellendale, a local senior care facility where he's not just clocked in for work — he's given a lifetime of heart.

It all began in the early 1980s, when a high school student from Ellendale High School took a job in the kitchen at the care center through a government program. "I liked older people," he recalls with a quiet smile. "That job was close to where I lived, and it just felt right." That simple connection — a young man who enjoyed the company of elders — became a lifelong calling.

After completing a program at Brainard Minnesota Vo-Tech School in Occupational Proficiency and a stint in food service at Northern State University, he returned to BLC-Ellendale. What was supposed to be a summer job became a 38-year career. "Since May of 1987, I've worked in the Environmental Services department," he says. "But I started in the kitchen back in 1984-85. So really, this place has been part of my life since high school." He is now the longest-serving employee at BLC-Ellendale — a title earned not just through time, but through tireless dedication, compassion, and a smile delivered daily to residents who've come to know him as part of their extended family.

A Family Legacy

His connection to the facility runs even deeper than his career. "My grandmother, grandfather,

and great-grandfather were all residents here before they passed," he shares. His roots in Ellendale go back generations. Today, he still lives here with his mother, and despite never having a driver's license due to a lifelong eyesight condition, he gets around town independently on his bicycle — to work, to church, and even to his volunteer duties.

"I took driver's ed in high school," he says, "but because of my eyesight, I was never able to get my license. So I ride my bike all around town — to work, for errands, wherever I need to go."

And ride he does — through the rain, snow, heat, and wind — because that's who he is: dependable, determined, and always showing up.

More Than a Job

What does he enjoy most about his work?

"Seeing the residents every day," he says without hesitation. "Talking with them, bringing a smile, listening to them. I like people, especially older ones." He finds joy in the small, quiet victories — like watching a resident improve enough to return home. "It's always good to see someone no longer needing care and getting to go home again. That makes my day." Those who work with him describe him as the heart of BLC-Ellendale — a true team player, a gentle presence who knows every face, every name, and every story that passes through the halls.

A Life of Service

Outside of work, his sense of service continues. He volunteers with the Ellendale Fire Department, ushers at his church, and even assists the local funeral chapel during family services.

In a world that sometimes moves too fast, he is a reminder of



what it means to live with purpose, to care deeply, and to serve others with quiet strength.

A Message to the Next Generation

Asked what he would say to someone thinking about applying at BLC-Ellendale, he offers simple, honest advice: "You have to want to be a good caregiver. A good listener. And you really have to like being around older people." It's a sentiment that has guided him for nearly 40 years — and has helped shape the lives of hundreds of residents, coworkers, and community members.

As Kelly prepares to celebrate his 38th year of service in 2025, his story stands as a testament to the power of consistency, compassion, and choosing kindness — day after day, year after year.

And every morning, as the sun rises over Ellendale, the quiet whirl of bicycle tires tells the town that he's on his way — not just to work, but to continue a legacy of care that's as enduring as it is inspiring.

Ellendale Community Food Pantry
10 AM - 12 PM
2ND & 4TH SATURDAY OF THE MONTH

NDNC
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The NDNC is a non-profit providing REAL journalism about North Dakota for North Dakotans.
To support local journalism, please make your charitable contribution to www.newscoopnd.org/donate

ELLENDALE CITY COUNCIL

Ellendale City Council Regular Meeting May 11, 2026

6:00 pm — City Hall and Zoom Virtual
This meeting was held at City Hall and virtual Zoom Meeting option was also available.

Mayor Flaherty called the public hearing to order at 6:00 PM with Council members in attendance: Lee, Belgarde, Langeliers, Denison, and Crabtree.

Absent: Meidinger
City Employees present: Auditor Gunn, Attorney Kelly, Deputy Auditor Schmidt and PW Monroe via zoom.

Others attending: Separate sign-in sheet available.

Public Comment: Vicki Crabtree would like to have Stop signs put up on the corner of 2nd St N and 8th Ave N. Due to increased traffic, there are concerns of the increased probability of accidents happening. Chief of Police Knutson and PW Works Supervisor Monroe to investigate and place signs within the next week if deemed necessary.

Public Comment Verification: Clarification of public comment periods are only required at regular meetings on topics that were covered at a previous regular or special council meeting, or anything that may be covered at the present regular meeting.

Meidinger arrives at 6:23 PM
Variance Request: J. Grimm is requesting a variance regarding setbacks for side yard on his lot. Lot is only 46.5 ft wide, and ordinance says side yards need to have 12 feet on each side, which leaves a building space of 22.5 feet. Requesting to change that to 5 feet for the side yards. Advised going through official variance request with publications and a hearing in case abutting property owners would contest this variance.

Cemetery Mowing Proposals: Two proposals received. Denison moves, Langeliers seconds to accept the lower bid of \$5,250 per month from Nick Kendall for the 2026 mowing season. Roll call vote: Meidinger, Denison, Lee, Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree- yes. Motion carries.

Wade: EMS Building: PE for work completed \$19,000.00. Work progressing on finishing touches for EMS building. Denison moves Belgarde seconds to pay this pay estimate. Roll call vote: Denison, Lee, Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree, Meidinger- yes. Motion carries.

Wade: EMS Building: PE for work completed \$19,000.00. Work progressing on finishing touches for EMS building. Denison moves Belgarde seconds to pay this pay estimate. Roll call vote: Denison, Lee, Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree, Meidinger- yes. Motion carries.

Wade: Street Project: Paperwork from Colliers to work with them to put together the sale of the bonds for this project. Denison moves, Lee seconds to sign Receipt of Refunding Improvement Bonds, Series 2026. Roll call vote: Lee, Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree, Meidinger, Denison- yes. Motion carries. Denison moves, Crabtree seconds to sign Collier's engagement letter. Roll call vote: Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree, Meidinger, Denison, Lee- yes. Motion carries. Mayor and City Engineer spoke with Ellendale Township regarding cost share for the city-wide street project for roads that Ellendale Township and City of Ellendale share. Denison moves, Belgarde seconds to have attorney Kelly to draft a Joint Powers Agreement drafted to include in which the Cemetery Road revitalization project costs would be split cost 75% paid by city, 25% paid by township. Township to pay the city its portion in whatever terms the city sets up in terms of their bond agreement and that any proration if any of the property owners during the time of the bond payments should be annexed into city limits the city would refund to the township their portion of payments prorated equal to the property owners who are annexed in. Roll call vote: Langeliers, Crabtree, Meidinger, Denison, Lee, Belgarde- yes. Motion carries.

Wade: Ellendale Acres: Manhole issue from Fall 2025 at Ellendale Acres needs to be fixed. Change order in the amount of \$13,986.00 to finish project to come out of the TIF funding. Lee moves, Meidinger seconds to accept this change order. Roll call vote: Crabtree, Meidinger, Denison, Lee, Belgarde, Langeliers- yes. Motion carries.

Agenda Additions: Building permit penalty fees, Midwest Inspections, Clarification garbage charges, Lagoon issues, 87th Ave Resolutions, Walking Trail update, Sales Tax Revenue Distribution discussion.

Police Report: Letter from Police Chief Knutson, things are moving along, getting busier with weather getting nicer out. E-bikes could possibly become a concern but will keep an eye out on them.

Public Works Report: Master Lift station needs work for \$8,460. Belgarde moves, Lee seconds to approve to spend up to \$10K to get the repairs completed. Roll call vote: Meidinger, Denison, Lee, Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree- yes. Motion carries.

Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree- yes. Motion carries. Working through auditing utility bills, grinding stumps, repairing other things, mowed cemetery first time. Couple of water meters have not been reading which indicates a bad meter that needs to be changed out. Tried contacting owners/renters, but not able to get a hold of them to enter the premises to do the change out. Attorney Kelly states that the city can give notice and shut water off to get homeowners to let city public works in the home to switch out the bad meters. Cars that were towed to landfill years ago need to be gotten rid of. People have approached Public Works Monroe about selling them. Bids to go out for those vehicles.

Building Permits: Lee moves, Meidinger seconds to approve: B. Fischer for porch and shed at 217 3rd St N; B. Sand for siding, windows, roof at 116 3rd St N; C. Stanley for garage at 515 Rolling Acres Lane; C. Merkel for shed at 209 5th St N; D. Muckey to jack up house and repair basement and add porch at 409 5th St S; Harvest Gardens to add porch at 1003 2nd St N; L. Dahlberg for shed and fence at 516 1st Ave N; L. Linder for skirt around foundation at 404 2nd Ave S; and TBC for shed at 50 6th Ave S. Lee moves, Belgarde seconds to approve A. Mitzelfelt to put a fence up at 816 3rd St. N. Meidinger moves, seconds to approve permit to jack up house and fix basement at 212 6th Ave N with stipulation that a snow fence type of structure needs to go up around the house to secure it while working on it, needs to be put up within a week and Anliker to pay admin fees of the papers that had been served to previous owner. All in favor, aye. Motion carries.

Storage Container Permit: Meidinger moves, Denison seconds to approve TBC storage container permit. All in favor, aye. Motion carries.

Gaming Site Authorization: Lee moves, Denison seconds to approve gaming site authorization permits for: American Legion, Roosters Corner and Ellendale Fire Protection Permit. All in favor, aye. Motion carries.

Minutes: Lee moves, Meidinger seconds to approve meeting minutes from: April 13, 2026: Zoning board hearing, City Council hearing, Regular City Council minutes and Board of Equalization meeting minutes and April 27, 2026, special meeting minutes. All in favor, aye. Motion carries.

Operating Statement: Meidinger moves, Crabtree seconds to approve April 2026 Operating Statement. All in favor, aye. Motion carries.

Bills: Lee moves, Meidinger seconds to approve bills. All in favor, aye. Motion carries.

Senior Center Remodel: Elliot construction inspected the roof of senior center, and it looks decent. Belgarde moves, Lee seconds to approve J. Elliot Construction quote for \$243,337.00. Roll call vote: Denison, Lee, Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree, Meidinger- yes. Motion carries.

Mayor Flaherty turns meeting over to Council President Meidinger.

Second Reading: Rezone Bell's Addn: Lee moves, Denison seconds for the Second Reading to rezone Bell's Addn. from Commercial to Mixed-1. Roll call: Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree, Lee, Denison- yes. Motion carries.

Second Reading: Amendment Ch. 5 Ordinances: Lee moves, Belgarde seconds to approve Second Reading Ch. 5 Amendment Ordinance. Roll call: Langeliers, Crabtree, Lee, Denison, Belgarde- yes. Motion carries.

Council President Meidinger turned meeting back to Mayor Flaherty.

ND Road Map: Mill and Overlay project for Hwy 11 in 2027 by NDDOT provided to council.

Garbage Charges Clarification: Citizen of Ellendale had a conflict on their utility bill regarding garbage charges. Their utility bill reflected garbage charges even though they had no garbage carts; per the policy water must be turned off in order to take garbage charges off, as long as carts are also removed. Belgarde moves, Meidinger seconds to forgive April charges for garbage, and citizen has until the end of May to decide if they want to keep water on but will still be charged garbage or turn water off in order to remove garbage charges, if they decide to turn the water off, the \$25 water shut-off fee will be waived. Roll call vote: Lee, Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree, Meidinger- yes. Motion carries.

87th Ave Resolutions: Denison moves, Langeliers seconds to approve Resolution Directing Assessments to be Levied. Roll call vote: Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree, Meidinger, Denison, Lee- yes. Motion carries. Denison moves, Crabtree seconds to approve Resolution Establishing Time Period. Roll call vote: Langeliers, Crabtree, Meidinger, Denison, Lee, Belgarde- yes. Motion carries.

JDA Agreement: Current JDA Agreement needs to be reviewed and updated. Council person Belgarde to work with Mayor Flaherty on suggestions for changes to be made.

Sales Tax: City Council wants monthly Sales Tax Revenue updates.

CD Cash Management: City of Ellendale has a few 12-month CD's that are due during the year. With the influx of monies coming in it was suggested to invest in CD's every other month each a 12-month period. Denison moves, Lee seconds to go ahead with this plan, with

an update at the end of 2026 to re-evaluate. Roll call vote: Crabtree, Meidinger, Denison, Lee, Belgarde, Langeliers- yes. Motion carries.

Midwest Inspections Update: Monthly Applied Digital inspection update, things on track, with interior progress continuing as well. Anticipated turnover for tenant slated for end of June for building 3.

Rapid Response Quote: AC in City Hall is old and needs to be replaced. Quote from Rapid Response for two mini splits to be installed in City Hall offices for \$10,625.00. Lee moves, Belgarde seconds to approve this estimate. Roll call vote: Meidinger, Denison, Lee, Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree- yes. Motion carries.

Correspondence: None.

Next meeting: Special Meeting: TBD; June regular meeting June 8, 2026 at 6 PM

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM

Nathan Poolman	\$150.30
James Monroe	\$242.20
Starion Bank	\$16,206.66
Bank of ND	\$13,395.00
Bound Tree Medical	\$644.37
Dickey Co. Leader	\$1,895.11
Amazon	\$44.95
Computer Express	\$432.00
Dickey County	\$3,934.00
Ferguson Waterworks	\$1,877.08
Interstate Engineering	\$21,120.53
Interstate Engineering	\$31,044.64
Metro-Billing	\$400.00
ND Surplus Property	\$75.00
Joyce Mosley	\$1,618.62
Matheson Tri-Gas	\$104.98
ND Dept of Health	\$54.00
Penguin Management	\$1,062.00
Titan Machinery	\$554.74
Sanitation Products	\$806.35
BCBS of ND	\$11,270.28
MDU	\$5,354.04
voided	
Ellendale Park Board	\$5,000.00
Ellendale Public School	\$1,750.00
Dickey Co. Fair Board	\$4,000.00
Ellendale Public School	\$2,350.00
Dickey Co. Fair Board	\$1,000.00
Ellendale Chamber of Comm.	\$8,000.00
Jones and Kelly	\$7,224.00
Council	\$923.48
Mayor	\$336.33
Ambulance	\$18,714.93
City Employee	\$35,276.75
IRS	\$14,785.55
NDPERS	\$421.93
NDPERS	\$6,521.13
Jonathan Juhula	\$30.00
Anne Vande Hei	\$35.00
Postmaster	\$264.89
Ellendale Park Board	\$1,724.87
Jonathan Juhula	\$30.00
Nathan Poolman	\$108.00
Ellendale Park Board	\$50.00
Strengthen ND	\$2,000.00
Lorena Lynde	\$240.00

Landrie Schmidt	\$53.00
ND One Call	\$24.30
NAPA	\$130.00
Southeast Water Users	\$15,000.00
Nicole Gunn	\$721.20
Amazon	\$325.13
AFLAC	\$620.98
Axon Enterprise	\$19.78
Dakota Supply Group	\$1,090.31
Central Business System	\$205.39
DRN Readtech	\$1,270.19
Column Software PBC	\$328.32
Computer Express	\$1,837.99
Chads Electric	\$353.84
Farmers Union Oil Co.	\$2,836.56
Information Tech Dept.	\$428.19
Lexipol	\$216.30
Jones and Kelly Atty's.	\$3,254.00
John Deere Financial	\$29.08
ND Department of Health	\$54.00
ND Surplus Property	\$50.00
NDSU Extension. Pesticide	\$100.00
MDU	\$3,121.64
Vestis	\$78.85
Verizon Wireless	\$429.87
Ellendale True Value	\$245.83
Recycle Center of ND	\$28,896.60
Team Laboratory	\$1,975.00
Fire and Safety First LLC	\$394.50
TOTAL	\$287,164.56

Donald Flaherty, Mayor
Nicole Gunn, Auditor
(Minutes subject to corrections and approval at the next regular meeting.)
(May 28, 2026)

City Council Hearing May 11, 2026

6:05 pm — City Hall and Zoom Virtual
This meeting was held at City Hall and virtual Zoom Meeting option was also available.

Mayor Flaherty called the City Council Public Hearing to order with council members in attendance: Lee, Denison, Crabtree, Belgarde, and Langeliers.

Absent: Meidinger
City Employees present: Auditor Gunn; Deputy Auditor Schmidt and Attorney Kelly.

Others attending: Separate sign-in sheet available

City Council Public Hearing called to order at 6:05 PM
Rezone Bell's Addn from Commercial to Mixed 1: No public comment
Hearing closed

(Minutes subject to corrections and approval at the next regular meeting.)
(May 28, 2026)

Regular Landfill Hours : April – September
Monday & Wednesday: 3:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Tuesday & Thursday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM