

\$100K fee for H1-B visas has North Dakota workforce impacts

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Widespread impacts

Besides K-12 schools, the policy change would also hit the two major research universities as well as healthcare facilities reliant on those visas to attract professionals and supplement their workforce needs.

Over the past five years, the University of North Dakota and North Dakota State University led with the most H-1B petitions, at 148 and 134, respectively.

Among school districts, Grand Forks petitioned for 64 H-1B visas, New Town was second with 42, followed by Dunseith with 14, and Divide County with six over the past five years.

Others, particularly smaller schools in rural areas, had a handful of petitions as well.

One of those is the Mott-Regent Public School District.

"I don't believe any public school in the country is going to be able to afford \$100,000," said Mott-Regent superintendent Zachary Slayton.

Slayton is in the process of hiring a music teacher for the school district from the Philippines on an H-1B visa. He said the district is lucky it filed before the new fee went into effect.

"Hopefully, we'll have him here within the next two weeks," Slayton said.

Slayton said the district has often used J-1 visas to fill teaching positions they can't find candidates for locally, but these aren't ideal. Teachers can only stay three years on a J-1, with a maximum of five years if extensions are granted.

"I don't want to let any of my J-1 visa teachers go home," Slayton said. "If I could keep them all here, I would. One of them was the county teacher of the year two years back. They're all amazing educators."

Hoping for waivers

Penny Morin, superintendent at Tate Topa Tribal School in Fort Totten, said that because the school is a Bureau of Indian Education school, it was notified it would get a waiver on the fee. The school currently has more than 20 teachers from the Philippines on either J-1 or H-1B visas.

Educators at other schools are hoping they can get waivers as well. New Town, since it is not a BIE school, would not currently qualify, according to Blue-stone.

Aimee Copas, executive director of the North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders, said the organization has reached out to North Dakota's congressional delegation to share stories from local educators about how the policy could impact them.

"Mostly, those (H1-B) teachers exist in our smaller school systems, and their budgets really don't have that flexibility," Copas said.

Other schools using the visas include Pingree-Bu-

chanan, which had difficulty finding a licensed math teacher for grades 7-12 until hiring a teacher from the Philippines on an H1-B visa this past January.

The district is currently trying to hire a K-12 music teacher on an H1B visa, but the process ground to a halt in late September when the fee change went into effect.

Gackle-Streeter also recently went through the H1-B visa process to hire a business teacher from South Africa. The position would have gone unfilled if the fee had been in place last spring, according to testimony shared by Copas.

Other schools in Kenmare and Warwick indicated they were trying to bring back teachers who had taught there on J-1 visas through H-1B visas. The schools are concerned the fee change could impact those processes.

Nick Archuleta, president of North Dakota United, a group advocating for public educators and employees in the state, said the visa fee doesn't only impact K-12 education.

"We've got two wonderful research universities in our state and we're happy to have them, but they also bring in educators from outside the country, international teachers, professors and others doing research," he said. "So, this is a very big concern for education across the state, regardless of whether it's K-12 or higher education."

Data showing the number of petitions for H-1B visas in 2025 in North Dakota, from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website.

A statement from an NDSU spokesperson said the university, like many research universities, relies on international talent to support its academic and research mission.

"We're aware of the proposed changes to the H-1B visa program and are monitoring the legal proceedings closely. While it's too early to assess the full impact, international talent continues to play an important role in contributing to our students' education and the advancement of research," the statement said.

A spokesperson with UND indicated that the administration was unable to comment on the policy at this time but is monitoring the situation.

As for the K-12 level, recruiting challenges necessitate the hiring of international teachers, Archuleta said.

"It's been so difficult to recruit teachers to some of the more geographically isolated areas and retain them," Archuleta said.

J-1 visas are a "revolving door" while the H-1B visas allow for more continuity, he said.

"I don't know of any that could afford \$100,000 out of their operating budgets to pay for an H-1B visa for one of their teachers," Archuleta said. "That money just doesn't exist where these folks are coming to work."

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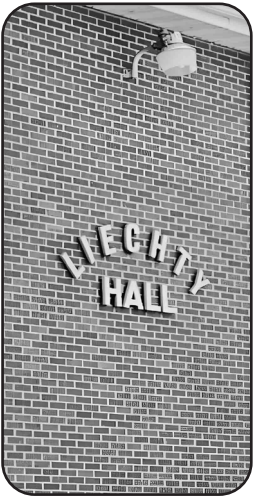


Prairie Rose 4-H Club met on Sunday, November 2 after attending a very successful awards banquet held at the Bernhagen Event Center in Ellendale. The club elected officers for the 2025-2026 4-H year.

From left to right: President Macy Norton, Vice Presi-

dent Evan Wagner, Secretary Anisten Petersen, Treasurer Annah Thorpe, Reporter Owen Bratlie.

"I look forward to keeping the public informed about our happenings this year" said Owen Bratlie, the group's official reporter.



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From very early in his career, Si Liechty got a great deal of satisfaction from the business of providing shelter for families in the form of manufactured homes, ultimately creating one of the largest mobile home dealerships in the region.

When Trinity Bible Institute (now Trinity Bible College and Graduate School) moved to the UND-Ellendale Branch campus in 1972, one of the crucial needs was to provide housing for the large and fast-growing student body. As a 1952 graduate of the school and longtime member of its Board of Directors, Si became the moving force behind planning and financing this motel-style building, which has now



served Trinity students for 50 years.

Four summers ago the building underwent a major renovation, with a small army of volunteers installing new bathrooms and plumbing in each room, replacing numerous walls and windows, installing new fixtures, laying new carpet, and generally bringing the facility up to 21st century standards.

Liechty Hall housed students in the 1970s and 1980s whose daughters came to the college and lived there during the 1990s and 2000s, and whose granddaughters lived there in the 2010s and 2020s. With good ongoing maintenance, the school hopes the dorms will house another two generations or more.

(photos by Ken Smith)

Public Notices: Ellendale City Council Oct. 18, 23 & 29

Regular Meeting City Council October 15, 2025

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 regular monthly meeting to order at 6:00 pm with Council members in attendance: Belgarde, Lee, Meidinger, Crabtree, and Langeliers. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Absent: Denison

City Employees present: Auditor Gunn, Deputy Auditor Schmidt, Attorney Kelly via zoom, and John Shockley via zoom.

Others attending: Pam Cook

Public Comment: None

Squad Car Grant Quote Approval: Meidinger moves, Langeliers seconds to accept the bid from Karl Automotive Group in the amount of \$44,143.20 for the squad car vehicle. Roll Call vote: Meidinger, Lee, Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree- yes. Denison- Absent. Motion carries. Meidinger moves, Lee seconds to accept the bid from 10-8 Video in the amount of \$3,149.00 for the squad car camera system. Roll call vote: Lee, Meidinger, Langeliers, Crabtree, Meidinger- yes. Denison- absent. Motion carries. Meidinger moves, Belgarde seconds to accept the bid from Karl Automotive Group in the amount of \$20,637.84 for equipment for the squad vehicle. Roll call vote: Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree, Meidinger- Yes. Denison- Absent. Motion carries. It was explained that Code 4 came in with the cheaper quote to equip the squad car, but Karl's Automotive would have had to ship the vehicle to Code 4, the shipping costs would be greater than that difference in price between Karl's Automotive and Code-4. Meidinger moves, Lee seconds to accept the bid from ECI in the amount of \$7,889.40 for the radio. Roll call vote: Langeliers, Crabtree, Meidinger, Lee, Belgarde- yes. Denison abstains. Motion carries. Only one quote received for the radio is because ECI is the only provider that is compatible with the state's siren radio system and is also used statewide for all law enforcement vehicles.

Denison arrives at 6:07 PM

Colliers Bond Letter: Collier's letter to authorize them to start the process of working on loan paperwork to make up the difference for the portions of the project for Ellendale Acres that were not eligible for the ND Infrastructure Fund. Lee moves, Crabtree seconds to allow Colliers to begin that process. Roll call

vote: Crabtree, Meidinger, Denison, Lee, Belgarde, Langeliers- yes. Motion carries.

TIF Agreement Review: Some changes to be made. Auditor Gunn to send changes to Shockley to make those changes. Meidinger moves, Denison seconds to approve this TIF Agreement with all the changes discussed and subject to final review approval by council and mayor. Roll call vote: Meidinger, Denison, Lee, Langeliers, Crabtree- Yes. Belgarde- No. Motion carries.

Lots for bid: Lots 10-12 Block 12 Bell's Addn. Normal bid process we have been practicing, with bid opening at city council regular November meeting, with a total minimum bid of \$2,400 for all three lots, along with 18 months to file a building permit and 24 months after submitting building permit to complete construction. Intended purpose to be listed on bid, and close within 30 days of bid process. Lee moves, Belgarde seconds to put these lots out for bid. All members, aye. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM

Donald Flaherty, Mayor
Nicole Gunn, Auditor

(Minutes subject to corrections and approval at next regular meeting.)
(November 13 2025)

Special Meeting City Council October 23, 2025

5:35 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 special monthly meeting to order at 5:30 pm with Council members in attendance: Belgarde, Lee, Crabtree, and Langeliers via zoom. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Absent: Denison, Meidinger

City Employees present: Auditor Gunn, Deputy Auditor Schmidt, Attorney Kelly via zoom.

Others attending: Janelle Combs, Martin Vega, Emma Perrotti, and Nick Phillips

Certificate of Occupancy: This meeting was called regarding a change in procedure for issuance for a certificate of occupancy for ELN02. In consultation with our city engineer, to issue a certificate of occupancy for this building it is better to switch the procedure for this building as when it was annexed in it was almost completed. Discussion on certificate of occupancy language held. Presented resolution: To issue a conditional certificate of occupancy expressly

contingent upon the Owner(s)' engineers and architects executing certificate under oath that: (1) they designed the structures and facilities and building systems covered by said Certificate of Occupancy in compliance with all applicable state, local, and federal building codes (IRC, IBC, IFC, IMC, IEBC, and applicable equipment and system schedules), and (2) that the structures and facility and building systems covered by the said Certificate of Occupancy was constructed in a manner that complies with said engineers' and architects' design and the applicable state, local, and federal building codes (IRC, IBC, IFC, IMC, IEBC and applicable equipment and system schedules). Belgarde motions, Lee seconds to pass the resolution as presented, which will approve the Certificate of Occupancy, contingent upon us receiving a letter from McGough construction stating that they followed all state, local and federal building codes. Roll Call vote: Belgarde, Crabtree, Lee, and Langeliers- all aye . Absent: Denison, Meidinger. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM

Donald Flaherty, Mayor
Nicole Gunn, Auditor
(Minutes subject to corrections and approval at next regular meeting.)
(November 13, 2025)

Regular Meeting City Council October 29, 2025

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 regular monthly meeting to order at 6:01 pm with Council members in attendance: Belgarde, Lee, Meidinger, Crabtree, and Langeliers and Denison via zoom. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Absent: None

City Employees present: Auditor Gunn, Deputy Auditor Schmidt, Attorney Kelly, and PW Monroe.

Others attending: Separate sign-in sheet available

Public Comment: None

Bid Opening: Lot 2, Blk 6 Ellendale Acres Commercial lot bid: James River Housing LLC bids \$2400 for this lot with the intent to build a multi-family residential structure with at least 30 units and would like to complete this project by summer 2026. Lot 3 Blk 6 Ellendale Acres Commercial lot bid: James River Housing LLC bids \$2400 for this lot with the intent to build a multi-family residential structure with at least 30 units and would like to complete this project by summer 2026. Lee moves, Meidinger seconds to approve each of these bids. Roll call vote: Meidinger, Lee, Denison, Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree-yes. Motion carries.
281 Sidewalk: One bid received

to replace part of sidewalk along 281 and Main St. from Glynn Brothers concrete in the amount \$9000 to repair the sidewalk. Meidinger moves, Crabtree seconds to approve this quote to fix the sidewalk. Roll Call vote: Lee, Denison, Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree, Meidinger-yes. Motion carries.

Staley Container: Tabled until November 10, 2025 agenda.

Nodak Ditch Concerns: Denison wants to have the ditch on 281 and 11 by Nodak café inspected. The slope seems quite steep and has an abrupt drop off that is dangerous. City engineers are looking into it on how to fix it and who would be responsible for fixing it.

Landfill/Cemetery signs: Ellendale Pharmacy would like to donate new signs for the City Landfill and the City Cemetery with no logos or anything else on them. Lee moves, Crabtree seconds to let them donate new signs for the landfill and cemetery contingent upon Meidinger speaking with parties that had offered to do the same years ago, to make sure we do not use anything they may have paid for.

Plat Filing: Applied Digital submitted their proposed plat filing for Applied Digital property, just for where their existing structures are at, not for where the two future buildings will be, that will be filed later. Will table until discussion on Industrial Zoning later in the meeting.

Joint Powers Agreement with County: This agreement is a JPA with Dickey County as they jointly undertake road improvements to 87th Ave. County Commissioners have passed and signed this agreement as of October 2025. Lee moves, Meidinger seconds to approve this JPA with City of Ellendale and Dickey County. Roll Call vote: Meidinger, Lee, Denison, Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree- yes. Motion carries.

Squad care resolution: Belgarde moves, Lee seconds to confirm the City of Ellendale can and will provide approximately \$25,000 towards a new squad car. Roll call vote: Meidinger, Lee, Denison, Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree-yes. Motion carries. With the recent government shutdown, USDA is unable to approve or proceed with the squad car grant currently. Police Chief Knutson is requesting to put money down to reserve the squad car until USDA reopens to continue the process. Lee moves, Belgarde seconds to authorize to submit a refundable deposit to the dealer, no greater than the amount of the city's obligation towards this purchase. Lee moves. Lee moves, Belgarde seconds to put money down to reserve this squad car so we do not have to start over when USDA reopens. Roll call vote: Meidinger, Lee, Denison, Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree- yes. Motion carries.

Public Works Report: PW Monroe reported on jobs for September 2025. Received culvert to replace on 5th Ave to replace the one that is caving in. Plan is to cover it up and keep level with gravel over the winter.

Building Permits: Lee moves, Meidinger seconds to approve building

permits for: E. Rains to put steel on carport at 423 3rd Ave SW; J. Lefforge to shingle house and install deck on front and rear of house at 601 1st Ave N; K. Gilbert to install fence at 405 2nd Ave S; N. Kendall for general inside/outside remodel at 708 3rd St N; R. Hutchinson to replace siding/skirting on house at 323 4th St SW. Roll call vote: Meidinger, Lee, Denison, Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree- yes. Motion carries. Belgarde moves Lee seconds to approve MDU building permit to run transmission lines from current substation to substation located on Applied Digital property after receiving proof that MDU received an easement from Applied Digital to construct those transmission lines on Applied Digital property.

Minutes: Meidinger moves, Crabtree seconds to approve minutes from September 8, 2025, regular meeting; September 22, 2025, special meeting; September 24, 2025, school and city special meetings; and September 29, 2025, special meeting. All in favor, aye. Motion carries.

Operating Statement/Fund Activity Statement: Lee moves, Crabtree seconds to approve September operating statement/fund activity statement. All in favor, aye. Motion carries.

Bills: Lee moves, Meidinger seconds to approve all bills presented. All in favor, aye. Motion carries.
Timely Submission to Council for Decision Consideration (Late Fees): Fee schedule discussed. Submission times discussed. Denison moves, Belgarde seconds to have first reading of this ordinance on November 10, 2025.

TIF Agreement: Most recent version of TIF Agreement sent to county and school to review. Meidinger moves, Crabtree seconds to approve this TIF Agreement. Roll call vote: Meidinger, Langeliers, Denison, Lee, Crabtree-Yes. Belgarde- no. Motion carries.

Ellendale Township Road Agreement: Terms to agreement discussed. Meidinger moves, Lee seconds to approve this version of Ellendale Township Road Agreement, pending changes discussed made by City Attorney Fallon. Roll call vote: Meidinger, Lee, Denison, Belgarde, Langeliers, Crabtree-yes. Motion carries.

Extra Territorial Jurisdiction: Discussed extra territorial jurisdiction be extended to a mile instead of one-half mile. Do not currently have a correct map showing where those jurisdictions would fall, wait until January 2026 to rediscuss. Hawkers/Peddlers/Mobile Food Ordinances: Some changes made, with fee schedule introduced. Few other minor changes made. With these changes being made first reading to be November 10, 2025.

Mobile Home/RV Court Ordinance: Some changes made. First reading to be November 10, 2025. Letter to be sent to all mobile home/RV parks in Ellendale advising them of upcoming changes.

Light Industrial Zoning Ordinance: Discussion on proposed Industrial Zoning Ordinance. Changes to be made.

First Reading to be November 10, 2025.
Meeting adjourned at 8:54 PM

Geffdog Designs	\$170.47
Quest - EMS	voided
Quest - EMS	voided
Quest - EMS	\$89,502.00
Quest - EMS	\$252,498.60
Verizon	\$268.82
MDU	\$5,901.91
281 Repair	\$268.56
Bound Tree Medical	\$1,439.37
Ellendale PB	\$1,728.09
Jennifer Edwards	\$181.30
Don Flaherty	\$484.00
Nicole Gunn	\$231.00
Keith Breckheimer	\$60.00
Lucas Van Zee	\$105.92
John Deere Financial	\$414.02
Team Laboratory	\$1,005.00
NAPA	\$222.17
Secretary of State	\$72.00
Erichs Excavating	\$3,380.00
NDLC	\$550.00
City of Fargo	\$28.00
EcoLab	\$181.61
Dickey CO. Leader	\$949.22
VISA	\$2,057.15
BCBS of ND	\$11,699.78
Jensen Rock and Sand	\$11,170.76
Council	\$692.64
Mayor	\$294.18
City	\$31,166.36
Ambulance	\$17,071.34
IRS	\$13,534.86
NDPERS	\$5,410.45
NDPERS	\$427.84
Postmaster	\$269.57
Starion Insurance	\$2,174.00
Jones and Kelly	\$4,126.56
DRN Readitech	\$1,105.17
Oakes Ambulance	\$80.00
ND State Tax Commissioner	\$524.21
Aflac	\$858.38
ND Dept of Health	\$54.00
Mertz Construction	\$94.63
Strengthen ND	\$2,000.00
Lorena Lynde	\$240.00
Southeast Water Users	\$15,000.00
Shilo Comeau	\$100.00
Retrofit	\$953.96
281 Repair	\$172.95
Ellendale Concrete	\$382.50
Menards Aberdeen	\$220.59
Vestis	\$76.98
Lucas Van Zee	\$462.50
Secretary of State	\$10.00
Matthew Thorpe	\$1,700.00
Ross Merkel	\$697.00
Pierson INC	\$70.25
Recycle ND	\$15,388.33
Simple Wolf	\$24.00
Dickey CO Leader	\$932.79
Dickey Co. Recorder	\$20.00
Amazon	\$24.99
Computer Express	\$80.00
Information Tech Dept	\$369.59
voided	voided
Revival Ribs	\$1,200.00
Rock Hack	\$825.00
TOTAL:	\$503,405.37

Donald Flaherty, Mayor
Nicole Gunn, Auditor
(Minutes subject to corrections and approval at next regular meeting.)
(November 13 2025)

Landfill Hours Oct. 1 to November 30
Monday & Wednesday: 1 pm–5 pm
Tuesday & Thursday: 9 am–12 pm (noon)
Saturday: 10 am to 4 pm