

HILLSIDE

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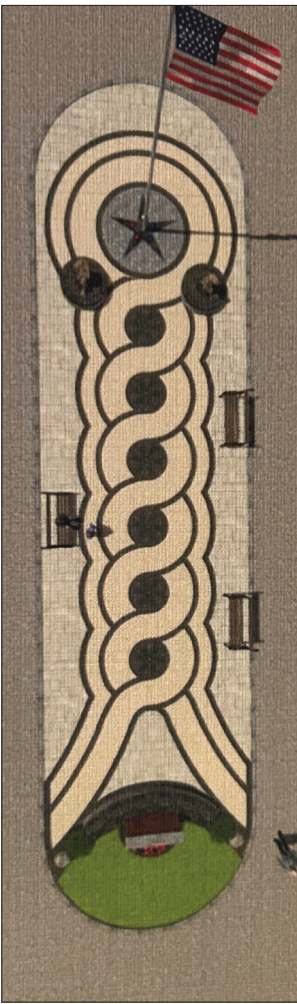
ed flag—the project also includes reflective benches along the perimeter.

Named Patriot Gate, this project honors those who served, as well as reflecting the personal cost of war. “There was no monument here to memorialize what they did, whether it be peace time or war time,” Slocum said.

The original cost for the monument was \$150,000, but it turned out to be a little more between costs which weren’t available at the time of planning (like electric), as well as some cost increases, Slocum said. So far, he added, the Williston Basin Military Affairs Committee has raised 75% of the costs.

“We have it on hand in reserves,” he said. “It’s not like we’re doing a project, and we can’t pay for it. We would like to not rob those other funds,” hence how it is only 75% raised. Fundraising efforts are ongoing and those who wish to donate can send donations to Military Affairs Committee, P.O. Box 2503, Williston, ND 58802-2503.

Before, the entry included a flagpole and about two dozen small, unmarked grosses arranged in the shape of a larger cross—nothing to



An aerial view of Patriot Gate will include two monuments (one of a Gold Star mother and the other of a soldier), a flagpole, and reflective benches. Work on the project began at Hillside Memory Gardens on April 16.

really indicate a military presence at the cemetery. (The flagpole remains and will be integrated into the planned monument.) Aside from Memorial Day and Veterans Day, when floral arrangements are placed on graves, there’s little to indicate the presence of veterans in the cemetery. (If you look the day before Memorial Day, Slocum noted, “then you’ll

see how many there are.) There are at least 1,000 graves in the cemetery. Of those, Slocum said, there are at least 180 who are veterans; the service of these veterans goes as far back as World War I. “It’s pretty heavy with veterans,” Slocum said.

Not only does the monument memorialize those veterans, “it also stands as a testament to what war is about. The one statue being a soldier mourning the loss of a comrade. And the other one a mother, the loss of her son or daughter,” Slocum explained. To his knowledge, this would be the first monument in the region to include a Gold Star mother, the mother of a U.S. service member who has died while serving in the Armed Forces.

Patriot Gate is the fourth project the committee has taken on in recent years, the first being the design, fundraising, and construction of the Freedom Monument in Veterans Plaza at Riverview Cemetery in 2019. Then, a recreation of a Monument to the Unknown was created and rededicated in 2021. The original wooden replica was moved to the Williston Basin International Airport in 2023. Then, the lighting project at Veterans Plaza, was also completed in 2021.

BADGE

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a training facility in Sharpsville, Pennsylvania, where the dogs are also selected and trained. However, Dickerson noted, it could take a while before the handler can get into the training program. “Who knows how long before the officer could get into the training,” he asked rhetorically, adding that it could take up to a year.

In all, the decision boiled down to investing in a K9 that the police department could get six months to a year’s worth of time or retire the dog. The police department chose the latter.

In cases like this, when a K9 is retired, their handler gets first priority in acquiring ownership. In Sisu’s case, Jonas was more than willing to buy his former K9 partner from the police department.

Sisu, a Belgian Malinois, was born in May 2018 and joined the force in November 2020. (K9s are typ-

ically one to two years old when they are put into service, Dickerson noted. He added that while the typical lifespan of a Belgian Malinois is 10 to 12 years, their workability as a K9 unit is between six to nine years.)

Sisu’s role with the K9 unit was that of narcotics apprehension, article search, and tracking—an invaluable role with the department. The K9 program is “a huge asset to the community,” Dickerson explained, noting that it helps to get narcotics off the streets. “It greatly assists in making it a safer community.”

According to the Williston Police Department’s annual report for 2024, K9 units conducted a total of 189 consent searches, 298 narcotics searches, and 419 vehicle searches last year. In all, they helped seize a total of 14.80 grams of cocaine, 1,128 fentanyl pills, 19 firearms, 13 grams of hash, 16 grams of heroin, 748.66 grams of marijuana, and 2,035 grams of methamphetamine, along with 1,323

paraphernalia items and \$33,181 in related U.S. currency.

While the department will continue operating with two K9s—a five-year-old Belgian Malinois named Kreed is a dual-purpose dog like Sisu, and Buster, a four-year-old German shorthair which performs narcotics detection and tracking—it is considering acquiring a replacement in the future.

It all comes down to the budget, Dickerson said. “In our 2026 budget, we will definitely request funding to purchase another K9 and get another one out there.”

The cost for that, he added, is \$16,000, which includes acquiring the dog, as well as training for the dog and the officer in Pennsylvania; for each, training takes six weeks. Paying for the officer to get there and back is also included. Outfitting a vehicle with the specifics for a K9 unit is not included as “we have all that” from Jonas’ previous patrol vehicle, Dickerson said.

TIOGA

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are trafficked by email and it’s important that a government it possesses those things,” said Pendlay. “We are supposed to possess those things, we are supposed to make those available on demand to the public or for the purposes of litigation to inform the court.”

Pendlay stated she didn’t want to get ahead of herself, but there may have been deletion of another city account, but they are investigation to find the extent of the situation.

“It’s a little bit defeating in the sense that they appear to be irretrievable, but at least we’ve sort of reached a conclusion,” said Pendlay. “Those matters have been referred for investigation to the appropriate authorities.”

The commission had assessed liquidated damages against Strata, amongst other costs for very significant delays and attended a meeting to try and reach a resolution instead of litigation.

Strata made an offer was to reduce the assessment of their liquidated damages up to the sum of \$300,000 against their last pay

in the hole to the tune of \$13,000 on a three year late project,” said Pendlay. “Just by virtue of engineering fees, but I have to tell you what their offer was and they wanted you to kick it around if feasible.”

The commission was quick to act with commissioner Kyle Ralston stating “I don’t think we owe them a red cent.” which was met with agreement from the other commission members.

The commission decided to decline the offer from Strata.

The commission discussed the softball field and being behind.

Rieniets stated that he has not heard from Moore Engineering and he wants to look into installing the old scoreboard that was taken down at the softball field and installing power as they “owe it to our kids.”

“I want to gussy up our existing softball field and give the girls an experience,” said Rieniets. “We’ve got that scoreboard we pulled out of the old softball field sitting at the city shop and it’s not doing us any good.”

Reiniets believes it will be less than \$20,000 but believes that they owe it to the kids.

“We have failed them. We failed them this year, we failed them last year,” said Rieniets. “Let’s try to make the best of what we have and when the new softball field is built we can buy another scoreboard.”

The board agreed and there was a motion made and approved to explore options for moving the scoreboard whether temporary or permanent, not to exceed \$20,000.

The Community Center provided updates on its progression and it stands about approximately 95 percent complete with the gym floor set to go in and should be done by end of May, first week of June.

Closing the meeting was Heather Mayer, publisher of the Williston Herald, to request the City of Tioga designate The Williston Herald as the official news-

paper of record.

Mayer spoke to the commission about the services that The Herald provides the City of Tioga, not only with legal notice publications through Column, a program that streamlines the publishing process and brings the legal notices to the modern age, but also the news coverage that has been ongoing since the closing of the Tioga Tribune.

“Since the unfortunate closure of the Tioga Tribune, we have been honored to serve you as your local paper,” said Mayer. “WE have been publishing your legal notices, we’ve been providing newsroom coverage for your city council, school board and local sports events and doing feature stories on important things that are happening in your community.”

Mayer shared a few of The Herald’s publications including the Bakken Living magazine that featured the updates and construction to the high school.

Mayer discussed looking into potential locations to expand newspaper access, as the only newspaper stand that The Herald maintains is currently at Tioga Drug.

“We are also working on installing a few more of those as well to other locations so that we can make that more accessible and convenient for the residents of Tioga,” said Mayer. “I realize that losing your local hometown paper, there’s nothing that we can do to replace that, all we can do is commit to fill that void the best that we can and I believe we have been doing that providing regular coverage.”

The City Commission has until their first meeting in May to designate a paper of record, or as soon as applicable after that first May meeting.

The Commission adjourned the meeting after approving the payroll at 8:21 p.m.

The next City of Tioga Commissioners meeting will be held May 5, 2025 at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

GROWTH

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Student Council.

Laqua emphasized the importance of meeting people where they are, rather than through special open house or town hall-style meetings. “I don’t think you get very good engagement,” she said. “We like to do community meetings in coordination with something else that’s already going on.”

Community outreach will include a mix of in-person events—like the Richland County Fair and a planned burgers-in-the-park event in Fairview on July 10—as well as online engagement opportunities. A website is expected to launch in June to share updates and collect community input.

A Steering Committee composed of local stakeholders will

meet every six weeks throughout the duration of the project to provide guidance and ensure the process remains rooted in community priorities.

“They help steer the project towards success and long-term implementation,” Laqua said of the committee. While this committee is still being formed, the City of Sidney appointed Cami Skinner and City Planner Forrest Sanderson—the latter as an ex-officio member—as the city’s representatives. Laqua’s anticipates the Steering Committee to start meeting in early May.

Future engagement will include conceptual value assessments, asking residents to weigh in on hypothetical funding decisions—such as, for example, allocating \$100 between options like road paving, a park upgrade, or a home ren-

ovation grant.

Laqua encourages residents to participate: “We’re always willing to talk to anybody. Once the online engagement is available, we hope the community will take the opportunity to share their thoughts and help shape our future.”

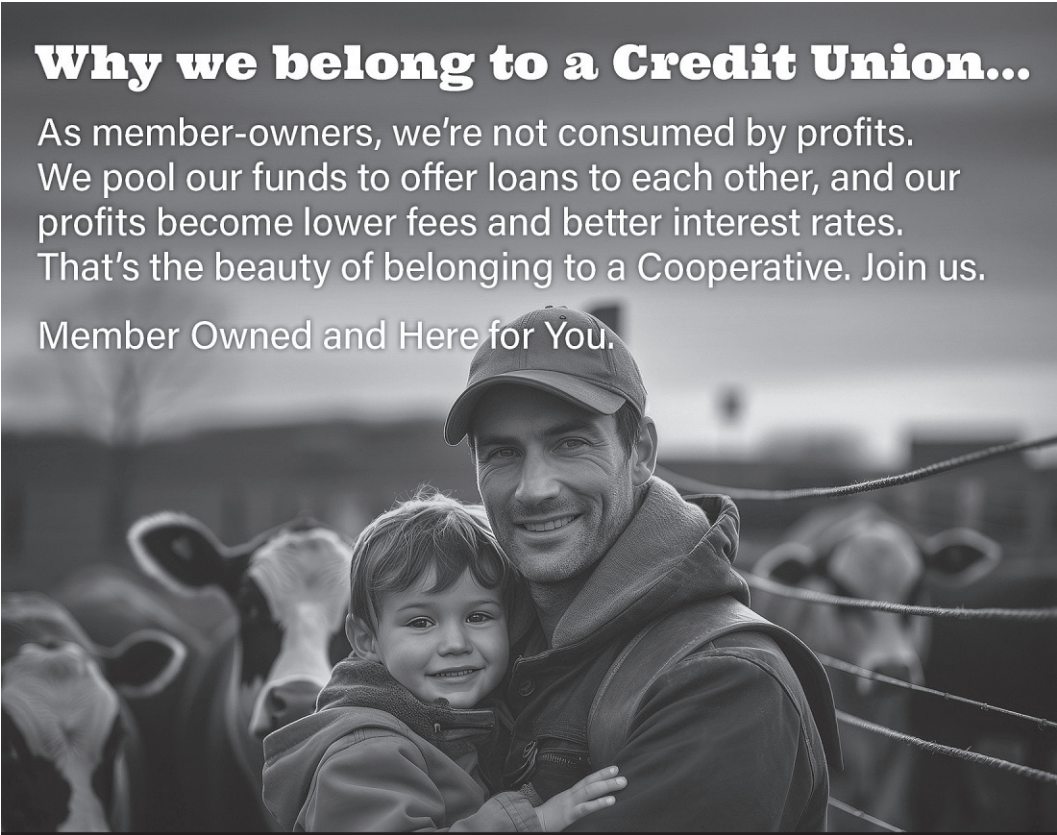
According to a Feb. 5, 2025, memo sent to the Richland County Commission, the Sidney City Council, and the Fairview Town Council, the project is being partially funded by a \$50,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Richland County is contributing an additional \$38,000 as a local match, with financial support also coming from Sidney and Fairview.

The growth policy update is expected to be finalized by early 2026, and according to Laqua, “we’re on schedule so far.”

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