

Crash Fatalities Lowest In 24 Years As Summer Driving Season Begins

Memorial Day marks the unofficial start of summer travel, and also the beginning of a period when traffic fatalities, particularly among teen drivers and their passengers, historically rise nationwide. Vision Zero urges all drivers and passengers to make safe choices, like buckling up, avoiding distractions and never riding with an impaired driver, because these decisions can prevent tragedies and save lives.

As the summer driving season begins, the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) Highway Safety Division is reporting a notable decrease in traffic fatalities. In 2024, 89 people, drivers, passengers, motorcyclists and pedestrians lost their lives on North Dakota roads, the lowest total recorded in over two decades.

This is seventeen fewer lives lost compared to 2023, and nine fewer from 2022.

“While we’re encouraged by the decline in crash fatalities, the reality is that 89 lives were still lost on our roads,” said NDDOT Director Ron Henke. “Each person was someone’s loved one, and that loss is felt deeply across our communities. This progress reinforces the importance of Vision Zero and continuing to educate the public on seat belt use, sober and distraction-free driving and following posted speed limits as we work toward a future with zero fatalities.”

A Closer Look at Preliminary 2024 Data

- 30 fatalities involved unbelted occupants, a decrease from 37 in 2023.

- 19 fatalities were alcohol-related, a decrease from 33 in 2023, however, several toxicology reports are still pending.

- 21 fatalities were speed-related, a decrease from 24 in 2023.

- 57 fatal crashes involved lane departures, an increase from 52 in 2023.

- 17 motorcyclists died in crashes, an increase from 16 in 2023

- 5 pedestrian deaths were recorded, a decrease from 10 in 2023.

Data is still being analyzed and will be published later this year in the 2024 North Dakota Crash Summary.

Vision Zero reminds the public that traffic deaths are largely preventable.

All North Dakotans can actively participate in Vision Zero by taking personal responsibility every time they travel by wearing a seat belt, using appropriate child passenger safety seats, following all posted speed limits and driving sober and distraction-free.

Learn more about the Vision Zero strategy and its traffic safety campaigns at VisionZero.ND.gov.

ND Department Of Water Resources Receives Key Federal Approvals For Northwest Area Water Supply Project

The North Dakota Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced recently that it has received critical federal authorizations under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 408 of the Rivers and Harbors Act from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the Northwest Area Water Supply (NAWS) project permanent intake structure.

These certifications represent major milestones in the continued advancement of the NAWS project, which is designed to deliver a long-term, reliable source of quality drinking water to communities in north-central North Dakota, including the City of Minot.

“These historic approvals are the result of rigorous coordination, technical review, and environmental planning that has been in the works for the last 23 years,” said Reice Haase, Director of the North Dakota Department of Water Resources. “They allow us to continue making meaningful progress on a project that is vital to the long-term water security of north-central North Dakota. We are grateful for the Corps’ partnership on this monumental project.”

Section 404 approval ensures that the project complies with federal regulations governing the dis-

charge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands. This authorization confirms that environmental impacts have been minimized and that appropriate mitigation strategies are in place.

Section 408 authorization is required for any project that may alter or utilize federal water infrastructure. The Corps’ approval under this provision affirms that the NAWS project will not impair the functionality, safety, or integrity of any existing U.S. Army Corps of Engineers civil works projects in the area.

With these certifications in place, the DWR is prepared to move forward with the next phases of construction and implementation. The agency will continue to engage with stakeholders, contractors, and the public as the project progresses.

For more information on the Northwest Area Water Supply project, visit the website.

ND’s Local Governments Press Forward Under New Property Tax Laws

By Mike Moen, Prairie News Service

North Dakota’s legislative session is in the rearview mirror, and the impact of hundreds of bills that were approved is still being assessed.

That includes by county governments, getting ready for property tax changes.

Of the nearly 1,100 bills introduced this year, North Dakota lawmakers approved more than 600. As expected, a property tax relief package was among them.

Aaron Birst, executive director of the North Dakota Association of Counties, said going in, they knew this would be a big challenge for policymakers to address, with all eyes in the state watching. “If anybody says they 100 percent know what the best taxing mechanism is for services, I’ve got a bridge to sell you,” said Birst, “because nobody really knows.”

Birst said the association embraces provisions that give money back to property owners. However, local governments are still bracing for a three percent cap on the annual

property tax increase they propose.

Lobbyists were able to squeeze in some flexibility for local governments. Residents in a taxing district do have the option to vote for an exemption from the annual cap.

In a ballot question last fall, North Dakota voters rejected the idea of largely doing away with local property tax collection.

Despite that failure, lawmakers sensed an appetite for reform. Birst said county governments have to be sensitive to what residents are feeling, while still trying to meet their needs. “Property tax is essential,” said Birst, “that is the number one lifeline that we have for dollars coming in to provide services.”

The relief package also places limitations on how much money school districts can raise through property taxes. Overall, the Legislature approved a two-year, \$20-billion budget.

Property tax relief accounts for nearly \$500 million of that total, with money from the state’s Legacy Fund covering that portion of the spending plan.

Minutes Of The New Town City Council

NEW TOWN CITY TAX EQUALIZATION MEETING

APRIL 9, 2025

Members Present: Mayor Jay Standish; Council Members: Frank Sillitti, Jesse Baker.

Absent: Nathaniel Mayer, Doug Bratvold.

Others Present: Eileen Zaun, Karla Harmel.

Meeting called to order: 5:10 P.M.

1. Tax Equalization:

* 119 Building Permit Applications for 2024 were reviewed, compared to 74 in 2023.

* Over \$16.2M in estimated construction value, compared to \$134M last year, (some property may be exempt, outside city limits, or not built yet.)

* 20 Sales Analyzed in 2024, compared to 14 sales in 2023.

* 25 Notices of Increase sent, compared to 45 last year.

* 77 Properties had changes from last year, compared to 655 properties last year.

* 26 Changes in Classification, from Vacant or Exempt to Residential or Commercial, compared to 14 changes last year.

Residents have gotten ahold of me about their property taxes, and why theirs went up so much, and why was mine not assessed higher. Will need a motion to approve the 2025 assessments.

Motion by Sillitti, second by Baker to approve the 2025 Tax Assessments as presented.

Voting Aye: Sillitti, Baker. Motion carried.

Voting Nay or Absent: Mayer, Bratvold.

I will also need the Assessors’ Oath signed by the members at this meeting. Meeting adjourned at 5:28 P.M.

Jay Standish, Mayor

Eileen Zaun, Auditor NEW TOWN REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 16, 2025

Members present: Mayor Jay Standish; Council Members: Frank Sillitti, Nathaniel Mayer.

Absent: Doug Bratvold, Jesse Baker. Others Present: City Attorney, William Woods; Eileen Zaun; Laurie Giffey; Scott Andersen; Chief White Owl; Patrick Samson; Ryan Anderson; Cal Oldenburg; Jason Strand; John DeGroot.

Meeting called to order at 5:03 P.M.

Motion made by Mayer, seconded by Sillitti to approve the agenda.

All Voting Aye.

Absent: Bratvold, Baker.

1. Minutes:

Motion by Sillitti, seconded by Mayer, to approve the March 16th minutes, with one change.

All Voting Aye. Motion carried.

Absent: Bratvold, Baker

2. Financials:

Motion by Sillitti, seconded by Mayer, to approve the financials and bill sets as presented.

Voting Aye: Sillitti, Mayer

Voting Nay or Absent: Bratvold, Baker.

Checks from the end of 2023 and 2024 that were not cashed yet:

CK#43961 Tikanye Elizabeth \$250.00 - YEAR 2023

CK#44110 Chase Marni \$98.08 - YEAR 2023

CK#44279 Halonen Jacquelyn \$25.66 - YEAR 2023

CK#44845 Bratvold Geri \$143.88 - YEAR 2024

CK#44862 Koenig Kayla \$4.97 - YEAR 2024

CK#44866 Nash Dennis \$375.00 - YEAR 2024

CK#44923 Fox Lucy \$149.09 - YEAR 2024

CK#44931 Lone Fight Phyliss \$24.52 - YEAR 2024

CK#44957 Yellow Wolf Tom \$250.00 - YEAR 2024

CK#45016 Good Bear Carol \$275.00 - YEAR 2024

CK#45033 Pourier Ricky \$50.10 - YEAR 2024

CKS First of the Month: CK#45436 Banyon Data System \$3,185.00; CK#45437 Ecliptic Builders \$20,000.00; CK#45438 MVEC \$14,123.39; CK#45439 ND Child Support \$2,436.93; CK#45440 New Town Fire Dept. \$1,065.00; CK#45441 Northern Testing \$625.00; CK#45442 Power Plan (RDO) \$4,217.44; CK#45443 Premier Properties \$1,176.45; CK#45444 RTC \$2,369.00; CK#45445 Shane Goetle \$2,680.00; CK#45446 United Quality \$1,295.77; CK#45447 William Woods \$3,500.00; CK#45448 WSI \$250.00; **Total Checks: \$56,923.98**

Council Bills: CK#45449 Ackerman-Estvold \$97,751.91; CK#45450 AE2S \$45,415.67; CK#45451 Aire-Master \$120.00; CK#45452 American Welding \$3,363.48; CK#45453 Armor Interactive \$1,703.77; CK#45454 Barnes & Noble \$123.41; CK#45455 Canadian Pacific Railway \$310.68; CK#45456 ECI Electrical \$36,045.71; CK#45457 Core & Main \$1,602.14; CK#45458 Dakota Business Solutions \$370.99; CK#45459 Dept Of Emergency Services \$766.00; CK#45460 Dept Of Environmental Quality \$422.39; CK#45461 Elan Financial Services

\$456.52; CK#45462 Estvold Oilfield Services \$2,725.00; CK#45463 Fahsholtz Charles \$10.18; CK#45464 Flowpoint Environmental \$325.70; CK#45465 Furuseth Law Firm \$1,000.00; CK#45466 Gaffaney’s \$32.90; CK#45467 Gaffaney’s \$4,704.22; CK#45468 Graymont \$18,562.96; CK#46469 H.A. Thompson \$916.48; CK#45470 Hawkins \$1,236.30; CK#45471 Kia Herbal \$24.73; CK#45472 Hosier Worldwide \$19,737.00; CK#45473 Information Tech. \$352.10; CK#45474 Jamerson Demetrius \$185.50; CK#45475 Menards \$9,863.96; CK#45476 Minot Plumbing And Heating \$425.00; CK#45477 Mountrail County Promoter \$24.00; CK#45478 MVTL \$885.00; CK#45479 NAPA \$329.63; CK#45480 New Town Jack & Jill \$59.28; CK#45481 Northstar Tech. \$12.00; CK#45482 Northstar Tech. \$1,738.34; CK#45483 NT Chamber \$3,200.00; CK#45484 One Call Concepts \$38.95; CK#45485 Postmaster \$350.00; CK#45486 Premier Properties \$4,200.00; CK#45487 Quadient Leasing \$363.39; CK#45488 Quintero Victor \$1,333.00; CK#45489 Satermo’s \$174.95; CK#45490 Souris Basin Planning Council \$450.00; CK#45491 Stryker \$1,355.00; CK#45492 Total Control \$57,120.00; CK#45493 Uniform Center \$183.97; CK#45494 United Quality \$6,642.96; CK#45495 Visa \$1,219.12; **Total Checks \$339,904.29**

Payroll: PP 7 E-Check 92325 to 92355 - CK#92356 Bi-Weekly \$57,202.43; PP 8 E-Checks 92354 to 92393 Bi-Weekly \$54,326.83; PP 8.01 CK#92395 \$741.20

3. Public Hearing/Zoning Change - Cicada Terminal (2nd Reading):

Motion by Mayer, seconded by Sillitti, to close the public meeting and go into public hearing. A list of the properties to be re-zoned from Agricultural to Industrial are as follows:

MOUNTRAIL COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA

TOWNSHIP 152 N.; RANGE 92 W

Section 17: Outlot(s) 13 of SE1/4

Section 20: Outlot(s) 1, 2, 11 of NE1/4

Section 20: Outlot(s) 7 less Sublot A of NW1/4

Section 20: Outlot(s) 8 of SE1/4

Section 21: Outlot(s) 1 of NW1/4

The only question asked is if this would allow big industrial companies to build there. This would not, it would have to come back to planning and zoning for that.

Motion by Mayer, seconded by Baker to close the public hearing and go back into our regular meeting.

All Voting Aye. Absent: Bratvold, Baker.

Baker arrived: 5:16 P.M.

Motion by Mayer, seconded by Baker to approve the second reading on the Zoning application request.

All Voting Aye. Absent: Bratvold. Motion carried.

4. City Foreman- Scott Andersen:

Had someone interested in the 2017 garbage truck (\$75,000.00), I did try and get ahold of the council on the amount (\$55,000.00) that was given to me for the garbage truck and only got 2 responses, 1 counter-offered a bid of \$65,000.00 but the person interested said \$60,000.00. I said we would accept that offer, as I did not hear from anyone. We have been working on the lawn mowers and getting them all ready. I have been helping out at the water plant as we had to let go of another employee. Will learn how to keep the plant up and running, until we get more help.

5. Water Plant Update- Cal Oldenburg:

Doug had asked if GIS map could be made public on the City Website. We can do that if you would like the high side budget was \$1,100.00 (one-time-fee).

Motion by Sillitti, seconded by Baker, to approve the GIS for the City-website for \$1,100.00.

Voting Aye: Sillitti, Baker, Mayer

Voting Nay or Absent: Bratvold

Lime disposal- waiting on pond 1 to finish drying to continue clean-up.

Currently working on location FBHA four-Plex service lines on 5th street. Need to locate 5 lines in the next few weeks. Well #2 had a leaking check valve, valve was delivered waiting for Watersmith to schedule a trip.

Looking ahead- Phase 2 street project, Cemetery irrigation set-up, finish collecting Phase 1 GPS shots for GIS system, update GIS map. Finish collecting GPS shots of cemetery system and other odds and ends that need to be updated.

Staffing Issues- lost two operators in early April, currently Kia, and myself, with Scott doing training to fill in and run the plant when we need some help, things are going well. Kia and I are working on a new department layout with defined positions and responsibilities that are much more clearly spelled out for employees and managers.

6. AE2S- Jason Strand:

* New Town Sand Hill Water Tower/GRS: State Water Commission awarded the City \$153,000.00 of cost share funding towards the preconstruction costs (design and bidding) for the water tower project. Next step will be surveying of the existing ground storage reserve and future water tower site on Sand Hill.

* New Town 2023 Street & Utility Im-

provements: Wagner will be taking care of the punch-list.

Plans is to be here in May or early June to get them done. There is approximately \$50,000.00 worth of retainage left to pay on this project.

* New Town 2025 Street & Utility Improvements (phase 2): at the March meeting, the council approved and signed the agreement with Meyer Contracting \$5,936,267.71. I am asking for a draw down from SWC for CW: \$51,664.74 and DW: \$70,177.21, need council approval.

Motion by Sillitti, seconded by Mayer to approve SWC draw down CW: \$51,664.74 and DW: \$70,177.21, for the construction and design.

Voting Aye: Sillitti, Mayer, Baker

Voting Nay or Absent: Bratvold

* Water Tower Coatings Failures: It has recently been noticed that the coatings have started to fail on the new water tower on the northwest end of New Town.

This water tower was constructed in 2019 and 2020, and is past the 2-year window for warranty repairs. I have asked KLM Engineering for a quote to inspect both the interior and exterior coatings on the water tower so we can determine the extent of the issues. Once I receive this quote, I will present it at the next council meeting.

7. Ackerman-Estvold- Ryan Anderson & Patrick Samson:

Ryan Anderson: I am presenting a change order for the Civic Center asbestos abatement. When busting into a door they discovered the door has asbestos in it. With this finding they checked the other fire doors, they also had asbestos in. The total was 5 doors \$1,000.00 for this change order.

Motion by Sillitti, seconded by Baker to accept the change order for \$1,000.00 for Total Control.

Voting Aye: Sillitti, Baker, Mayer

Voting Nay or Absent: Bratvold

Also have a (change order #001) Rolac Contracting, New City Hall, for the sales tax that was not added into the contract. Change order is for \$333,580.00. Will need a motion on this. Motion by Baker, seconded by Sillitti to approve the change order for the New City Hall for \$333,580.00.

Voting Aye: Baker, Sillitti, Mayer

Voting Nay or Absent: Bratvold

Patrick Samson: 2025 West Central Avenue Improvements: Construction Contract for Bechtold Paving, Inc., agreement, is ready to be signed.

Motion by Mayer, seconded by Baker to sign for Bechtold Paving, West Central project, this will not be starting until school is out for the summer.

All Voting Aye. Absent: Bratvold. Motion carried.

With this West Central project, we have added (Change order #1 in the contract) East-Ave. and 9th Street, road repair per the city, the road is sinking in, will have numbers next city council meeting.

School Parking on West Central Avenue:

I have driven down that street and there is enough room for traffic to go by both ways, but I could see in the winter it may be a little more difficult. I see no problem with this. Maybe the school employees should park in the parking lot that was designed for them and not on the street, especially in the winter. The school needed to enforce this.

8. Building Permits

Motion by Sillitti, seconded by Baker, to approve Nick D’Onofrio 3889 88th Ave., NW, to split the parcels into 3 different parcels-Plat of sublot A of outlot Lot 2, Plat of sublot A of outlot lot 11, Plat of sublot C of outlot Lot 7.

All Voting Aye. Absent: Bratvold. Motion carried.

Motion by Mayer, seconded by Baker to approve City of New Town-Golf Course 9151 23B Wood Fence.

All Voting Aye. Absent: Bratvold. Motion carried.

Motion by Mayer, seconded by Baker to approve Phillis Howard 413 5th St., new concrete driveway.

All Voting Aye. Absent: Bratvold. Motion carried.

9. Police Report:

Grants: Working with EOC to get assistance.

Personnel: Continuing looking into options for Echo/K-9. Conditional offer presented to Bianca Chase for patrol officer today/accepted position.

Policy Manual: Last month I gave out the Policies for - Vehicle Use, Medical Marijuana, Information Exchange, Biased Based Policing, Vehicle Towing and Release, Medical Aid and Response. Will need a motion to approve this part of the new policy book.

Motion by Sillitti, seconded by Baker to approve these Policies as presented.

Voting Aye: Baker, Sillitti, Standish

Voting Nay: Mayer. Absent: Bratvold.

New Policies for this month: Communicable Diseases, Mental Illness Commitments, Vehicle Maintenance, Custodial Searches and Temporary Custody of Adults.

Patrol Vehicles: Vehicle noted from mechanical issue is currently in Minot for repair. Needing to get vehicle recalls completed on several vehicles yet. Anticipating new patrol units to be completed within the next month or so.

Training: Sgt. Jamerson attended training in Grand Forks.

Calls of Service: 331

Meeting Adjourned: 6:35 P.M.

Jay Standish, Mayor

Eileen Zaun, Auditor

Ukrainians Face Slow Walk Out The Door As Status Expires

Unable to legally work, some fear a return to war zone

By Michael Standaert

North Dakota News Cooperative

In mid-June Yaroslav Riazanov’s upended life will change once again.

The 27-year-old who drove trucks and worked construction around Fargo for the past two years as a Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) parolee will no longer be able to work.

Riazanov is fine. He’s in the prime of his life. He has no forthcoming surgery or anything that could make him physically incapable of working.

Only his paperwork will change.

Instead of being a two-year parolee, he’ll move to the limbo of temporary protected status.

While this allows him to stay in the U.S. for potentially another six months, it revokes his ability to work here legally.

Without work, his savings will dwindle, possibly forcing him to return to Ukraine.

Riazanov is one of the 600 to 800 Ukrainians who have settled in North Dakota as part of the U4U program now facing an uncertain future.

Since the program began in 2022, over 1,500 North Dakota sponsors submitted applications to help temporarily resettle Ukrainians here for periods of two-years while the war rages.

President Donald Trump and his administration paused all humanitarian parole programs in February for review.

That means those Ukrainians who pass the two-year mark can still apply to stay temporarily, but they can’t continue to work unless they get authorization.

Melania is one of the local Ukrainian parolees whose status has already expired. (Melania agreed to speak about her situation if her real name was not disclosed. NDNC verified her identity through her sponsors and others who know her.)

She, along with her husband and teenage son, have lived, worked, and studied in Fargo for the past two years, having fled the war in Ukraine under the same U4U program.

She worked as a cleaner; her husband was in construction. They’re hoping they can at least stay for their son to complete high school.

They have no backup plan and fear a return to Ukraine.

Kharkiv, in eastern Ukraine where they’re from, continues to be shelled daily.

Besides that, the whole country feels unsafe, she said. Russia launched one of its largest drone and ballistic missile attacks of the war across Ukraine just days before in late May.

Danylo Hoshko, 21, has another year before his status will expire, but has already become concerned.

He works at a pastry shop in Fargo, a very different situation from the one he’d imagined back home where he’d studied to be a sailor on the