

**City of Ellendale**  
**January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025**  
**Regular Council Meeting**  
**7:00 pm**

**Agenda**

**7:00 Call Meeting to Order**

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approve Agenda

**7:05 Swearing in of New Council Members-Oath of Office**

- **Mayor**-Scott Groth
- **Council members:** Joel Meyer, Scott Swanson

**7:15 Appointment to fill Council Member Vacancy**

1. Council vote on accepting new appointee to fill Council Member Groth's positions
2. Resolution 2025-1 Filling a Vacancy
3. Oath of Office

**7:20 Consent Agenda Items:** *If there is any item on the consent agenda that a council member feels needs further discussion, please ask for it to be removed and placed on the agenda.*

1. Accounts Payable/Claims
2. Minutes
  - December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024: TnT Public Hearing Minutes
  - December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024: Council Meeting Minutes
3. Resolutions
  -
4. Financials

**7:25 Public Comment:** *Those wishing to speak must state their name and address for the record. Each person will have three (3) minutes to make his/her remarks. Speakers will address all comments to the City Council as a whole and not any individual Council Member. The Council may not act on an item presented during the Public Comment period unless the item is already on the agenda for action. When appropriate, the Council may refer inquiries and items brought up during the Public Comment period to the City Clerk-Treasurer for follow-up.*

**7:40 Reports**

1. Fire Department
  - Fire Hall Committee *APX MEP drawing & bidding update*
  - Expenses
2. Maintenance
  - Partial Collapsed Line on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue – *Otto to gather quotes*
  - Expenses
3. Park and Trails Committee
  - Update
4. Community Gathering Place Mural Project Committee

- Update
5. Steele Heights
    - Update *Determining final deferred loan amount to accept.*
  6. Codification
    - Updates
      - 199 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue East – *Update No change or progress noted. Waiting for response from owners on cleanup plan.*
      - 5th Avenue Complaint – *Section 92.16 violations No violation noted. Closed.*
      - Radel Court-Sections 92.18, 92.19 violations *Majority abated.*
    - Notice of Violation/Warning Administrative Citation
      - 601 Lageson Court – *Conditional Use Permit Violation Letter and Documentation sent to Metronet in Owatonna. On hold pending Metronet response.*
      - 513 School Street South – *92.38 Weed Ordinance Council member Meyer observed. No issue seen. Closed.*
      - 601 School Street South – *92.38 Weed Ordinance. Engel sent letter to property owner.*
    - Administrative Citation
      - 109 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue East; 408 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue West: *\$50.00 citation issued for each property. Issues not abated. Expect reply at February meeting.*
  7. Clerk
    - Notice of Pay Equity Compliance - *Approval of plan received 1/2/25*
    - Fire Department CD Maturity
    - New Council Member training sessions-LMC

### **8:15 Unfinished Business**

1. Clerk's Office Repairs
  - Update
2. Crown Ridge & Commercial Street Road Improvements
  - Bolton & Menk Engineering Estimate – *Tabled*

### **8:30 New Business**

1. Additional Part Time Employee
  - Interview held- discuss outcome of interview
2. Tax Abatement Policy Extension Request
  - Late submission for tax abatement acceptance
  - Extension of policy time period.
3. Ellendale City Appointments
  - Discuss positions to be filled
4. Resolutions
  - Resolution 2025-2 Ellendale City Appointments

- Resolution 2025-3: Authorizing the City Clerk/Treasurer or Deputy Clerk/Treasurer to Pay certain Vendors Prior to Submitting the Bills to Council
  - Resolution 2025-4 Allowing Wire/Automated Bank Payments
  - Resolution 2025-5 Emergency Ambulance Funds Award to Ellendale Ambulance
  - Resolution 2025-6 Authorizing Donation of Money from the Ellendale Fire Relief Association
5. ESRI GIS Application Software Renewal Quote
  6. Kibble Repair Quote for lawnmower
  7. Hill, Benda, Skov & Bernau 2025 Audit Report Agreement
  8. City Council Rules of Procedure Policy 9.0
    - Discussion-review of the policy
    - Vote on policy implementation
  9. Codification Draft Revision
    - Section 152.219 Telecommunication Towers and Antennae
    - Resolution 2025-7 for publication upon future approval

**9:00 Mayor/Council Updates**

1. Mayor Groth
2. Council Member Asplund
3. Council Member Meyer
4. Council Member Swanson
5. Council Member Berg

**9:10 pm Adjournment**

# MINUTES OF ELLENDALE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2025

**Present:** Acting Mayor Scott Groth; Council Members; Jon Asplund, Joel Meyer, Scott Swanson, Charles Berg, City Clerk/Treasurer Steve Engel

**Absent:**

**Visitors:** Fire Chief Logan Busho; City residents: Cynthia Nelson, Laura Krenke, Amy Berg, Sue Asplund; property owner Daniel Petsinger; Star Eagle Reporter Eli Lutgens; Steele County Times Reporter Kay Fate; Independent Investigative Journalist Keith Haskell

**Call Meeting to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Acting Mayor Groth.

**Agenda:** Mayor Groth asked if there were any additions or corrections to the agenda. Engel requested to add two notices to the Clerk's items. Motion to approve the revised Agenda by Council member Asplund. Motion advanced by Council member Meyer. Voice vote taken: All in favor, Motion approved

**Swearing in of New Council Members** Engel swore in the following city residents to their respective council positions:

1. Scott Groth: Scott Groth was given the oath of office of Mayor for the 2 year term.
2. Joel Meyer: Joel Meyer was given the oath of office of Council member for a 4 year term.
3. Scott Swanson: Scott Swanson was given the oath of office of Council member for a 4 year term.

**Appointment to fill Council Member Vacancy:**

1. Council vote on accepting new appointee to fill Council Member Groth's positions. Mayor Groth stated that Charlie Berg has said he would accept the appointment to the remaining 2 years of the vacated council position of Scott Groth. Motion to approve the appointment of Charlie Berg to the vacancy of council member was made by Mayor Groth. Motion advanced by Council member Asplund. Voice vote, all in favor. Motion passed.
2. Resolution 2025-1 Filling a Vacancy. Motion to approve Resolution 2025-1, Filling a Vacancy of a Council position was made by Council member Meyer. Motion advanced by Council member Swanson. Voice vote, all in favor. Motion passed.
3. Oath of Office. Engel swore in Charles Berg to fill the remaining 2 years of the vacancy of council member.

**Consent Agenda Items**

A motion was made by Council Member Meyer to approve the Consent Agenda Items, which included Accounts Payable/Claims in the amount of \$198,819.65. Meeting minutes for December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024 and Truth and Taxation Minutes from December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024; and the monthly financial report. Motion advanced by Council member Asplund. Voice vote taken all in favor. Motion approved.

**Public Comment:**

- Daniel Petsinger gave the City Clerk/Treasurer a document with several web links to various regulations related to internet broadcasting. He had two issues that concern our community: the proposed codification change, (item #9 Codification Draft Revision on tonight's agenda), not being thoroughly researched and not subjected to public comment and input; The city's decision to terminate Radio Link's contract for the use of our water tower. This action could expose the city to potential litigation. He asked the council to review their decisions on the tower agreement termination and the proposed changes to the proposed codification changes.

- Keth Haskell stated he was representing this community's interest in his interventions and public input comments at the City Council meetings. He speaks for the silent community residents who have reached out to him. He then stated he had filed a lawsuit against the city council. Daniel Petsinger served the documentation to the City Clerk/Treasurer.

## Reports

### 1. Fire Department

- Fire Hall Committee: Fire Chief Logan Busho Chief Busho sent the revised mechanical, electrical & plumbing (mep) drawings to Engel to print out for review. APX had updated the plumbing drawing. Once we have approved the drawings, APX can advertise for bids on the mep items, which will take about 3 weeks to complete the process. Once this has been done and a final level quote is ready, we can proceed with the public hearing for bonding.
- Expenses: Chief Busho received a quote for a new refrigerator for the fire hall, in the amount of \$2,500.00. This is needed for storage of food items for the fish fries. The other refrigerator is not worth repairing. There is no warranty on it either. Motion to purchase the new refrigerator for \$2500.00 was made by Council member Asplund. Motion advanced by Council member Berg . Roll call vote: Council members: Asplund-Aye; Meyer-Aye; Berg-Aye; Swanson-Aye; Mayor Groth-Aye. Motion approved.
- Tanker: The new poly tanker chassis is ready for the tank to be put on. OSCO is a few months behind. We will deliver the truck to OSCO when they tell us they are ready for it.
- Our other tanker needs valve connections updated to be compatible with tank loading facilities in other surrounding towns. A 5" connector is needed to make our hoses compatible. The valve and plumbing cost is about \$2,500.00, needed to install on the tanker. Motion to install the new 5" valve for \$2500.00 was made by Council member Meyer. Motion advanced by Council member Asplund . Roll call vote: Council members: Asplund-Aye; Meyer-Aye; Berg-Aye; Swanson-Aye; Mayor Groth-Aye. Motion approved.
- Chief Busho stated he is still working on the fire code violation report. He is waiting for response on questions he had, from the State Fire Marshall's office.
- He also stated the fire department roster is full now.

### 2. Maintenance

- Partial Collapsed Line on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Josh received a quote from Olson excavating for \$2,500.00 each for the two sewer lines that need repair. He reminded the council that Empire Pipe will pay half the cost of one of those repairs, located in the alley behind the Ellendale Café. Council Member Meyer mentioned we should obtain more quotes for these repairs. If we can't get any more quotes, we can decide at the next meeting.
- Lawn mower repair at Kibble Implement, item #6 was discussed under Maintenance. Josh contacted Kibble to revise the previous quote, to remove items that he could repair at the city shop. Kibble said to deduct 3-4 hours of their labor from the quote. Their rate is \$190.00/hr. The total bill was \$3,371.00. The labor reduction brought the quote down to \$2,611.00. Josh remarked that we don't use it very often. We could sell it. Council Member Asplund asked why would we put that much money into it if we are going to sell it? It doesn't make sense to fix it and sell it. We wouldn't recoup our repair money. The council decided to have Josh bring the mower back to the shop for now. Council Member Meyer stated will could look into finding another repair shop that could do the work at a lower cost.

3. Park and Trails Committee
  - Nothing from the committee
4. Community Gathering Place Mural Project Committee
  - Cynthia Nelson remarked that bricks are for sale for the walkway by the committee. They will be memorial bricks with the names etched into the bricks.
5. Steele Heights Engel reported that Darrin Stadheim is working with the MN Dept. of Labor to determine the prevailing wage reporting requirements. It appears that we will not accept the 2024 award as it would put us over \$500,000 loan amount that will require prevailing wage requirements. Engel will contact Sara Bunn and Darrin Stadheim to get an update.
6. Codification
  - Updates
    - 199 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue East – *This property was taken off the active list as there has been progress. The owner was not asked about this property in the letter sent.*
    - 5th Avenue Complaint – Section 92.16 violations *No issues found. Problem was cleaned up prior to complaint. Close this.*
    - Radel Court-Sections 92.18, 92.19 violations. Letter was sent but no response or actions taken. Motion to issue a citation and fine to the owner was made by Council Member Meyer. Council Member Asplund advanced the motion. Voice vote taken. All in favor, motion approved.
  - Notice of Violation/Warning Administrative Citation
    - 601 Lageson Court – Conditional Use Permit Violation Letter and Documentation sent to Metronet in Owatonna. City Attorney Mark Rahrck is waiting for a response from Metronet’s attorney on the matter. No further update at this time.
    - 513 School Street South – 92.38 *Weed Ordinance*. Council member Meyer observed the property. No issues seen. Closed.
    - 601 School Street South – 92.38 *Weed Ordinance*. Engel talked to renter and owner. Owner will look into fallen branches in front yard. Grass length will be addressed in the spring.
  - Administrative Citation
    - 109 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue East; 408 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue West: Additional \$50.00 citations issued for each property. Issues not abated. Expect reply by February meeting. No action will be taken until the February council meeting. The council has voted to turn this over to the city attorney. We will wait for that action until the February council meeting, to see if any response or action is seen.
7. Clerk
  - Notice of Pay Equity Compliance. Engel informed the council that we received approval for our 2025 pay equity report. This will be in effect for 3 years. Kim did a great job in completing the documentation and completing the reports.
  - Fire Department CD Maturity. Engel stated the 9 month fire dept CD in the amount of \$10,302.14 is maturing 1-18-25. The current rate is 4.75%. The best rate available is 4.35% for a 7 month term. Motion by Council member Groth to renew the cd at the 4.35% with a 7 month term. Motion advanced by Council member Asplund. Voice vote taken all in favor. Motion approved.
  - New Council member training sessions-LMC. Engel reminded the new council members that the LMC offers a two day Foundational Program training session that also includes online learning as well. The closest program is scheduled for February 8<sup>th</sup> in Mankato. Total cost for each member is \$350.00, paid by the city. Part of the training is online with the balance being completed in the seminar. All three new council members will attend the training. Engel will get them registered for the Mankato training on February 7 & 8.

- 2025 Board of Appeals Meeting. Steele County Assessor's office has set the board of appeals and equalization Open Book meeting time for April 9, 2025 at 1:00 pm-3:00 pm at the City of Blooming Prairie City Hall.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### 1. Clerk's Office Repairs

- Update. Waiting for contractor to inspect the building and determine needed repairs. Mayor Groth will contact the person again.

#### 2. Crown Ridge & Commercial Street Road Improvements

- Bolton & Menk Engineering. Tabled at December meeting. Engel explained the various options that were given to the council by our city engineer. All options will require us to bond as the cheapest, single street repair was about \$100,000.00. Engel will send the Bolton & Menk engineering quotes to the council members for their information. Council Member Berg asked about the TH 30 project. Engel said that it is tentatively set for 2031. We would also do 4<sup>th</sup> Ave at that time. The estimate for 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. was approximately \$2 million when we last discussed the project with MnDOT.

Council member Swanson asked to have a street map created with the current conditions and to set up a plan for long term repairs. Josh will work with Scott Swanson and Charlie Berg; to put together the information so the council can better understand the current situations. Engel will put together a summary of current city bonds and the projects they correspond to.

### **8:40 New Business**

#### 1. Additional Part Time Employee

- Additional person due to unavailability of other employees
- Interview held- discuss outcome of interview. Mayor Groth, Council member Asplund, Maintenance & Utilities Supervisor, Otto and Clerk/Treasurer Engel met with Jesse Moe regarding the Part-time Maintenance position. Council member Asplund wanted to table the decision. Due to the new council members not having the chance to review the applicant's application, it was determined that we may hold an interview with the applicant. Engel will look into what we should do next.

#### 2. Tax Abatement Policy Extension Request

- Engel received a last minute request for application for the tax abatement program. The property owner did not realize all the documentation and building permit had to be in place. They thought the building plans were all that was required to apply for the program. The request is to accept and extend the policy for a period of time, to allow them to get everything in place. There is another property owner whose property was renovated and should be re-assessed at or above the 50% improvement threshold once the County Assessor's office does the re-assessment. This may not happen by the appeal meeting in April. But the work has been done. The program is a policy, not an ordinance and can be altered by the council, by a vote, if they so choose. The Council can change the term length of the abatement also. It is currently 5 years. Motion by Council member Meyer to extend the tax abatement application expiration date to April 15, 2025. Motion advanced by Council member Berg. Voice vote taken all in favor. Motion approved. Engel will edit the policy to submit to the council at the February 13<sup>th</sup> meeting for review and approval of the edits.

#### 3. Ellendale City Appointments

- Discuss positions to be filled Mayor Groth went through the city appointment list to be printed in Resolution 2025-2. The appointments were accepted as suggested by Mayor Groth and discussed by the council members.

#### 4. Resolutions

- Resolution 2025-2 Ellendale City Appointments Motion by Council member Asplund to approve Resolution 2025-2 Ellendale City Appointments Council Member Meyer advanced. Motion carried. Voice vote taken all in favor. Motion approved. All in favor.
  - Resolution 2025-3: Authorizing the City Clerk/Treasurer or Deputy Clerk/Treasure to Pay certain Vendors Prior to Submitting the Bills to Council Motion by Council member Berg to approve Resolution 2025-3. Motion advanced by Council member Asplund. Voice vote taken all in favor. Motion approved.
  - Resolution 2025-4 Allowing Wire/Automated Bank Payments Motion by Council member Meyer to approve Resolution 2025-4. Motion advanced by Council member Swanson. Voice vote taken all in favor. Motion approved.
  - Resolution 2025-5 Emergency Ambulance Funds Award to Ellendale Ambulance Engel informed the council, the joint Ellendale Ambulance has been awarded \$74,238.75 to be paid from the State of Minnesota Emergency Fund. This award was designated the Minnesota Legislature in 2024 for all ambulance services who applied and qualified for the funding. Motion by Council member Meyer to approve Resolution 2025-5. Motion advanced by Council member Asplund. Voice vote taken all in favor. Motion approved.
  - Resolution 2025-6 Authorizing Donation of Money from the Ellendale Fire Relief Association Engel stated the Fire Relief Gambling Committee has donated \$2,500.00 to be applied to the new Fire hall building. Motion by Mayor Groth to approve Resolution 2025-6. Motion advanced by Council member Asplund. Voice vote taken all in favor. Motion approved.
5. ESRI GIS Application Software Renewal Quote Engel presented the ESRI quote for the annual fee of \$1,035.00 for the purpose of setting up all our water and sewer service boxes on GIS. It is being utilized currently for identifying any storm sewer lines. It is recommended to locate and identify all our water service curb boxes via a GIS mapping system. It is not due until March. Motion by Council member Meyer to approve the ESRI annual contract for \$1,035.00 . Motion advanced by Council member Swanson. Voice vote taken: Role call vote: Mayor Groth; Aye, Council members: Asplund aye; Berg aye; Meyer aye; Swanson aye. all in favor. Motion approved.
  6. Kibble Repair Quote for lawnmower Discussed under Maintenance.
  7. Hill, Benda, Skov & Bernau 2025 Audit Report Agreement This is the annual auditor’s agreement for completing our annual audit due to the MN State Auditor’s office. The gross fee will not exceed \$14,000.00. Motion by Mayor Groth to approve audit agreement with Hill, Benda, Skov & Bernau. Motion advanced by Council member Berg. Voice vote taken all in favor. Motion approved
  8. City Council Rules of Procedure Policy 9.0
    - Discussion-review of the policy Engel reminded the council that we do not have a policy in place that lays out Rules of Procedure for Council meeting procedures. We do not use Robert’s Rules as it is not recommended due to the overwhelming number of details and procedures not needed for small cities. Mayor Groth suggested we table the policy discussion and vote until the next meeting to give the new members a chance to review the policy.
  9. Codification Draft Revision
    - Section 152.219 Telecommunication Towers and Antennae. Mayor Groth explained this is a draft version of the proposed changes. Engel explained the ordinance change requires a draft of the proposed changes be posted for the public’s view for 30 days and cannot be voted upon until a later meeting. There isn’t a public hearing required for this one. Anyone can come into the office to ask questions about the proposed changes. It can be voted on after being posted fir the required time. This change is done by a Resolution of the changes. Once approved by the council, it must be posted in the official newspaper before it is enforceable and officially changed.

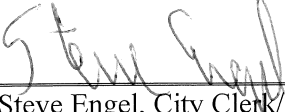


- Resolution 2025-7 Section 152.219 Telecommunication Towers and Antennae for publication upon future approval. Motion by Council member Meyers to post the Draft Resolution 2025 -7 for public view. Motion advanced by Council member Berg. Voice vote taken all in favor. Motion approved.


**Mayor/Council Updates**

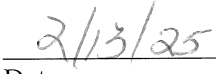
1. Mayor Groth Mayor Groth asked the council if they had any objections to him writing a letter to the Union Pacific Railroad regarding TH 30 crossings needing repair. They agreed. He also mentioned that the 125<sup>th</sup> celebration of Ellendale’s founding will be held on June 26-29. He also asked each member to come up with one goal that you would like to see for the city. He is looking at new council meeting tables that would be more circular.
2. Council Member Asplund nothing to add
3. Council Member Meyer He will look into available funds or grants to help cities with clean-up of blighted, nuisance areas within the city.
4. Council Member Swanson Mentioned the issue with the trains coming through during the Ellendale Days parade.
5. Council Member Berg nothing to add

Motion by Council member Asplund to adjourn the meeting. Motion advanced by Council member Berg. Voice vote taken all in favor. Motion approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 pm.

  
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 Steve Engel, City Clerk/Treasurer

  
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 Date

  
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 Scott Groth, Mayor

  
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 Date

The Minutes are a true and exact copy of the Minutes as they appear in the City of Ellendale Minutes Book.