

# Entertainment helped define Ellendale long before the Opera House

(continued from page 4)

for that class of persons who will help to make the infernal regions blue and unbearable. Cheerful men and women are not wanted. . . . The entertainment was creditable throughout and evoked praise from all present."

Like many Dakota towns, Ellendale during the boom drew people of talent who foresaw a great future in the rising plains civilization. Often they came for a start, and then moved on. Dell Knott, an aspiring actor and vaudeville performer brought his family to Ellendale in 1883. Knott, who "has been connected with McVicker's Theater, Chicago" soon began presenting plays with his family. On Thanksgiving Day 1883, they performed, along with several local actors, "Dora, or Driven from Home," a play based on a poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson. Music for the play was provide by the Lindersmith Orchestra.

On Christmas Eve, Dell won the hearts of the Presbyterian congregation with his gregarious impersonation of "old Santa Claus," having the large audience "repeatedly convulsed with laughter as some name was called out and the present exhibited." Evidently he had the gift of humor. The *Leader* described him as "a man of many faces" after a stand-

up vaudeville act he gave at the roller rink. The "Dell Knott Troupe" used Ellendale as its home base, and traveled widely, often being away for months at a time. In September 1884, young Clara Knott "returned to Ellendale . . . coming home to attend school. She left the company in Michigan, and says it is having good success, now being composed of fourteen members."

The Knott family's association with Ellendale seems to have only lasted several years, but the troupe continued performing for decades, and Knott performances came to Ellendale often. In October 1892, Dell Knott's sister, "Miss Lydia Knott (an old favorite here both socially and personally) won the hearts of the audience at her first entrance" as she performed with the "Keene, Hillyer, & Hartell Co." for two evenings, putting on the comedic plays "Galley Slave" and "Held by the Enemy." The *Leader* provided a highly descriptive summary of the roles played by the company's actors and noted that "the scenery was by far the most gorgeous and complete ever put up in the court house." In December 1893, Dell Knott, "an erstwhile Ellendale boy, but now a famous facial comedian," returned to town and "gave one of his entertainments to an appreciative audience in Good Templar's Hall."

Though their Ellendale connections evidently faded,



"The Yorktown Dramatic Club '90 and '91" is the designation for this historic photo that recalls the theatrical ambitions of the townsfolk of a mostly forgotten town that was located east of Fullerton. This scene is a reminder that human motivation and talent comes prior to elaborate buildings such as the Ellendale Opera House. Drama clubs like this flourished in small Dakota towns even while the towns' basic physical

structures were quite primitive.

The names of club members are written on the back of the photo. In the back row is Edgar Pope, S.B. Kessler, Ernest Wippich, Tom Spiller, A.B. Storms, Charles Curtis and Andrew Smith. In the front row are H. Hunter, Gertrude Peck, Mrs. Ernest Wippich, Charles H. Peck, John Spiller, Grace Porter and Edith Peck

## Public Notice

### CITY OF ELLENDALE REGULAR MEETING September 9, 2024

**6:00 pm – City Hall and Zoom Virtual**  
This meeting was held at the 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, Crabtree, Lee, Langeliers, and Denison via zoom.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Absent: Meidinger.

City Employees present: Attorney Kelly, Auditor Kempf, Police Chief Knutson, C. Middlestead and PW Monroe via Zoom.

Others attending: Wade Senger, Interstate Engineering via zoom; John Gruneich, Shelly Bullock, Amanda Barton, and Wes Knutson.

Agenda additions: DMV Chairs, flagpole at City Hall, Crossroads.

Sewer Project Update: Senger reported on the Pressurized Sewer project. Construction of project done, need final inspections, final paperwork, and approval is all that needs to be done. Will present that to the City Council at October meeting.

Ambulance Hall: Last item before anything goes out on bids; HUD (Housing & Urban Development) says there is a code we need to abide by concerning propane tanks. A 500 gallon propane tank has to be 207 feet away from the building and a 1000 gallon propane tank must be 276 feet away. This includes existing and future proposed tanks. Dickey County Emergency Management building to the South has a propane tank in that radius. Two proposals are: moving Dickey County propane tank or building a shelter around the existing tank. Moving the tank should be easier. Flaherty will discuss with County Commissioners at their next meeting. Senger suggests getting a soils report for this site, contractors have an easier time if they know what kind of soils they are dealing with before starting construction. Two quotes received to do soils reports: Terracon for \$11,900 and Braun for \$11,500. Lee motioned to hire Braun for \$11,500, Tammy seconded. Roll call vote: Denison, Lee, Langeliers, Belgarde, and Crabtree – Yes. Medinger absent. Motion approved.

Housing Development/Ellendale Acres: Regular meetings have been held discussing Phase 1. Headwaters Development hoping to submit building permits in September and request a special meeting to get those approved. Justin Meidinger and Hans Gruner join the meeting at 6:10 pm.

Special Permit: Bullock requests to close street for an auction. Lee motioned, Crabtree seconded, to close off 4th St North from 3rd Ave North to half-way down the street on September 14, 2024, from 9 am to evening. All members, aye. Motion approved.

Bullock leaves at 6:16 pm.

Building Permits: Motion by Meidinger, second by Lee, to approve Knutson request with a variance to place his shed closer to the fence line with written consent from neighbors at 701 2nd St N. All members, aye. Motion approved. Motion by Lee, second by Langeliers, to approve Barton permit to put concrete around home at 121 3rd St S. All members, aye. Motion approved. Motion by Meidinger, second by Belgarde, to approve all remaining permits, with Bixby permit for detached garage at 71 2nd St N provisionally approved since PW Monroe needs to sign off first. All members, aye. Motion approved. Dickey County Fair Board, construct multi-use building at Fair grounds; T. Denison, indoor plumbing at 220 4th St S; S. Berens, replacing shingles at 616 2nd St S; C. Bauer, new metal roof, replace some siding, remodel bathroom at 312 1st St S; N. Kee, update driveway at 204 2nd Ave SW; J. Monroe, replace sidewalk and steps, replace shingles with steel; C. Durheim, reroof and fix basement walls at 209 7th St N; K. Radermacher, replacing deck at 314 1st St S; N. Oravsky, replace shingles at 516 2nd St N; J. Van Wagner, general indoor remodel at 308 1st St N; J. Grueneich, replace existing garage at 522 4th St N; and D. Kendall, connecting to city sewer at Oxenrider Motel.

Rada's Outlot A: Lee motioned, Belgarde seconded, to list Rada's Outlot A for sale with bid openings at the next regular council meeting on October 14,

2024. Property zoned as Commercial, with minimum bid being \$1200, and buyer stating what their intentions are for the property. Competitive bidding if necessary.

2025 Budget Hearing: After discussion of the 2025 budget, a motion was made by Lee, seconded by Crabtree, to approve the 2025 final budget in the amount of \$320,200 based on 94 mills. Roll call vote: Langeliers, Crabtree, Lee, Denison, Belgarde, and Meidinger – Yes. Motion approved.

Joel Hamar in attendance via zoom at 6:36 pm.

Elevator Concerns: Gruner is concerned regarding traffic safety issues by the elevator while trucks are in the street while being loaded/unloaded. Stop signs will help reduce risk. Belgarde motioned to put up three Stop signs by elevator, Meidinger seconded. All members, aye. Motion approved.

Minutes: Motion by Lee, second by Denison, to approve the minutes of the regular council meeting on August 12, 2024, and special council meeting September 3, 2024. All members, aye. Motion approved.

Operating statement: Motion by Meidinger, second by Crabtree, to approve the August operating statement. All members, aye. Motion approved.

Bills: Motion by Lee, second by Denison, to approve the bills as presented. All members, aye. Motion approved.

Delinquent accounts: C. Broer, M. Mills, S. August, M. Deering, Z. Sahli, E. Orwig, S. Tank, D. Moreno, A. Filbert, and J. Pies

Police Report: Chief Knutson presented the police log activity for the month of August. Things still going smoothly, traffic improved on Hwy 11.

Special/Raffle Permits: Meidinger motioned, Crabtree seconded, to approve special permits for: Ellendale Chamber of Commerce for a variance of ordinance for street closures for the parade and vendor show; Alcoholic Beverage Permit and street closure for American Legion; and Ellendale Chamber of Commerce Bingo Permit, all of which during Applefest on September 14, 2024. All members present, aye. Motion approved.

Storage Container: Todd Staley had 90 days to move container into proper place and cover with roof and siding. It is going on 120 days and roof/siding has not been completed. Council requests Staley attend October regular council meeting to give update. Concerns raised regarding storage containers sitting on Coteau Elevator property being used for storage and with doors left open, causing a possible safety risk. PW Monroe will follow up with Gruner regarding those issues.

Public Works Report: PW Monroe reported on the monthly jobs for August. There is a drainage issue in alley south of Blumhardt Chevrolet, water is not flowing how it should when it rains. Everything Monroe checked seems fine on city end, but he saw that there were possible issues at Hwy 281. He will check with Senger to see who to talk to from the state regarding Hwy 281. Received a verbal quote to put in power poles for security cameras at landfill. \$3.50/foot for trenching, \$5.50/foot for trenching and wiring. If using existing pole it would be 150 feet, if new pole is installed it would be 250 feet. Motion by Denison, second by Belgarde, for trench and camera installation up to \$7,000. Roll call vote: Langeliers, Crabtree, Lee, Denison, Belgarde, and Meidinger – Yes. Motion approved.

Landfill Fees: In response to complaints from some rural citizens regarding fees to use city landfill, Attorney Kelly advised to post fees for rural citizens. Rural citizens can use landfill at a fee that will be posted. City ordinances states PW Foreman oversees landfill. Discussion regarding commercial businesses being charged landfill fees. No changes at this time.

City Hall Issues: City hall has had some sewer issues. Some work was done, but it needs more. Monroe stated a bigger hole needs to be dug to insert a trap to fix the issues better. Denison moved, Lee seconded, to fix City Hall issues up to \$5000. Roll call vote: Langeliers, Crabtree, Lee, Denison, Belgarde, and Meidinger – Yes. Motion approved.

Cemetery: Mower outdated and out of warranty. Monroe found a rear discharge mower which would work better for cemetery. Denison moved, Lange-

liers seconded, to purchase new cemetery mower for \$5000. Roll call vote: Langeliers, Crabtree, Lee, Denison, Belgarde, and Meidinger – Yes. Motion approved.

2nd Reading – Chapter 11-Article 11.0121 - Camping: Sleeping and/or camping in any publicly owned property prohibited. Motion by Lee, second by Belgarde, to approve the 2nd Reading of the Amendment by Addition of Article 11.0121- Camping. Roll call vote: Belgarde, Lee, Langeliers, Denison, and Meidinger – Yes. Crabtree- Absent. Motion approved.

Flagpole at City Hall: Discussion held on installing flagpole at City Hall. Lee brought a quote stating American Legion may help cover some of the costs. No action at this time until it is determined if a flagpole can be installed on side of building instead of being installed on south side of City Hall. Chairs at DMV: Customer chairs at DMV are short and very old. Auditor Kempf will look into new chairs.

Crossroads/JDA: Discussion regarding Don Frye retirement and concerns of receiving services as before. Mayor was told that other representatives would handle business in Ellendale. Council would like reports on things they are working on. Auditor Kempf will monitor. Correspondence: Meeting with Nick Phillips from Applied Digital and others regarding possible grants that would be helpful to the city to be held later this week. City received open records request regarding Applied Digital. Deputy Auditor Russell handed in her resignation.

Next meeting: October 14, 2024.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm. (Minutes subject to corrections and approval at the next regular meeting.)

Job Service ND	\$25.00
Vestis	\$76.98
BEK Sports Network	\$300.00
Dickey County Recorder	\$50.00
Sansio	\$2,495.00
John Deere Financial	\$5,250.00
James Monroe	\$198.20
Employees	\$36,587.18
Ambulance	\$13,053.23
Valley Plains Equipmnet	\$1,092.48
ND PERS regular	\$6,159.45
Ellendale Park Board	\$2,319.83
Ellendale Fire Protection Dist	\$500.00
Ellendale Chamber of Comm	\$5,000.00
Farmers Union Oil Co	\$2,880.00
James Monroe	\$87.10
Lorena Lynde	\$190.00
BG Glass	\$50.00
City of Fargo	\$28.00
Dickey County Recorder	\$20.00
John Deere Financial	\$309.23
Starnon Insurance	\$2,174.00
AFLAC	\$342.88
Russell Beadle Landscaping	\$400.00
Jerry Rekow	\$825.00
Newman	\$1,013.43
Recycling Center of ND	\$15,480.96
Resa L Russell	\$51.92
Blue Cross/Blue Shield ND	\$12,384.42
Computer Express, Inc	\$607.47
MDU	\$2,783.32
Railroad Management Co	\$379.14
Visa	\$1,196.86
Council	\$692.64
Mayor	\$300.34
Postmaster	\$224.46
IRS Payroll Taxes	\$14,533.70
ND PERS deferred	\$746.93
Bank of ND	\$43,255.00
America Homeland Rev Ribs	\$600.00
OPERA, Inc	\$2,500.00
Crossroads Comm Advisors	\$3,300.00
Rick Hack	\$825.00
Troy Fischer	\$176.78
Southeast Water Users	\$15,000.00
DRN ReadiTech	\$1,079.18
Muckey Constr/Ell Concr Prod	\$175.00
Oakes Ambulance	\$175.00
Vezken Wireless	\$240.85
Ellendale True Value	\$429.82
Team Laboratory	\$883.50
MFOA	\$80.00
Mendards - Aberdeen	\$365.05
Jones & Kelly, Attys at Law	\$1,624.00
Chad's Electric	\$936.54
Diesel Machinery, Inc	\$387.80
Postmaster	\$350.00
	\$98,194.49
	\$104,998.18
	\$203,192.67

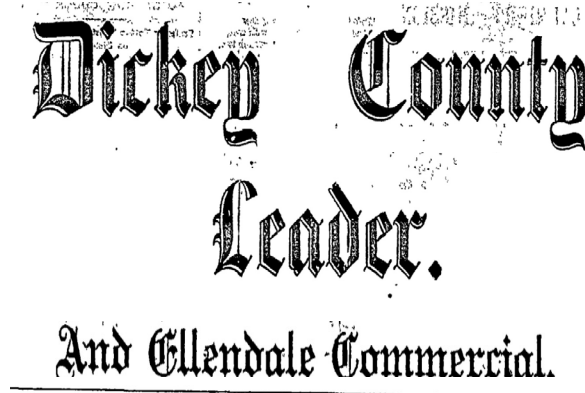
Donald Flaherty, Mayor  
Nicole Kempf, Auditor  
(Minutes subject to corrections and approval at the next regular meeting.)  
(September 26, 2024)

the Knott family devotion to the dramatic arts evidently lasted through their lifetimes. In the 1910s, Dell Knott moved to southern California and became involved in the film industry, playing minor roles in numerous silent films while continuing to act in stage dramas. His sister Lydia followed him, and her career likewise prospered.

A 1923 notice in *Camera!* magazine noted that Dell Knott would be appearing in "Tom Buckingham's production 'The Arizona Express,' now being made at the William Fox West Coast Studios, Hollywood." The notice pointed out that "Mr. Knott . . . is Lydia Knott's

brother" and that he "has a part excellently suited to his histrionic abilities." One can only speculate whether any Ellendalers who had known the Knotts thirty years earlier had the chance to see them on the big screen, and what they would have thought of that experience.

The Dell Knott Troupe was only one manifestation of the multi-faceted phenomena of entertainment in and around Ellendale, but it may have inspired others who remained and participated in the dozens of dramatic plays that were presented virtually every year in Ellendale's halls, schools and churches: they were one part of a rich legacy of entertainment found in this little



There is some talk of organizing a stock company and building an opera house in Ellendale. This is an enterprise that would not be a very great money maker but it would be a very nice thing for the city to have. It is not probable that it will materialize yet, but the Ellendale Grand Opera house is a sure thing in the future.

ELLENDALE, DICKEY COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1897.

Above: a prophetic paragraph, written 10 years before construction began on the Ellendale Opera House.

# She Shows Up!

**Katrina Christiansen isn't taking 1 penny of corporate PAC money and supports Term Limits.**

**She wants to:**

- Secure the Border**
- Protect Social Security and Medicare**
- Lower Prescription Drug Prices**
- Fight for Family Farms**

**Katrina Christiansen's journey is a testament to resilience. During the 1980's farm crisis, her family lost the farm. Katrina grew up in poverty and received the help of federal programs like food stamps, W.I.C. and Head Start. She defied the odds, becoming her high school valedictorian and earning a PhD in Agricultural Engineering. Katrina is a successful engineer with three patents to help our farmers. Now a dedicated wife and mother of three, Katrina deeply understands the needs of working people because she has lived them! Her experience makes her a powerful voice for our rural communities in the U.S. Senate.**

## Katrina is running for the Senate to fight for you!

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