

Town of Ellendale
Regular Meeting of Ellendale Town Council
January 7, 2026
Ellendale Fire Hall – 302 Main Street
Minutes – Records on Apple iPad

CALL TO ORDER: President Sam Noto began the meeting @ 7pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Recited, and a Moment of Silence was observed.

ROLL CALL: Taken by Council Secretary Lindsay Adams and the following council members were present:

Sam Noto – President
Tony Ottomano – Vice President
Lindsay Adams – Secretary
Bob Billbrough – Treasurer
Aaron Moore – Council Member

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: January 7, 2026 Agenda – Approved
Motion to approve Agenda: VP-Ottomano 1st and Treasurer-Billbrough 2nd.
Passed 5 to 0

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:
December 3, 3025 Meeting Minutes – Approved
January 6, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes – Approved
Motion to approve Previous Meeting Minutes: Treasurer-Billbrough 1st and VP-Ottomano 2nd.
All In Favor - Passed 5 to 0

TREASURERS REPORT: Reviewed by Treasurer Billbrough
No comments needed be addressed.

POLICE CHIEF’S REPORT: Reviewed by Police Chief Von Goerres

- Police Chief Von Goerres stated that in 2025 all departments received \$45K from the Sussex County Enhanced Funding Request. In 2026 this will be prorated based on the size of the department. No cuts in funding.

Approved February 4, 2026

- Police Chief Von Goerres also mentioned that his department is undergoing accreditation this Friday January 9, 2026 and if passes Ellendale will be the smallest department to receive this accreditation.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: Reviewed by Town Manager Kayla Adkins

- Need to update Upcoming Meetings section with correct date of January 21, 2026 from 2025.
 - Completed

COMMITTEE REPORT(S)

Community Outreach: Reviewed by VP Tony Ottomano

- New Year's Day Parade/Reception
 - Thank you to all of the New Year's Day Parade participants for being a part of our annual tradition: Police Chief Bruce Von Goerres, Officer Jim Woznicki, Grand Marshalls Dale and Sharon Annis (and Zander, Tommy, Jasper and Bryson), Ellendale Volunteer Fire Department and families, EVFD Auxiliary and families, Ellendale Community Outreach Committee, Town Councilmen- Bob Billbrough, Sam Noto and Tom Panas, Town Manager-Kayla Adkins, ShyAnn Sykes and family representing Revelation Wealth Management, Sussex County Clerk of the Peace-Norman "Jay" Jones, Bowers Volunteer Fire Dept., Slaughter Beach Volunteer Fire Dept., Crew Plumbing LLC., Kirlin's Mower & Golf Car Shop, East Coast Car & Truck Club, and Southern DE Street Rods
 - Reception was well attended. Leftovers were brought over to Home of the Brave.

VISITOR RECOGNITION: Visitors were present; however, no comments were made.

OLD BUSINESS

Security Camera Poles – Town Manager Kayla Adkins

- Last month Jim Smith of Delmarva Power was looking into utilizing their poles. There is a new President at Delmarva Power, and he was looking at this situation. As of this week we still have no update from him.
- Grant needs to be used by the end of March so at this time we need to look into doing the work ourselves. We can no longer wait on Delmarva Power.
- Looking at different vendors to purchase/install separate poles.
- At the February Town Council Meeting we will have quotes on poles and installation and will need to vote on purchase. Or a special meeting can be held if needed before then.
- Proposed areas were to cover the entrances and exits for our town. We will review this plan again.

Realign Feral Cat/Dog Park Grant – Town Manager Kayla Adkins

- There remains \$29K in grant monies and this needs to be used by the end of March. Town assisted with neutering feral cats at screening event held. Grant can also be used for a Dog Park which we do not want. We learned this grant can be used for capital projects so we would like to get the funds realigned for our park. We looked into a basketball court for our park, but the cost is too high. We would like to use in our park for additional parking and to replace items such as swings and purchase new equipment (rubber mats, tire swing, etc.). For this we need to get the funds realigned for our park.
- Reached out to multiple paving vendors for additional parking spots in front of our park and only one (1) vendor provided estimate at a cost of \$15K.
- Would like to use the remaining \$14K for playground equipment as documented.
- At the February Town Council Meeting we will have estimates for equipment.

Motion to request grant monies be realigned to improve our playground equipment:

Member At Large-Moore 1st and Treasurer-Billbrough 2nd

Passed 5 to 0

Extend motion for playground equipment and paving:

VP-Ottomano 1st and Treasurer-Billbrough 2nd

Passed 5 to 0

NEW BUSINESS

Revised Cedar Creek Master Plan – Town Manager Kayla Adkins

- Reviewed GMB letter that documented changes.
- Clubhouse B is being moved.
- Flex space can be used for places such as a trampoline park. An example would be the flex space that is located behind the Milton Food Lion. This is a more affordable space.
- Member At Large-Moore: Raised interconnectivity with other non-developed connected parcels. Believes this is a highly suggested and desired by the State and DelDOT to leave dedicated space for road between properties if needed in future. This would be a 24' right of way for adjoining lots.

Motion to send back the revised master plan to the developer to add right of way/interconnectivity for adjoining lots:

Member At Large-Moore 1st and Treasurer-Billbrough 2nd

Passed 5 to 0

Schedule Town Charter Workshop Meetings

One week notice for meeting is needed.

All council members are requested to provide their availability to the Town Manager for the remainder of January.

Town Attorney-Jamie Sharp discussed editing the charter: This is a tedious process. Unless they are easy fixes such as wanting a section to read as follows, I am advising Council not to rush this process. I went thru it last year with Houston and submitted draft bill in February and did not get comments back from legislative attorneys of general assembly until April or early May. There were several hundred technical edits they wanted because there are state requirements when drafting a bill, they have a certain legislative manual that they follow. I had to look for all the commas, and gender neutrality is required now. So, when making revisions to a specific section that is an easier lift, but if looking at wholesale changes or moving things around beware that will take a lot of time, resources from staff (Jamie will be looking at it and coordinating with legislative attorneys). I just caution you on this. Pick out items that you feel are important that you would like to focus on and we can make the changes from there. I would say this is probably not something you will get in by the end of June when it needs to be voted on by legislature. Unless they are minor items you can get thru. But you would have to hearings for the public to comment on.

Workshop is a meeting such as town council meeting we have right now but then when you have a charter to be presented that would be a public hearing for the public to comment on before we can vote on it to then submit to the legislature from one of our Senators/Reps to submit as a bill.

When doing edits makes sure you are using the document that is on the State Division Registrar website. When making changes use a strike through for items that are being removed and underlines for items that are being added. But if you are circulating it do not accept changes because it needs to show strike throughs and underlines.

Last version signed by the Governor is October 21, 2022.

Changing Town Hall Hours – Town Manager Kayla Adkins

Due to increased population and building within the town we are proposing to change our hours from 9am – 2pm Monday thru Thursday. Our budget can handle the additional hours.

Motion to extend town Hall hours from 9am – 2pm Monday thru Thursday:

Treasurer-Billbrough 1st and Secretary-Adams 2nd

Passed 5 to 0

Police Chief Position – Police Chief Von Goerres

We put the Police Chief position out there to see if there was any interest. I never formally resigned. I did have some health issues, very serious surgery back in August. I have now beaten cancer and I feel really good. I also had a severe hernia, but I had to deal with the cancer first. And hernia was repaired recently. I am mending from that surgery and should be back to full duty on February 19th. I feel good, I am strong and I am going to continue to be the Chief of Police.

Additional Police Officers/Police Academy – Police Chief Von Goerres

President Noto: A lot of people have been asking about our police department, security for our town. Our Police Chief will speak on his vision and options we have to build our police department.

Approved February 4, 2026

Police Chief Von Goerres: Across the country and our state law enforcement is struggling. Our state last year used some funds from Combat Violent Crime to fund a contract with Guardian and Allstar to help recruiting, which the Ellendale Police Department was part of. In the past we only looked for recruits that were already certified but we were not getting any responses. Recently since I have come back, we have had 107 responses. Eleven (11) of the respondents are from within the state of Delaware which is good. Some are not certified. So, I spoke with the Town Manager to see if there is funding to support certification. I am working on the costs for this. Dover is now certified and hosts an Academy which is 26 weeks long and their tuition is \$1,500.00 per recruit. Academy is held when they have enough applicants. We missed deadline for class starting this coming week. Recruit(s) would need to be hired by Ellendale before they could attend the Academy. Received costs from Dover Army Navy for Academy uniforms, physical training gear, etc. Background checks will need to be performed which we pay for.

President Noto: Can we do a contract with the recruit when sending them to the Academy, so they are locked into Ellendale Police Department?

Police Chief Von Goerres: Recently passed into legislation if someone left for another department, they would have to pay us back. Need to follow up on prorated timeframe and also see if we can get our money back if a recruit fails or quits the Academy.

Secretary Adams: Include in contract that if they fail or quit the Academy or leave before a certain timeframe in the position they should be held responsible to pay us back.

Member At Large Moore: Is there a plan for on-the-job training?

Chief Von Goerres: FTO process is mandated. Other departments have done this and work with larger departments. I have spoken with them and even helped them with the FTO process. For this recent accreditation all the documents that have been uploaded into Power DMS and the Assessors have done a review of our stuff and now they are going to do an onsite review January 9th. A lot of my credentials have been uploaded, and they have honored my management credentials from State Police, NC State Administrative Officers Management Program to meet the Accreditation of Standards.

Defer motion until next month when we have total costs, contracts, etc.

CORRESPONDENCE: None to review.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:20pm

Motion to adjourn: Treasurer-Billbrough 1st and VP-Ottomano 2nd.