

the town crier

Volume 38 Number 3

September 1, 2026

Ellis, Kansas



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We will be **CLOSED** Monday,
September 7th for



Stay Connected with the City of Ellis

Submitted by Ashley Scheibler, City Clerk

Want to stay up to date on what's happening around Ellis? The City has a Facebook page designed to help residents easily find City announcements, updates, and important information all in one place.

You can find us on Facebook by searching for "City of Ellis - Kansas."

What Can You Find on the City's Facebook Page?

The City uses its Facebook page to share a variety of information, including:

- 💧 Water main breaks and water-related updates
- 🏊 Swimming pool closures and schedule changes
- 🏢 City office closures and holiday hours
- 🚧 Road closures and construction updates
- 🌳 Parks and recreation information
- 📢 Important City announcements
- 📅 Upcoming events and deadlines
- 📁 Other information residents may find helpful

Our goal is to use the page as another way to keep residents informed about what's happening in our community.

Follow Along and Stay Informed

While the City has had its Facebook page for some time, we want to make sure residents know it's available and know where to find us. Follow the City of Ellis - Kansas on Facebook so that important updates are easy to find when you need them.

Have an idea or suggestion? Let us know!

We also welcome your feedback. What would you like to see on the City's Facebook page? Are there certain updates, reminders, or information that would be helpful to you?

Our goal is not only to share information, but to find better ways to communicate with our residents and serve our community. The City of Ellis is committed to keeping residents informed and making it easier to stay connected with your local government.



West 2nd St. Project Update

Submitted by Verda Flinn, Assistant City Clerk

Great news! The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) has approved our shovel-ready plan. Council approved putting the project out for bid. If any company is interested in submitting a sealed bid for the project, they can visit our website link <https://ellis.ks.us/contact-us/> for more information. If all goes as planned, construction is expected to begin in Spring 2027 and completed by year-end 2027, weather permitting.

We appreciate the patience and support of our businesses and community members as we move forward with the project and construction phase to improve West 2nd Street to better accommodate heavy truck traffic and the growing number of vehicles traveling through the area.



Swim Night Makes a Splash

Submitted by
Ashley Scheibler, City Clerk

The Ellis Municipal Pool made a splash with its first Swim Night, welcoming an incredible 237 patrons for a day full of fun and community connection! The turnout was a great indication of how much our community enjoys having opportunities to gather, cool off, and make memories at the pool. With such a positive response, the City is considering whether Swim Night should become a summer tradition at the Ellis Municipal Pool.

We Want to Hear from You! Did you attend the first Swim Night? What did you think? Would you like to see more Swim Nights in the future? The City appreciates everyone who has taken the time to share their thoughts and feedback on the City of Ellis - Kansas Facebook page. We encourage residents to continue sharing their ideas, comments, and suggestions about the pool. Your feedback is valuable and helps the City determine what activities and events our community would like to see at the pool.

Thank you to everyone who came out for our first Swim Night and helped make it such a success! We appreciate the community's enthusiasm and feedback, and we look forward to seeing what the future holds for Swim Night at the Ellis Municipal Pool.

The Public Works Department will return to 8am to 5pm work hours on September 8, 2026.



Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Submitted by Avery Smith, Chief of Police

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, an opportunity to raise awareness about domestic violence, support survivors, and highlight the resources available to those who may need help.

Domestic violence can take many forms and can affect individuals and families throughout our community. Law enforcement officers often work alongside victim advocates and other community partners to help victims access resources, understand their options, and develop a plan for their safety. **Confidential, no cost help is available to you.**

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, Options Domestic & Sexual Violence Services provides confidential support and assistance to victims and survivors throughout Northwest Kansas. Options offers crisis intervention, safe shelter, and emergency accommodations, supportive counseling, personal and court advocacy, and medical and law enforcement advocacy.

Advocates are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

24-Hour Helpline: (800)794-4624

24-Hour Texting: Text HOPE to 847411

You do not have to make a report to law enforcement to receive services from Options. An advocate can help you understand the resources available and consider the options that are right for your situation. If you are in immediate danger always call 911.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month is also an opportunity for all of us to learn more, recognize warning signs, support those who may be experiencing abuse, and help connect friends, family members, and neighbors with trusted resources. By working together, law enforcement, advocates, and community members can help create a safer community for everyone.



Utility Rate Changes (Comparison of Current to New)

Submitted by Verda Flinn, Assistant City Clerk

One of the key considerations during the budget process is determining whether current utility rates can continue to cover the expenses required to maintain each utility. The City manages three main utility funds: water, sewer, and sanitation (trash).

According to State Statute, municipal utility funds must be self-sustaining, meaning that the revenue generated must be sufficient to cover the expenses of each fund. In August 2016, the Council adopted Ordinance No. 1407, which provides

for automatic 2% annual utility rate increases. This measure aims to address inflation gradually, reducing the need for larger, more sudden rate hikes. The percentage can be adjusted by Resolution if necessary.

During budget preparation each year, this Ordinance is reviewed to determine whether the 2% increase will be sufficient for the upcoming year. After analyzing the utility funds, the Council decided to move forward with the automatic 2% increase in water, sewer, and sanitation rates for the next budget. The new rates will take effect with the November 1, 2026 utility bills, covering usage from September 10th to October 10th.

	CURRENT	Starting with November 1, 2025 billing	
	4,000	4,000	Gallons of water billed (Sample Usage Only - Actual usage unique to each household)
	\$13.65	\$13.92	3/4" Meter Monthly Rate
	\$5.23	\$5.33	Water Usage Rate (per 1,000 gallons)
	\$0.032	\$0.032	State Water Fee Rate (per 1,000 gallons)
WT	\$34.57	\$35.24	Total Water Charge (monthly meter charge PLUS charge for water usage)
WF	\$0.13	\$0.13	State Water Fee
SW	42.21	\$43.04	Monthly Sewer Charge
SN	\$30.46	\$31.07	Monthly Sanitation Charge
TR	\$9.75	\$9.95	Monthly ADDITIONAL Trash Cart Charge (i.e.—second trash cart)
GR	\$2.43	\$2.48	Monthly Grass Cart Charge (for EACH grass cart*)
	\$119.55	\$121.91	TOTAL RESIDENTIAL FAMILY UTILITY BILL
1.6% Increase in TOTAL utility bill *Grass carts are only billed May-November.			

**City code prohibits vegetation watering
between the hours of
Noon to 7:00 p.m. year round.**



Looking Ahead: A New Fire & EMS Station for Ellis

Submitted by Chris Cline, Volunteer Firefighter Member

There are some exciting possibilities ahead for emergency services in Ellis. In fall 2025, the Ellis County Commission approved a bond that includes funding for a new emergency services building in our community. This project is able to be completed without raising property taxes.

In Ellis today, Ellis County EMS and Fire operate out of two separate, aging buildings. Both have challenges, including no space for training/meetings, inadequate bathroom and decontamination areas, and issues with drainage, water penetration and mold. A new station would provide a safer, more functional space for those who help protect you, plus having space to possibility add another ambulance in Ellis at some point in the future.



Ellis County is providing the City of Ellis with the option to add two bays to the building for City fire trucks. This opportunity creates many efficiencies for our 20 firefighters, because those 20 City of Ellis firefighters are the same 20 firefighters who make up the Ellis County Fire Department. The City of Ellis and Ellis County Company 6 have been sharing firefighters since 2005.

While the two departments would remain separate, sharing one station could help both departments make better use of equipment and taxpayer dollars. For instance, instead of purchasing duplicate items, like protective gear that costs about \$7,000 per firefighter, the departments could split some of those expenses and resources. There are many more examples of this efficiency.

Most importantly, having our firefighters, equipment, and training space in one location could make it easier for our volunteers to train together and respond in a time of need.

This project is about more than a new building. It's an opportunity to work together, use our resources wisely, and continue providing the best emergency response possible for Ellis and the surrounding area. This is an investment in our community and our firefighters today, and those in the future.



Last Grass Pickup

Submitted by Verda Flinn,
Assistant City Clerk

The **LAST GRASS PICKUP** of 2026 will be Monday, **October 26th**.

After that date, the Sanitation Crew will **NOT** empty the green grass carts until next April. You may store the grass cart at your residence until the next mowing season.

If you are still mowing grass after October 26th, please place the **BAGGED** grass clippings in your trash cart or take them to the compost pile.

During the winter season, grass carts cannot be used as extra trash carts. If you have more trash than your regular cart can hold, please call 785-726-4812 to arrange a special trash pickup.



Every Vote Counts!

Submitted by Verda Flinn,
Assistant City Clerk

Registered voters will head to the polls on November 3rd to elect local government representatives. This year, three City Council seats are up for election. The positions are currently held by Council Members Dava Gaschler, Devin Henderson, and Jolene Niernberger.

Seeking re-election is incumbent Dava Gaschler. Write-in candidates will also play an important role in this year's City Council election, as there is three seats open.

Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Ellis VFW, located at 813 Jefferson Street, next to City Hall.

Make sure to vote on November 3rd and let your voice be heard!

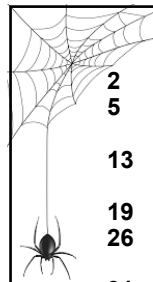


calendar

SEPTEMBER

- 5 Municipal Court 8:00 am
- 7 **LABOR DAY**
City offices closed
- 8 Public Works resumes
8-5 work hours
City Council 6:30 pm
- 11 RNR & Budget Hearings 5:30 pm
- 14 City Council 6:30 pm
- 28 Planning Comm 7:00 pm

OCTOBER



- 2 Municipal Court 8:00 am
- 5 **CITY-WIDE CLEANUP**
City Council 6:30 pm
- 13 Voter Registration Books
closed until after election
- 19 City Council 6:30 pm
- 26 Planning Comm 7:00 pm
- Last Grass Pickup**
- 31 **HALLOWEEN**

NOVEMBER

- 1 Daylight Saving Time Ends
- 2 City Council 6:30 pm
- 3 **ELECTION DAY**
City-State-National offices
- 4 Voter Registration Books
Re-open
- 6 Municipal Court 8:00 am
- 11 **VETERANS DAY**
City offices closed
- 16 City Council 6:30 pm
- 23 Planning Comm 7:00 pm
- 26 **THANKSGIVING**
City offices closed
- 27 **Thanksgiving Holiday**
City offices closed





2027 Budget Update: A Look at Ellis' Property Tax Rate

Submitted by Ashley Scheibler, City Clerk

As the City of Ellis works toward finalizing the 2027 budget, we want to give residents a better idea of where the budget stands and what the proposed property tax rate means. We also thought it would be helpful to look beyond just the upcoming year and see how the City's property tax rate has changed over the past several years.

A Look at the Last Four Years

One way to look at property taxes is through the City's **mill levy**. The mill levy is the rate used to calculate the City's portion of your property taxes. Here is how the City's total mill levy has looked, which includes the Library's mills:

2024: 75.235 mills **2025:** 75.228 mills **2026:** 75.330 mills **2027 Proposed:** 75.397 mills

The City's portion of the levy was 71.235 mills in 2024, 71.228 mills in 2025, 71.330 mills in 2026, and is proposed at 71.397 mills for 2027. The Library's portion has remained at 4 mills throughout the entire period.

So, has the City been raising taxes?

The answer is the mill levy has increased slightly, but it has remained very consistent. From 2024 to the proposed 2027 rate, the total mill levy has increased by only **0.162 mills**. To put that into perspective, the City's total mill levy was 75.235 mills four years ago and is proposed at 75.397 mills for 2027. The rate has not increased dramatically year after year. In fact, the 2025 mill levy was slightly lower than the 2024 rate. The City has made small adjustments to the levy while continuing to provide the services residents rely on and plan for future expenses.

But what about my property tax bill?

This is an important distinction. **The mill levy is not the same thing as your individual property tax bill.** Your property tax bill is also affected by the assessed value of your property, which is set by the Ellis County Appraiser. If your property's assessed value changes, your tax bill can change even if the City's mill levy stays exactly the same. Likewise, if property values throughout the community increase, the City may collect more property tax revenue without making a large change to its mill levy. That's why simply looking at the mill levy doesn't tell the entire story of what an individual property owner will pay.

What is the Revenue Neutral Rate?

Another term residents may hear during the budget process is the **Revenue Neutral Rate, or RNR**. The easiest way to think about the RNR is this: **It is the tax rate that would bring in about the same amount of property tax money as the previous year, after taking changes in property values into account.** For 2027, the State-calculated RNR for the City of Ellis is **72.946 mills**, while the City's proposed total mill levy is **75.397 mills**. Because the proposed rate is higher than the RNR, State law requires the City to hold a public hearing before adopting the proposed rate. This hearing allows residents to ask questions, learn more about the proposed budget and tax rate, and share their thoughts with the Governing Body.

When is the Hearing?

Revenue Neutral Rate & Budget Hearing
Friday, September 11, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.
Ellis City Hall - 815 Jefferson Street

Residents are encouraged to attend and participate in the process.

The Bigger Picture

When looking at the City's property tax rate over the past four years, the overall picture is one of **consistency**. The total mill levy has remained around **75 mills**, moving from 75.235 mills in 2024 to a proposed 75.397 mills in 2027. That doesn't mean the City has never made an adjustment to the mill levy. It means those adjustments have been relatively small and the City's overall tax rate has remained stable.

At the same time, the City has to account for increasing costs associated with employee wages, insurance, utilities, equipment, infrastructure, maintenance, and the many other expenses involved in operating a city. The City's goal is to balance those increasing costs with responsible budgeting and careful use of taxpayer dollars.

We encourage residents to look at the numbers, ask questions, and take part in the budget process. The proposed 2027 budget and tax rate will be discussed at the September 11th hearing, and residents are welcome to attend.

The 2027 mill levy is proposed and will not be final until the budget is officially adopted. Individual property tax bills may vary based on changes in assessed property value by Ellis County Appraiser and other taxing jurisdictions.



HOLIDAY TRASH SCHEDULE



Monday, September 7.....NO trash pickup on **LABOR DAY**

Tuesday, September 8.....The Monday grass/trash and Tuesday trash routes will be run

Monday, October 5.....The Monday grass route will not be run due to the City Wide Cleanup

Wednesday, November 11 ...NO trash pickup on **VETERANS DAY**

Thursday, November 12.....The Wednesday and Thursday trash routes will be run

Wednesday, November 25 ...The Wednesday and Thursday trash routes will be run

Thursday, November 28.....NO trash pickup on **THANKSGIVING DAY**

Friday, November 29.....NO trash pickup on **Thanksgiving observation**

Monday, November 30.....The Friday and Monday trash routes will be run

Downtown Historical District Update



Submitted by Verda Flinn,
Assistant City Clerk

The City of Ellis submitted a grant application through the Kansas Historical Society to help offset the cost of preparing and submitting nomination applications for the two proposed downtown historical districts. We are pleased to announce that the City has been awarded the grant.

Because this is a federally funded program, the City is currently waiting for notification from the Kansas Historical Society to receive authorization to move forward with the project. Once we receive the go-ahead, the City will solicit bids for a qualified consultant to prepare and submit the nomination applications. We hope to complete the bidding and select a consultant within the next couple of months.

Once a consultant is selected, the work of preparing the nominations will begin. Much of the process will be similar to Phase I, including fine-tuning information on each structure within the proposed districts, holding public meetings, and reaching out to community members and property owners to gather additional information and historical details about the buildings.

The City will continue to keep the community informed as we move through the nomination process. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the City Clerk's Office at 785-726-4812.



Back to School

Submitted by Avery Smith, Chief of Police

As students return to school and activity season ramps up, I'd like to take some time to remind our Community Members to use extra caution in the busier areas around town. Many of our local students will continue to walk to school throughout the fall and into the winter season.

Drivers should slow down and obey the posted speed limit, use extra caution, and avoid additional distractions as they drive through school zones. Remember to stop for school buses that have their stop signs and red flashing lights activated!



Community Clean-up OCTOBER 5th

Submitted by Verda Flinn, Assistant City Clerk

- You must have items out before 8:00 a.m. on October 5th (but please do not begin making your pick-up piles before October 2nd).
- Place items to be picked up where your normal trash is collected.
- All items should be placed approximately 3 feet away from all utilities.
- **Separate your items by type (see categories below).**
- We will be stopping at each residence for ONLY 15 minutes MAXIMUM
- We will NOT make any return trips.
- **To avoid wrongful pickup, please tag or remove your "treasures" from the collection area.**
- **Grass will NOT be picked up Monday, October 5th.**

If you have any questions concerning the Clean-Up, call the Ellis Public Works Department at 785-726-4741 or 785-726-1741.

Municipal Waste

Fabrics	Couches
Lamps	Carpet & Pad
Furniture	Foam Products
Upholstery & Plastic Chairs	

Trees

**NO LONGER THAN:
4' in length & 6" in diameter**

Place in alley—will be removed as soon as possible at a later date

Construction & Demolition

Bricks & Masonry Materials
Any Wood Products
(including Pallets)
Wallcoverings
Drywall
Electric Wiring
Non-Asbestos Insulation
Roofing Materials
Plumbing Fixtures
(Stools, Sinks, Tubs)
Wire Fencing or Wire

Metals (White Goods)

Washers	Wagons
Dryers	Refrigerators (only remove if tagged)
Metal Buildings	Lawn Mowers (with Gas & Oil removed)
Metal Doors	Metal Containers
Piping	Bed Frames & Springs
Lawn Chairs	Lawn Equipment
Swing Sets	
Bicycles	
Open Barrels	
Tin	

Non-Collectable Items*

Explosives Batteries
Glass Tires Paints/Coatings
Thinners Strippers
Drain Openers
Flammable Materials
Asbestos Materials Buildings
Concrete or Rocks
Hot Tubs or other Large Items
Medical Waste (Needles, Syringes, etc.)

* **E-Waste** can be taken directly to the Ellis County Transfer Station.

* **Household Hazardous Waste Station** is open

Mon.-Fri. 8:00 am to 4:45 pm
Sat. 9:00 am to 3:45 pm
785-628-9460



While doing your yard work, please remember that the City's **BURN SITE** is open Mon., Tues., Thurs. & Fri. 7am-3:30pm, Wed. 7am-7pm and 1st & 3rd Sat. 8:30am-11:30am and **accepts ONLY tree limbs, branches and brush.** The site does **NOT** accept grass, leaves, lumber, or miscellaneous wooden items. **Take your grass, leaves and garden waste to the COMPOST SITE** which is open 24 hours/7 days per week.



More than Just Books

Submitted by Tracey Andrews, Ellis Public Library Director

Fall is sure to be a fun season at Ellis Public Library with something for everyone! Join us for our upcoming community events including the Friends of the Ellis Public Library Puzzle Competition on September 26th. Gather a team and test your puzzle-solving skills! Be on the lookout for another Bunco Night as well! It's always a favorite evening of fun and laughter.

Our regular programs continue throughout the fall. Book Club meets on September 24th, October 15th, and November 12th. Toddler Tuesdays are held every other Tuesday on September 1st & 15th, October 6th & 20th, and November 3rd & 17th.

We're also excited to welcome back Trick-or-Treating at EPL! Local businesses, community organizations, and individuals...especially those who live in the country and would like to participate...are invited to hand out candy at the library, creating a fun, safe, and convenient Halloween experience for local families.

As the weather cools down, stop by to browse our puzzle collection, pick up a take-and-make craft, or share a favorite dish at our recipe exchange.

Stay up to date on everything happening at EPL by watching our **new** electronic sign, following us on Facebook, or checking the Ellis Review each week. We look forward to seeing you at the library this fall!



Past and Future Fire Stations

Submitted by Dustin Vine, Volunteer Fire Chief

Over the last couple of months the county and city have had discussions about partnering and building a combined station. The two departments would remain separate, however, the trucks would be under one roof.

One cost saving advantage would be the ability to share bunker gear. However, location could be a significant disadvantage. Specifically, from the past reoccurring theme of having a centrally located station which helps with quick response times.

The first station was where the V.F.W. is currently located. The second station was on the southeast corner of Chrysler Park on 11th Street (formerly know as Adams Street). The next station was built in the 1930's near the second station on Dorrance Street. Finally, in the early 1990's, the fire station was moved to its current location on Jefferson Street.

Unfortunately, the center of Ellis is in the flood zone. As a result, the new fire station would likely be located somewhere on the north end of town. Currently, most of the residents in Ellis live south of 10th Street and most of the new residential construction is being built further south.

The Ellis Volunteer Fire Department is seeking input from Ellis residents regarding the ideas, concerns, and future direction of our fire department. Community feedback is important as we consider the needs and priorities of the department moving forward.

Residents are encouraged to share their thoughts and concerns by contacting Chief Dustin Vine at D & B Body Shop, speaking with a volunteer fire department member, or reaching out to a member of the City Council.

City of Ellis **MISSION STATEMENT**

The City of Ellis efficiently promotes infrastructure and beautification programs, supporting community growth while preserving its intrinsic small town charm.



That's a Wrap!

Submitted by
Ashley Scheibler, City Clerk

We hope everyone enjoyed this past pool season! A huge thanks to our pool staff for a fun and safe summer: Manager Kelsie McMillan, Assistant Manager Taegan Shannon, Lifeguards Dora Bencze, Baylor Born, Payten Burd, Haylee Comer, Braidyn Cox, Raegan Jimenez, Jack Reed, Cody Cullison, Carter Jimenez, Leah Reed, Mackinley Rhoden, Lyla Richards, Mason Rohleder, Trenton Schartz and Pool House Attendants Madison Birdsong and Emma Downing.

We had six Water Safety Instructors who led the two sessions of Red Cross swimming lessons – Braidyn Cox, Cody Cullison, Kooper Hankins, Carter Jimenez, Raegan Jimenez, Mason Rohleder, and Leah Reed. They also held private swimming lessons before and after regular pool hours.

Mother Nature spoiled many of our pool days with cloudy skies and cooler weather. Those conditions, however, surprisingly did not spoil our attendance, with 3,232 patrons visiting the pool this year, up from 3,015 last year. Water aerobics continued to be popular with 173 participants, and we hosted 18 pool parties! Thank you all for making 2026 another successful year! We can't wait to see you next summer!



End-of-Life

Submitted by Verda Flinn,
Assistant City Clerk

The City's current municipal software is nearing the end of its service life. Staff have been busy working with our new software provider to transfer account information and test the new programs. Staff are also working through any issues that arise as we prepare for the transition.

Customers will see some changes to utility billing. We are currently on schedule to go live with the new Utility Billing Software in November 2026. The new software will provide improved online access and additional bill payment options. Billing statements will also have a new look.

More information about the new billing statements, online access, and payment options will be included in the December newsletter.

We appreciate our customers' patience as City staff learn the new programs and work to make the transition as smooth as possible.



Another Step Closer

Submitted by Verda Flinn,
Assistant City Clerk

The City of Ellis Clerk's Office and Wilson & Company, Inc. have been busy over the past couple of months pursuing various funding opportunities for the Booster Pump Station Project. With several applications submitted and additional funding opportunities on the horizon, the City continues to take steps toward making this important project a reality.

In the last newsletter, one of the City's primary goals was to qualify Ellis as a Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) community, which would open the door to additional funding opportunities through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The City worked with Wilson & Company to complete the LMI survey, and Ellis successfully qualified as an LMI community.

Following the successful LMI qualification, the City applied for a grant from the Dane G. Hansen Foundation and was successfully awarded funding. This grant will provide a portion of the required local match and allow the City to earn additional bonus points toward its CDBG application.

The City also submitted its CDBG grant application to the Kansas Department of Commerce in June 2026. The application seeks funding to help move the Booster Pump Station Project forward, with CDBG funding award announcements anticipated at the end of August 2026.

In addition to the CDBG opportunity, the City received notification that it is eligible to apply for a Kansas State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan opportunity which offers up to 40% forgiveness. This provides another potential funding source that could significantly reduce the City's overall financial obligation for the project.

With the shovel-ready plan already completed, the project is positioned to move quickly into the bidding phase if funding is secured. Planned improvements include construction of a new building to house and protect the pressure pumps, upgrades to the driveway at the south high school entrance, and improved access to the new facility.

The Booster Pump Station Project is an important partnership between the City of Ellis, USD 388, Wilson & Company, and other project stakeholders. Improving the City's water infrastructure will provide the capacity and reliability needed to support future housing development, create opportunities for additional families to relocate to Ellis, and contribute to long-term community growth and increased school enrollment.



Suicide Awareness During the Holiday Season

Submitted by Avery Smith, Chief of Police

The holiday season is often associated with celebration, family, and togetherness, but it can also be a difficult time for many people. Grief, loneliness, financial pressures, family conflict, substance abuse, and other life changes can feel especially heavy during this time of the year.

Suicide is a serious public health concern that can affect people of every age and background. There is no single cause of suicide, and someone experiencing a mental health crisis may not always know how or feel able to ask for help.

A person who is struggling may show changes in what they say, how they feel, or how they behave. Warning signs can include:

- Talking about wanting to die or feeling like a burden to others
- Expressing hopelessness or feeling trapped
- Experiencing extreme bouts of sadness, anxiety, agitation, or anger
- Withdrawing from friends, family, or other social circles
- Significant changes in sleep habits
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Giving away important belongings
- Talking about death or suicide

These signs should be taken seriously, particularly when they are new, have increased, or appear after experiencing a particularly painful event, loss, or life change.

One important fact about suicide prevention is that asking someone directly if they are thinking about suicide does not put the idea in their head or increase suicidal thoughts. Having the courage to ask the question can open the door for an honest conversation and help connect someone with the support they need.

Northwest Kansas residents have access to crisis care through High Plains Mental Health Center. High Plains' Mobile Crisis Response Team is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The team can provide crisis support by telephone, telehealth, or in person when appropriate. Its goal is to help individuals safely through a behavioral health crisis and, when possible, reduce the need for hospitalization or law enforcement intervention. Mobile Crisis services are available regardless of an individual's ability to pay.

High Plains also operates the Crisis Intervention Center in Hays; a 16-bed facility for adults 18 and older experiencing a mental health or substance-use crisis. The center provides 24-hour support that can include therapy. Individuals can seek help voluntarily through self-referral or via hospital or law enforcement.

Crisis services through the Mobile Crisis Response Team and Crisis Intervention Center are completely free of charge.

You don't have to handle crisis alone. If you or someone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts call High Plains Mental Health Center's crisis team at (800)432-0333, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You may also call 988; the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. In the event of a serious emergency or immediate threat to life, please dial 911.



City of Ellis

VISION STATEMENT

A truly unique Kansas community, Ellis celebrates its rich heritage of friendly people that value family and strong work ethics while actively promoting quality education and public services.



Why Can't the City Just Use the Money in the Bank?

Submitted by Ashley Scheibler, City Clerk

As the City works through its annual budget process and determines how much money will be available to spend during the upcoming year, there is one question we hear fairly often: **"If the City has millions of dollars in the bank, why can't we fix the streets, replace water lines, or avoid increasing utility rates?"** It's a fair question - and one that deserves an explanation.

The simplest answer is this: **The City's money is not all in one big pot that can be used for whatever the City wants.** Municipal finances are different from how most of us manage money at home. The City keeps its money in separate accounts called funds, and each fund has a specific purpose. There are also laws and rules that determine how the money in each fund can be spent.

Think of It Like Different Envelopes - One way to understand the City's funds is to imagine that you have several envelopes sitting on your kitchen table. One envelope is labeled **"House Payment,"** another **"Groceries,"** another **"Car Repairs,"** and another **"Vacation."** You may have \$10,000 total between all of those envelopes, but that doesn't mean you have \$10,000 available to spend on anything you want. The money in the "House Payment" envelope is there for a specific purpose. The City works much the same way. The City may have approximately \$8 million in its bank accounts, but that money is divided among many different funds. Each fund has its own purpose and restrictions.

☆ **The General Fund** - The General Fund is essentially the City's main operating account. This is where many of the City's everyday expenses are paid, including employee wages, insurance, utilities, and other general operating costs. The General Fund is largely supported by property taxes and is subject to State budget laws. These laws require the City to plan ahead and establish a budget for how the money will be spent.

☆ **Money Set Aside for Specific Things** - The City also has funds that are specifically designated for certain purposes. For example, there are funds for **streets and highways, parks and recreation, equipment, and capital improvements.** If money is set aside for streets, the City cannot simply move that money to the water department because the water system has an unexpected need. Likewise, money set aside for water improvements cannot simply be used to purchase a new sanitation truck. **The money needs to be used for the purpose for which it was set aside.**

☆ **What About the City's Reserves?** - The City also sets money aside in reserve funds. You may ask why? Because big expenses don't always come at convenient times. A water line may need to be replaced. A sewer main may fail. A large piece of equipment may reach the end of its useful life. A major improvement project may need to be completed. Rather than waiting until the City suddenly needs hundreds of thousands of dollars - or even millions of dollars - the City can set money aside over time. Some reserves are also required because of the City's debt obligations. So, when you hear that the City has money "sitting in reserves," it doesn't necessarily mean that money is available to spend on today's problem. That money has been set aside for a future need or a specific obligation.

☆ **Why Do Utility Rates Have to Increase?** - This is another area that can be confusing. The City's utility funds, such as water, sewer and sanitation, are expected to essentially pay their own bills. Think of it like your household checking account. You need enough money coming in each month to pay your mortgage, utilities, groceries, insurance, and other expenses. The same basic idea applies to the City's utilities. Water, sewer and sanitation rates need to generate enough revenue to operate and maintain those systems. This includes employee wages, insurance, electricity, repairs, supplies, equipment, debt payments, and other costs. So, even if the City has money saved in another fund, that doesn't mean it can continually use that money to pay the everyday operating costs of the water, sewer or sanitation systems.

Why Can't We Just Spend More If We Have the Cash? - Kansas law also requires municipalities to follow certain rules when spending public money. In simple terms, the City cannot just look at its total bank balance and decide it has enough money to pay for something. The City has to consider:

Which fund is the money in? • What can that fund legally be used for?

Was the expense included in the City's budget? • Is there enough money available in that particular fund?

This is one of the biggest differences between municipal finances and personal finances. If you have \$10,000 in your personal checking account, you generally have the ability to decide whether you want to spend it on a new vehicle, home repairs, or a vacation. **The City does not have that same flexibility.**

So, Does the City Have \$8 Million to Spend? - Not in the way you might think. The City may have approximately \$8 million across all of its bank accounts, but that money is divided among many different funds. Some of it is needed to operate the City today. Some is dedicated to specific purposes. Some is set aside for future projects. Some is required to remain available for debt obligations. And some may have restrictions established by State law or City policy. That is why the City's total bank balance doesn't tell the whole story.

Why Does This Matter? - We understand why a resident may look at a City financial report and think: **"If there is that much money in the bank, why isn't everything fixed?"** The answer isn't that the City doesn't have money. The answer is that responsible budgeting means making sure the right money is available for the right purpose. The City has to balance today's needs with tomorrow's needs while following State laws, meeting financial obligations, maintaining essential services, and planning for large expenses that we know will eventually come. So, the next time you hear that the City has millions of dollars in the bank, remember: **It isn't one big pile of money. It's more like several envelopes, each with a different label and a different purpose.** Managing those envelopes responsibly is an important part of protecting the City's financial health and making sure we can continue providing services to our community today - and for years to come.





Keeping Ellis Clean, Safe and Beautiful: What Property Owners Need to Know

Submitted by Ashley Scheibler, City Clerk

One of the things that makes Ellis a great place to live is the pride residents take in their homes, neighborhoods, and community. Well-maintained properties not only make Ellis look its best but also help protect property values, promote safety, and prevent conditions from becoming problems for neighbors. The Public Works Director helps ensure properties are maintained in accordance with City codes. Following the recent rains, one of the most common property maintenance concerns has been tall grass and weeds. But what happens when a property is found to be in violation? What are the City's responsibilities, and what is expected of the property owner?

Grass and Weeds: What You Need to Know

Under **City Code 8-402**, weeds and grass must be kept at **12 inches or less**. When grass or weeds exceed that height, the property owner or resident will receive a violation notice. City ordinance requires that the notice be delivered either by personal service or by certified mail. Because the cost of certified mail continues to increase, the City primarily uses personal service through the Ellis Police Department. This helps the City control mailing costs while also creating a documented paper trail showing that the notice was personally delivered.

Once a violation notice is received, the property owner or resident has **10 days to correct the problem**. If the property owner wants to appear before the Governing Body to discuss the violation, a hearing must be requested within **five days of receiving the notice**.

What Happens If the Property Isn't Mowed? - If the violation is not corrected within the 10 days, City ordinance allows the City to have the property mowed. The City charges **\$150 per hour, with a minimum charge of two hours**, regardless of how long the mowing actually takes. The cost of the City's work is then assessed to the property owner.

There is another important provision residents should be aware of. **Once a violation notice has been issued for a property during the calendar year, the City is not required to issue another notice for subsequent violations during that same year.** This means that if a property owner has already received a notice for tall grass or weeds, the City may be able to address future violations without sending another notice. If the City has to mow the property, the associated cost may then be assessed to the property owner.



Tall Grass Isn't the Only Property Concern

Grass and weeds are one of the most visible property maintenance issues, but they are not the only conditions addressed by City Code.

Health Nuisances - City Code **8-201** addresses conditions that may be considered a health nuisance. These can include the accumulation of items such as:

Abandoned appliances • Furniture • Trash or refuse • Lumber • Other discarded or accumulated materials

The notification process is similar to that used for mowing and weed violations. The property owner or resident will receive notice through personal service or certified mail and generally will have **10 days to correct the problem**.

Dilapidated Structures and Unsafe Conditions

City Code **8-2A08** addresses dilapidated structures and other conditions that may be unsafe or harmful to the health and safety of residents. These situations can include abandoned vehicles, accumulated debris, unsafe structures, and other conditions that may create a hazard or negatively affect surrounding properties. The amount of time given to correct the problem depends on the type of violation:

Yard conditions: 15 days to correct

Structure violations: 45 days to correct

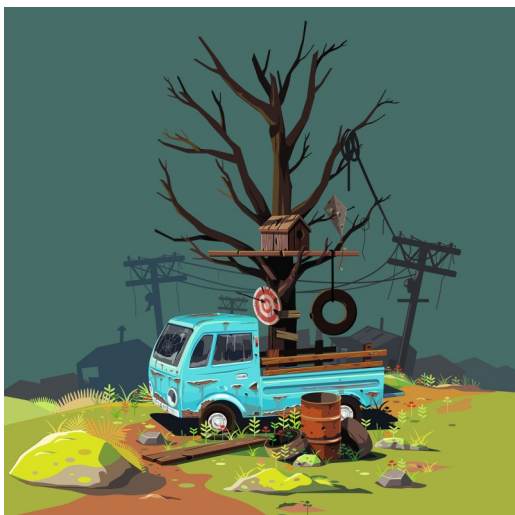
Request for a hearing: Must be made within 15 days of receiving the notice. If the violation is not corrected within the required timeframe, the City may take further enforcement action and, when authorized, arrange for the condition to be corrected. If the City performs the work, the costs may be assessed to the property owner.

Why Does Property Maintenance Matter?

Property maintenance isn't just about keeping Ellis looking nice. Tall grass and weeds, accumulated debris, abandoned items, and unsafe structures can create health, safety, and neighborhood concerns. The City's goal is to work with property owners to address these issues before they become larger

problems. The easiest way to avoid a violation - and the potential costs associated with City action - is to keep your property maintained and respond promptly if you receive a notice. If you receive a violation notice, don't ignore it. The notice will explain the issue and the timeframe you have to correct it. If you have questions or are unsure what needs to be done, contact the City before the deadline.

For questions regarding property maintenance requirements or a violation notice, contact the **Public Works Director at 785-726-4741**. **By working together and taking pride in our properties, we can help keep Ellis clean, safe, and a community we are all proud to call home.**





Mount Hope Cemetery Survey



The Cemetery Committee is seeking your input on the future of Mount Hope Cemetery. Your feedback will help guide future improvements, maintenance priorities, and long-term planning for one of our community's most treasured landmarks.

The City continues to budget funds each year for repairs to the cemetery wall. However, obtaining grant funding and community donations could significantly accelerate the restoration timeline and allow additional improvements to be completed sooner.

Before moving forward with future projects, the Cemetery Committee would like to hear from community and family members about their priorities and preferences for Mount Hope Cemetery. Your responses will help the Committee make informed decisions and identify the most fiscally responsible path forward.

Please complete the survey and return it to the City Clerk's Office at 815 Jefferson Street, Ellis, KS 67637, place it in the City Hall night drop box. Please return by October 1, 2026.

Thank you for taking a few minutes to share your thoughts and help shape the future of Mount Hope Cemetery.



Mount Hope Cemetery Survey

1. Overall Appearance

Are you satisfied with the overall appearance of Mount Hope Cemetery as it looks today? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Cedar Trees

Do you like the appearance of the existing cedar trees? ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Future Trees

If new trees are planted in the cemetery, would you prefer a different variety? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what types of drought-tolerant trees would you recommend?

4. Cemetery Caretaker

If funding were available, would you support hiring a dedicated sexton (caretaker) whose primary responsibility is maintaining Mount Hope Cemetery? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Volunteer Opportunities

Would you be interested in volunteering to help with the beautification and upkeep of Mount Hope Cemetery?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please provide your name and contact information (optional):

6. Columbarium

Would you support the addition of a columbarium (a structure for the placement of cremated remains) at Mount Hope Cemetery? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Cemetery Wall

The cemetery's perimeter wall is in need of repair. Do you consider repairing the wall to be a community priority?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Are you:

☐ Ellis Resident ☐ Ellis County Resident (Non-City) ☐ Family Member ☐ Visitor/Other _____

9. Additional Comments

Please share any additional suggestions or comments regarding Mount Hope Cemetery:



See a Problem? Here's How to Report it to the City of Ellis

Submitted by Ashley Scheibler, City Clerk

Keeping Ellis clean, safe and well-maintained takes all of us. City employees work every day to maintain streets, water and sewer systems, parks, signs and other City property. Residents can help by letting the City know when something needs attention. Whether you see a pothole, water leak, broken sign, tall grass or weeds, trash or debris, or another problem, reporting it to the City helps make sure it gets to the right person. And remember, you don't have to figure everything out on your own. Rachel, Danielle, Verda, and I are here at City Hall and are happy to help you through the process. If you're not sure where to start, give us a call at 785-726-4812, and we'll help point you in the right direction.

What Can You Report?

Residents can contact the City about problems such as:

Potholes or damaged streets • Broken or missing street signs • Streetlights that are not working
 Water leaks or other water system problems • Sewer or drainage problems • Problems with City parks or playgrounds
 Damaged sidewalks or other City property • Trees or branches causing problems on City property • Tall grass or weeds
 Trash, debris, or abandoned items on a property • Abandoned vehicles • Unsafe or run-down buildings
 Other possible City Code violations

What Should You Include?

When reporting a problem, a little extra information can go a long way. Try to include these four things:

1. **Where is it?** - Give the street address if you have one. If there isn't an address, *tell us the nearest intersection or give a clear description of where the problem is located. For example, instead of saying: "There's a pothole on Washington Street." Say: "There's a large pothole on Washington Street near the intersection of 6th Street."*
2. **What is wrong?** - Give us a short description of what you see. For example: *"There is water running down the street near the curb."* or *"The grass at this property appears to be more than 12 inches tall."*
3. **Can you provide a picture?** - If it is safe to do so, a photo can be very helpful. Pictures can help City staff understand the problem and determine what needs to be done before they arrive at the location. Photos are especially helpful for things such as potholes, broken signs, debris, and property maintenance concerns.
4. **How can we contact you?** - Please provide your name and a phone number or email address when possible. City staff may need to contact you if they have questions or need more information.

Be Specific

The more information you give us, the easier it is for City staff to find the problem and figure out what needs to be done. A report that simply says, **"There is a problem on Washington Street,"** may require staff to spend extra time trying to figure out exactly where the problem is. A good report answers three simple questions:

Where is it? • What is wrong? • What can you tell us about it?

If you're unsure what information to provide, that's okay! Call City Hall at 785-726-4812. Rachel, Danielle, Verda, or I will be happy to help you figure out what is needed. A few extra details - and a simple phone call when you're unsure - can help City staff respond more efficiently and keep Ellis clean, safe, and a community we can all be proud of.

What Happens After You Report Something?

Once the City receives your report, staff will review it and send it to the appropriate department or employee. Some problems can be fixed quickly, while others may take more time. Repairs may require additional materials, equipment, scheduling, or coordination with other agencies or utility companies.

For **code violations**, the process may take longer because the City has to follow the requirements set by City Code. This may include inspecting the property, determining whether a violation exists, sending the required notice, and giving the property owner time to correct the problem. **Reporting a violation does not mean the City can immediately remove or fix the problem.** The City must follow the proper process.

You Don't Have to Deal with a Neighbor Yourself

If you notice a possible code violation on a neighboring property, you do not have to confront the property owner. Instead, report the concern to the City and let City staff determine whether a violation exists and what action is appropriate. This helps ensure complaints are handled fairly and consistently.

Not Sure Who Is Responsible?

Sometimes it can be difficult to know whether something belongs to the City or a private property owner. For example, a water or sewer problem may be on private property rather than part of the City's system. A tree may belong to a property owner rather than the City. If you're not sure, ask us. We can help determine who is responsible and where the concern should be directed. You don't need to know which department handles the issue or which City Code applies. That's what we are here for.

What About Emergencies?

Routine repairs and code concerns should be reported through the City's normal reporting process. If you see something that creates an immediate danger to people or property, don't wait for a regular work order. Contact the appropriate emergency services by calling 911 or City personnel right away.

Your Report Helps Our Community

Residents are often the first people to notice a problem. By reporting it, you are helping City employees know where attention is needed. The next time you see a pothole, water leak, broken sign, tall grass or another concern, let us know. Give us a call at 785-726-4812, and we'll help you through the process and get your concern to the right place.

CANDIDATE COMMENT



The candidate who filed for a position on the Governing Body was asked the following questions:

- ▶ *What position are you running for?*
 - ▶ *What do you think are your qualifications for this position?*
 - ▶ *What do you think are the most important issues facing the City during the next two years, and how should they be dealt with?*

The following response has been printed exactly as the candidate submitted.

What position are you running for?

City Council

Dava Gaschler

What do you think are your qualifications for this position?

I am a current city council member and willing to listen to the citizens of Ellis

What do you think are the most important issues facing the City during the next two years, and how should they be dealt with?

- "Affordable" housing for young families, I love the duplex housing between the Good Samaritan Center and Mt. Hope. Whether it helps, young families move into a version of those or make more for our senior citizens and in turn their smaller homes would be for sale.
- Keep our cybersecurity at full strength.
- To have and maintain a street maintenance program.
- Constantly evaluate our water needs, infrastructure, and programs. This also includes staying on top of the south hill pump station.
- Actively engaging the citizens to be involved in the city and making it known their opinions matter.
- Keeping our departments and budgets fiscally responsible



Help Us Keep Your Contact Information Up to Date

Submitted by Danielle Schaus, Accounts Payable/Court Clerk

The City of Ellis is preparing to transition to a new software system, and as part of this process, we would like to make sure our resident records are as accurate and up to date as possible. Having current phone numbers and email addresses on file helps us communicate with residents when important situations arise. For example, if we become aware of a water leak or another issue at your property, having accurate contact information allows us to reach you quickly. We are asking all City of Ellis residents to take a moment to verify that we have your current phone number and email address on file.

There are two easy ways to update your information:

- ⇒ **Complete the Form Below** - Simply fill it out and return it to the City Clerk's Office.
- ⇒ **Call or Email Us** - You can also contact the City Clerk's Office directly by calling 785-726-4812 or email clerk@cityofellisks.gov

Even if you believe we already have your information, we appreciate you taking a moment to verify it. Keeping our records current helps us better serve you and our community. **Thank you for helping us keep Ellis connected!**



City of Ellis

Resident Contact Information Update Form

The City of Ellis is updating resident records as we transition to a new software system. Please complete the information below so we can make sure we have the most current contact information on file.

Thank you for helping us keep our records up to date!

Name(s) on Bill: _____

Service Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Please return this completed form to the
Clerk's Office • 815 Jefferson • Ellis, KS 67637 • 785-726-4812 • clerk@cityofellisks.gov