

**City of Fairmont
100 Downtown Plaza
Fairmont, MN 56031**

City Council Minutes
Regular Meeting

February 10, 2025
City Hall, 5:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

The Fairmont City Council met in regular session at the City Hall Council Chambers. Mayor Baarts called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Council present:

Lee Baarts, Mayor
Wayne Hasek, Councilmember
Britney Kawecki, Councilmember
James Kotewa, Councilmember
Randy Lubenow, Councilmember
Jay Maynard, Councilmember

Staff present:

Matthew York, Director of Public Works/Utilities
Paul Hoye, Finance Director
Michael Hunter, Chief of Police
Pat Oman, Community Development Director
Ned Koppen, Economic Development Coordinator
Hannah Neusch, Water Resources Technician
Rachel Viesselman, Human Resources Manager
Betsy Steuber, City Clerk
Troy Nemmers, Bolton & Menk (contracted services)
Cara Brown, City Attorney, via telephone
(Flaherty & Hood)

**PLEDGE OF
ALLEGIANCE**

The City Council and all present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF
AGENDA**

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Lubenow to approve the agenda as presented. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

ROTATING VOTES

Please note that votes taken by roll call are called by the City Clerk on a rotating basis; however, the written minutes list the Councilmembers in alphabetical order.

**RECOGNITION/
PRESENTATIONS
Item 4.1**

Jennifer McCoy, Senior Traffic Engineer with Bolton & Menk presented the Blue Earth Avenue Improvement: Traffic Study to Council. The road is currently a four-lane undivided road with parking on the south side, featuring about 40 parking spaces, mostly used on weekends. McCoy stated current traffic volumes and future traffic volume projections were considered in the study, with a proposed 4-lane to 3-lane conversation to

enhance safety, support current and forecasted traffic patterns, while increasing on-street parking and bike lane opportunities.

McCoy discussed roadway traffic control options, such as two-way stop control or mini roundabouts, while considering traffic flow, costs and pedestrian safety.

Item 4.2

Water Resources Technician Neusch presented on “Lakefest”, a new community event tentatively scheduled for August 10, 2025. The event is intended to celebrate art installations highlighting the importance of clean drinking water and will feature educational activities for all ages. The City looks forward to fostering community conversations around our lakes and water quality.

Item 4.3

Water Resources Technician Neusch presented on “Prairie Walks”, a new series of educational events to be held in the Spring, Summer and Fall of 2025. Attendees will learn about prairie ecosystems and management while walking in native prairie in the City of Fairmont.

**PUBLIC DISCUSSION/
COMMENT**

Rin Porter, a Fairmont resident and member of the Fairmont Human Rights Committee, voiced concern regarding the impact of the new administration on immigrants in Fairmont. Ms. Porter shared a handout with Council on the Rights of Immigrants According to Minnesota Immigration Experts, Immigrant Detention in Minnesota and Resources for Immigrants.

Terry Riggs, a Fairmont resident, expressed issues with the wording and structure of past referendum questions. Ms. Riggs asked Council, moving forward, to reference one item and make it a simple question with clear language to better understand voter support.

Peter Bode, a Fairmont resident and former City employee, commended the professionalism and knowledge of City staff and addressed the lack of protection against employee slander and harassment. Mr. Bode proposed Council consider a communication policy, between Council and staff, to ensure clear guideline and protect integrity. Mr. Bode expressed gratitude for serving the City of Fairmont and Fairmont City Council.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Baarts introduced the consent agenda items as listed for consideration to be enacted by one motion unless requested that an item be removed and included under new business. Mayor Baarts reviewed the consent items, as follows:

- City Council Meeting Minutes from the Regular Meeting held January 27, 2025
- City Council Meeting Minutes from the Special Meeting held January 15, 2025

- Event Permit for the Fairmont City Band to Host Band Concerts at the Sylvania Park Bandshell on June 10, June 17, June 24, July 4 and July 8, 2025
- Event Permit for the Martin County Library to Host the Library Family Summer Shindig on August 6, 2025
- Renewal of the Consumption & Display Permit for the Chain of Lakes Yacht Club
- Event Permit for the Martin County Chapter of Pheasants Forever Youth Ice Fishing Event on Saturday, February 15, 2025

Motion was made by Councilmember Kotewa, seconded by Councilmember Maynard to approve the consent agenda as presented. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS
MOTION
Item 9.A.1**

Human Resources Manager Viesselman introduced item 9.A.1: Consideration to Approve a Bone Marrow/Organ Donation Leave Policy, as required per Minnesota Statutes (§181.945 and §181.9456).

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Hasek to Adopt a Bone Marrow/Organ Donation Leave Policy, as Proposed. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

**MOTION
Item 9.A.2**

Consideration to Update the City of Fairmont's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy/Statement, item 9.A.2, was introduced by Manager Viesselman. As Minnesota's CROWN Act (effective February 1, 2023) adds that racial discrimination includes natural hair characteristics and styles (like braids, locs and twists) Viesselman stated the City's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy must be updated to reflect this.

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Lubenow to Update the City of Fairmont's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy/Statement, as Proposed. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

**MOTION
Item 9.A.3**

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Hasek to Adopt a School Conference and Activities Leave Policy, as Proposed. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

**MOTION
Item 9.A.4**

As the Local Government Pay Equity Act requires local governments to report pay equity data every three years to eliminate gender-based wage inequities, Manager Viesselman announced the City of Fairmont was in compliance for 2025.

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Hasek to Approve the 2025 Pay Equity Compliance Report. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

**MOTION
Item 9.A.5**

Economic Development Coordinator Koppen introduced Proposed Ordinance 2025-01 on Establishing a Local Housing Trust Fund. Koppen noted that the fund is advised by state agencies as a best practice ensuring effective and flexible distribution of funding for community projects and, in certain situations, is required when applying for grants.

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Lubenow to Approve the First Consideration of Proposed Ordinance 2025-01: An Ordinance Establishing a Local Housing Trust Fund in the City of Fairmont. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

**MOTION
Item 9.A.6**

Clerk Steuber presented item 9.A.6: Consideration on an Amendment to Section 3.12 of the Fairmont Charter to Reduce the Civil Penalty from \$2,000.00 to \$1,000.00 to Match State Statutory Limits and to Increase the Required Minimum for Obtaining Bids from \$5,000.00 to \$25,000.00. As Council approved the recodification project and the Charter Commission would like to update two Charter items (as noted above and in the agenda packet), Steuber stated as there may be additional Charter amendments to consider, it is preferable to address all proposed amendments collectively for efficiency.

Motion was made by Councilmember Lubenow, seconded by Councilmember Kawecki to Table Agenda Item 9.6.A to a Future Meeting. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

**MOTION
Item 9.B.1**

Director York provided background on the Gomsrud Park – North Parking Lot and Trail Project, agenda item 9.B.1. York reviewed the results of the recent bid opening, noting that Ulland Brothers was the lowest bid, well under the Engineer’s Estimate.

Company	Base Bid	Alt A (Concrete Trails)	Alt B (Asphalt Trails)
Ulland Brothers	\$825,448.84	\$190,908.25	\$134,779.50
M.R. Paving & Excavating, Inc.	\$826,390.16	\$212,814.28	\$159,669.58
Nielsen Blacktopping and Concrete, Inc	\$831,984.70	\$225,396.02	\$157,925.12
<i>Engineer’s Estimate</i>	<i>\$867,697.00</i>	<i>\$235,382.00</i>	<i>\$181,232.00</i>
Duininck, Inc.	\$897,129.90	\$205,422.50	\$157,797.50
OMG Midwest dba Minnesota Paving & Materials	\$905,501.00	\$259,996.25	\$195,377.25
Shoreline Landscaping & Contracting	\$1,145,288.46	\$188,812.55	\$111,821.10
Urban Companies	\$1,228,330.35	\$269,735.00	\$228,210.00

Councilmember Kawecki raised concerns about the project design of the boat launch, expressing doubts about its effectiveness and lack of a viable solution.

Motion was made by Councilmember Hasek, seconded by Councilmember Lubenow to Approve the Bid from Ulland Brothers without Trails. On roll call, Councilmembers Hasek, Kotewa, Lubenow, and Maynard voted in favor; Councilmember Kawecki voted against. Motion carried.

STAFF/LIAISON REPORT

Director York reported the City was awarded a \$98,000 grant for sewer cleaning and televising, to be conducted this summer in northern Fairmont. York reported the City also received a grant from MnDOT for an airport lawnmower and burning of the yard waste recycling site began today and will continue over the next several weeks.


Director Oman reported on various Community Development Department initiatives including the Local Housing Trust Fund Ordinance and an upcoming grant opportunity available with adopting said Ordinance, the status of the Habitat for Humanity house project, staff's review of the HRA and EDA enabling resolution and seeking volunteers for the Community Resiliency Plan.

Councilmember Lubenow updated Council on the recent HRA meeting stated the board refinanced a bond, evaluated the director and discussed upcoming housing projects for senior citizens and families.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Lubenow to adjourn the meeting, as there was no further business to come before the Council. All present voted in favor. Motion carried. The Fairmont City Council adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

ATTEST:


Betsy Steuber, City Clerk


Lee C. Baarts, Mayor