

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**

Mayor Baarts proclaimed the week of March 9, 2025 – March 15, 2025 as Girl Scout Week in the City of Fairmont. Betsy Tino, Girl Scout Leader, and the Junior Girl Scout Troop accepted the proclamation after thanking Council for their support.

**PUBLIC DISCUSSION/
COMMENT**

Amanda Forstrom, resident of Fairmont and representative of the Fairmont Triathlon Committee, addressed Council expressing appreciation of the City's support of the Fairmont Triathlon events.

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 February 24, 2025
- The Authorization of Mayor Baarts to Execute a Letter of Support, on behalf of the Fairmont Opera House, for FY26 Congressional Directed Spending
- A Temporary On-Sale Liquor License for the Martin County Preservation Society (dba Red Rock Center for the Arts) on April 11 and April 12, 2025
- A Temporary On-Sale Liquor License for the Martin County Preservation Society (dba Red Rock Center for the Arts) on May 3, 2025
- An Event Permit for the Fairmont Triathlon Committee and Bacon Capital to hold the Fairmont Triathlon, Marty's Youth Triathlon on June 20, 2025
- An Event Permit for the Fairmont Triathlon Committee and Bacon Capital to hold the Fairmont Triathlon and Bacon Run 5K on June 21, 2025
- An Event Permit for the Fairmont Disc Golf Committee to hold the Goliath Disc Golf Open - Disc Golf Tournament on May 17 & May 18, 2025 at Cedar Creek Park
- An Event Permit for Imagine Martin to hold a Swine Derby on May 24, 2025
- An Event Permit for Imagine Martin to hold an Art Mart on May 8, May 22, June 5, June 19, July 3, July 17, July 31, August 21 and August 28, 2025

- An Event Permit for Rewind Med Spa to hold a 3rd Anniversary Block Party on June 5, 2025
- Resolution 2025-12: Resolution to Petition to Transfer Part of Martin County Ditch #56 Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 103E.812

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

**PUBLIC HEARING
RESOLUTION 2025-15
Item 7.1**

Prior to opening the Public Hearing on the 2025 Improvement Program, Engineer Cowing provided background and summary information on the project: Reconstruction of Lake Avenue, from Bixby Road to Fairlakes Avenue. Cowing stated the intent of this project is to improve the conditions of the street surface, extend the life of the utilities beneath the street, enhance the area's appearance, and lower maintenance costs and time for city and utility crews. The total estimated cost of the project is \$6.3 million, with \$900,000 in assessments and a \$1.5 million state grant. Cowing shared that a public hearing will be held fall 2025, and property owners can appeal their assessment and/or defer their assessment under certain conditions.

Mayor Baarts opened the public hearing at 5:45 pm. Comment was received from the following individual(s):

Clerk Steuber read a letter received by DFP Limited Partnership, represented by Tom Dougherty and Colin Dougherty. Steuber noted the Dougherty's were unable to attend the hearing and requested their letter be read as part of the public record. In summary, DFP Limited Partnership objects to the proposed total assessment for their 74-acre farmland located at 1300 Lake Ave, claiming it exceeds the special benefit they will receive from the project. They contend the assessment of \$305,000 is inappropriate as the farm will not gain any clear benefits, the assessment amount is unfair in comparison to similar properties and the assessment is excessive relative to the farm's value. Overall, DFP Limited Partnership requested exclusion from the special assessment to be imposed on their property.

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Lubenow to close the public hearing at 5:49 pm. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Hasek to Adopt Resolution 2025-15: Ordering Improvement, Preparation of Plans and Advertising of Bids. In discussion, Councilmember Kawecky stated that residents and businesses are

unhappy with Council's decision on this matter and while improvements are necessary, choosing concrete over asphalt has raised costs significantly and Council should consider better ways to use taxpayer dollars. On roll call, Councilmembers Hasek, Kotewa, Lubenow and Maynard voted in favor; Councilmember Kawecki voted against. Motion carried.

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

Director Oman introduced agenda item 9.A.1: Consideration to Submit a Federal Appropriation Request for the Fairmont Fire Hall. Oman stated this project/request is supported by a 2023 feasibility study and fire hall projects typically receive significant federal funding, making our request of \$6.2 million appealing. Oman noted, if selected, funds may not be available for nearly two years, allowing for numerous discussions to be held.

Motion was made by Councilmember Kawecki, seconded by Councilmember Lubenow to Authorize Staff to Submit a Federal Appropriation Request for the Fairmont Fire Hall. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

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

The last item of new business was item 9.B.1: Discussion on the Yard Waste and Wooded Debris Recycling Area. Director York mentioned site improvements have been made, including a site burn and reorganization of materials, to enhance user functionality. The site is open from April 1st to November 30th, with operation year-round for permitted contractors. Discussion was held regarding the unclear source of materials, with evidence suggesting some materials come from outside city limits.

A proposal to increase permit fees for contractors was discussed, but further concerns about fairness and costs to residents were raised. The council debated whether only Fairmont residents should use the tree dump, while considering enforcement challenges. Discussion was held on managing large tree stumps and implementation of a permit system for homeowners. Director York stressed the need for a clear answer on whether materials should be received from only Fairmont residents to guide future discussions and decisions.

Motion was made by Councilmember Kawecki, seconded by Councilmember Maynard to Direct Staff to Only Receive Trees/Materials from City of Fairmont Residents. Councilmembers Hasek, Kawecki, Kotewa, and Maynard voted in favor; Councilmember Lubenow voted against. Motion carried.

Continued Council discussion centered on how dumping materials are handled, limiting site hours, and hiring a part-time individual to track

materials' origin with a chain of custody system. An alternative idea focused on utilizing the old public works site as a materials transfer station, but similar issues were raised about staffing and monitoring.

Council recognized that the site has worked well in the past, but has not been maintained properly, leading to a buildup of materials over the years. Discussion was held on implementing regular burning of collected materials. Director York stated that burning seems to be the least expensive option.

While York was pleased with the discussion, he noted that no process needed to be finalized and whichever options are brought to fruition, clear signage to guide resident on material placement and discussion with contractors on material disposed and specific dumping areas, is vital for success.

STAFF/LIAISON REPORT

As the DNR lacks the resources to handle the dead geese on the waters/shorelines across Minnesota, Director York stated efforts will begin, this week, to remove geese carcasses from public shorelines, with follow-up work expected as the lakes thaw. Information will be posted on Facebook regarding safe handling, including using disposable gloves and double bagging the birds prior to placement in the trash.

Director Oman provided the Mayor and Council an update on the Local Housing Trust Fund. Previously, it was mentioned that the City would apply for a grant along with the Fairmont HRA, however during training it was stated that both entities cannot request the same funds. The HRA will continue with its application, requesting about \$92,000, with the City's support. Oman stated monthly meetings are being held with Fairmont HRA and Martin County to discuss housing.

Interim O'Neill reported the following:

- The Fairmont Area Community Center project shows positive progress and a work session will be scheduled to review agreements with the City Attorney.
- The investigation regarding the Code of Conduct complaints is winding down and a work session will be scheduled soon to address the findings.
- Due to recent inclement weather conditions, City Hall was closed, and employees were paid for that day.
- The League of Minnesota Cities Conference is set for June 25 to 27, 2025 and attendance is encouraged for learning and networking.
- The League of Minnesota Cities is offering free online sessions for city staff and elected officials about social media.

- Candidates are being sought for the Charter Review Team, as only one application has been received so far. Interested individuals should contact the City Clerk for an application.

-The Spring Expo is scheduled for April 15, 2025, and revenue/site sharing issues with the Hockey Association have been resolved. The Fair Board will manage the Expo as intended.

Councilmember Hasek reported the CFO and CEO of SMMPA presented at the most recent Public Utilities Commission meeting.

Councilmember Lubenow shared that several twin homes remain available for purchase on Red Bird Lane, near the soccer complex and that there is an open position on the HRA board, which meets monthly at noon at Friendship Village.


Councilmember Maynard reported on the recent FEDA meeting noting various projects are moving forward, (ie Midwest Shop Condos and Les Schwab Tires), the Minnesota Economic Development Authority Day at the Capitol is on March 19th with FEDA representatives in attendance and there was a recent vacancy on the board.

Mayor Baarts recognized the Fairmont High School Robotics Team, who is competing in the world championship in Texas. Additionally, the City of Fairmont/Martin County has been challenged by City of St. James/Watonwan County to compete in a friendly (food/monetary) competition for Heaven's Table.


ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Kotewa 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 6:53 p.m.

ATTEST:



Betsy Steuber, City Clerk



Lee C. Baarts, Mayor