

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

City Council Minutes
Regular Meeting

February 9, 2026
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 Kawecky, Councilmember
James Kotewa, Councilmember
Randy Lubenow, Councilmember
Jay Maynard, Councilmember

Absent: None

Staff present: Paul Hoyer, Finance Director/Acting City Administrator
Matthew York, Director of Public Works/Utilities
Michael Beletti, Police Chief
Ned Koppen, Economic Development Coordinator
Mike Schutz, Planning & Zoning Code Enforcement
Coordinator
Rachel Viesselman, Human Resources Manager
Betsy Steuber, City Clerk
David Assaf, City Attorney, via telephone
(Flaherty & Hood)

**PLEDGE OF
ALLEGIANCE**

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

**PUBLIC DISCUSSION/
COMMENT**

Gregg Paulson, Fairmont resident, spoke regarding Fairmont's history of collaborative leadership and economic growth, referencing past community and business leaders who worked to promote growth. Mr. Paulson voiced concern about population decline and emphasized the importance of maintaining a positive community reputation, cooperation, and proactive planning. He encouraged current and future leaders to work collaboratively with the City to positively shape the community's future and support economic development.

Vicki Schulte, Fairmont resident, addressed the Council regarding the presence of ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) vehicles in the region and voiced concern for the safety of migrants, immigrants, and

people of color. She asked what measures the City is taking to help ensure individuals feel safe. Ms. Schulte also inquired about the continuation of the public comment section at Council meetings.

**APPROVAL OF
AGENDA**

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Hasek, 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.

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 26, 2026
- Event Permit for the Fairmont Track Association Vault the Plaza Event on June 27, 2026
- Purchase Order No. 15778 Authorizing the Purchase of New Network Switches
- Resolution 2026-05 to Decertify Tax Increment Financing District No. 26
- 2026 Service Agreement for Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP) Pick-Up Service with Waters Edge Fairmont LLC
- Event Permit for the Interlaken Heritage Days Festival to be held on June 12-13, 2026
- \$7,000 Donation in Funding to the Interlaken Heritage Days Committee for the 2026 Interlaken Heritage Days Festival

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Hasek to approve the consent agenda as presented. During discussion, Councilmember Lubenow inquired whether the same business would be providing services for CLP pick-up as the prior year. Staff confirmed that it was. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS
ORDINANCE 2026-01
Item 8.1**

Finance Director/Acting City Administrator Hoye introduced Agenda Item 8.1, Ordinance 2026-01 – Repealing and Replacing Fairmont City Code Chapter 14, Article IV – Lodging Tax.

Hoye provided background on the proposed ordinance, which would authorize the Minnesota Department of Revenue to collect the City's

lodging tax, including taxes from short-term rental properties such as Airbnb and VRBO. He noted the change would reduce administrative burden and help ensure proper collection. The estimated initial setup cost is approximately \$6,000–\$8,000, with an annual one percent administrative fee.

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Kotewa to Approve the Second and Final Consideration of Ordinance 2026-01, An Ordinance Amending Fairmont City Code, Chapter 14 – Licenses, Permits and Miscellaneous Business Regulations by Repealing and Replacing Article IV – Lodging Tax. On roll call, Councilmembers Hasek, Kaweckj, Kotewa, Lubenow, and Maynard voted in favor. Motion carried.

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

Human Resources Manager Rachel Viesselman provided an update on the City Administrator process during agenda item 9.A.1. Viesselman reported that following interviews conducted in January, Jason Baker was selected to continue in the process. A comprehensive background check was completed and returned without issues.

Viesselman explained that if the Council wished to proceed with an offer, Council would need to determine proposed employment terms, including a potential start date (with March 16 discussed as the earliest possible date), salary, vacation and sick accrual placement, and possible relocation or temporary housing assistance. It was noted the Council could authorize staff or legal counsel to negotiate contract terms to avoid delay between meetings.

Council discussion followed regarding salary range calculations, candidate experience relative to the size and complexity of Fairmont, and whether additional information, including recent performance evaluations from the candidate's current employer, should be reviewed prior to extending an offer. Council also discussed the role of the independent background investigator and the scope of materials provided.

The City Attorney provided guidance regarding discussion of non-public personnel data and the circumstances under which a closed session may be appropriate.

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Kotewa to Meet on February 19, 2026 at 5:30 pm for a potential closed session to discuss non-public information regarding Jason

Baker, followed by an open session to take potential action. On roll call, Councilmember Kawecki, Kotewa, Lubenow and Maynard voted in favor; Councilmember Hasek voted against. Motion carried.

MOTION
Item 9.A.2

Mayor Baarts brought forward Consideration of Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Placement in City Designated Locations, noting the two units have been sponsored and purchased. Prior to Council discussion on designated locations, Mayor Baarts stated installations are proposed for spring, weather permitting, with the City covering installation and annual electricity/maintenance costs (approximately \$600.00 per unit per year) consistent with the existing AED unit at the Jeffrey Kot Soccer Complex.

Council discussed potential locations, with consideration given to accessibility, visibility and proximity to power sources. Following discussion, consensus supported placement at Winnebago Diamonds (425 Winnebago Avenue - near the restroom facility) and Gomsrud Park (260 W. Lair Road).

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Lubenow to Approve the Placement of Two Additional AED Units at Winnebago Diamonds and Gomsrud Park and Authorize Staff to Cover the Cost of Installation and Annual Maintenance Fee (approximately \$600.00 per unit per year), Consistent with the Existing AED Unit at the Jeffry Kot Soccer Field Complex. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

MOTION
Item 9.D.1

During agenda item 9.D.1, Planning and Zoning Code Enforcement Coordinator Schutz presented on the Consideration of the 315 N. Park Street, Fairmont Demolition Recommendation. Coordinator Schutz stated sealed bids were opened on January 30, 2026 for removal of all structures, foundations, fencing and trees, along with backfilling and seeding. Bids received were :

<u>Company</u>	<u>Bid Amount</u>
Beemer Companies	\$43,000
Rosburg Construction	\$39,000
S & J Excavating	\$38,900

Staff recommended acceptance of the low bid from S & J Excavating and requested authorization to work with the City Attorney to prepare a contract for services. Director York noted the property is anticipated to

be used in connection with the Park Street stormwater project, with attention to maintaining proper sightlines.

Motion was made by Councilmember Lubenow, seconded by Councilmember Maynard to Accept the Request for Proposals Received for the Demolition Work at 315 N. Park Street, Fairmont and Authorize Staff to Work with S & J Excavating and the City Attorney to Prepare a Contract for Future Council Consideration. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

STAFF/LIAISON REPORTS

Finance Director/Acting Administrator Hoye provided an update on the collection of projects ideas for the Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) funds. He noted the public has been invited to submit eligible project ideas related to cultural and recreational amenities, trails and community facilities and should email project ideas to Clerk Steuber. To date, 41 project requests have been received with total estimated costs exceeding available funding. Hoye noted that prioritization will be necessary and suggested a Council work session in March to review proposals.

Director York thanked residents for their patience during recent cold and fluctuating weather conditions. He noted that the Lake Avenue project continues to present challenges due to thawing conditions and ongoing maintenance efforts and encouraged residents to remain patient as winter conditions persist.

Director York also referenced impacts related to the Frontier project, including ground cover and erosion control concerns, and stated that staff will continue working to prevent soil runoff into the stormwater system.

Councilmember Lubenow reported on a recent HRA meeting regarding proposed twin home developments near Lakeview Methodist Home, noting discussion of infrastructure needs and encouraging coordination with the City.

Councilmember Lubenow also addressed questions about the Local Option Sales Tax, stating he does not believe a community center concept is no longer under consideration and encouraged continued submission of project ideas.

Mayor Baarts noted that City offices will be closed on Monday, February 16, in observance of Presidents Day, the next regular City Council

meeting will be held on February 23 and the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting is scheduled for April 8 at 9:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers.

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 6:17 p.m.

ATTEST:


Betsy Steuber, City Clerk


Lee C. Baarts, Mayor