City of Fairmont
100 Downtown Plaza
Fairmont, MN 56031

City Council Minutes — July 30, 2026
City Projects/Capital Improvements Workshop — City Hall, 5:00 p.m.

The Fairmont City Council met for a City Projects/Capital Improvements Workshop at Fairmont City Hall Council Chambers.

The following were present:

Council present:	Lee Baarts, Mayor Wayne Hasek, Councilmember Britney Kawecki, Councilmember James Kotewa, Councilmember Randy Lubenow, Councilmember Jay Maynard, Councilmember
Staff present:	Jason Baker, City Administrator Matthew York, Director of Public Works/Utilities Paul Hoye, Finance Director Ned Koppen, Economic Development Director Betsy Steuber, City Clerk

Mayor Baarts opened the workshop at 5:00 p.m. Administrator Baker stated the purpose of the workshop was to connect the Council's adopted Strategic Policy Priorities with identified initiatives, partnerships, and investments and to provide staff with policy direction and identify areas for further investigation and Council consideration.

Administrator Baker and staff highlighted current efforts underway, followed by Council discussion as outlined below.

Lake Management: Discussion was held on the importance of Fairmont's lakes, pursuing grant opportunities for water quality, collaborating with lake-related stakeholders to discuss lake management strategies/projects and developing a formal long-term lake management plan. Council expressed interest in continued consideration of lake management planning as part of the 2027 Capital Improvement Plan.

Downtown Revitalization Project: Director York provided an update on the Downtown Revitalization project, including development of project scope and the upcoming community engagement workshop. Discussion was held on stakeholder involvement, with staff noting additional unrepresented stakeholders to be invited to upcoming meetings.

Housing & Economic Development: Director Koppen highlighted preliminary findings from the Bowen National Research Housing Study, noting Fairmont's housing shortage, workforce commuting to and

from Fairmont, and blighted properties within Fairmont. Discussion was held on housing incentives, development of spec housing, and future subdivision infrastructure. Discussion was held on the ongoing zoning work of MSA and the importance of its completion.

Transportation & Utility Improvements: Director York reviewed upcoming street improvement projects, noting Park Street and Orient Street projects to be bid in December with construction anticipated in spring 2027.

Technology and Modernization: Director Hoye reported on technology modernization efforts as the City issued an RFP for the municipal, police and liquor store website redevelopment and staff have been reviewing financial, payroll, and human resources software systems. Discussion was held on ensuring software integrations between departments and website accessibility and communication capabilities. Council discussed seeking references and feedback from comparable communities as a means to select software.

Airport Improvements: Director York reported on airport improvements, including the construction of a new hangar, apron modifications for land lease access, the Airport Master Plan and Airport Layout Plan currently under FAA review, and proposed airport terminal improvements. Staff noted continued communications with the FAA regarding the Airport Master Plan.

Park and Recreation Improvements: Council discussed current and future park needs, including playground equipment, the impacts of Emerald Ash Borer, trails and potential development of a Park Master Plan to evaluate park usage and amenities. Council discussed native plantings to reduce maintenance and enhance water quality, including seeking partnerships and grant opportunities. Staff will evaluate the park locations and opportunities and whether additional maintenance is needed at the lake beaches.

Council discussed the skate park and pickleball project. Some Councilmembers requested that vehicles and equipment proposed for replacement have mileage and hours presented to Council. Staff confirmed such information would be included in the Capital Improvement Plan. Council discussed conducting a broader fleet needs analysis in conjunction with future vehicle and equipment replacement planning, including consideration of equipment utilization, staffing, and operational needs. Administrator Baker noted the request for further consideration.

Administrator Baker went on to review potential community initiatives and opportunities as outlined in the agenda packet. Council discussed the potential benefits of the programs, staff time, and required resources. Council expressed interest in learning more about the program before determining whether to pursue participation. Baker noted such and stated staff input could be gathered regarding the program.

Council discussed technology within the Fairmont City Hall Council Chambers (i.e. sound quality, meeting connectivity, and remote participation). Council identified technology modernization as an area warranting continued attention.

Discussion was held on code enforcement and blighted properties as areas needing continued attention. Council discussed staffing, funding, and the required process to address problem properties. Staff noted available funding within the demolition fund and that staff will continue to work with legal counsel on a process for addressing properties.

Council identified housing, childcare and workforce availability as important factors in Fairmont's future growth. Council discussed having project plans developed in advance to better position the City to pursue funding and grant opportunities as they become available, while balancing staff time and resources devoted to planning.

Finance Director Hoye reviewed the City's five-year Capital Improvement Plan and noted that the project description sheets within the agenda packet provide additional information and justification for projects proposed in 2027, including mileage and equipment hours where applicable. He noted the plan identifies anticipated project costs, timing and potential funding sources, and that utility project information would be provided to Council once finalized by staff.

Council discussed future facility needs for City Hall, the Police Department and Fire Department. Discussion included previous facility assessments, the need for updated facility and space needs analyses, potential future funding opportunities and whether facilities could be combined or shared. It was noted that prior to making technology improvements within the Council Chambers, the City's long-term plan should be considered before such investment. Administrator Baker noted he was reviewing previous facility information and would work with Finance and department staff to develop additional information for future Council discussion.

Administrator Baker stated staff would review the initiatives, priorities and follow-up items identified during the workshop to ensure they are considered as upcoming projects, capital improvements and future budgets are developed.

The City Projects/Capital Improvements Workshop concluded at approximately 6:38 p.m.

Lee C. Baarts, Mayor

ATTEST:

Betsy Steuber, City Clerk