City of Fairmont
100 Downtown Plaza
Fairmont, MN 56031

City Council Minutes
Regular Meeting

October 26, 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 Kawecki, Councilmember
James Kotewa, Councilmember
Randy Lubenow, Councilmember
Jay Maynard, Councilmember

Absent: None

Staff present: Jason Baker, City Administrator
Matthew York, Director of Public Works/Utilities
Paul Hoye, Finance Director
Ned Koppen, Economic Development Director
Tyler Cowing, Civil Engineer
Michael Beletti, Police Chief
Betsy Steuber, City Clerk
Troy Nemmers, City Engineer (Bolton & Menk)
David Assaf, City Attorney, via telephone (Flaherty & Hood)

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.

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 Hasek to approve the agenda as presented. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

RECOGNITION/ PRESENTATIONS
Item 4.1

Mayor Baarts recognized the following City Employees for their years of service: Bryan Kastning, Fire Department – 20 years; Cade Hartwig, Fire Department, 15 years; and Troy Barnes, Public Works Department, 10 years.

Item 4.2

Chief Beletti presented a Fairmont Police Department Lifesaving Award to Carter Simmering in recognition of his quick actions on October 8, 2026, at the Fairmont High School when he performed the Heimlich maneuver on a fellow student who was choking during lunch.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION/ COMMENT

Myron "Bruce" Eastlund, Fairmont resident and Ward 1 Councilmember Candidate, raised concerns regarding interactions he had experienced and reported communications between Councilmembers and candidates about potential plans following the election. Eastlund stated he reported his concerns to the City, County, League of Minnesota Cities, and filed a police report.

Char Kahler, pickleball enthusiast, spoke on the newly established pickleball organization, which had exceeded its membership goal of 50 members. Kahler requested the organization be included in future discussions regarding pickleball facilities and expressed appreciation of the proposed outdoor courts while encouraging consideration of an indoor facility.

Jon Omvig, Fairmont resident and representative of the Fairmont Lakes Foundation, addressed Council on the importance of improving Fairmont's lakes and water quality. Omvig emphasized the need for a clear plan and funding opportunities for lake restoration. He also invited the public to a meeting with the Shell Rock River Watershed District on October 29 at 5:15 p.m. at SMEC to discuss potential strategies and funding opportunities.

Councilmember Lubenow referenced the Declaration of Independence, the importance of having one's voice be heard and exercising the right to vote. He encouraged residents to vote in the November 3, 2026 General Election.

Councilmember Kawecki commented on freedom of speech and the rights to express differing opinions.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Baarts introduced the consent agenda items as listed for consideration to be enacted by one motion unless an item was requested to be removed and placed under New Business. Mayor Baarts reviewed the consent items, as follows:

- Minutes from the Regular Meeting held October 12, 2026
- October 2026 Accounts Payable List
- Appointment of Angela Garbers to the Fairmont Public Utilities Commission (PUC)
- Declare the Identified Equipment from the Electric and Water Departments as Surplus and Authorize its Sale or Disposal (2002

Sterling Acterra M-8500, 1985 V40B Caterpillar Forklift and a 2017 Dodge Minivan)
- Temporary On-Sale Liquor License for Martin County Preservation Association d/b/a Red Rock Center for the Arts for an Event on November 13, 2026, Contingent upon Receipt of the Required Payment
- Temporary On-Sale Liquor License for Martin County Preservation Association d/b/a Red Rock Center for the Arts for an Event on November 30, 2026, Contingent upon Receipt of the Required Payment
- Purchase of a GPS Unit and Controller from Frontier Precision

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

PUBLIC HEARING
Item 7.1

Mayor Baarts opened the public hearing on the 2026 Improvement program at 5:48 p.m. No public comments were heard, however Mayor Baarts acknowledged receipt of a written objection from the Martin County Historical Society regarding the proposed special assessments for the Pioneer Museum and Pioneer Parsonage properties along Blue Earth Avenue. The correspondence was included in the Council packet.

Staff noted limited circumstances in which properties are exempt from special assessment and that nonprofit status is not an automatic qualifier for exemption.

Following Council discussion, motion was made by Councilmember Kawecki, seconded by Councilmember Maynard to pass upon the objection for the Martin County Historical Society Pioneer Museum and Pioneer Parsonage and keep the assessment as listed. On roll call, Councilmembers Hasek, Kawecki, Kotewa, Lubenow, and Maynard voted in favor. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Kotewa to close the public hearing at 5:54 p.m. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Hasek to Adopt Resolution 2026-38, Adopting the Special Assessment for the 2026 Improvement Program. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS
MOTION
Item 9.C.1 to 9.A.1A

Mayor Baarts moved Agenda Item 9.C.1, Consideration of CivicPlus Service Agreement for City Website forward for consideration as Item 9.A.1A as Ryan Anderson, representative of CivicPlus, was available via remote meeting.

Director Hoye reviewed the RFP process for the replacement of the City website and the committee recommending CivicPlus.

Council discussed the website implementation timeline, the first-year cost of approximately $46,000 and ongoing annual costs of approximately $30,000, ADA compliance, staff involvement and terms of the agreement.

Motion was made by Councilmember Lubenow, seconded by Councilmember Maynard to Approve the CivicPlus Statement of Work and Addendum to the Master Service Agreement for the City of Fairmont Website Replacement Project. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE 2026-04
Item 9.A.1

Clerk Steuber introduced Agenda Item 9.A.1, Consideration of an Ordinance Granting a Cable Franchise to Midcontinent Communications (Midco). Steuber provided a brief overview of the proposed agreement, including the proposed franchise fee adjustment from 1.5% to 4% and the continuation of existing public, educational, and governmental (PEG) access channels. Steuber noted that the agreement was a joint staff effort and referred Council to Finance Director Hoye for financial questions, City Attorney Assaf for questions regarding the agreement, and City Administrator Baker for general oversight and fee adjustment.

Council discussed the proposed franchise fee increase, the fee's impact on cable television customers, and allocation of franchise fee revenue.

Motion was made by Councilmember Lubenow, seconded by Councilmember Kotewa to Approve the First Reading of Proposed Ordinance 2026-04 Granting a Cable Franchise to Midcontinent Communications (Midco), with 1.5% of the franchise fee designated to the General Fund and the remaining 2.5% designated to the Lake Restoration Fund, and to call for a Public Hearing to be held on November 23, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. in the Fairmont City Hall Council Chambers. Councilmembers Hasek, Kotewa, Lubenow, and Maynard voted in favor; Councilmember Kawecki voted against. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION 2026-39
Item 9.B.1

Civil Engineer Cowing presented Resolution 2026-39, Ordering Preparation of a Report on Improvements for the 2027 Improvement Program during Agenda Item 9.B.1. Cowing stated the City is working to begin the design and bidding process sooner for the upcoming 2027 street improvements.

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Lubenow to Adopt Resolution 2026-39 Ordering Preparation of Report on Improvements. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION 2026-40
Item 9.B.2

Engineer Cowing presented the 2027 Improvement Program Engineering Report, reviewing the proposed improvements, estimated project costs, funding sources, and special assessment process.

Motion was made by Councilmember Kotewa, seconded by Councilmember Hasek to Adopt Resolution 2026-40 Receiving the 2027 Engineering Report and Calling for a Public Hearing on the 2027 Improvement Program, to be held at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, November 23, 2026 in the Fairmont City Hall Council Chambers. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION 2026-41
Item 9.B.3

During Agenda Item 9.B.3, Engineer Cowing presented on the proposed Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) grant application for the Albion Avenue Reconstruction Project (reconstruction of Albion Avenue from State Street to Cedar Street). Cowing noted construction to be anticipated in 2029, pending funding being awarded.

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Lubenow to Adopt Resolution 2026-41 Authorizing the Pursuit of 2026 Local Road Improvement Program Funding for the Albion Avenue Reconstruction Project. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

MOTION
Item 9.B.4

The last item of new business to come before the Council was 9.B.4, Consideration of Base Material Options for the Pickleball Court Project. Director York presented options for the base material for the proposed courts, including asphalt and post-tensioned concrete which would include additional design costs. Director York and City Engineer Nemmers reviewed information and answered Council questions on anticipated lifespan of the material, project costs, budget considerations, court and site design, amenities, and the potential for future expansion.

Motion was made by Councilmember Lubenow, seconded by Councilmember Maynard to Approve Post-Tension Concrete as the Base Material for the Pickleball Court Project. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

STAFF/LIAISON REPORTS

Administrator Baker thanked staff for their work during his absence while attending the ICMA Conference, noting that he would provide Council with information he found valuable from the conference, along with staff reports and updates covering his absence.

Director York reported that leaf pickup has begun and provided updates on the ongoing Lead Service Line Replacement Project and upcoming preconstruction meetings for the Airport Hangar Project and Raw Water Retaining Wall Project.

In response to Council's questions, Engineer Cowing reported the overlay projects are substantially completed. Cowing noted the petroleum-contaminated soils at the Park Street/Blue Earth Avenue intersection required water main replacement, resulting in project delays and additional costs for the Blue Earth Avenue Reconstruction Project. He noted that staff is pursuing potential reimbursement for costs associated with the contamination. York noted the contamination may be related to historical fuel leaks, but the exact sources could not be determined.

Director Koppen reported staff is working on recommendations for curly-leaf pondweed harvesting for next season and staff received the final draft of the Zoning Code Update from MSA, with both items returning to Council at a future date for consideration.

Koppen shared that Region Nine Development Commission and the Fairmont Economic Development Authority are hosting two community planning and visioning sessions to gather feedback and to help shape economic development priorities for Fairmont, and Martin County as a whole.

Councilmember Kotewa provided an update from his attendance at the recent Region Nine meeting, noting anticipated reductions in the state transportation fund due to changes in lower vehicle registration fees. He also noted that MnDOT does not anticipate improvements to State Highway 15 in Fairmont within the next ten years, as the project is currently a lower priority.

Councilmember Lubenow reported on the final Park Board meeting for 2026, noting Board members were provided information to review and assess City parks, including potential improvements and amenities for future budget consideration.

Councilmember Maynard reported on the recent Airport Advisory Board meeting, noting members toured the new Advantage Aviation hangar at the Fairmont Municipal Airport. Maynard highlighted the facility's potential to expand aircraft maintenance and inspection services in the region.

Mayor Baarts reviewed upcoming events and meeting dates.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Hasek, seconded by Councilmember Maynard 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 7:16 p.m.

Lee C. Baarts, Mayor

ATTEST:

Betsy Steuber, City Clerk