

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

City Council Minutes
Special Meeting – City Administrator Position & AFSCME Union Contract

December 29, 2025
City Hall, 5:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

The Fairmont City Council met in special session at Fairmont City Hall in the 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 Kaweck, Councilmember
 James Kotewa, Councilmember
 Randy Lubenow, Councilmember
 Jay Maynard, Councilmember

Staff present: Michael Beletti, Police Captain
 Rachel Viesselman, Human Resources Manager
 Betsy Steuber, City Clerk

Also present: David Assaf,

**PLEDGE OF
ALLEGIANCE**

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

ROTATING VOTES

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

**APPROVAL OF
AGENDA**

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

**NEW BUSINESS
MOTION
Item 4A**

Mayor Baarts introduced agenda item 4A, Consideration and Potential Action on the City Administrator Position (Temporary, Interim, and/or Permanent). City Clerk Steuber summarized options for administrative continuity based on legal guidance from Flaherty & Hood, as outlined in the attorney-client privileged memorandum prepared for Council.

Clerk Steuber noted that prior to Interim City Administrator O'Neill's departure, he was directed to contact the League of Minnesota Cities list of potential interim candidates to assess interest, availability, and the

Council's preference for an on-site administrator for up to one year, which resulted in limited success. Clerk Steuber also noted outreach with MGT regarding contracted administrative services, with the identified individual scheduled to meet with staff and Council on January 6, 2026.

Clerk Steuber stated that additional inquiries have since been received and outlined Council options, as listed in the agenda packet, as:

- Postponing further consideration of the MGT candidate pending negotiation of preliminary contract terms;
- Designating Councilmembers to work with the Human Resources Manager to schedule interviews with identified permanent or interim non-MGT City Administrator candidates;
- Designating Councilmembers to work with the Human Resources Manager to bring forward a resolution appointing an Acting City Administrator for Council consideration; and/or
- Taking other action as directed by the City Council.

Mayor Baarts noted that the MGT candidate expressed a preference to initially serve under an MGT contract, with the possibility of transitioning to a direct City contract at a later date if mutually agreeable (as that one option for Council consideration). While the City is not conducting a formal search for a permanent City Administrator, he (Mayor Baarts) has received unsolicited inquiries regarding interim service.

Following clarification from legal counsel that the City may proceed with interviews based on applications already received and that reposting the position is discretionary, a motion was made by Councilmember Lubenow, seconded by Councilmember Maynard, to proceed with interviews of candidates identified as Exhibit B and Exhibit C.

In discussion following the motion, Council discussed the cost of Option A and expressed interest in interviewing Exhibits B and C as a potentially more cost-effective approach for an interim City Administrator. Council reviewed the proposed interview process, including staff involvement and a public Council interview, and discussed whether proceeding with only these candidates (versus prior applicants) raised any legal or liability concerns. Attorney Assaf advised that proceeding with interviews of Exhibits B and C presented no legal issues, noting prior applicants had been reviewed and declined by Council, and reposting for the position could be considered, if necessary.

Motion was made by Councilmember Lubenow, seconded by Councilmember Maynard to interview the applicants identified as Exhibit B and C as potential interim City Administrator candidates, with

interviews coordinated and structured by Human Resources Manager Viesselman. On roll call, Councilmembers Hasek, Kaweck, Kotewa, Lubenow and Maynard voted in favor. Motion carried.

Attorney Assaf clarified that proceeding with interviews did not preclude Council from also considering appointment of an Acting City Administrator.

A motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Hasek, to designate no more than two Councilmembers to work with Human Resources Manager Viesselman to bring forward a resolution appointing Finance Director Paul Hoyer as Acting City Administrator for Council consideration at the next open meeting on January 12, 2026, with Hoyer to serve until an interim or permanent City Administrator is appointed.

In discussion, Council discussed the timing of interviews for Exhibits B and C and the need for an acting appointment in the interim. In response to an inquiry from Councilmember Kaweck regarding Hoyer's initial declination of the role, Clerk Steuber clarified that following subsequent communication, Hoyer indicated willingness to consider the position.

On roll call, Councilmembers Hasek, Kaweck, Kotewa, Lubenow, and Maynard voted in favor. Motion carried.

Following the vote, Councilmembers Kotewa and Maynard volunteered to work with Human Resources Manager Viesselman to finalize details required to bring forward the resolution appointing the Acting City Administrator (Paul Hoyer). By consensus, Council affirmed this designation.

To ensure a timely interview process between Exhibits B and C Administrator candidates and City Council, Council discussed whether to designate Councilmembers to work with the Human Resources Manager to coordinate interviews.

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Kotewa to designate Councilmember Lubenow to work with Human Resources Manager Viesselman to coordinate and schedule interviews between the identified City Administrator candidates (Exhibits B and C) and City Council. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION 2025-48
Item 4B

The last item of new business was, agenda item 4B, Consideration of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Union Contract. Human Resources Manager Viesselman presented the proposed AFSCME labor agreement, effective January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2028, and summarized key changes as outlined in the agenda packet materials. Manager Viesselman noted adjustments to cost-of-living increases, a transition to an eight-step performance-based pay scale, and alignment with previously approved City labor agreements. She noted additional provisions, such as standby pay for full-time Aquatic Park maintenance staff, recognition of statutory holidays, increased safety reimbursement allowances (glasses and boots), paid leave requirements, increased vacation carryover provisions, and revisions to sick leave benefits.

Councilmembers asked questions and discussed standby coverage, consistency with other union contracts, vacation carryover limits, sick leave payout structures, and long-term fiscal considerations.

Motion was made by Councilmember Kawecky, seconded by Councilmember Maynard to adopt Resolution 2025-48 Approving the Labor Agreement Between the City of Fairmont and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Local #1204. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Maynard, seconded by Councilmember Lubenow, to adjourn the special 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 6:09 p.m.

ATTEST:


Betsy Steuber, City Clerk


Lee C. Baarts, Mayor