

NATIVE AMERICAN COMMISSION
Thursday, March 26, 2026 | 12:00PM
City Commission Chambers
AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Approve Agenda & Minutes.....Action Item
3. Discussion: Transition and Action Plan of the Native American Commission
4. Native American Commission 20-Year
5. Public Comment
6. Staff & Liaison Reports
7. Adjourn

Native American Commission meetings are broadcast live on cable channel TV Fargo 56, subject to the availability of recording equipment. Broadcasts can be seen live by video stream on www.FargoND.gov/streaming. They are rebroadcast each Tuesday at 8:00 p.m. and Thursday at 5:00 p.m. Minutes are available on the City of Fargo Web site at <http://fargond.gov/city-government/boards-commissions/native-american-commission>.



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BOARD OF NATIVE AMERICAN COMMISSIONERS MINUTES

Regular Meeting:

Thursday, September 4, 2025

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Native American Commissioners of the City of Fargo, North Dakota, was held in the Commission Chambers at City Hall at 12:00 p.m., Thursday, September 4, 2025.

The Native American Commissioners present or absent were as follows:

Present: Ashley Littlewolf, Daniel Frye, Amanda Strauss, Suzanne Senske (via conference call), Emily Sargent (via conference call)

Absent: Dale Sayers, Lisa Ducheneaux

Also present: Fargo School Board Liaison Melissa Burkland, Fargo City Commission Liaison John Strand

Item 1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Littlewolf welcomed Members to the meeting and introductions were made.

Item 2. Approve Order of Agenda & Minutes

Member Frye moved the Order of Agenda and the minutes of the May 1, 2025 Native American Commission meeting be approved. Second by Member Senske. All Members present voted aye and the motion was declared carried.

Item 3: Public Comment

No public comment was presented.

Item 4: Gladys Ray Award Nominations due October 3

Chair Littlewolf shared the Fargo Native American Commission is now seeking nominations for individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the Indigenous Peoples of Fargo. Applications are available at www.FargoND.gov/NAC and are due on October 3.

Item 5: Announcements

Chair Littlewolf shared that August 9 was Savanna Greywind Day and the City issued a Mayoral Proclamation and lit up City Hall in recognition.

Chair Littlewolf shared that September 30 is Truth & Reconciliation Day, and for the past two years the Native American Commission has advised the City to issue a joint proclamation with Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead, and Dilworth to recognize this day.

Member Frye moved the Native American Commission recommends the City to issue a proclamation to recognize Truth & Reconciliation Day on September 30, 2025 be

approved. Second by Member Senske. All Members present voted aye and the motion was declared carried.

Chair Littlewolf shared that October 13 is Indigenous Peoples Day, which was first formally recognized by the City via Resolution in 2015 thanks to immense advocacy from community members and the Native American Commission.

Item 6: Indigenous Association Report

Chair Littlewolf shared that an Indigenous Peoples Day breakfast to honor the Gladys Ray Award recipient is anticipated to take place at the Indigenous Association, and that additional programming is anticipated to be announced in the coming weeks.

Member Sargent shared that the Indigenous Association has been partnering with Sanford Health's Treatment Collaborative for Traumatized Youth in North Dakota for cultural humility training and research in Fargo and across the state.

Item 7. Staff & Liaison Reports

Assistant Planner Catlyn Christie reported that the Fargo Public Library had a booth at the Indigenous Association's annual picnic on August 16, 2025.

Member Senske reported about a recent parent night and school supply drive for the Native American Education program. Due to limited funds, backpacks were not distributed, however, she coordinated fundraising at Microsoft that raised approximately \$500, with another round anticipated soon. Member Sargent noted that Sanford has backpacks available that could also be donated to the program.

Item 8. Governance and Operations

Director of Planning and Development Nicole Crutchfield provided a governance discussion with details for the City's boards and commissions.

Further discussion was held by the members to request additional time to convene to discuss needs and options for the future; to express gratitude for support provided by staff; and to underscore the need to identify how to best support and represent the community.

Item 9. Adjourn

The time of adjournment was 12:51 p.m.

Native American Commission Transition Development - February 23, 2026

Developed by current and past NAC members – WORKING DRAFT

Purpose

Establish a sustainable, community-led Native American Commission that continues serving Native residents while maintaining clear partnership and accountability from the City of Fargo.

Background

The mission of the Fargo Native American Commission (NAC) is to work together to strengthen the Native American community to promote understanding, recognition, and respect for cultures and to enrich the community as a whole. The NAC and its members are committed to a shared vision that nurtures Native American culture and values. While city staffing is no longer available, the need for representation, coordination, and advocacy remains strong.

Proposed Action

The Native American Commission will continue to serve in its essential advisory role, providing guidance and recommendations to the Mayor and the City of Fargo on matters impacting Native American communities. At the same time, the Commission will transition to operating as an informal, volunteer-led body that functions independently of City administrative oversight for its internal operations and administrative duties. This structure preserves the Commission's advisory relationship with City leadership while allowing greater flexibility, community responsiveness, and self-directed governance. The NAC has always been and continues to be a conduit to inform and represent City-sponsored opportunities and activities and continues to see a need in that effort.

Goals

- Maintain consistent Native representation in city decision-making
- Provide structured civic input and open forums
- Advance economic development and entrepreneurship
- Support sovereign partnerships with tribal nations
- Promote cultural awareness, tourism, and education
- Ensure ongoing access and accountability to City leadership

Operating Model

- Volunteer-led and community-driven
- Rotating roles (Facilitator, Recorder, Communications Lead)
- Bi-monthly public meetings
- Consensus-based decisions
- Low-cost, simple structure
- City liaison (no staffing)

Scope of Work & Operational Structure

The Native American Commission Will:

- Provide a collective Native community voice
- Share concerns and recommendations
- Engage City Commission, School Board, and partners
- Support cultural events and education
- Connect residents with services and resources
- Support continued funding alignment with the Indigenous Association
- Submit periodic recommendations and reports to City leadership

The Native American Commission Will Not:

- Operate as a nonprofit
- Replace City services or responsibilities

City Partnership & City Commission Role:

- Appoint an official liaison
- Provide meeting space at City Hall as needed for education or awareness (2–3 times annually)
- Offer communication platforms for announcements and calls to action
- Receive and consider recommendations
- Collaborate on outreach and engagement

Community & Economic Impact Recognition:

Economic Strength

- Contributions to workforce, small business, housing, and education
- Supports entrepreneurship and supplier participation
- Tribal nations are key regional economic partners

Tourism & Regional Branding

- Cultural events, arts, and Native-owned businesses drive visitor spending
- Strengthens Fargo's identity and destination appeal

Timeline

Transition to the community-led model gradually ensuring uninterrupted engagement and continued partnership with the City of Fargo.