



Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan
Council of Governments

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CASS CLAY
FOOD
PARTNERS

**57th Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission**

March 11, 2026 10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Location: Metro COG Conference Room

[Click here to join the meeting online](#)

Meeting ID: 890 4069 8060

Passcode: 499190

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| 10:30 am | 1. Welcome |
| | a. Approve Order & Contents of the Overall Agenda |
| | b. Review & Action on Minutes from January 14, 2026 (Attachment 1) |
| | c. Approve Appointments of At-Large Members (Attachment 2) |
| 10:35 am | 2. Commission Introductions – Chair Nesemeier |
| 10:40 am | 3. Leadership Updates |
| | a. Financial Health Committee – Adam Altenburg & Eric Hegg |
| | b. Today's Planning Team Overview – Rory Beil |
| 10:45 am | 4. More Than Mana Presentation – Candi Holcomb |
| 10:55 am | 5. Clay County Land Development Ordinance Update – Erika Franck (Attachment 3) |
| 11:05 am | 6. Municipal Composting Blueprint Update – Erika Franck (Attachment 4) |
| 11:20 am | 7. Education Sharing on Creating an Organics Composting Program – Fred Sternhagan & Bryce Haugen (Attachment 5) |
| 11:30 am | 8. Public Comment Opportunity – Chair Nesemeier |
| 11:35 am | 9. Commission & Steering Committee Roundtable: Community Updates & Meeting Reflections – Chair Nesemeier |
| | a. What stood out to you from the presentations today? |
| | b. What ideas, connections or questions could you bring back to your community or organization? |
| | c. How can we, as the food commission, support the initiatives that were discussed today? |
| 11:55 am | 10. Future Meetings & Commission Action Steps |
| | a. Next Steering Committee Meeting – March 23, 2026, 1:00 pm
Metro COG – 1 2 nd Street N Suite 232, Fargo |
| | b. Next Commission Meeting – May 13, 2026, 10:30 am |
| 12:00 pm | 11. Adjournment |

Cass Clay Food Commission meetings are taped and rebroadcast on cable channel TV Fargo 56 each Friday at 11:00 am. People with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and need special accommodations should contact Angela Brumbaugh at Metro COG at 701.532.5100. Please contact us at least 48 hours before the meeting to give our staff adequate time to make arrangements. Meeting minutes are available on the Cass Clay Food Partners website at www.cassclayfoodpartners.org and Metro COG's website at www.fmmetrocog.org.

A PLANNING ORGANIZATION SERVING

FARGO, WEST FARGO, HORACE, CASS COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA AND MOORHEAD, DILWORTH, CLAY COUNTY, MINNESOTA

Attachment 1

**56th Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission
January 14, 2026
Metro COG Conference Room**

Members Present:

Heather Nesemeier, Moorhead City Council, Chair
Jim Kapitan, Cass County Commission
Amy Zundel, West Fargo City Commission
Paul Hankel, Horace City Council (proxy)
Amber Borah, Dilworth City Council
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Anna Johnson, At-Large Member
Carin Engler, At-Large Member
Jeff York, At-Large Member

Members Absent:

Paul Krabbenhoft, Clay County Commission
Joan Kopperud, At-Large Member
Jeffrey Miller, At-Large Member

Others Present:

Cheryl Stetz, Fargo Cass Public Health
Rory Beil, Clay County Public Health
Rita Ussatis, NDSU Extension
Noelle Harden, U of M Extension
Jill Ambuehl, Great Plains Food Bank
Mel Ell, Great Plains Food Bank
Erika Franck, Clay County Planning and Zoning
Eric Hegg, Global Refuge
Candance Anderson, Cass Clay Food Partners
Anna Monico, CAPLP
Haley Lind, AGL/West Fargo Citizen
Adam Altenburg, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments
Karissa Pavek, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

1a. Approve Order and Contents of the Overall Agenda

A motion to approve the order and contents of the overall agenda was made by Mr. Strand and seconded by Ms. Engler. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from September 10, 2025

A motion to approve the minutes for September 2025 was made by Mr. Hankel and seconded by Mr. York. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

2. Commission Introductions

Chair Nesemeier led the Commission and steering committee members in a brief round of introductions. She noted that Cass County Commissioner Jim Kapitan had been reappointed to serve on the Commission.

3. Commission and Steering Committee Roundtable

Chair Nesemeier asked for the Commission and the steering committee to share comments on news and updates from their communities.

4. Summary and Recommendation from Network Planning Conversations

Ms. Harden and Mr. Altenburg shared information regarding Food Partners network meetings in late 2025 and recommendations for the Food Commission in 2026.

Mr. Altenburg provided recaps of network meetings held on October 27, November 12, November 24, and December 15. He explained that early discussions centered on whether to sunset or pause the Cass Clay Food Commission due to concerns about limited capacity among members of the steering committee. He also noted that the steering committee had been unsuccessful in securing grant funding for 2026, with four unsuccessful applications. This included an application for the North Dakota Department of Health Block Grant, which had previously been a non-competitive grant awarded to Fargo Cass Public Health to support Commission activities.

Mr. Altenburg further stated that Commission and steering committee members discussed potential opportunities to merge with existing networks, including the Hunger Coalition and the West Central Minnesota Food Policy Council, but ultimately found that doing so might be infeasible. Additional discussions included opportunities to solicit project proposals using funds from an environmental settlement between the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and the former Budweiser plant in Moorhead. He noted that the group also spoke with RDO to learn more about its philanthropic initiatives and to explore whether the Food Partners might be eligible to apply for funding.

Ms. Harden shared several recommendations that emerged from the network planning conversations aimed at continuing the Food Commission's work. She explained that, for 2026, she recommended adopting a shared leadership model in which elected and at-large commissioners take a more active role in setting meeting agendas and helping center discussions on community-based needs and ideas. She also shared a meeting planning guide intended to assist with developing agendas and identifying and reaching out to potential speakers. In addition, she and Mr. Altenburg recommended forming a financial health committee to focus on securing funding to support future Commission activities.

5. Commission Action

Chair Nesemeier explained that the Commission would be asked to vote on two recommendations: adopting a shared leadership model for 2026 and forming a financial health committee.

A motion to approve the recommendation to adopt a shared leadership model was made by Mr. York and seconded by Mr. Kapitan. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

A motion to approve the formation of a financial health committee was made by Mr. Strand and seconded by Mr. Hankel. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

Chair Nesemeier asked Commission and steering committee members if they would be interested in leading upcoming Commission meetings in March and May. Members representing Clay County indicated they would lead the March meeting, while members representing Horace and West Fargo volunteered to lead the May meeting.

6. Public Comment Opportunity

Chair Nesemeier informed the Commission that time would be allotted for public comments. She also noted that community members may submit comments through a link included when Commission meeting packets are distributed via email.

Haley Lind, a landscape architect and West Fargo resident, expressed interest in seeing community gardens established in West Fargo. She also shared her hope that the City of West Fargo would consider adopting a boulevard garden ordinance similar to the one adopted by the City of Fargo.

7. Future Meetings and Commission Action Steps

Chair Nesemeier stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on March 11. She noted that the next steering committee meeting would be January 26 at Metro COG and that Commissioners and others were welcome to attend.

Chair Nesemeier adjourned the meeting at 11:59 AM.



To: Cass Clay Food Commission
From: Adam Altenburg, Metro COG
Date: March 5, 2026
Re: *Approve Appointments of At-Large Commission Members*

In addition to representatives from each of the seven jurisdictions in the Fargo–Moorhead metropolitan area, the Food Commission includes five at-large members. These at-large positions are intended to bring additional and diverse expertise to the Commission. Applicants for at-large positions are first reviewed by the Steering Committee and then brought forward for a voice vote by current sitting Commission members. Each at-large member serves a two-year term.

With Anna Johnson concluding her term, the Steering Committee sought applicants for one new at-large member position in late February and early March. Following this process, the Steering Committee recommends the appointment of Casey Steele as a new at-large member to the Food Commission.

The Steering Committee also recommends the reappointment of Joan Kopperud and Jeffrey Miller to additional two-year terms on the Commission.

Requested Action:

Approve the appointment of Casey Steele and reappointments of Joan Kopperud and Jeffrey Miller to the Food Commission.

APPLICATION FOR CASS CLAY FOOD COMMISSION		
APPLICANT INFORMATION		
Name: Casey Steele		
Phone: 763-439-8365		
Email: casey.j.steele@gmail.com		
Preferred mailing address: 1407 1st Ave N		
City: Fargo	State: ND	ZIP Code: 58102
EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION		
Current employer: Square One Rental Kitchen & Events		
Employer address: 1407 1st Ave N		
Phone: 701-388-1137	Email: info@squareonekitchens.com	
City: Fargo	State: ND	ZIP Code: 58102
Position: Founder and Managing Director		
WHAT SKILLS, TRAINING, OR EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE RELATED TO THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION?		
I have been working in the food industry for over 15 years with 12 of those years operating my own food business. With owning and operating a shared kitchen for over a decade, I work daily with other locally owned food ventures and have close ties to the food community, its entrepreneurs and the community they serve.		
REASON FOR YOUR INTEREST TO SERVE ON THIS COMMISSION:		
I served on the Board for Heart-n-Soul Community Cafe as secretary for several years and most recently as board president. At the end of 2025, I termed out of the board and am looking for another way to connect with food access in the Fargo-Moorhead Area. I briefly explored others ways to serve our community outside of the food realm but nothing ignites my passion like food. When I saw the commission's email regarding a member-at-large position I was immediately ready to dive in and apply.		
PLEASE PROVIDE A BRIEF BIO (200 WORDS OR LESS): NOTE: THIS MAY BE INCLUDED IN PACKET MATERIAL TO THE COMMISSION.		
My educational background is in architecture and I have lived in the FM area for 20 years now. I have a strong passion for food entrepreneurship and providing opportunities to expand our locally owned food offerings in sustainable ways - both financially for the food business operator and environmentally. Volunteering for Heart-n-Soul and actively engaging in their mission to feed everyone in our community, regardless of financial circumstances has really shown me how impactful intentional, methodical actions can be. I appreciate you considering my application and the work that you do with the Cass Clay Food Commission.		
Signature: 		Date: 2/20/2026
Please return this form to Adam Altenburg – altenburg@fmmetrocog.org Or mail to: Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments Attn: Adam Altenburg 1 2nd Street N Suite 232 Fargo, ND 58102-4807		
		CASS CLAY FOOD PARTNERS



To: Cass Clay Food Commission
From: Erika Franck, Steering Committee Member
Date: 3/2/2026
Re: *Clay County Land Development Ordinance Update*

On June 3, 2025, Clay County adopted a Land Development Ordinance Update, which aligns County regulations with the 2045 Comprehensive and Transportation Plan. The update modernizes the previous ordinance (last comprehensively revised in 2012), incorporates public input gathered between 2023 and 2025, and improves clarity and usability. Several amendments directly support community health, local food access, and agricultural vitality, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's goals.

Key updates include expanded allowances for seasonal farm produce sales across zoning districts, revised standards for keeping animals on residential lots, and an updated agricultural use definition that now includes apiculture. The ordinance also strengthens agricultural protection measures through conservation-focused subdivision design, pollinator-friendly ground cover requirements for solar farms, and updated feedlot setback standards. Additionally, agricultural tourism is now formally recognized as an allowed use. Collectively, these changes promote rural character, protect prime farmland and natural resources, and support a resilient local food system.

Requested Action:
None



To: Cass Clay Food Commission
From: Erika Franck, Steering Committee Member
Date: 3/2/2026
Re: ***Municipal & Commercial Composting Blueprint Update***

Since March 2015, the Cass Clay Food Partners has developed nearly two dozen resource documents highlighting urban agriculture, food access, sustainability, and other food systems topics relevant to the Fargo-Moorhead area. These documents have included blueprints, which look at food systems from a land development code perspective; and issue briefs and snapshots, which provide more of an overview of a local community issue. Members have also developed a new framework document with information regarding zoning practices, local ordinances, and urban agriculture. This framework is intended to be one of five historical pillar framework documents for the Cass Clay Food Partners to serve as a tool for evaluating existing documents.

As the topic of organic composting has grown interest in the community, there became the need to update the 2017 document to better reflect current policies, resources and programs across the regional jurisdictions. This document can provide valuable information to jurisdictions as they navigate composting programs.

The item will be presented as a laydown item at the meeting.

Requested Action:

Motion to update the Municipal & Commercial Composting Blueprint.



To: Cass Clay Food Commission
From: Fred Sternhagen & Bryce Haugen, Clay County Climate Action Group
Date: March 4th, 2026
Re: *Food Waste Composting Program for Clay County*

Members from the Clay County Climate Action Group will provide the Commission with a presentation regarding a food waste composting program for Clay County.

Requested Action:
None – Information Sharing Only