



Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan
Council of Governments

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CASS CLAY
FOOD
PARTNERS

**59th Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission**

September 9, 2026 10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Location: Metro COG Conference Room

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

Meeting ID: 836 4408 5761

Passcode: 340677

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| 10:30 am | 1. Welcome |
| | a. Approve Order & Contents of the Overall Agenda |
| | b. Review & Action on Minutes from May 13, 2026 (Attachment 1) |
| 10:35 am | 2. Commission Introductions – Chair Nesemeier |
| 10:40 am | 3. MB Johson Food Forrest – Trent Wise, Moorhead City Forester |
| 11:05 am | 4. City of Moorhead Presentation – Ethan Johnk, Assistant City Planner |
| | a. Local Food – Comprehensive Plan & GreenStep Summary |
| | b. Backyard Chickens |
| | c. Community Gardens |
| | d. Natural Plantings & Pollinator Conversations |
| 11:30 am | 5. Discussion Questions |
| | 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? |
| 11:40 am | 6. Public Comment Opportunity – Chair Nesemeier |
| 11:50 am | 7. Commission & Steering Committee Roundtable: Community Updates & Meeting Reflections – Chair Nesemeier |
| 11:55 am | 8. Future Meetings & Commission Action Steps |
| | a. Next Steering Committee Meeting – September 28, 2026, 1:00 pm
Metro COG – 1 2 nd Street N Suite 232, Fargo |
| | b. Next Commission Meeting – November 4, 2026, 10:30 am |
| 12:00 pm | 9. 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

**58th Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission
May 13, 2026
Metro COG Conference Room**

Members Present:

Heather Nesemeier, Moorhead City Council, Chair
Jim Kapitan, Cass County Commission
Paul Krabbenhoft, Clay County Commission
Amy Zundel, West Fargo City Commission
Paul Hankel, Horace City Council (proxy)
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Joan Kopperud, At-Large Member
Casey Steele, At-Large Member
Carin Engler, At-Large Member

Members Absent:

Amber Borah, Dilworth City Council
Jeffrey Miller, At-Large Member
Jeff York, At-Large Member

Others Present:

Cheryl Stetz, Fargo Cass 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
Chad Zander, City of West Fargo
Dave Schacher, West Fargo Park District
Josh Mathern, West Fargo Park District
Leola Daul, Heart-n-Soul Community Café
Alyssa Athman, CAPLP
Adam Altenburg, 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. Krabbenhoft and seconded by Mr. Strand. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from March 11, 2026

A motion to approve the minutes for March 2026 was made by Mr. Strand and seconded by Mr. Kapitan. 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.

3. West Fargo Community Orchards Presentation

Chad Zander, West Fargo City Forester, and Dave Schacher, West Fargo Park District Forestry Specialist, presented information on West Fargo's community orchard program.

The program began in 2017 as a pilot project with the Francis Street and Meadowridge orchards, supported by a North Dakota Department of Agriculture grant. The program has since expanded to multiple locations throughout West Fargo, including sites on FEMA buyout properties, retention pond lots, lift station green spaces, easement lots, and West Fargo Parks property.

The orchards contain a variety of fruit and nut-producing plants, including apples, cherries, pears, plums, raspberries, serviceberries, mulberries, honeyberries, hazelnuts, currants, apricots, and ground cherries. Several sites were established through partnerships or memorandums of understanding with West Fargo Parks. West Fargo provides an interactive community orchard map and information about the types of fruit available at each location through its Forestry webpage.

Mr. Zander and Mr. Schacher discussed lessons learned from the program, including challenges with clay soils, rabbits and deer, and the initial small size of fruit trees. They also highlighted the wide variety of fruit and other edible landscape plants that can be successfully incorporated into community orchards.

4. Boulevard Gardens Blueprint Update

Haley Lind and Noelle Harden provided an update on the Boulevard Gardens Blueprint. The presentation covered the benefits of boulevard gardens, including improved streetscapes, pollinator habitat, and opportunities for residents to grow food or flowers. Concerns and mitigation strategies related to soil contamination, pet waste, safety, and garden appearance were also discussed.

The Commission reviewed how boulevard gardens are currently addressed by jurisdictions throughout the region. Moorhead and Fargo allow boulevard gardens with certain requirements and/or permits, while other jurisdictions have varying or no specific regulations.

Examples of Fargo and Moorhead boulevard garden requirements were presented, including plant height, setbacks, utility access, maintenance, raised beds, and permitting.

A motion to approve the updated municipal and composting blueprint was made by Ms. Kopperud and seconded by Mr. Kapitan. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

5. Steering Committee Updates

Ms. Stetz informed the Commission that Fargo Cass Public Health developed a 2026 Fargo-Moorhead Area Community Gardens and Orchards list, which includes locations, contact information, costs, and other relevant details.

Ms. Harden asked for volunteers to facilitate the next Commission meeting. Chair Nesemeier indicated that she would contact the City of Moorhead regarding assistance with developing the next meeting agenda.

6. 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.

7. Public Comment Opportunity

Chair Nesemeier informed the Commission that time would be allotted for public comments. She noted that members of the community may also submit comments via a comment link when Commission packets are emailed out.

Leola Daul noted that Heart-n-Soul now has their mobile cafe schedule on their Facebook page and on their website.

8. Future Meetings and Commission Action Steps

Chair Nesemeier stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on September 9. She noted that the next steering committee meeting would be May 26 at Metro COG and that Commissioners and others were welcome to attend.

Chair Nesemeier adjourned the meeting at 12:03 PM.