

City of Fargo

Liquor Control Board

Meeting Minutes

Date: December 17, 2025

Time: 1:30 PM

Attendees: Commissioner Piepkorn, Scott Brekke, Robert Nelson, Tatiana Hackman

1. Approval of Minutes

Action: Approval of the November 19, 2025, regular meeting minutes.

- Motion made to approve the minutes: Brekke
- Second: Hackman
- No changes or corrections were requested.
- Vote: Approved Unanimously

2. Review of Liquor Applications

2A. USH Fargo Ventures LLP doing business as Four Points by Sheraton

- **Location:** 564 23rd Avenue South
- Transfer of ownership only (no change in license type or DBA)
- Fargo South Hospitality LLC sold the license to USH Fargo Ventures LLP.
- Background checks revealed no concerns.
- Discussion focused on ownership, management responsibility, and liability.
- Josh Schmaltz, President and CEO of US Hotel and Resort Management, addressed the Board:
 - Confirmed USH Fargo Ventures LLP owns and operates the hotel and bar.
 - All employees are employed by US Hotel and Resort Management.
 - On-site manager (Claire Hughes) will serve as the local point of contact.
- Board members expressed the importance of having a local, identifiable contact for compliance and law enforcement matters.

Action:

- Motion to approve: Nelson
- Second: Brekke
- Vote: Approved Unanimously

3. Police Monthly Report

- Police Chief reported a significant decrease in liquor-related incidents.
- Ongoing work continues with the City Attorney/Auditor to refine liquor licensing guidelines, with updates anticipated next year.

Board Comment:

The Board expressed appreciation for the positive report and commended license holders, city staff, and law enforcement for collaborative efforts.

4. Wine Accessory License

4.1 Public Comment

Angie introduced the proposed wine accessory license and noted that a draft had been included in the agenda packet. This item was presented for public comment only, with action planned for a future meeting.

Public Speakers:

- **Mark Bjornstad**
 - Expressed strong support for the proposed license.
 - Noted Fargo's need to modernize and remain competitive with surrounding cities.
 - Emphasized that similar models expand the market rather than harm existing retailers.
 - Highlighted that the proposal includes appropriate guardrails and conservative implementation.
- **Nikki Bergland**

- Supported the license as both a business and wine education opportunity.
- Explained how such licenses help customers discover new wines and later purchase them from retailers.
- Noted that participating establishments typically sell niche or obscure wines at higher-than-retail prices, minimizing competition with liquor stores.
- Shared examples of customer demand and potential market benefits.

Board Direction:

- No action taken at this meeting.
- The item will return to a future Liquor Control Board agenda for consideration and vote.

5. Special Event Alcohol Permit Process

Angie provided an update on a citywide Special Event Committee working toward a unified permit process covering:

Key Points:

- Special event organizers would submit one comprehensive application.
- Alcohol service requirements would depend on whether the vendor holds a Fargo city license or only a state license.
- The goal is improved coordination, public safety awareness, and communication among departments.

Discussion:

- Board members discussed challenges related to state-licensed vendors operating in Fargo without prior city awareness.
- Mark Bjornstad explained state special event permits for producers (breweries, wineries, distilleries), including limitations and regulatory oversight.
- Joel Kath further clarified:
 - State special event permits allow service in North Dakota without requiring a separate city license.
 - Usage is limited annually and subject to strict state guidelines.

Board Comment:

The Board emphasized public safety and communication as the primary concerns and expressed intent to work collaboratively with industry stakeholders. Angie will keep the Board informed as the committee's work progresses.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:18 PM.