

Planning Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, May 27, 2026; 8:15 am  
Fargo Parks Sports Center  
Alex Stern Board Room

Present: Vicki Dawson, Jerry Rostad, Zoe Absey, Aaron Hill, Joe Deutsch, Zoe Absey  
Susan Faus, Dave Bietz, Jayne Gust, Tyler Kirchner, Tony Schmitt, Broc Lietz, Kali Mork

1. Garden of Healing – Phase Two (Urban Plains)

- \$1.5M secured, enough to complete Phase 2 of Garden of Healing.
- Design largely unchanged; extends from existing garden south to 32nd Ave S.
- Substantially complete or presentable by end of August 2026 to support:
  - Regional Garden Society event hub.
  - Strides for Second Chances (organ donation awareness).
- New agreement between Garden of Healing entity and Fargo Park District required per original MOU.
- Phase 1 to remain usable during Phase 2 construction as much as possible.
- Bring plans + 3-minute virtual tour to full board for review/celebration.

The committee recommends moving this to the full board and placing it on the Regular Agenda for consideration and approval.

2. City of Fargo 12th Ave Bridge Project as it relates to Jack Williams Stadium

- Project:
  - City redesigning 12th Ave N Bridge to:
    - Raise it out of floodway.
    - Straighten alignment for safer traffic.
- Park District Impacts:
  - No loss of parking; north lot expanded/organized.
  - New Elm Street entrance for south lot due to heavy 12th Ave traffic.
  - Trail raised and realigned under bridge, moving it higher out of floodway.
- Operations:
  - Construction timeline not set; City still in design and grant phase.
  - No construction cost to Park District; only coordination/logistics.
  - Post 2 comfortable as long as parking and access are maintained.
- Direction / Next:
  - Park District to sign Section 4(f)/FHWA concurrence letter confirming needs are met.

The committee recommends moving this to the full board and placing it on the Consent Agenda for consideration and approval.

### 3. Urban Archery Deer Hunting Program Update

- Program Snapshot (2025–26):
  - 81 qualified hunters; 37 deer harvested, 7 hit/not recovered, 2 clean misses.
  - 32% hunter success rate (above state average).
  - Only 1 arrow lost; 55 lbs meat donated (~220 meals).
  - Very low public interaction ( $\approx$ 2 per hunter for entire season).
- Key Changes:
  - Split into early (Sept–Oct) and late (Nov–early Jan) seasons.
  - State reduced tags from 3 to 2; season now ends early January.
- Expansion Request:
  - Club requested adding three south-side parks back into program (incl. Orchard Glen).
- Board Concerns & Direction:
  - Sensitivity around nature parks and visitor perception.
  - Need:
    - Detailed maps of proposed hunt zones.
    - Usage data (e.g., cell phone counts) for those parks.
    - Clear plan for avoiding event/high-use conflicts.
  - No decision yet; return to Planning Committee with more detail.

### 4. Rose Creek Driving Range Improvement Project

- Project:
  - Install synthetic tee line at Rose Creek (last course to be upgraded; matches Edgewood & Osgood).
  - Low bid: TNT Landscaping – \$51,160 (within estimate).
- Benefits:
  - Protects turf; improves early/late season usability.
- Timeline:
  - Construction after Labor Day, done by mid-October.

The committee recommends moving this to the full board and placing it on the Consent Agenda for consideration and approval.

### 5. Cell Tower Proposal – Sports Center Site

- Proposal:
  - Ground lease for cell tower at northeast corner of Sports Center site.
  - Developer: Hemphill / Great Plains Towers, anchor tenant Verizon.
  - Terms: \$1,000/mo base + revenue share, 2.5% annual escalator, larger footprint than existing sites.
- Benefits:
  - Significant coverage improvement inside Sports Center and nearby.
  - Expect future AT&T / T-Mobile co-location.
- Concerns:
  - Is rent market-rate compared to other public leases?

- Value of land/green space being committed.
  - Direction / Next:
    - Staff to research market rates for cell tower ground leases (other public entities).
    - Broker to explore higher revenue-share.
    - Bring updated analysis back to Planning Committee before decision.
6. Bridge Maintenance Agreement in relation to pedestrian bridges across the Red River
- Scope:
    - Updated agreement among Fargo, Moorhead, Clay County, Fargo Park District for:
      - Oak Road, Dyke East floating, Lindenwood, Main Ave/Veterans Memorial, and new Bluestem Pedestrian Bridge.
  - Key Points:
    - Existing pedestrian bridge responsibilities unchanged.
    - New Bluestem bridge:
      - No Park District funding or maintenance.
      - Improves southern trail connectivity; target completion around 2028.
    - Park District no longer responsible for Main Ave bridge flags.

The committee recommends moving this to the full board and placing it on the Consent Agenda for consideration and approval.

#### 7. 2027 Budget – Approach & Timeline

- Goals:
  - Balanced budget with flat mill levy.
  - Focus on needs-based budgeting and actual historical spend.
  - Look for operational efficiencies and careful review of part-time/seasonal hours.
  - No net new FTEs unless a clear, critical need is documented.
- Tools & Process:
  - New Una Solutions budgeting software for better forecasting/CIP.
  - Strong emphasis on line-item detail from departments.
- Key Dates:
  - Depts build budgets through June.
  - Finance/executive review & adjustments: July–August.
  - Public hearing: September 8, 2026.
  - Final approval: October 6, 2026.
  - Certification: October 10, 2026.

#### 8. Fargo Resident Fee Structure – 2027 Direction

- Objective:
  - Provide added benefit to Fargo taxpayers while remaining accessible region-wide.

- Phase 1 – 2027 Implementation (Recommended):
  - Resident vs non-resident pricing for:
    - Golf season passes
    - Pool season passes
  - Priority registration for Fargo residents:
    - Recreation programs where software allows.
    - Future tee-time priority once golf software supports it.
- Next Steps:
  - Staff to bring:
    - Detailed 2027 fee proposals (resident vs non-resident) for passes.
    - Data on resident vs non-resident pass purchases.
    - Communications plan; future community engagement before broader expansion.

#### Other

##### Cornerstone Arena – Sale Inquiry

- Issue:
  - West Fargo Youth Hockey asked if FPD would consider selling Cornerstone Arena.
- Direction:
  - No interest in selling.

Meeting adjourned at 10:02 am.

Minutes submitted by Carmen Johnson, Executive Assistant