Planning Committee Meeting
Wednesday, August 19, 2026; 8:15 a.m.
Fargo Parks Sports Center
Alex Stern Boardroom

Present: Zoe Absey, Vicki Dawson, Joe Deutsch, Emily Secor May, Susan Faus, Dave Bietz, Jayne Gust, Tony Schmitt, Tyler Kirchner, Luke Evenson, Broc Lietz, Kali Mork, Kelsey Smith

Public Comment: Members of the public were afforded the opportunity to discuss issues with the Board. A member of the community had questions regarding the VSS 2027 budget.

Snow Removal Bids at the Fargo Parks Sports Center
Kali Mork, presenter

- Bids received from four companies for snow removal at Fargo Parks Sports Center
- Staff recommend a 3-year contract with Glacier Snow:
    - Prior positive performance and familiarity with the site.
    - Competitive monthly rate lower than current contractor.

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

Consideration of Amendment to the Southwest regional Pond Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Fargo
Tony Schmitt, presenter

- Proposal to amend the existing 2019 MOU to:
    - Add the Far South Pond (south of 64th Ave S) to the agreement.
    - Clarify future responsibilities for shared-use paths and box culverts, especially at replacement time (25–30+ years out).
- Key points:
    - North Pond: Park District already obligated to install trails there; significant costs (full trail build-out originally over $4M).
    - South Pond: Intent is shared funding via adjacent development and special assessments rather than solely Park District dollars.
    - Partnership with Audubon (Great Plains) providing funding for native grass establishment.
- Board concerns:
    - Current language relies on “cooperate/coordinate” and feels too soft; request to strengthen commitments so future city leadership is more clearly tied to replacement cost sharing.
    - Need to avoid a situation where Fargo Parks is “holding the asset” without clear long-term city cost participation.

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

2026 Market Compensation Review and Recommendation 2027 Compensation Adjustments
Kelsey Smith, presenter

- HR completed a market compensation review of 95 full-time positions using regional public-sector comparators.
- Findings:
    - 42 positions: <5% range change.
    - 33 positions: 5–9% range increase.
    - 20 positions: 10%+ increase needed (notably park maintenance roles).
- 2027 recommendation:
    - 4.5% combined increase:
        - 1% across-the-board.
        - 3.5% merit pool, using a merit matrix tied to performance and position-in-range.
    - Additional $125,000 equity pool for 43 employees needing targeted market adjustments.
- Other workforce items:
    - Total full-time employees: 169.
    - Plan to provide annual total compensation statements (salary + benefits + retirement + “soft” benefits).
    - Align part-time pay ranges with full-time structures; part-time will also benefit from updated ranges.
    - Education plan: department meetings to explain market adjustments, merit process, and performance expectations.

2027 Budget Review
Broc Lietz and Luke Evenson, presenters

- Total all funds: about $64.28M (General, Valley Senior Services, Capital Projects, Debt Service).
- General Fund – Revenues
    - Property tax: 52% of General Fund.
        - Strategy: use full 3% cap + new growth; shift 0.38 mills from Debt Service to General Fund to capture capacity.
        - Staff recommendation to reduce Debt Service by an additional 0.2 mills, dropping total from 35.53 to 35.33 mills overall.
    - Charges for services: 35%; projected +$727K in 2027 (golf, pools, programs, Courts Plus, facility use, etc.).
    - Intergovernmental (state aid via city): 9%; assumed flat based on city guidance.
    - Interest income: 2%; projected $937K, moderating as large project cash balances decline.
    - Sponsorships/donations/foundation: 1%; includes foundation pledge reimbursements from the capital campaign (about $7M total over time) coming back to the general fund with no new donor restrictions.
- General Fund – Expenses
    - Compensation: 37% of General Fund.

    - Benefits: 13%; currently budgeted at +10% increase pending broker update.
    - Programs & operations: 17%.
    - Repair & maintenance: $2.6M.
    - Utilities: 5.5%, trending down slightly (efficiencies, especially in the new building).
    - Capital equipment: 8%.
    - Capital improvements: 9%.
    - Transfers out to CIP: $2.2M (about $1.9M from Admin + $250K from golf capital).
- Structural transparency changes:
    - Benefits currently all sit in Admin; plan to allocate benefits to departments so true costs show per function.
    - Internal transfers and admin-heavy items will be clarified so the 29% admin share reflects reality after shifting those costs.
    - Debt Service Fund will be split and reported as:
        - Bond debt service (no flexibility, G.O. bonds).
        - Special assessment debt (more flexible, may be prepaid).
- Capital Projects – 2027
    - Four recommended projects (approx. $3M+ total):
        - Edgewood Irrigation Phase 1 (including pump station; part of a two-year 2027–28 project).
        - Jack Williams Stadium lights.
        - Southwest Regional Pond – Phase 1 (natural surface trails, erosion control, native seeding, supported by Outdoor Heritage Fund).
        - Tharaldson Little League turf (Park District share).
- Valley Senior Services (VSS)
    - 2027 budget about $8M (up $0.5M from 2026).
    - Funded via county levies (up to 1 mill per county) + state and federal sources; no direct General Fund dollars, but significant shared admin support.
    - VSS reserves currently near 100% of annual budget; staff will:
        - Revisit reserve targets (likely higher than Parks' 25% due to federal/state funding risk).
        - Clarify how much of reserves can/should go toward facilities vs. operations.
        - Tighten documentation (e.g., county forms) so representation of "new senior center" dollars is realistic and consistent.

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

<u>Other</u>

Clothing for Board/Staff

Meeting adjourned at 10:17 am.
Minutes submitted by Carmen Johnson, Executive Assistant