Governance Committee Meeting
Wednesday, November 25, 2026; 8:00 a.m.
Fargo Park District Board Room
6100 38th Street S, Fargo

AGENDA

1. Recognition of Audience/Public Comments
2. Discussion of Compensation Policy for Park Board Commissioners; Commissioner Rostad, presenter
3. Discussion of Executive Director Compensation; Commissioner Rostad, presenter
4. Review Operational Expectation (OE-4) Financial Planning and Administration; Commissioner Rostad, presenter
5. Review Operational Expectation (OE-6) Communication with the Commissioners; Commissioner Rostad, presenter
6. Review Operational Expectation (OE-7) Focus on Strategic Priorities; Commissioner Rostad, presenter

7. Other

Next Park Board Meeting: December 8, 2026: 5:30 p.m.
Next Planning Committee Meeting: December 16, 2026; 8:00 a.m.
Next Governance Committee Meeting: December 23, 2026; 8:00 a.m.

Susan Faus, Executive Director
Park Commissioners – Zoe Absey * Vicki Dawson * Joe Deutsch * Aaron Hill * Jerry Rostad
Clerk -Jeff Gunkelman

Our Core Values: * Be Authentic * Be Bold * Be Collaborative

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 25, 2026

TO: Fargo Park Board Committee Members

FROM: Susan Faus, Executive Director

RE: Agenda Item No. 2 – Compensation Policy for Park Board Commissioners

At its September meeting, the Governance Committee recommended revisions to the draft policy establishing compensation for Park Board Commissioners.

The revised proposal addresses the Committee's concerns and provides greater transparency regarding the process for determining and increasing compensation.

The meeting packet includes both the original and revised policy drafts for comparison.

Please contact me before the meeting if you have any questions.

Thank you.

Compensation Policy for Park Board Commissioners

1. Purpose

To establish a transparent, consistent process for reviewing and approving annual salary adjustments for elected park district officials while ensuring compliance with the **North Dakota Century Code**, fiscal responsibility, and public accountability.

2. Legal Framework

1. **Authority:** Compensation for park district board members must be approved by the board and included in the park district's annual budget.

2. The board shall comply with all applicable North Dakota statutes regarding compensation and budget law.

3. Annual Review Timing

1. Salary and compensation levels for elected officials shall be reviewed **annually as part of the budget development process** before adoption of the final budget.

4. Compensation Review Criteria

The board should consider the following when evaluating potential adjustments:

• Changes in the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** as a measure of inflation.

• Changes in the Employment Cost Index (ECI).

• Compensation levels in **comparable North Dakota park districts or similar units of local government**.

• The park district's **financial condition**, projected revenues, and budget constraints.

• The elected officials' **roles, responsibilities, and time commitments**.

• Impact on **tax levies** and community expectations.

5. Compensation Principles

• Annual review does not guarantee an increase.

• Compensation must be reasonable and fiscally responsible.

Updated

• Justification should be required for increases above the benchmark.

• Commissioners' compensation should be evaluated consistently using objective criteria.

• The process should avoid actual or apparent conflicts of interest.

• The effective date will coincide with the start of the Park District fiscal year.

6. Other Compensation and Reimbursements

Park Board Commissioners may receive or be provided other forms of support, reimbursement, stipends, or allowances as authorized by applicable North Dakota Century Code provisions and Park District policies. Other compensation and support may include, but are not limited to:

• IT and Technology Support

• Clothing Allowance

• Conferences and Professional Development

• Conference and Related Travel Costs

• Facility and program access benefits (see Park Board Commissioner Soft Benefit Outline).

• Other Reasonable or Necessary Reimbursements and Stipends

7. Review Process

1. **Proposal Preparation:** The Governance Committee shall prepare a compensation review report that includes:

• Current salaries and any soft benefits

• Benchmarking data from similar North Dakota park districts

• Recommended adjustment (if any) and rationale

• The across-the-board salary adjustment approved for full-time employees shall be considered as one benchmark when evaluating commissioner compensation. The Board may approve an adjustment that differs from the employee adjustment based upon the factors identified in this policy.

Updated

2. **Board Action:** Compensation adjustments shall be included in the final annual budget document. Any proposed commissioner compensation adjustment above and beyond the adjustment approved for full-time employees shall require separate approval through documented Board action.

8. Policy Review

The board shall review this policy **every three (3) years** or when there is a substantive change in applicable North Dakota law.

Adopted:

Updated

Compensation Policy for Park Board Commissioners

1. Purpose

To establish a transparent, consistent process for reviewing and approving annual salary adjustments for elected park district officials while ensuring compliance with the **North Dakota Century Code**, fiscal responsibility, and public accountability.

2. Legal Framework

1. **Authority:** Compensation for park district board members must be approved by the board and included in the park district's annual budget.
2. The board shall comply with all applicable North Dakota statutes regarding compensation and budget law.

3. Annual Review Timing

1. Salary and compensation levels for elected officials shall be reviewed **annually as part of the budget development process** before adoption of the final budget

4. Compensation Review Criteria

The board should consider the following when evaluating potential adjustments:

- Changes in the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** as a measure of inflation.
- Changes in the Employment Cost Index (ECI)
- Compensation levels in **comparable North Dakota park districts or similar units of local government**.
- The park district's **financial condition**, projected revenues, and budget constraints.
- The elected officials' **roles, responsibilities, and time commitments**.
- Impact on **tax levies** and community expectations.

5. Compensation Principles

- Annual review does not guarantee an increase
- Compensation must be reasonable and fiscally responsible
- Justification should be required for increases above the benchmark
- Commissioners' compensation should be evaluated consistently using objective criteria
- The process should avoid actual or apparent conflicts of interest
- The effective date will coincide with start of the Park District fiscal year

DRAFT

6. Other Compensation and Reimbursements

Park Board Commissioners may receive or be provided other forms of support, reimbursement, stipends, or allowances as authorized by applicable North Dakota Century Code provisions and Park District policies. Other compensation and support may include, but are not limited to:

- IT and Technology Support
- Clothing Allowance (will need parameters, if we want to go there now)
- Conferences and Professional Development
- Conference and Related Travel Costs
- Other reasonable or necessary Reimbursements and Stipends

7. Review Process

1. **Proposal Preparation:**
   The Governance Committee shall prepare a compensation review report that includes:
   - Current salaries and any soft benefits
   - Benchmarking data from similar North Dakota park districts
   - Recommended adjustment (if any) and rationale
   - The Across-the-Board salary adjustment approved for full-time employees shall be considered as one benchmark when evaluating commissioner compensation. The Board may approve an adjustment that differs from the employee adjustment based upon the factors identified in this policy.
2. **Board Action:**
   Compensation adjustments shall be included in the final annual budget document.

8. Policy Review

The board shall review this policy **every three (3) years** or when there is a substantive change in applicable North Dakota law.

DRAFT

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: November 25, 2026

TO: Fargo Park Board Committee Members

FROM: Susan Faus, Executive Director

RE: Agenda Item No. 3 – Executive Director Compensation

At its September meeting, the Governance Committee recommended revisions to governance policy C/ED – 7 – Executive Director Compensation.

The proposed revisions clarify how the compensation increase is incorporated into the annual operating budget, making the process more transparent.

The packet includes both the original and updated policies.

Please contact me with any questions before the meeting.

Thank you.

C/ED-7 Executive Director Compensation

The Executive Director is the Board's principal representative and is responsible for its efficient operation. Therefore, the Board desires to provide fair yet reasonable and not excessive compensation for the Executive Director.

The Executive Director's compensation is planned and budgeted as part of the annual budgeting process. During the annual budget process, the Board approves funding for a potential compensation adjustment, but the final salary adjustment is determined only after the Executive Director's evaluation.

The annual process for determining compensation is as follows:

• The entire Board shall annually evaluate the Executive Director on their performance and ask for their input on matters of performance and compensation.

• Based on a comparability data review, the Governance Committee, in partnership with the Fargo Park District Human Resource Director, will obtain research and information to recommend to the entire Board for the Executive Director's compensation (salary and benefits).

• Following the Executive Director's evaluation, the Governance Committee will make a final compensation recommendation to the full Board for approval at an official Fargo Park District Board meeting. The target timeline is Governance Committee review in November and Board approval in December.

Monitoring Method: Commissioner self-assessment

Monitoring Frequency: Reviewed Annually

Adopted: August 2024

Revised: November 2026

Updated

C/ED-7 Executive Director Compensation

The Executive Director is the Board's principal representative and is responsible for its efficient operation. Therefore, the Board desires to provide fair yet reasonable and not excessive compensation for the Executive Director.

The annual process for determining compensation is as follows:

- The entire Board shall annually evaluate the Executive Director’s performance and ask for input on matters of performance and compensation.

- Based on a comparability data review, the Governance Committee will obtain research and information to recommend to the entire Board for the Executive Director's compensation (salary and benefits).

- To approve the compensation for the Executive Director, the Governance Committee will make a final recommendation to the full Board at an official Fargo Park District Board meeting.

Monitoring Method: **Commissioner self-assessment**
Monitoring Frequency: **Reviewed Annually**
Adopted: **August 2024**

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 25, 2026

TO: Fargo Park Board Committee Members

FROM: Susan Faus, Executive Director

RE: Agenda Item No. 4 - Review Operational Expectation (OE-4) Financial Planning and Administration

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The Governance Committee will review and discuss Operational Expectation OE-4, Financial Planning and Administration, for the Fargo Park District. The policy is included in the packet for the committee's review.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me prior to the meeting.

Thank you.

OE-4 Financial Planning and Administration

Financial Planning

To ensure timely fiscal budget approval, the Executive Director shall provide timely budgets for the Board of Directors' approval. The Executive Director will, in collaboration with the Finance Director, create a proposed budget for each fiscal year and present it to the Planning Committee for discussion and preparation for the entire Board's approval.

Accordingly, the Executive Director shall develop a budget that:

1. In a summary format that is understandable to the Board and presented in a manner that allows the Board to understand the relationship between the budget and the Strategic Plan.

2. Describes revenues and expenditures.

3. Shows the amount spent in each budget category for the most recently completed fiscal year and budgeted for the current fiscal year.

4. Discloses budget-planning assumptions.

5. Assures fiscal soundness in future years.

6. Reflects anticipated changes in employee compensation, including inflationary adjustments, increases, and benefits.

7. Includes such amounts as necessary for the Board's governing function, including Board member training, consultation, attendance at professional conferences and events, and other matters identified by the Board.

Financial Administration

The Executive Director shall not cause or allow any financial activity or condition that materially deviates from the budget adopted by the Board to cause or permit any financial situation inconsistent with achieving the Fargo Park District's Mission or jeopardize the organization's long-term financial health.

Accordingly, the Executive Director shall:

1. Assure that payroll and legitimate debts are promptly paid when due.
2. Assure that all purchases are based upon:
    a. reasonable precaution against conflict of interest.
    b. comparative prices based on items of similar quality.
    c. a balance between long-term quality and cost.

3. Ensure a process is in place to monitor the execution of the approved budget related to monthly reports and updates informing the Board of Commissioners of actual revenue and expenditure performance.

4. Coordinate and cooperate with the Board's appointed financial auditor for an annual audit.

5. Make all reasonable efforts to collect funds due from any source.

6. Keep complete and accurate financial records by following Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

Accordingly, the Executive Director shall NOT:

1. Exceed the overall expenditure budget without prior Board approval.

2. Fail to promptly provide a rationale for exceeding the expenditure budget.

3. Fail to promptly provide a rationale for revenue realization less than the revenue budget.

4. Allow the organization to become indebted without the approval of the Board.

5. Withdraw from an established credit line without prior Board approval.

6. Allow any required reports to be overdue or inaccurately filed.

7. Receive, process, or disburse funds under insufficient controls under Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

Monitoring Method: **Commissioner self-assessment**
Monitoring Frequency: **Reviewed Annually**
Adopted: **August 2024**

FARGO PARK DISTRICT – 2026-27

October 28, 2026

RE: Monitoring Report on OE – 4 Financial Planning and Administration

FROM: Susan Faus, Executive Director

BOARD FOCUS: Action Required

Responding Board members: Zoë Absey, Vicki Dawson, Joe Deutsch, Emily Secor May, Jerry Rostad

Governance policies are monitored per the schedule. Monitoring determines the degree to which board policies are being met. Information that does not contribute directly to this purpose is not considered monitoring data. The standard for compliance shall be whether the Executive Director has reasonably interpreted the Board policy being monitored.

DIRECTIONS:
Board members will provide an individual assessment of compliance with the policy using response options of "Compliant" or "Not Compliant." If marked "Not Compliant," the responding Board member will provide a short explanation of why the response was assessed. Questions regarding operational items associated with the policy must be lodged with the Executive Director, separate from the monitoring assessment. Suggestions for possible policy changes must be included in the area at the bottom of this document.

OE-4 Financial Planning and Administration

To ensure timely fiscal budget approval, the Executive Director shall provide timely budgets for the Board of Directors' approval. The Executive Director will, in collaboration with the Finance Director, create a proposed budget for each fiscal year and present it to the Planning Committee for discussion and preparation for the entire Board's approval.

Policy Statement	Summary Response	Administrative Opinion of Status	Board Members' Assessment
Financial Planning Accordingly, the Executive Director shall develop a budget that: 1. In a summary format that is understandable to the Board and presented in a manner that allows the Board to understand the relationship between the budget and the Strategic Plan, describe revenues and expenditures, shows the amount spent in each budget	The budget is presented in a summary format that is understandable to the Board and clearly connects financial information to the Strategic Plan. It includes revenues and expenditures, prior year spending, current-year budgeted amounts, anticipated compensation and benefit changes, and funding necessary to support the Board's governing responsibilities.	X ____Compliant ____Non-Compliant	____Compliant ____Non-Compliant

category for the most recently completed fiscal year and budgeted for the current fiscal year, discloses budget-planning assumptions, assures fiscal soundness in future years, reflects anticipated changes in employee compensation, including inflationary adjustments, increases, and benefits, includes such amounts as necessary for the Board's governing function, including Board member training, consultation, attendance at professional conferences and events, and other matters identified by the Board.			
Financial Administration Accordingly, the Executive Director shall: 1. Assure that payroll and legitimate debts are promptly paid when due, assure that all purchases are based upon: a. reasonable precaution against conflict of interest. b. comparative prices based on items of similar quality. c. a balance between long-term quality and cost, ensure a process is in place to monitor the execution of the approved budget related to monthly reports and updates informing the Board of Commissioners of actual revenue and expenditure performance, coordinate and cooperate with the Board's appointed financial auditor for an annual audit,	Payroll and legitimate debts are paid promptly when due, and purchasing practices include reasonable safeguards against conflicts of interest, use comparative pricing for items of similar quality, and consider the appropriate balance between long-term quality and cost. Processes are also in place to monitor budget execution through regular financial reporting to the Board, cooperates with the auditor for the annual audit, make reasonable efforts to collect funds due, and follows GAAP. Staff follow the procurement policy.	X Compliant ____Non-Compliant	____Compliant ____Non-Compliant

make all reasonable efforts to collect funds due from any source, keep complete and accurate financial records by following Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.			

Possible Policy Changes *DIRECTIONS*: Please use the area below to suggest possible policy changes for the Governance Committee to review. Proposed edits must be included below using strike throughs or word additions and be accompanied by a rationale for the change.

RECOMMENDATION:

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 25, 2026

TO: Fargo Park Board Committee Members

FROM: Susan Faus, Executive Director

RE: Agenda Item No. 5 - Review Operational Expectation (OE-6) - Communication with the Commissioners

The Governance Committee will review and discuss Operational Expectation OE-6, The Executive Director's Communication with Commissioners. The policy is included in the packet for the committee's review.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me prior to the meeting.

Thank you.

OE-6 Communication with the Board

The Executive Director shall ensure that the Board is fully and adequately informed about matters relating to Board work and significant organizational concerns.

Accordingly, the Executive Director shall:

1. Submit required monitoring data in a thorough, accurate, and understandable fashion, according to the Board's Annual Work Plan schedule, including the Executive Director's interpretations and relevant data to substantiate compliance or reasonable progress.

2. Inform the Board of significant money transfers within funds or other changes substantially affecting the organization's financial condition.

3. Assure the Board has adequate information from various internal and external viewpoints to ensure informed decisions.

4. Will make a reasonable effort to inform the Board of anticipated significant media coverage.

5. Treat all members impartially and ensure all members have equal access to information.

6. Inform the Board promptly of any actual or anticipated non-compliance with any OEs or any expected failure to achieve reasonable progress toward any Strategic Plan initiatives.

Monitoring Method: **Commissioner self-assessment**
Monitoring Frequency: **Reviewed Annually**
Adopted: **August 2024**

FARGO PARK DISTRICT – 2026-27

November 25, 2026

RE: Monitoring Report on OE – 6 Communication with the Commissioners

FROM: Susan Faus, Executive Director

BOARD FOCUS: Action Required

Responding Board members: Zoë Absey, Vicki Dawson, Joe Deutsch, Emily Secor May, Jerry Rostad

Governance policies are monitored per the schedule. Monitoring determines the degree to which board policies are being met. Information that does not contribute directly to this purpose is not considered monitoring data. The standard for compliance shall be whether the Executive Director has reasonably interpreted the Board policy being monitored.

DIRECTIONS:
Board members will provide an individual assessment of compliance with the policy using response options of "Compliant" or "Not Compliant." If marked "Not Compliant," the responding Board member will provide a short explanation of why the response was assessed. Questions regarding operational items associated with the policy must be lodged with the Executive Director, separate from the monitoring assessment. Suggestions for possible policy changes must be included in the area at the bottom of this document.

OE-6 Communication with the Commissioners

The Executive Director shall ensure that the Board is fully and adequately informed about matters relating to Board work and significant organizational concerns.

Policy Statement	Summary Response	Administrative Opinion of Status	Board Members' Assessment
Accordingly, the Executive Director shall: 1. Submit required monitoring data in a thorough, accurate, and understandable fashion, according to the Board's Annual Work Plan schedule, including the Executive Director's interpretations and relevant data to substantiate compliance or reasonable progress.	I have provided required monitoring data according to the Board's Annual Work Plan schedule.	X ____Compliant ____Non-Compliant	____Compliant ____Non-Compliant

2. Inform the Board of significant money transfers within funds or other changes substantially affecting the organization's financial condition.	There have not been any money transfers within funds or other changes affecting the organization's financial condition. I am committed to communicating effectively with the Board.	X ____Compliant ____Non-Compliant	____Compliant ____Non-Compliant
3. Assure the Board has adequate information from various internal and external viewpoints to ensure informed decisions.	I have and will assure the Board receives sufficient information to support well-informed decision making.	X ____Compliant ____Non-Compliant	____Compliant ____Non-Compliant
4. Will make a reasonable effort to inform the Board of anticipated significant media coverage.	I have and will make a reasonable effort to inform the Board in advance of any anticipated significant media coverage.	X ____Compliant ____Non-Compliant	____Compliant ____Non-Compliant
5. Treat all members impartially and ensure all members have equal access to information.	I have and will make every reasonable effort to treat all Board members impartially and ensure each member has access to relevant information.	X ____Compliant ____Non-Compliant	____Compliant ____Non-Compliant

6. Inform the Board promptly of any actual or anticipated non-compliance with any OEs or any expected failure to achieve reasonable progress toward any Strategic Plan initiatives.	I have and will inform the Board of any noncompliance with Organizational Expectations, as well as any expected progress toward Strategic Plan initiatives.	X ____Compliant ____Non-Compliant	____Compliant ____Non-Compliant

Possible Policy Changes *DIRECTIONS*: Please use the area below to suggest possible policy changes for the Governance Committee to review. Proposed edits must be included below using strike throughs or word additions and be accompanied by a rationale for the change.

Recommendation:

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 25, 2026

TO: Fargo Park Board Committee Members

FROM: Susan Faus, Executive Director

RE: Agenda Item No. 6 – Review Operational Expectation (OE-7), Focus on Strategic Priorities

The Governance Committee will review and discuss Operational Expectation OE-7, Focus on Strategic Priorities. The policy is included in the packet for the committee's review.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me prior to the meeting.

Thank you.

OE-7 Focus on Strategic Priorities

The Executive Director shall ensure that the organizational Strategic Plan and priorities are implemented and monitored in alignment with a yearly Operational Plan and the Board's Annual Work Plan. The outcomes of an operational annual plan will also be monitored, and the plan's outcomes shall provide reasonable progress toward meeting the strategic priorities and goals outlined in the Fargo Park District's Strategic Plan.

The strategic priorities identified and further developed into goals, objectives, and outcomes are:

Strategic Priority I – Organizational Excellence

Strategic Priority II – Relationships

Strategic Priority III – Places and Spaces

Monitoring Method:	**Board self-assessment**
Monitoring Frequency:	**Reviewed Annually**
Adopted:	**June 2025**

FARGO PARK DISTRICT – 2026-27

November 25, 2026

RE: Monitoring Report on OE – 7 Focus on Strategic Priorities

FROM: Susan Faus, Executive Director

BOARD FOCUS: Action Required

Responding Board members: Zoë Absey, Vicki Dawson, Joe Deutsch, Emily Secor May, Jerry Rostad

Governance policies are monitored per the schedule. Monitoring determines the degree to which board policies are being met. Information that does not contribute directly to this purpose is not considered monitoring data. The standard for compliance shall be whether the Executive Director has reasonably interpreted the Board policy being monitored.

DIRECTIONS:
Board members will provide an individual assessment of compliance with the policy using response options of "Compliant" or "Not Compliant." If marked "Not Compliant," the responding Board member will provide a short explanation of why the response was assessed. Questions regarding operational items associated with the policy must be lodged with the Executive Director, separate from the monitoring assessment. Suggestions for possible policy changes must be included in the area at the bottom of this document.

OE-7 Focus on Strategic Priorities

The Executive Director shall ensure that the organizational Strategic Plan and priorities are implemented and monitored in alignment with a yearly Operational Plan and the Board's Annual Work Plan. The outcomes of an operational annual plan will also be monitored, and the plan's outcomes shall provide reasonable progress toward meeting the strategic priorities and goals outlined in the Fargo Park District's Strategic Plan.

Policy Statement	Summary Response	Administrative Opinion of Status	Board Members' Assessment
The strategic priorities identified and further developed into goals, objectives, and outcomes are: Strategic Priority I – Organizational Excellence	Perform regular benchmarking studies to compare compensation and benefits packages with similar organizations. Analyze industry-specific data to understand prevailing trends and standards for various positions and as positions open. Review and update the benefits package to remain competitive and responsive to employee needs and industry trends. Develop standards for and expectations for replacement of all equipment used within the park district.	☑ Compliant ☐ Non-Compliant	☐ Compliant ☐ Non-Compliant
Strategic Priority II – Relationships	Evaluate current partnerships and relationships and define the different levels of partnerships.	☑ Compliant ☐ Non-Compliant	☐ Compliant ☐ Non-Compliant

Strategic Priority III – Places and Spaces	Implement and enhance recycling procedures and environmental stewardship practices in facilities, parks, trails and events. Develop and implement education programs and events to increase community knowledge and appreciation of local natural spaces.	☑ Compliant ☐ Non-Compliant	☐ Compliant ☐ Non-Compliant

Possible Policy Changes *DIRECTIONS*: Please use the area below to suggest possible policy changes for the Governance Committee to review. Proposed edits must be included below using strike thoughts or word additions and be accompanied by a rationale for the change.
Click or tap here to enter text.

RECOMMENDATION: Click or tap here to enter text.

That the monitoring report be accepted and filed.