

**55th Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission
September 10, 2025
Metro COG Conference Room**

Members Present:

Heather Nesemeier, Moorhead City Council, Chair
Tim Flakoll, Cass County Commission
Paul Hankel, Horace City Council (proxy)
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Anna Johnson, At-Large Member
Joan Kopperud, At-Large Member
Jeffrey Miller, At-Large Member
Carin Engler, At-Large Member
Jeff York, At-Large Member

Members Absent:

Paul Krabbenhoft, Clay County Commission
Amy Zundel, West Fargo City Commission
Amber Borah, Dilworth City Council

Others Present:

Cheryl Stetz, Fargo Cass Public Health
Rory Beil, Clay County Public Health
Noelle Harden, U of M Extension
Jillian Patrie, U of M Extension
Nikki Johnson, NDSU and U of M Extension
Eric Hegg, Global Refuge
Jill Ambuehl, Great Plains Food Bank
Mel Ell, Great Plains Food Bank
Rosalinda Gonzalez, U of M Extension, SNAP-Ed
Kamaludiin Mohamed, U of M Extension, SNAP-Ed
Ali Abdi, Academy Education International
Caitlin Schmidt, NDSU
Adam Altenburg, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments
Karissa Pavek, 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 Ms. Kopperud and seconded by Ms. Johnson. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from May 14, 2025

A motion to approve the minutes for May 2025 was made by Mr. Strand and seconded by Mr. Flakoll. 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. Celebration of SNAP-Ed Panel

Ms. Harden presented an informational item highlighting the history and impact of SNAP-Ed, as well as celebrating several extension specialists for their contributions. She explained that SNAP-Ed provided evidence-based nutrition education in schools, clinics, food banks, and other locales. She shared statistics in which nearly half of the participants increased fruit and vegetable intake and reduced consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, while one-third of participants became more physically active. She noted that HR 1, passed by both houses of Congress and passed into law on July 4, repealed Section 28 of the Food and Nutrition Act and eliminated SNAP-Ed. Layoff notices were sent to U of M Extension SNAP-Ed staff on July 7.

Ms. Harden expressed her appreciation for two SNAP-Ed educators in attendance: Rosalinda Gonzalez and Kamaludiin Mohamed. She also expressed her thanks to another SNAP-Ed educator not present at the meeting: Sara VanOffelen.

4. Steering Committee Updates

Ms. Harden provided an update on the request from the Commission to develop a letter on behalf of the Food Commission for federal and state representatives. She stated that for a mix of reasons, the steering committee was unable to deliver on that recommended action due to uncertainty of the scope, timing, and discomfort from impacts to organizations that steering committee members work for or serve.

Ms. Harden shared that one of the main efforts of the steering committee had been to apply for grants to help fund the activities of the Food Commission. She stated that they had been unsuccessful in the four grants that they had applied for: the newly competitive North Dakota Department of Health Block Grant, the Better Food Policy Fund Rapid Response Grant Program, the West Central Initiative Civic Engagement grant, and the FM Area Foundation. She asked Commission members and others for ideas on how the Food Partners could increase their capacity, potentially connecting with city and county planning departments to update and revise blueprints and policy documents.

5. Cass Clay Connect

Mr. Altenburg shared news and updates from the steering committee. Items that were shared included:

- Food Access: Links to the Great Plains Food Bank Food Assistance Map and information on the 8th Annual Hunger and Health Summit scheduled for October 30
- Urban Agriculture: Backyard chicken updates in the City of Fargo (now allowing up to six chickens) and City of Horace (revised chicken ordinance), as well as community garden updates from Growing Together and Village West
- Outreach and Education: Future Farmers of America comeback at Moorhead High School after 43 years, and The Longest Table event scheduled for September 18
- Economic Development: Several new restaurants highlighted (Fuji Hibachi Express and Poke Bowl and Daan Middle Eastern Cuisine), termination of the Regional Food Business Centers program, and FARRMS From Field to Feast tour scheduled for September 18
- Food Infrastructure: Information on the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Farm to School and Early Care grants and news on Minot's pilot project to test a rural grocery and local food hub

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.

No additional comments were made.

8. Future Meetings and Commission Action Steps

Chair Nesemeier stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on November 12. She noted that the next steering committee meeting would be September 22 at Metro COG and that Commissioners and others were welcome to attend.

Chair Nesemeier adjourned the meeting at 12:05 PM.