



Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan

Council of Governments

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CASS CLAY
FOOD
PARTNERS

56th Meeting of the Cass Clay Food Commission

January 14, 2026 10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Location: Metro COG Conference Room

[Click here to join the meeting online](#)

Meeting ID: 890 4069 8060

Passcode: 499190

10:30 am	1. Welcome
	a. Approve Order & Contents of the Overall Agenda
	b. Review & Action on Minutes from September 10, 2025 (Attachment 1)
10:35 am	2. Commission Introductions – Chair Nesemeier
10:40 am	3. Commission & Steering Committee Roundtable - Chair Nesemeier
	a. How are current events affecting food insecurity in the community?
	b. What resources or actions can support food security?
11:00 am	4. Summary and Recommendations from Network Planning Conversations – Adam Altenburg & Noelle Harden
	a. Recap of Network-Wide Meetings in November and December
	b. Recommendations for 2026
	i. Form a Financial Health Committee
	ii. Continue Food Commission Meetings
	iii. Implement a Shared Leadership Model
	c. Review meeting planning guide template (Attachment 2)
11:40 am	5. Commission Action – Chair Nesemeier
	a. Motion to Approve Recommendations
	b. Financial Health Committee Members
	c. March and May planning Teams and Jurisdictions of Focus
11:50 am	6. Public Comment Opportunity – Chair Nesemeier
11:55 am	7. Future Meetings
	a. Next Steering Committee Meeting – January 26, 2026, 1:00 pm Metro COG – 1 2 nd Street N Suite 232, Fargo
	b. Next Commission Meeting – March 11, 2026, 10:30 am
12:00 pm	8. Adjournment

Cass Clay Food Commission meetings are rebroadcast on cable channel TV Fargo 56 each Friday at 11:00 am. People with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and need special accommodations should contact Angela Brumbaugh at Metro COG at 701.532.5100. Please contact us at least 48 hours before the meeting to give our staff adequate time to make arrangements. Meeting minutes are available on the Cass Clay Food Partners website at www.cassclayfoodpartners.org and Metro COG's website at www.fmmetrocog.org.

A PLANNING ORGANIZATION SERVING

FARGO, WEST FARGO, HORACE, CASS COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA AND MOORHEAD, DILWORTH, CLAY COUNTY, MINNESOTA

Attachment 1

**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.

CCFC Meeting Planning Guide Template for 2026

Purpose

The Cass Clay Food Commission is a food policy council comprised of key organizations, elected officials, and food system experts working to foster a sustainable, thriving, and inclusive food system for all residents of the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area. The commission meets five times per year at the office of MetroCOG, a metropolitan planning organization that provides administrative support to these meetings. MetroCOG also hosts monthly meetings of the steering committee, which include representatives of public health and food system entities in the region that have historically set the agenda of the commission.

In January 2026, the Cass Clay Food Commission adopted a new shared leadership model to plan the four remaining meetings in the year. The approach is in response to the shifting leadership capacity of the steering committee and is also intended to create opportunities for voting members of the commission to contribute to and drive the agenda. The commission is also piloting an approach to center needs of 1-2 jurisdictions per meeting to address emerging food system issues or highlight relevant work of organizations or individuals within that jurisdiction.

The meeting schedule for 2026 is as follows:

- January 14th, 10:30 – noon
- March 11th, 10:30 – noon
- May 13th, 10:30 – noon
- September 9th, 10:30 – noon
- November 11th, 10:30 – noon

The seven jurisdictions with voting membership in the commission include:

- Cass and Clay Counties
- City of Fargo
- City of West Fargo
- City of Horace
- City of Moorhead
- City of Dilworth

Your Role

Thank you for volunteering to help plan a food commission meeting! The purpose of this guide is to provide context and structure to assist you and your fellow planning team members in this process. This model of shared leadership is new for the commission, so be creative as you approach this task. The recommendations provided below are suggestions, not requirements.

Recommended Approach

Each meeting will involve 2-3 volunteers from the commission and steering committee working together to plan the agenda. It is suggested that you start by connecting with “key informants,” including community leaders and food-related organizations within the assigned jurisdiction(s) to help identify which food system topics, activities, and actors are relevant to that jurisdiction. Key informants may include city / county staff, elected officials, food business owners, nonprofit leaders and staff, youth organizations, school food service, and any other entities or individuals within that community with knowledge of community or food system needs and opportunities.

Questions to consider asking key informants include:

- What have you observed about the food system in this community?
- What are the biggest needs of community members related to food access?
- Who are the key organizations and individuals working on these issues now?
- If you could change anything about the community’s food system, where would you start?
- Who can you recommend to speak about food system issues in the community?

After gathering insights from the key informants, using the suggested timeline below and template meeting agenda at the bottom of this document to start building an agenda. During the weeks leading up to the meeting, a member of the steering committee will check in with you and be available to answer any questions.

Suggested Timeline

6 weeks prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Meet with fellow planning team members to brainstorm topics● Select key informants and determine who will reach out to them
5 weeks prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reach out to key informants through the appropriate channel● Ask for ideas on food system topics and speakers
4 weeks prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reach out to potential speakers and confirm interest and availability● Create a draft meeting agenda using the template
3 weeks prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Continue working on agenda with planning team● Decide on roles of planning team members during the meeting (providing an overview of the content and planning process, introducing speakers, facilitating discussion, etc)
2 weeks prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Finalize agenda and any materials for the meeting packet and send to Adam Altenburg: altenburg@fmmetroco.org
1 week prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Check in with speakers about presentation materials
Meeting Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Provide an overview of meeting content and introduce speakers● Thank presenters and guests for attending the meeting

Resources

- Cass Clay Food Commission [website](#) and [resources](#)
- Contact Adam Altenburg with questions: altenburg@fmmetrocog.org

Appendix: Cass Clay Food Commission Agenda Template

Meeting of the Cass Clay Food Commission

DATE || 10:30 am – 12:00 pm

MetroCOG 1 2nd St N., Suite 232, Fargo

10:30 am	1. Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Approve Order & Contents of the Overall Agendab. Review & Action on Minutes from PREVIOUS MEETING DATE
10:35 am	2. Commission Introductions – Chair Nesemeier
10:40 am	3. Leadership Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Financial Health Committee (<i>standing update</i>)b. Today's Planning Team (<i>overview of planning process & agenda</i>)
10:50 am	4. AGENDA ITEM
11:10 am	5. AGENDA ITEM
11:30 am	6. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (<i>these can be adapted or cut as needed</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. What stood out to you from the presentations today?b. What ideas, connections or questions could you bring back to your community or organization?c. How can we, as the food commission, support the initiatives that were discussed today?
11:45 am	7. Public Comment Opportunity – Chair Nesemeier
11:50 am	8. Commission & Steering Committee Roundtable – Chair Nesemeier
11:55 am	9. Commission Action Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Next Steering Committee Meeting – DATEb. Next Commission Meeting – DATE
12:00 pm	10. Adjournment