



48th Meeting of the Cass Clay Food Commission

March 13, 2024 10:30 am – 12:00 pm
Location: Fargo City Commission Chambers

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| 10:30 am | 1. Welcome |
| | a. Approve Order & Contents of the Overall Agenda |
| | b. Review & Action on Minutes from January 10, 2024 (Attachment 1) |
| | c. Welcome to Paul Hankel, City of Horace (proxy) |
| | d. Mission of the Cass Clay Food Partners |
| | <i>The mission of the Cass Clay Food Partners is to improve all levels of the community food system and assure that residents have increased access to safe, nutritious, affordable, and culturally-based foods. The Cass Clay Food Partners includes three separate arms: the Cass Clay Food Commission which educates local leaders and discusses food policy issues, a steering committee comprised of key government institutions and local food systems experts that advises the Food Commission, and an action network of area organizations and individuals working together on important food topics in the community.</i> |
| 10:35 am | 2. Commission Introductions – Chair Preston |
| 10:40 am | 3. Cass Clay Food Partners Resource Review – Janice Tweet (Attachment 2) |
| 10:50 am | 4. Implementation of USDA Nutrition Assistance Programs in North Dakota – Melissa Anderson & Linda Schloer, North Dakota Department of Public Instruction |
| 11:10 am | 5. Meal Repack Program – Zoe Absey & Amber Lockhart |
| 11:30 am | 6. Steering Committee Updates – Michelle Draxten |
| 11:35 am | 7. Kudos & Community Recognition – Michelle Draxten (Attachment 3) |
| 11:45 am | 8. Public Comment Opportunity – Chair Preston (Attachment 4) |
| 11:50 am | 9. Commission & Steering Committee Roundtable: Community Updates & Meeting Reflections – Chair Preston |
| 11:55 am | 10. Future Meetings & Commission Action Steps |
| | a. Next Coffee with the Commission Event – TBD |
| | b. Next Commission Meeting – May 8, 2024 |
| 12:00 pm | 11. Adjournment |

Cass Clay Food Commission meetings are taped and 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 Savanna Leach 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.

Attachment 1

**47th Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission
January 10, 2024
Fargo Commission Chambers**

Members Present:

Arlette Preston, Fargo City Commission, Chair
Heather Nesemeier, Moorhead City Council
Jace Hellman, Horace City Council (proxy)
Jim Kapitan, Cass County Commission
Paul Krabbenhoft, Clay County Commission
Dave Steichen, Dilworth City Council
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:

Jace Hellman, Horace City Council (proxy)
Mandy George, West Fargo City Commission

Others Present:

Michelle Draxten, Fargo Cass Public Health
Halli Heimbuch, Fargo Cass Public Health
Rory Beil, Clay County Public Health
Rita Ussatis, NDSU Extension
Noelle Harden, U of M Extension
Janice Tweet, Great Plains Food Bank
Erika Franck, Clay County Planning and Zoning
Eric Hegg, Great Plains Food Bank
Deb Haugen, Cass Clay Food Partners
Makenna Peterson, Metro Area Student Ambassadors
Adam Altenburg, 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 Mr. Krabbenhoft and seconded by Mr. York. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from November 8, 2023

A motion to approve the minutes for November 2023 was made by Mr. Steichen and seconded by Ms. Kopperud. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1c. Welcome to New Food Commission Member Jim Kapitan, Cass County; and Steering Committee Member Eric Hegg

Chair Preston noted that Cass County Commissioner Jim Kapitan was newly appointed to serve on the Food Commission. She also welcomed Eric Hegg of Global Refuge (formerly Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service) as the newest member of the steering committee.

1d. Mission of the Cass Clay Food Partners

Chair Preston noted that the steering committee had asked that the mission of the Cass Clay Food Partners be included as part of meeting agendas in 2024. She read the following:

The mission of the Cass Clay Food Partners is to improve all levels of the community food system and ensure that residents have increased access to safe, nutritious, affordable, and culturally-based foods. The Cass Clay Food Partners includes three separate arms: the Cass Clay Food Commission which educates local leaders and discusses food policy issues, a steering committee comprised of key government institutions and local food systems experts that advises the Food Commission, and an action network of area organizations and individuals working together on important food topics in the community.

2. Commission Introductions

Chair Preston led the Commission and steering committee members in a brief round of introductions. She also directed the Commissioner's attention to the video: The Cass Clay Food Partners and Our Food System.

3. Approve Appointments of At-Large Members

Mr. Altenburg explained that the steering committee reviewed and recommended the reappointments of current at-large members Anna Johnson, Joan Kopperud, and Jeffrey Miller and that each had agreed to serve an additional two-year term.

A motion to approve the reappointments of Anna Johnson, Joan Kopperud, and Jeffrey Miller to the Commission was made by Ms. Kopperud and seconded by Ms. Nesemeier. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

4. Cass Clay Food Partners Resource Review

Mr. Altenburg explained that in the past eight years, the Cass Clay Food Partners had developed nearly two dozen resource documents highlighting urban agriculture, food access, sustainability, and other food systems topic areas relevant to the Fargo-Moorhead area. He noted that these documents have included blueprints, which look at food systems from a land development code perspective; and issue briefs and snapshots, which provide more of an overview of an issue the community may have seen locally.

Mr. Altenburg provided a brief overview of the snapshots and issue briefs developed for Pollinator Habitats (2019) and Pesticide Use on Public Land (2020).

5. Asset Inventory Review

Ms. Tweet provided a brief recap of the asset inventory activity that Commissioners and steering committee members took part in at the last Commission meeting in November. She reiterated that the activity was meant to identify different types of assets in the community that related to food systems, whether assets were regional or specific to certain communities, and what assets did Commissioners and steering committee members agreed on collectively.

Ms. Tweet noted that individual, intellectual, social, and cultural assets that were identified included: strong community organizations, cultural diversity, good educational systems, community volunteers/civic-minded population, local food organizations, community gardens, and ethnic diversity celebrations. She stated that natural, built, political, and financial assets identified included: flood buyout properties, great farmland, land access, bike/ped/trail systems, health-related research and promotion, a high level of civic engagement, the Cass Clay Food

Commission itself, Metro COG, grant opportunities, and the support of public health in Cass and Clay counties.

6. Cass Clay Food Action Network Survey Results and Update

Ms. Tweet provided the Commission results from the Cass Clay Food Action Network Interest Survey that was sent out to Food Partners members in November 2023. She noted that the purpose of the survey was to hear what the community liked about Food of the North, First Fridays, and other events celebrating the local food community, and to hear about ideas for a new local food action network moving forward in 2024.

Ms. Tweet noted that, of the 31 surveys received, over 84 percent had attended a First Fridays event in the past year. She stated that, of the responses received to the question of what people liked best about First Fridays, over 90 percent stated that they liked hearing from local organizations and individuals and over 80 percent stated that they liked learning about local food issues, meeting others who were interested in local food issues, and connecting with the community. Only 45 percent responded that they felt energized to take action and make change.

Ms. Tweet noted that, when asked about their preferred format, over 60 percent of respondents favored a panel or open conversation format, followed by an interactive format by 55 percent of respondents. The least popular format style was a social gathering at 39 percent, with 13 percent stating no preference.

Ms. Tweet noted that the next steps included a review of survey results by the steering committee, meetings with potential action network members, and the design of a new format and cadence for the Cass Clay Food Action Network.

7. Civic Engagement and Our Food System: Three Big Ideas for 2024

Ms. Harden provided a brief presentation on her findings from visiting several food policy councils and networks which included the Just Foods Collaborative, Roanoke Foodshed Network, Greater Franklin Food Council, Cumberland County Food Council, and the Main Network of Community Food Councils. She shared her three ideas for the Commission in 2024 including: (1) bridging and belonging; (2) cultivating community creativity; and (3) democratizing our dollars.

Ms. Harden also posed several questions to the Commission for their consideration including: (1) how to include more voices in shaping local food system decisions and support an accessible and inclusive action network; (2) how to tell community food stories and foster connections to food, nature, and art; and (3) how can grantmaking and budgeting processes be more participatory?

8. Steering Committee Updates

Ms. Draxten provided an informational update to the Commission regarding the steering committee's recent activities.

9. Kudos and Community Recognition

Ms. Draxten recognized Makenna Peterson and the Metro Area Student Ambassadors for their work during the 2023 Fill the Dome. More than 50 area elementary, middle, and high schools participated in the annual Fill the Dome event on November 20 and 21, 2023. Since it began in 2007, Fill the Dome has raised over \$740,000 and collected over 2.5 million pounds of food.

Ms. Peterson noted that the Metro Area Student Ambassadors, in partnership with the Great Plains Food Bank, Hornbacher's, Fargodome, and Dakota Medical Foundation, raised over \$39,000 and collected more than 100,000 pounds of food and other necessities in 2023. She stated that total donations would provide over 161,000 meals for area residents.

10. Public Comment Opportunity

Chair Preston 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 public comments were made.

11. Commission and Steering Committee Roundtable: Community Updates and Meeting Reflections

Chair Preston asked for the Commission and the steering committee to share any additional updates or meeting reflections.

12. Future Meetings and Commission Action Steps

Chair Preston stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on March 13 and noted the schedule for the remainder of 2024. She also mentioned that the Food Action Network would be hosting Food Systems Bingo at Front Street Taproom on January 11 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. She further noted that the next Coffee with the Commission event would be on a date yet to be determined.

Chair Preston adjourned the meeting at 11:56 AM.



To: Cass Clay Food Commission
From: Janice Tweet, Great Plains Food Bank
Date: March 8, 2024
Re: *Cass Clay Food Partners Resource Review*

Since March 2015, the Cass Clay Food Partners has developed nearly two dozen resource documents highlighting urban agriculture, food access, sustainability, and other food systems topic areas relevant to the Fargo-Moorhead area. These documents have included blueprints, which look at food systems from a land development code perspective; and issue briefs and snapshots, which provide more of an overview of an issue the community may have seen locally.

In January 2024, the steering committee provided information on the issue briefs and snapshots for [Pollinator Habitats](#) and the issue brief on [Pesticides on Public Land](#). This month, the steering committee will present information from the snapshot on [Hunger and Food Insecurity](#).

All blueprints, snapshots, and issue briefs can be found at the link below:

<https://fargond.gov/city-government/departments/fargo-cass-public-health/health-promotion/cass-clay-food-partners/blueprints>

Requested Action:
None

Hunger and Food Insecurity

Cass-Clay Community Snapshot

Updated March 2024

INTRODUCTION

While hunger is the physiological discomfort that results from prolonged, involuntary lack of food, food insecurity occurs when consistent access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources at times during the year and oftentimes results in hunger.¹ Food insecurity and hunger are seen in every county across the United States including Cass and Clay Counties.² According to Feeding America, the food insecurity rate in Cass County is 4.7%, and the food insecurity rate in Clay County is 7.4%.

The Great Plains Food Bank's [2023 Hunger on the Plains Report](#) surveyed 518 clients from 68 food pantries and meal sites from across North Dakota and Clay County, Minnesota; 100 resided in Cass and Clay Counties. The survey revealed the following about neighbors use utilize the charitable feeding network.

- 43% of neighbors served are children; 11% are older adults
- 40% do not have access to a vehicle that runs
- 74% have at least one chronic condition
- Neighbors are making choices between paying for food and utilities (42%), transportation (38%), and healthcare (19%)

While food insecurity is a complex problem, it stems from two primary issues – not having enough resources to be able to afford nutritious foods and not having access to affordable, healthful foods.⁴ The Cass-Clay community is working to improve in each of these areas in a variety of ways. The following is a snapshot of some of the more directly related efforts to reduce hunger and food insecurity within our local community.

INITIATIVES TO REDUCE HUNGER AND FOOD INSECURITY IN CASS-CLAY

Federal Programs

- *SNAP*: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides monetary benefits and education to low-income households for the purchase of healthful foods. Benefits are provided in the form of an EBT card.
- *WIC*: The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children provides nutrition education and food assistance in the form of vouchers to low income pregnant or nursing women and infants and children up to the age of 5.
- *School Lunch Program*: The SLP provides free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch meals to income eligible students at participating schools. In 2023, North Dakota expanded the income guidelines for those families who qualify for free lunch to 200% of poverty. This expansion covers the 2023-2025 biennium. As of the 2023-2024 school year, all Minnesota students can receive school meals at no-cost, regardless of their family's income level.
- *Senior Commodities*: the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) provides bi-monthly food distribution to income eligible seniors. This program is administered through SENDCAA in Cass County and serves individuals 60 and over. In Minnesota the

program is called the Nutrition Assistance Program for Seniors and is administered by CAPLP in Clay County, serving individuals 65 and over.

<https://www.caplp.org/healthwellness.html>

https://www.sendcaa.org/self_sufficiency_program/programs/csfp.html

Food Banks, Food Pantries, Donations

Great Plains Food Bank

The Great Plains Food Bank (GPFB) is part of the Feeding America network and works to end hunger together across North Dakota and Clay County, Minnesota, distributing large amounts of food quickly and efficiently to local food pantries and other local food distribution programs. The food bank also works through a variety of programs aimed at improving hunger in specifically targeted populations:

- *Backpack Program*: supplies backpacks filled with milk, juice, snacks and food for meals to assist hungry children over the weekend
- *School Pantry Program*: provides nutritious food to children and their families in convenient, familiar and safe locations
- *Youth Summer Meals Program*: provides nutritious meals for children during the summer months who would normally receive free or reduced meals at school during the school year
- *Wellness Pantry*: located within clinics, this program provides patients who screen positively for food insecurity with nutritious foods following medical appointments
- *Kitchen Coalition*: provides ready to eat meals to individuals and families going through a time of transition

Visit the GPFB website for additional information: <https://www.greatplainsfoodbank.org>

Pantries and Soup Kitchens

For a list of pantries and soup kitchens in Cass and Clay Counties visit the Great Plains Food Bank website or First Link:

<https://www.greatplainsfoodbank.org/get-help/partner-food-pantries/>

<https://myfirstlink.org/community-resources>

GleaND

GleaND is a gleaning network that works through volunteers and local growers to capture excess produce to donate to local food pantries.

<https://www.gleand.org>

Food Pantries and organizations that accept fresh produce donations

There are several locations throughout the community that will accept fresh produce. It is advised to contact individual locations for specific hours and drop off instructions.

<https://www.ndda.nd.gov/produce-donation-sites>

Master Gardner Veggies for the Pantry

Community members can take the excess produce from their gardens to one of several drop off locations where it will be picked up by an Extension Master Gardener and delivered to a local food pantry. Drop off locations vary by year.

<https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/programs/master-gardener/veggies-pantry>

Local Organizations

Cass Clay Food Partners

The Cass Clay Food Partners work to improve all levels of the community food system and ensure that residents have increased access to safe, nutritious, affordable, and culturally-based foods. This organization consists of three arms:

- *Cass Clay Food Partners Steering Committee*: an advisory committee comprised of key government organizations and food systems experts working to provide direction, organization, and management to the Cass Clay Food Partners.
- *Cass Clay Food Commission*: advises policy makers and elected officials in Cass and Clay Counties on how to assure that residents have access to safe, nutritious, and affordable foods.
- *Cass Clay Food Action Network*: facilitates connections and leverages capacity with partners to increase access to safe, nutritious and affordable food for all residents of Cass and Clay Counties.

<https://www.cassclayfoodpartners.com>

Cass/Clay Hunger Coalition

The Cass Clay Hunger Coalition is a group representing over 40 agencies passionate about ending hunger in Cass and Clay Counties. Their mission is partners advancing food security to cultivate a thriving community. The coalition is open to the public and currently meets at 8:15 A.M the first Tuesday of every month at Fargo Cass Public Health (March 2024).

For more information on how to get involved contact Jill Ambuehl at coordinator@cassclayhungercoalition.org.

Local Initiatives, Programs, Opportunities

Community Gardens

Community gardens provide an opportunity for people without space, gardening resources, or varying gardening knowledge to work together to grow nutritious fruits and vegetables. Generally, anyone in the community can participate, and gardening opportunities may be either free or for a small cost. The Fargo-Moorhead area offers community gardens where individual plots can be rented as well as a number of “communal” gardening opportunities run by the Growing Together Community Gardens program where participants work in the garden together.

<https://www.facebook.com/GrowingTogetherND>

https://download.fargond.gov/0/community_gardens_2023.pdf

Farmers Markets

Farmers markets provide the opportunity for community members to purchase locally grown, nutritious produce and provide additional locations outside of supermarkets where potentially food insecure residents can access healthy foods. Currently, Hildebrandt Farmers Market, Moorhead Farmers Market, and the Red River Farmers Market accept SNAP benefits.

https://download.fargond.gov/0/area_farmers_markets_produce_stands_-_2023.pdf

Urban Orchard Projects

Urban orchards provide access to fresh, locally grown food through plants and trees grown and maintained by homeowners on their privately owned residential property or by organizations on their land. Produce is shared with the community.

- An urban orchard in Moorhead can be found at 802 3rd St. S. in Moorhead.
<http://www.fmuglyfood.com/urban-orchard>
- In 2021, a food forest was planted in Moorhead's M.B. Johnson Park at 3601 Oakport Street North. While it is expected to take several years to start producing fruit, the public is invited to pick the trees when they do produce.
<https://www.cityofmoorhead.com/Home/Components/FacilityDirectory/FacilityDirectory/13/349?npage=2>
- Orchard Glen Park (Fargo Parks) can be found at 76th Ave S & Orchard Park Dr in Fargo.
<https://www.facebook.com/OrchardGlenParkFargo/>
- The City of West Fargo collects community orchards within the city on their website.
<https://www.westfargond.gov/816/Community-Orchard>

Heart-n-Soul Community Cafe

The Heart-n-Soul Community Café, Inc. is committed to addressing food insecurities, building community and providing delicious food to nurture the body, heart and soul. All are welcome at the café which provides healthy meals incorporating locally grown, fresh food and operates under a pay-what-you-can model.

<http://heartnsoulcafe.com>

Double Up Food Bucks

SNAP users at both the Moorhead Farmers Market and the Red River Market can increase their purchasing power with Double Up Food Bucks programs. The amount of additional SNAP dollars consumers can receive depends on the year and the market. Check with each market to learn about their current offerings.

<https://cityofmoorhead.com/departments/parks-recreation/special-events/farmer-s-market#ad-image-2>

<https://www.redriver.market/>

1. Coleman-Jensen A, Gregory CA, Rabbitt MP. Definitions of food security. United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service website. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security/>. September 2018. Accessed September 10, 2018.
2. Borger C, Kinne A, O'Leary M, et al. Hunger in America 2014 executive summary. Feeding America website. <http://www.feedingamerica.org/research/hunger-in-america/hia-2014-executive-summary.pdf>. Accessed September 10, 2018.
3. 2023 Hunger on the Plains. https://www.greatplainsfoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/HOTP-report-with-cover-compressed_1-4.pdf. Accessed March 8, 2023.
4. Move for Hunger. Hunger and homelessness website. <https://www.moveforhunger.org/hunger-and-homelessness/>. 2018. Accessed September 9, 2018.



To: Cass Clay Food Commission
From: Michelle Draxten, Fargo Cass Public Health
Date: March 8, 2024
Re: *Kudos and Community Recognition*

Since May 2022, the Cass Clay Food Commission has highlighted individuals and organizations for their work in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area and the broader community. This includes awards and recognitions as well as state and local initiatives that support food systems and the values of the Commission.

In March 2024, the Steering Committee would like to recognize the following:

1. Keith Lehman Completes Fourth Year of Raising Funds for Fargo North Open Door
Fargo North's 'Open Door' is a hybrid food pantry and clothing room for students in need. Students have access to necessities such as food, toiletry items, shoes, clothing, and a helping hand. To support the program, Keith Lehman, a Fargo Mathematics teacher and Department Chair, as well as the Head Coach for girls Track and Field and Assistant Coach for boys Cross Country, runs one mile for every \$100 raised each fall and winter. Since 2020, Keith has run over 99 miles and raised almost \$10,000 for Open Door.

Additional program information can be found at the Fargo Public Schools Development Foundation website.

<https://fargoschoolsfoundation.org/what-we-do/critical-needs-program.html>

2. FM Area Restaurants and Chefs Recognized for Culinary Achievement in James Beard Awards
The James Beard Foundation's Restaurant and Chef Awards recognize exceptional talent and achievement in the culinary arts, hospitality, media, and broader food system, as well as demonstrated commitment to racial and gender equity, community, sustainability, and a culture where all can thrive.

The 2024 Restaurant and Chef semifinalists are recognized across 22 categories and include the following:

- i. Outstanding Restaurateur: Nikki Ness Berglund and Ryan Nitschke, Luna Fargo, Sol Ave. Kitchen, Nova Eatery and others, Fargo, ND
- ii. Outstanding Bakery: Nichole's Fine Pastry & Café, Fargo, ND
- iii. Best Chef: Midwest – Andrea Baumgardner, BernBaum's, Fargo, ND

Nominees will be announced on April 3, and winners will be announced at an awards ceremony on June 10 in Chicago.

Requested Action:
None.



To: Cass Clay Food Commission
From: Arlette Preston, Chair
Date: March 8, 2024
Re: *Public Comment Opportunity*

The public comment opportunity is an open forum for the public to provide comments about specific items on this meeting's agenda, as well as any other issues that may pertain to food systems policies or programs. Members of the public may also submit comments online through the comment form link sent out with the meeting's agenda and packet. People may sign up to receive notices about the Cass Clay Food Commission at <http://fmmetrocog.org/get-involved>.

Comments to the Cass Clay Food Commission will be limited to one minute per individual or at the discretion of the Commission Chair.

Requested Action:
None