

City Council Minutes
September 2, 2025

The Fergus Falls City Council held a regular meeting on Tuesday September 2, 2025, at 5:30 pm in the City Council Chambers. Pastor Roger Sodsod gave the invocation, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Mayor Hicks called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm and the following council members were in attendance: Kremeier, Mortenson, Rachels, Kilde, Fish, Job, Kvamme and Leighton.

Open Forum

Robyn Foss shared a document on how donations and fundraisers should be conducted. She described the council's actions as having gone from disappointing to disgusting with council members going rogue, disparaging the past mayor and council, and going beyond their authority as council members. She requested a Code of Conduct be implemented so the public does not have to referee the council.

Deborah Zachmann spoke in response to Mark Leighton's letter to the council printed in the Daily Journal and felt it was out of line. She thanked and appreciated the responses from council members Rachels and Job.

Debbie Smith said she attended the town hall to express her concerns about giving the HRA the authority to levy a tax and feels this additional funding to the HRA is burdensome to the community.

Approval of Agenda

A motion and second were made by Kvamme and Rachels to approve the agenda as presented and the motion carried.

Welcoming Week Proclamation

Mayor Hicks read a proclamation declaring September 7-13 as Welcoming Week.

Planning Commission Update on Standalone Garages

During the July 16th Committee of the Whole meeting the Planning Commission was directed to review the council's comments on the ordinance addressing standalone garages. The Planning Commission studied the changes and proposed seven changes which were individually considered by the council.

This change was not recommended to move to a final version of the ordinance:

#1- A maximum allowable lot size, measured in square feet at a size to be determined by council, be included as 8(d).

The following changes were recommended to move to a final version of the ordinance:

#2- The maximum side wall height shall not exceed 19' or the height of the primary structure on adjacent lot(s), whichever is greater, and shall be in conformance with the neighborhood.

#3-Original (g) removed: "The maximum pitch height shall not exceed 30 feet." Building height is covered in (e).

#4-Update (g) to read "The building must have an apron to the street which at minimum conforms with the condition of the street." The apron was defined as the road to the sidewalk or approach.

#5-(k) is updated to require "detail of roofing and exterior wall covering materials".

#6-(i) defines the harboring of pets: "...including pets. For purposes of this condition, the term harbor is defined as providing food, water, and a place to stay overnight".

#7-Final paragraph includes: "Placement of the structure on a lot must conform with the underlying zoning district's setback requirement. Applicant for a conditional use permit for a residential garage must be a resident of the City of Fergus Falls." Language requiring an applicant to be a resident of the city was stricken.

The council agreed the definition of outside storage would not preclude a patio, but machinery etc. would not be allowed outside the structure. A motion and second were made by Kilde and Leighton directing the City Attorney to draft amendments to Ordinance 69, Eighth Series, Standalone Garages and the motion carried.

Consent Agenda

The following items were approved under **Resolution #156-2025** by Job: Motion approving the minutes from the August 18, 2025, City Council meeting and the August 27, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting. Motion approving the following licenses: Minnesota Lawful Gambling Permit for Kaddatz Galleries Inc for a raffle at the Kaddatz on December 13, 2025; Excavator Paul Haarstad Excavating; Mechanical Mission Mechanical; Demo/Hauler Hansen Concrete of Spicer. **Resolution #157-2025** accepting the grant award of a LUCAS automatic CPR device from the MN AED Project. **Resolution #158-2025** approving the 2026 sculpture walk selections as recommended by the Public Arts Commission. **Resolution #159-2025** authorizing a contract with MetLife to administer the Minnesota Paid Family Medical Leave. The resolution was seconded by Kilde and was adopted.

2026 Fee Schedule

Rachels offered **Resolution #160-2025** adopting the 2026 fee schedule, which was seconded by Fish and was adopted with Leighton voting in opposition.

MnDOT Contract 1059845

Fish offered **Resolution #161-2025** entering MnDOT Agreement #1059845 for the local cost share of the costs of the TH 210 roundabout, trail and aesthetic construction project and authorizing signing the agreement, which was seconded by Kilde and was adopted.

Ordinance 73

Ordinance 73, Eighth Series, Amending City Code Chapter 121.14, Cannabis Businesses and Sales of Operations was introduced by Fish with an amendment to include the restriction of drive-up services and the ordinance was declared to have its first reading.

Ordinance 71

Ordinance 71 in the format proposed tonight removes the cap on the number of cannabis registrations the City of Fergus Falls will provide, extending the buffer zones and grandfathering locations that have already received Interim Use Permits from the larger buffers. Mayor Hicks urged the council to come to a decision on how they want to proceed with cannabis registrations. State law requires the city to issue two registrations, and he proposed instead of using the matrix system to rate the applications, the council simply vote on each application. If the council truly wants to be business friendly, it is time to conclude the process, or businesses will look at other communities. He was not opposed to the council making this decision tonight. Fish and Kvamme each voiced they were not ready to decide tonight as businesses may still be submitting applications until the September 18

deadline. Kremeier commented on the optics of the process and said he was supportive of the applications planning to purchase land, construction a building and adding to the property tax rolls. Kvamme felt the ordinance removing the number of allowed registrations may be business friendly, but it is not family friendly, and it normalizes cannabis usage. He advocated keeping the number of allowed businesses at two and using the matrix or merit system to score the applications. The second reading of the ordinance was called to a vote and was adopted 6-2. Voting in favor were Kremeier, Mortenson, Rachels, Kilde, Fish and Job. Kvamme and Leighton voted in opposition.

Resolution of Accounts

Fish offered a resolution authorizing the payments and claims in the amount of \$1,448,038.15, which was seconded by Kilde and was adopted.

The meeting adjourned at 6:32

Lynne Olson