

Regular Meeting – March 17, 2026

The Fairmont Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting on Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center with Mayor Charles Kemp presiding. Commissioners present were J.J. McCree, Heather Seibles, Jan Tedder-Rogers, Felecia McLean, and Rasheena Graham. Commissioner Melvin Ellison was absent. Staff present included Town Manager Jerome Chestnut, Town Clerk Jenny Larson, Deputy Town Clerk Rodney Cain, Public Works Director Ronnie Seals, Fire Chief Veronica Hunt and Police Captain Jonathan Evans. Town Attorney Jessica Scott attended by telephone. Others in attendance included Rev. Michael Hunt, FHS Girls Basketball Team, Coach Marcus Thompson, Rachel Whitaker, Jason Glazener, Mary Ellen Bass, Shea Ann Dejarnette, Scott Ivey, Henry Bernacki, and several citizens.

Call to Order and Invocation

Mayor Charles Kemp called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Rev. Michael Hunt, of Maranatha Word of Life Church of God, gave the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor's Presentation – Recognition of FHS Girls Basketball Team

Mayor Kemp recognized the Fairmont High School Girls Basketball team and their coach Marcus Thompson for winning the NCHSAA 4A Eastern Regional Division and finishing second in the state, the first time in school history. Coach Thompson was also named Southeast Conference Coach of the Year.

Public Hearing – Closeout of CDBG-Infrastructure Projects #15-I-3158, #17-I-3608, and #20-I-3608

Motion was made by Commissioner Tedder-Rogers to open the Public Hearing at 6:18 p.m. to discuss the project closeout of the following CDBG-I grants: 15-I-3158, 17-I-3608, and 20-I-3608. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mrs. Rachel Whitaker, of LKC Engineering, stated the purpose of this Public Hearing is to discuss the project closeout for the Town of Fairmont's Community Development Block Grants, CDBG project numbers 15-I-3158, 17-I-3608, and 20-I-3608. This public hearing will provide citizens with information concerning the CDBG program and authorize LKC Engineering, PLLC to prepare the final closeout report and documents and for the authorized representative to sign the closeout documents. The public hearing will solicit public participation in the closeout of the CDBG Infrastructure project by gathering citizens' views and comments prior to the submission of the closeout documentation to the NC Department of Environmental Quality

The original scope of work for the 20-I-3608 grant provided \$1,903,000 in CDBG-I funds (CDBG) to include the rehabilitation/replacement of the existing Brown Street pump station and the repair/replacement of the associated mechanical bar screen and grit removal systems which transports 100% of the Town's wastewater to the Town of Fairmont Regional WWTP via approximately 51,000 LF of force main. The project will also make improvements to an existing approximately 51,000 LF of discharge force main along NC Hwy 103 by replacing and adding the air valve along this line and provide for the replacement of approximately 800 LF of 18-inch failing gravity sewer outfall. The low-to-moderate income percentage of the project area is 65.05 percent, and the poverty level for the entire town is 39.8 percent.

The FY20 project was amended a first time to include a revised and reduced scope of work which resulted in negotiations with the low bidder. The revised scope of work includes the installation of a new triplex submersible pump station along the route of the existing force main, replacement & addition of air release valves, providing weatherproof shelters for the existing electrical controls and cleaning & coating of the existing conduit exposed in the wet well and valve vault at the Brown Street pump station. The existing electrical and pump control components will remain in service as they were planned for replacement in the original scope of work. In addition, the revised scope of work will include replacement of the existing Brown Street generator but incorporate use of the existing automatic transfer switch instead of a complete replacement of both components. The wet well and valve vault rehabilitation at the Brown Street pump station are not included in the revised project scope. The proposed benefit will remain unchanged at 65.05 percent low-to-moderate income.

The FY20 project was amended a second time to include revisions to the previously approved scope of work. The revised scope of work includes the purchase of a new two-ton hoist and frame (approximately \$32,000) and an autodialer (approximately \$2,000) for the new intermediate pump station located at 16619 NC130 Hwy E, Fairmont, NC. The Town does not currently have a means of removing the proposed pumps from the pump station when necessary for maintenance. In addition, the proposed pumps are too heavy to be safely removed with a typical davit crane. The addition of the autodialer, or some means of remote monitoring, is required by NCDEQ. The addition of the proposed auto-dialer is the most cost-effective solution that meets NCDEQ requirements. The amended scope of work does not require additional grant funds. The proposed benefit will remain unchanged at 65.05 percent low-to-moderate income.

The Town received additional grant funds provided by the FY17 program. The original scope of work for the 17-I-3608 grant provided \$500,000 in CDBG-I funds (CDBG) to include mobilization and materials for the pump station and additional grant administration activities. The overall project includes installation of a new triplex submersible pumps station along the route of the existing force main, replacement & addition of air release valves, providing weatherproof shelters for the existing electrical controls and cleaning & coating of the existing conduit exposed in the wet well and valve vault at the Brown Street pump station, and replacement of the generator at the Brown Street Pump Station. The LMI for this project is 65.05%.

There were 2 change orders made throughout the project. All change orders were approved by NCDEQ.

The project financials are as follows:

CDBG-I Project 15-I-3158 (Total awarded: \$97,000.00)

Administration:	\$72,000.00
Environmental Review:	\$12,500.00
Engineering Report:	<u>\$12,500.00</u>
Total Expended:	\$97,000.00

CDBG-I Project 17-I-3608 (Total awarded: \$500,000.00)

Sewer:	\$483,000.00
Administration:	<u>\$ 17,000.00</u>
Total Expended:	\$500,000.00

CDBG-I Project 20-I-3608 (Total awarded: \$1,903,000.00)

Administration:	\$ 39,599.00
Sewer:	<u>\$1,745,254.00</u>
Total Expended:	\$1,784,853.00
Deobligated funds:	(\$ 70,147.00)

The floor was opened for public comments and Mr. Terry Evans, former Town Commissioner, thanked Bill Lester and LKC Engineering for all the work they have done for the town.

Motion was made by Commissioner Seibles to close the Public Hearing at 6:23 p.m.. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Motion to authorize LKC to prepare the closeout report and final documents and authorize the Town Manager to sign the closeout report and final documents.

Motion was made by Commissioner Mclean authorizing LKC Engineering to proceed with the closeout report and final documents and authorizing Jerome Chestnut, Town Manager, to execute all required documents for the FY15, FY17, and FY20 closeout on behalf of the Town. Commissioner Graham seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mayor Kemp called for a short recess at 6:24 p.m. so the minutes from the public hearing could be finalized, and they could be approved and certified at tonight's meeting. The minutes will be included in the FY15, FY17, and FY20 closeout documents to be submitted soon after the public hearing.

Mayor Kemp reconvened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Upon reconvening, Commissioner McLean made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the CDBG-I Closeout Public Hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Graham and approved unanimously.

Approval of Agenda

Mayor Kemp announced the Clean Sweep Team has resigned and to remove their report from Old Business. Commissioner McLean made a motion to approve the amended agenda with the removal of the Clean Sweep Team report from Old Business. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Public Comment Period/Citizens Appearance

Mary Ellen Bass – Site Plan Modification

Mrs. Mary Ellen Bass had concerns about the change of entrance to the new apartment complex and who would be financially responsible for the construction of the entry road.

Shea Ann Dejarnette – Site Plan Modification

Ms. Shea Ann Dejarnette spoke on behalf of the Russ Family that owns lots on either side of West View Road, the newly proposed entrance to the apartment complex. She is concerned about the traffic from the apartments and thinks a traffic study should be done. She asked the board to consider tabling the site plan modification until more research can be completed.

Scott Ivey – Site Plan Modification

Mr. Scott Ivey said there is a deed covenant on file for the Friendly Street/West View Road neighborhood subdivision. The proposed apartments are not within the city limits or part of said subdivision.

Henry Bernacki – Site Plan Modification

Mr. Henry Bernacki feels there should be better communication between the board and the citizens and suggested the site plan modification be tabled.

Consent Agenda

Upon motion by Commissioner Seibles and seconded by Commissioner McLean, it was unanimously voted to adopt the following consent agenda items:

- a. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting, February 17, 2026
- b. Approval of FY 2026-207 Budget Workshop Schedule
- c. Ordinance 29-290 – FY 25-26 Budget Amendment #3
- d. Ordinance 29-291 – Budget Amendment CDBG-I grant
- e. Ordinance 29-292 – Budget Amendment NCYVP grant

Signed copies of the ordinances are hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business this month.

New Business

Army Corp of Engineers PAS Study Closeout Briefing

Mr. Jason Glazener, United States Army Corps of Engineers presented the following results of the NC Flood Risk Management Public Assistance to States (PAS) Study of the Pittman Mill Branch Canal:

This report presents the results of the Fairmont, NC Flood Risk Management Study prepared by the US Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District for the Town of Fairmont, NC. The purpose of this hydrology and hydraulics (H&H) analysis was to analyze the existing drainage system of the Old Mill Swamp watershed and evaluate potential drainage improvements which may inform future flood risk management strategies by the Town and Robeson County. The study limits included the main channel of Old Field Swamp, three small tributaries and Pittman Mill Branch.

Phase one of the study included collecting data on the watershed characteristics and a topographic survey of bridges, culverts and stream cross sections. The second phase included developing the hydrologic computer model HEC-HMS to calculate rainfall runoff from the Old Field Swamp watershed and developing the hydraulic model HEC RAS to evaluate the flow capacity and peak water levels of the drainage system. The third phase included evaluating drainage improvements with the models.

One of the primary drainage problems for Old Field Swamp and Pittman Mill Branch was heavy vegetation, debris and sediment along the channels reducing the drainage capacity. An annual maintenance program to remove vegetation, debris and sediment along established drainage channels is highly recommended. Focus should also be placed on maintaining the flow area at existing bridges and culverts. The H&H analysis 46 Fairmont Flood Risk Management Study indicated that increased maintenance would reduce the 25-Year flood levels by 1.0 to 3.0 ft along Pittman Mill Branch and 1.0 ft along Old Field Swamp. The time for floodwaters to recede would also significantly decrease.

High priority bridge and culvert upgrades were also identified. The collapsed pedestrian bridge east of Pittman Steet is a significant blockage to drainage and removal is highly recommended. A timber bridge upstream of NC Hwy 130 is a significant restriction to drainage. This bridge is in poor condition and should be investigated for removal. The existing Old Field Swamp culvert pipe at McDonald Road is a significant restriction to drainage and should be replaced with a 10 ft x 8 ft box culvert. The culvert at School Road is also a significant restriction and replacement with a 10 ft x 8 ft box culvert is recommended.

The residential areas along the lower reach of Pittman Mill Branch experiences frequent flooding because of limited channel capacity. It is recommended that a stream restoration project to include bench cuts into the adjacent streambank to increase flow capacity be investigated.

The topographic survey of the Old Field Swamp channel indicates sediment accumulation and reduction of flow capacity that is negatively impacting Pittman Mill Branch. Removal of sediment along this 2,500 ft section of Old Field Swamp is recommended. Drainage along the Hog Swamp channel was not included in this analysis but further investigation of sedimentation and impacts of decrease drainage capacity is recommended.

Site Plan Modification – The Reserve apartments

The Reserve Apartments, Church Street, Fairmont, NC has submitted a site plan modification request. The request changes the primary entrance from Church Street to West View Road, off Friendly Street. The Fairmont Planning Board met on Thursday, March 5 and approved the site plan modification. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers made a motion to approve the site plan modification moving the entrance of The Reserve Apartments from Church Street to West View Road off Friendly Street with the understanding that any additional modifications will come back to the board for further review. Commissioner Graham seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Approval of CDBG-NR legal services

The Adams Company, the Grant Administrator for our \$950,000 2024 CDBG-NR Grant awarded for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of 4-6 homes here in Fairmont, properly solicited and received bids on February 26, 2026, for Legal Services. The Adams Company recommends that the surveying services contract be awarded to Graham Law Firm, PLLC at a cost of \$350.00 per property. Commissioner McLean made a motion to award the 2024 CDBG-NR Legal Services contract to Graham Law Fire, PLLC at a cost of \$350.00 per property. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Subdivision Approval – Iona Church Road

Mr. Nathaniel Johnson, of 9182 Iona Church Road, Fairmont, NC has submitted a Subdivision Application. He purchased two tracts of land in April and July 2025 from Carolina Homestead, LLC. He would like to subdivide the two tracts into three. The Fairmont Planning Board approved of his subdivision request on January 8, 2026. Commissioner Graham made a motion to approve Mr. Nathaniel Johnson's subdivision on Iona Church Road. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Board of Adjustment appointment

The Town Manager recommends the Board of Commissioners appoint themselves as the Board of Adjustment. The Board of Adjustment addresses zoning variances and acts as appeals board to the Planning Board. The town has an upcoming variance that needs Board of Adjustment review.

According to Fairmont’s ordinance, the Board of Adjustment is made up of the following:

(1) *Regular members.* Board of Adjustment shall have initial terms of appointment as follows: one member for three years, two members for two years, and two members for one year.

(2) *Alternates.* Not more than two alternate members may be appointed to serve in the absence of regular members.

(3) *Appointment.* Members shall be appointed by the Town Board of Commissioners and shall serve at the pleasure of the Board.

(4) *Terms.* All members and alternates shall be appointed by the Board of Town Commissioners for overlapping terms of three years.

Commissioner Seibles made a motion to appoint the Fairmont Board of Commissioner as the Board of Adjustment with the following terms:

- One Year Term expiring March 2027 - Jan Tedder-Rogers and Heather Seibles
- Two Year Term expiring March 2028 - Felecia McLean and Rasheena Graham
- Three Year Term expiring March 2029 - Charles Kemp
- Alternates – Three Year Term expiring March 2029 - Melvin Ellison and J.J. McCree

Commissioner McLean seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Town Manager Updates

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut announced the town has been awarded a FY 2025 CDBG-I grant for the Brown Street Pump Station Rehabilitation in the amount of \$3,000,000.

Mr. Chestnut also informed the board that work has begun on the \$15 million sewer rehabilitation grant starting in the Church Street area.

Mayor and Commissioner Comments

The commissioners thanked the citizens for coming and encouraged them to contact them if they have any issues or concerns. They also congratulated the girls’ basketball team on their winning season and for bringing positivity to Fairmont and Robeson County.

Mayor Kemp congratulated Commissioner Melvin Ellison for being elected as the District 2 Robeson County Commissioner. He informed everyone that Sunday, March 29 is Vietnam War Remembrance Day.

Announcements

Sunday, March 29 – Easter Egg Hunt, 3:00 p.m. Fairmont Community Park.

Thursday, April 2 – Fairmont Planning Board, 6:00 p.m., Town Hall.

Friday, April 3 and Sunday, April 5 – Town offices closed in observance of Easter.

Saturday, April 11 – Senior Bingo, 12:00 to 2:00 p.m., Heritage Center.

Wednesday, April 15 – Job Fair, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Heritage Center.

Tuesday, April 21 – Regular Town Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m., Heritage Center.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner McLean made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Jennifer H. Larson, NCCMC
Town Clerk