Regular Meeting – October 20, 2026

The Fairmont Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting on Tuesday, October 20, 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, Melvin Ellison, Rasheena Graham, Felecia McLean, Jan Tedder-Rogers, and Matt Moore. Staff present included Town Manager Jerome Chestnut, Town Attorney Jessica Scott, Town Clerk Jenny Larson, Deputy Town Clerk Rodney Cain, Public Works Director Ronnie Seals, Police Chief Jonathan Evans, Police Captain Joshua Harris, Recreation Director Mickey Williamson, and Fire Chief Veronica Hunt. Others in attendance included Reverend Michael Hunt, District Court Judge Krystle Melving, Shea Ann Dejarnette, Terry Evans, Henry Biernacki and several citizens.

Call to Order and Invocation

Mayor Charles Kemp called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Reverend Michael Hunt, of Maranatha Word of Life Church of God, gave the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Swearing in of Commissioner Matt Moore

Commissioner Melvin Ellison gave farewell remarks and vowed to continue serving Fairmont as the Robeson County Commissioner for District 2.

District Court Judge Krystle Melvin swore in newly appointed Commissioner John Matthew "Matt" Moore. Commissioner Moore thanked everyone and is looking forward to working for the citizens of Fairmont and being their voice.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Seibles made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner McLean seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Public Comment Period/Citizens Appearance

Shea Ann Dejarnette

Ms. Shea Ann Dejarnette spoke on transparency and communication. She thanked the police department for their assistance with a pack of wild dogs. She asked for better communication from the town's administration especially concerning the request for a traffic study on Church Street.

Terry Evans

Mr. Terry Evans stated recent code enforcement efforts are working but to be cautious because it could affect the re-election campaigns of the commissioners next year. He was also concerned about how the town would find funds to purchase a new fire truck.

Henry Biernacki

Mr. Henry Biernacki welcomed Commissioner Moore and thanked Mr. Chestnut for his code enforcement efforts.

Consent Agenda

Upon motion by Commissioner Seibles and seconded by Commissioner Tedder-Rogers, it was unanimously voted to adopt the following consent agenda item:

a. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting, September 15, 2026

Old Business

Ordinance 26-302 – Amended Chapter 92 Fire Department

Town Attorney Jessica Scott explained the changes she made to the ordinance that was first presented to the board in August. She removed repetitive information and updated sections to reflect current state law, including completing criminal background checks on all potential firemen. A second reading and adoption of the ordinance will be made at the November meeting.

New Business

Approval of new fire truck purchase

During a scheduled pump performance test conducted on September 1, 2026, Fairmont Fire Truck 910 failed the test and has been determined to be unsafe for operation due to mechanical issues with the engine. It has been determined that it is not cost effective to repair this truck. To keep our fire insurance rating, this truck needs to be replaced. In the past, the town has purchased or been given older trucks, but repairs can be costly.

Fire Connections has a new truck available for $475,000.

Finance options are: 10 years (4.75% interest) $60,770.07 annual payment
12 years (4.89% interest) $53,260.12 annual payment
15 years (5.00% interest) $45,762.59 annual payment

Commissioner Tedder-Rogers made a motion to move forward with the best financing terms and rates possible for a new fire truck. The motion died for lack of a second.

Town Manager updates

The Town Manager presented the following updates:

- Code Enforcement – Five telephonic code enforcement hearings were held; 12 cases were closed and numerous more are being sent out for local contractor bids. Four properties were secured because of alleged squatters, alleged drug activity, and to mitigate safety issues.
- Housing Repair Programs – Encouraged citizens 62 and older to contact USDA Rural Development to see if they qualify for $10,000 in housing repair funds. Asked for private donations and called for volunteers to help with small home repair projects.
- Energy Innovation Partnership Project – Working with John Roberts of Groundswell.org for possible energy solutions for our Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, Downtown Business Owners, and our citizens to mitigate rising costs in energy. Researching alternative energy solutions through a grant partnership and have a letter of support from Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation, who supplies electricity to the WWTP.
- Community Urban Forestry Project – Downtown business owners and citizens have long requested for the reinstallation of trees in the downtown corridor to provide shade. Working with the NC Forestry Service for assistance in planting 22 trees in the same location where the previous trees were downtown.

Commissioner and Mayor Comments

The board thanked the citizens for coming.

Mayor Kemp reminded the board and town staff of the Robeson County Municipal Association meeting to be held next Tuesday, October 27 at 7:00 p.m. in the Heritage Center. He announced that the 2026-2027 Farmers Festival queens will be introduced at the November meeting.

Announcements

Wednesday, October 21 – Job Fair, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Heritage Center.

Friday, October 23 – Fairmont High School Homecoming, Parade, 3:00 p.m. and Game vs. South Brunswick, 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 24 - 4th Annual Grand Reunion, All day, Fairmont Community Park.

Tuesday, October 27 – Robeson County Municipal Association Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Heritage Center.

Saturday, October 31 – Halloween Community Event, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Fairmont Community Park.

Thursday, November 5 – Fairmont Planning Board, 6:00 p.m. Town Hall Courtroom.

Saturday, November 7 – Senior Bingo, 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m., Heritage Center.

Wednesday, November 11 – Town offices closed in observance of Veterans Day.

Wednesday, November 11 – Veterans Day ceremony, 11:00 a.m., Heritage Center.

Saturday, November 14 – Christmas Market, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Cukabury Farms.

Tuesday, November 17 – 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 7:30 p.m. Commissioner Graham seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

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Jennifer H. Larson
Town Clerk