

Regular Meeting – September 16, 2025

The Fairmont Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting on Tuesday, September 16, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Fairmont-South Robeson Heritage Center with Mayor Charles Kemp presiding. Commissioners present were J.J. McCree, Jan Tedder-Rogers, Terry Evans, Heather Seibles, Melvin Ellison, and Clarence McNeill, Jr. Staff present included Town Manager Jerome Chestnut, Town Attorney Jessica Scott, Town Clerk Jenny Larson, Deputy Town Clerk Rodney Cain, Police Captain Jonathan Evans, and Public Works Director Ronnie Seals. Others in attendance included Reverend Chuck Williams, Randolph Washington, Natasha Washington, Mason Pittman, Henry Bernacki, Angie Lovin, and several citizens.

Call to Order and Invocation

Mayor Charles Kemp called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Reverend Chuck Williams, Pastor of Baltimore Baptist Church, gave the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor's Presentation

Proclamation – NC Clean Sweep

Mayor Kemp read a proclamation naming September 13-27, 2025, as Keep Fairmont Clean and Green Weeks. A signed copy of this proclamation is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Recognition of Randolph and Natasha Washington, owners of Zaberans Restaurant

Mayor Kemp presented a certificate of appreciation for business growth to Randolph and Natasha Washington, owners of Zaberans Restaurant on Main Street.

Introduction of 2025-2026 Golden Ambassador Mason Pittman

Mayor Kemp introduced Mason Pittman as a 2025-2026 Golden Ambassador.

Public Hearing – 2025 CDBG-NR Application

Commissioner Seibles made a motion to go into public hearing at 6:15 p.m. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut stated the purpose of this Public Hearing is to advise and receive feedback from the citizens of the Town of Fairmont on applying for the 2025 CDBG-NR Grant Program. The Town of Fairmont applied for this grant in 2023 and 2024 and were successful in both applications. Mr. Chestnut noted the following:

- Second of 2 public hearings to notify of intent to apply
- Community Development Block Grant-Neighborhood Revitalization
- Applications due in Raleigh on October 29

- Applying for the maximum amount \$950,000
- Will be all housing
 - Started with town list of homes from town staff then did income surveys
- Activities to include
 - Reconstruction of 4 homes (demolish and rebuild new) and alternates of 1 reconstruction and rehabilitation of 2 homes
 - 604 Red Cross Street – Reconstruction
 - 129 Liberia Street – Reconstruction
 - 205 Stephens Street – Reconstruction
 - 702 Morro Street – Reconstruction
 - Alternate #1— 202 Jenkins Street – Rehabilitation
 - Alternate #2— 205 N. Walnut Street – Rehabilitation
 - Alternate #3— 603 Floyd Street – Rehabilitation
 - Alternate #4— 614 W. Benjamin St – Reconstruction

Mrs. Angie Lovin asked if the grant could be used to fix roads. Mr. Chestnut replied no that the grant is for homes only.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to come out of the public hearing at 6:21 p.m. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Public Hearing – CDBG-I 20-I-3608 Program Amendment

Commissioner Tedder-Rogers made a motion to go into public hearing at 6:22 p.m. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut stated the purpose of this Public Hearing is to discuss the proposed project amendment for the Town of Fairmont's Community Development Block Grant, CDBG project number 20-I-3608.

The Town of Fairmont received CDBG funds (20-I-3608) in the amount of \$1,903,000 to provide for 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 Wastewater Treatment Plant via 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.

A previous program amendment was submitted to modify the scope of work due to budget constraints. The revised scope of work included 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 included the replacement of the existing Brown Street generator but incorporated the 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 current FY20 project is being amended to include revisions to the previously approved scope of work. The revised scope includes the purchase and installation of a new two-ton hoist and frame and an auto-dialer 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. Furthermore, the proposed pumps are too heavy to be safely lifted with a standard davit crane. The addition of the auto-dialer, 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 project amendment also includes necessary work to remove and replace existing small-diameter piping, valves, tapping saddle, and miscellaneous hardware between the sewer forcemain and the existing ARVs. This replacement is essential due to severe deterioration and unreliability. The ARV's included in this amendment are located along Hwy 130 between the Town of Fairmont and Hwy 74.

The project amendment also includes new soft starts to the Brown Street Pump Station electrical controls and required panel air conditioner to prevent overheating. The amendment includes replacement of the existing Brown Street Pump Station check valves to eliminate ongoing leakage, as well as replacement of the plug valves, which are corroded and incompatible with the new check valves. Lastly, a failed fitting and pipe segment in the Brown Street Pump Station wet well will be replaced with this amendment, as it currently prevents proper operation of the associated pump. The work at the Brown Street pump station is located at 101 Brown Street, Fairmont, NC.

The total additional cost of the work items included in the amendment totals \$128,410.00. However, the currently approved project budget has sufficient contingencies remaining to cover these costs. As such, the amended scope of work does not require additional grant funds. The project area and service population will remain unchanged as a result of the proposed amendment. The proposed benefit will remain unchanged at 65.05 percent low-to-moderate income.

There was no public input, so Commissioner Ellison made a motion to come out of the public hearing at 6:27 p.m. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Commissioner Ellison made a motion to authorize LKC Engineering to proceed with FY20 CDBG-I-3608 Program Amendment authorizing Mayor Charles Kemp to execute all required documents for the FY20 Program Amendment on behalf of the Town. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Public Hearing – CDBG-I 2025 Grant Application

Commissioner McNeill made a motion to go into public hearing at 6:28 p.m. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut stated the purpose of the public hearing is to discuss the Town of Fairmont's CDBG-I funding application. Mr. Lacy stated that the purpose of the public hearing was to obtain citizens' views and to respond to funding proposals and answer any questions posed by citizens. Mr. Lacy also stated that the public hearing must cover the Town's community development needs, development of the proposed activities, and a review of program compliance before the submission of the Town's CDBG-I funding application to the state of North Carolina.

The Town proposes requesting funding from NCDEQ'S CDBG-I program for **Brown Street Pump Station Rehabilitation**. The proposed project will meet the following community and housing needs of Town by providing for the proposed project includes the rehabilitation / replacement of the existing Brown Street pump station and the repair / replacement of the associated mechanical bar screen at the pump station. All concrete structures and site piping will be completely rehabilitated. All pumps and pump control systems will be replaced to be better suited for being the effluent pump station to the wastewater treatment plant. The electrical system will be replaced by new wiring and controls, leaving the electronics of the station with more protection than they originally had and restoring function to anything that is not up to par. The SCADA alert system will be modernized and completely replaced. The project is located at 101 Brown Street.

The purpose of the CDBG-I grant program is to improve the quality of life for low to moderate income people by providing a safe, clean environment and clean drinking water through water and sewer infrastructure improvements and extensions of service.

- To benefit a residential area where at least 51% of the beneficiaries are low to moderate income as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- To perform eligible activities.
- To minimize displacement, and
- Provide displacement assistance as necessary.

For the fiscal year of 2025 the CDBG-I funding available is expected to be approximately \$19 million dollars, and the maximum available grant is \$3 million over a 3-year period. Applications for funding are received by September 30, 2025.

The CDBG program can fund a wide variety of community development activities. The State of North Carolina has chosen to fund several activities: water and sewer infrastructure, neighborhood revitalization, urgent need, and economic development projects that lead to job creation or retention. The infrastructure program, or CDBG-I program can fund a range of water and sewer infrastructure and economic development activities, including, but not limited to the following:

Water:

- Projects that resolve water loss in distribution systems.
- Projects that extend public water to areas with contaminated wells.
- Projects that extend water lines to areas with dry wells.
- Projects that assist with low water pressure in public water systems.
- Projects that regionalize two or more water systems.
- Project that rehabilitate or replace a water treatment plant.

Wastewater:

- Projects that resolve inflow and infiltration to collection systems and surcharges from pumps stations and manholes.
- Projects that extent public sewer to areas with failed septic tanks.
- Projects that rehabilitate a wastewater treatment plant to allow for greater efficiency/compliance with regulations.

The Town is seeking an amount in CDBG-I funds not to exceed \$3 million dollars for the **Brown Street Pump Station Rehabilitation** project. The purpose of the Town's request is to provide for the proposed project includes the rehabilitation/replacement of the existing Brown Street pump station and the repair/replacement of the associated mechanical bar screen at the pump station. All concrete structures and site piping will be completely rehabilitated. All pumps and pump control systems will be replaced to be better suited for being the effluent pump station to the wastewater treatment plant. The electrical system will be replaced by new wiring and controls, leaving the electronics of the station with more protection than they originally had and restoring function to anything that is not up to par. The SCADA alert system will be modernized and completely replaced. The project is located at 101 Brown Street.

The project proposed by the Town of Fairmont was identified in Asset Management Plan adopted in 2025. Informal community meetings were held in the project area to inform citizens of the potential project and get feedback from the residents.

A total of 100% of the CDBG- I funding will be used to benefit Low to Moderate Income (LMI) people. The project area in the Town of Fairmont has been determined to have an *area-wide* of 65.05%. The project area includes the Brown Street Pump Station located at 101 Brown Street.

The range of activities covered by the CDBG-I funds for the **Brown Street Pump Station Rehabilitation** includes:

- Construction.
- Environmental Review
- Engineering Design
- Construction Administration and Observation
- Legal Activities
- Surveying
- Grant Administration

If the Town is awarded a CDBG-I grant, the Town is required to adhere to program's procurement requirements and other federal regulations which include:

- Completion/Submittal of Environmental Review
- American with Disabilities Act/Section 504 Self-Survey
- Davis-Bacon & Related Labor Acts
- Adoption/Submittal of a Citizen's Participation Plan
- Adoption/Submittal of an Equal Opportunity Plan
- Adoption / Submittal of the Program's Procurement Policy
- Adoption/Submittal of a Fair Housing Plan (Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing)
- Adoption/Submittal of a Language Access Plan
- Adoption/Submittal of a Relocation Assistance Plan
- Adoption/Submittal of a Section 3 Plan
- Excess Force Provision
- Acquisition, Demolition and Uniform Relocation Act
- Build America, Buy America

The State of North Carolina requires that if the Town of Fairmont receives CDBG grant funding that the Town will certify that they will comply with the requirements of the general displacement and relocation policy for CDBG grant funding. This policy assists low to moderate income people with costs associated with relocation or displacement, should such relocation become necessary due to the project activities. CDBG funds can be used for those costs, if necessary. If no displacement and relocation will occur as a result of the proposed CDBG grant activity, then the Town of Fairmont confirms that during this public hearing.

In the past, the Town has applied for and received for the following completed CDBG project:

- List Name of Projects:
 - Brown Street Pump Station Improvements (active)
 - Fairmont 2016 CDBG Infrastructure
 - Fairmont CDBG Economic Development – In 7 – Water
 - Fairmont CDBG Community Revitalization – Martin Luther King Blvd
 - Fairmont CDBG Infrastructure – Sewer Rehabilitation

The Town will submit its CDBG-I application for the **Brown Street Pump Station Rehabilitation** on September 30, 2025. The CDBG-I application will be available for review during normal business hours at Fairmont Town Hall: 421 S. Main Street, Fairmont, NC 28340. Additional information is available from Jennifer Larson, Town Clerk, (910) 628-9766.

Should you have any complaints or grievances regarding the subject public hearing, they should be addressed to the addressee mentioned above within fifteen (15) business days or by October 6, 2025, and a written to the written complaints and/or grievances will be sent by the Town within fifteen (15) business days, where practicable.

Mr. Henry Bernacki, 405 Mitchell Street, asked who was involved in writing the grant application. Mr. Chestnut responded that it was the town staff and LKC Engineering.

Commissioner Ellison made a motion to come out of the public hearing at 6:32 p.m. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Mayor Charles Kemp called for a short 10-minute recess at 6:32 p.m. so the minutes from the public hearings could be finalized, approved and certified at tonight's meeting.

Once the meeting resumed at 6:42 p.m., Commissioner McNeill made a motion to adopt the Public Hearing Minutes for the CDBG-I 20-I-3608 Program Amendment and the CDBG-I 2025 Grant Application. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Approval of Agenda

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

Public Comment Period/Citizens Appearance

Henry Bernacki

Mr. Henry Bernacki thanked Mr. Chestnut for recent progress on code enforcement issues and expressed disappointment in the board members who voted to remove him.

Angie Lovin

Mrs. Angie Lovin criticized the board members who voted to remove Mr. Chestnut as Town Manager because his payout and new contract unnecessarily cost the town \$51,000.

Consent Agenda

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

- a. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting, August 19, 2025, and Special Meetings, September 2 and September 5, 2025
- b. Ordinance 25-283 - Stormwater AIA Project Budget Ordinance
- c. Ordinance 25-284 - Closing of Main Street for Twilight Christmas Parade

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

Old Business

There was no old business this month.

New Business

Appointment of ABC Board member

Mr. Dwayne McCormick's term on the ABC Board expires this month. The board can reappoint him or choose someone new. Mr. McCormick has indicated that he would like to serve another term. The appointment is for a three-year term expiring September 2028. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers made a motion to reappoint Mr. Dwayne McCormick to the Fairmont ABC Board for a three-year term expiring September 2028. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion, and it passed with a vote of 5 to 0 with Commissioner Ellison abstaining since he is the ABC Store Manager.

Resolution 25-10 – 2025 CDBG-NR grant application

Commissioner Seibles made a motion to adopt Resolution 25-10 – 2025 CDBG-NR grant application in the amount of \$950,000. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. A signed copy of the resolution is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Resolution 25-11 – 2025 CDBG-I Brown Street Pump Station Rehabilitation grant application

Commissioner Evans made a motion to adopt Resolution 25-11 – 2025 CDBG-I Brown Street Pump Station Rehabilitation grant application in the amount of \$3,000,000. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. A signed copy of the resolution is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Resolution 25-12 – Offer from NC Youth Violence Prevention Center for old library

Mr. Paul Smokowski, Executive Director of the NC Youth Violence Prevention Center, is offering \$35,000 for the old library building located at 108 South Main Street. The tax value of the property is \$125,100 and the recently appraised value is \$110,000. Commissioner Evans made a motion to adopt Resolution 25-12 – Offer from NC Youth Violence Prevention Center for old library. Commissioner McNeill seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. The property will be advertised for upset bids in the newspaper. A signed copy of the resolution is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Resolution 25-13 – Wastewater Asset Management Plan & CIP Amendment #1

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut stated the Wastewater Asset Management Plan and Capital Improve Plan require regular updates to prioritize needs and costs for grant applications. Commissioner Evans made a motion to adopt Resolution 25-13 – Wastewater Asset Management Plan & Capital Improvement Plan Amendment #1 as part of the DEQ-DWI Project# AIA-W-VUR-0017. Commissioner Ellison seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. A signed copy of the resolution is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Resolution 25-14 – Tentative Award for the Collection System Rehabilitation Contract 4 – WWTP Grit Removal and Brown Street Pump Station Grit System Rehabilitation

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut recommends a tentative award to install a new grit removal system at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the rehabilitation of the grit system located at the Brown Street Pump Station to J.S. Haren Company for \$2,565,000.00. The award is contingent on the final authorization and approval from NCDEQ - Division of Water Infrastructure. Commissioner Tedder-Rogers made a motion to adopt Resolution 25-14 – Tentative Award for the Collection System Rehabilitation Contract 4 – WWTP Grit Removal and Brown Street Pump Station Grit System Rehabilitation to J.S. Haren Company for \$2,565,000.00. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. A signed copy of the resolution is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

Commissioner Input

Commissioner Evans accused other board members of calling him a “snake” and a “fool” at the last special meeting. Mayor Kemp and Town Attorney Jessica Scott interrupted him to say he could not discuss what was talked about during closed session. Mr. Evans left the meeting at 7:21 p.m.

Commissioner Seibles, Ellison, and Tedder-Rogers thanked the citizens for coming and giving their input.

Mayor Input

Mayor Kemp praised Town Manager Jerome Chestnut for all the work he has done for Fairmont over the past three years.

Manager’s Input

Town Manager Jerome Chestnut gave the following updates:

- The Brownfield project is going well, and Terracon will present a drone study of downtown next month.
- The new sewer lift station on Highway 130 should be operational by the end of the month.
- Old Masonic Lodge on Linden Street next to Rosenwald Elementary School has been removed.
- The burned house on Thompson Street near Fairmont Middle School has been removed.
- Linden Street next to Rosenwald Elementary School and Mulberry Street next to Fairmont Rural Fire department will be paved in October.

Announcements

Friday, September 19 – FHS Homecoming game, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, September 20 – 3rd annual FHS Grand Reunion – Fairmont Community Park, all day.

Saturday, September 27 – Golf Cart Cruise-In and Parade, Food Truck Rodeo, Craft Village, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Town Hall parking lot.

Saturday, September 27 – River Roots Concert, 6:30 p.m., Heritage Cener.

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

Saturday, October 4 – Senior Bingo, 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m., Heritage Center.

Friday, October 10 – Chamber of Commerce Fall Fling Concert featuring “Past Perfect”, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., Fairmont Golf Course.

Saturday, October 11 – Fairmont Farmers Festival Scholarship Pageant, 2:00 p.m., E.R. Gause Auditorium, Rosenwald Elementary School.

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

Saturday, October 18 – Fairmont Farmers Festival, Main Street, 10:00 a.m.

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

Saturday, October 25 – Senior Citizens Trip to Northwood Temple

Friday, October 31 – Drive Thru Trunk or Trunk

Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Ellison made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 p.m. Commissioner Seibles seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Jennifer H. Larson
Town Clerk