

CivicWest Fire Hall Chat – Summary Report

December 11, 2025

West Fargo 2025 Year End Report: Mayor Bernie Dardis

CivicWest hosted a Fire Hall Chat on December 11, 2025, at the West Fargo Fire Hall, featuring **Mayor Bernie Dardis**. The Mayor provided an overview of key accomplishments, operational updates, and governance priorities for the City of West Fargo during 2025. His presentation focused on explaining how city government functions and highlighted outcomes made possible through strong coordination among city departments.

City Operations & Governance

Mayor Dardis emphasized that West Fargo's departments work collaboratively, contributing to operational stability. At the time of the presentation, the City had only one open position, reflecting strong retention and organizational health. Attendees gained insight into the mechanics of city governance, budgeting, and decision-making processes.

City Facilities & Public Safety

- **City Hall Relocation:** City Hall moved to a new location, allowing the Police Department to expand into the vacated space. This transition resulted in cost savings while improving operational efficiency.
- **Police Department:** The department includes 83 sworn officers, 7 canine units, 15 civilian employees, and volunteers. Block cameras have been installed at 50 intersections, with plans to add 40 more. These cameras capture rear vehicle images to aid identification. West Fargo received a national award for its **Community Resource Officer program**, which incorporates canine units.

Fire Department

West Fargo, Fargo, and Moorhead jointly established a **Fire Academy** to train new firefighters, significantly reducing training costs. In 2025, the West Fargo Fire Department received **international accreditation**, making it one of only three departments in North Dakota to achieve this status. The department employs 54 staff members and relies on volunteers. A volunteer chaplain serving emergency response personnel received honorable mention from the President in the prior year.

Public Works

The Public Works Department, responsible for streets and sanitation, completed work in-house that had previously been outsourced, resulting in substantial cost savings. A new facility is under construction to store large equipment, including garbage trucks that were previously stored outdoors. This investment is expected to extend the lifespan of City equipment.

Legislative & Financial Overview

Mayor Dardis worked directly with the Governor, legislative leaders, and committee chairs on property tax reform. Legislative studies ultimately adopted a **West Fargo-developed spreadsheet model** to analyze tax impacts, contributing to the passage of the property tax bill in 2025. He noted that **29% of West Fargo's property tax revenue comes from businesses**. Due to revenue uncertainty, the City's annual budget was developed with **no new full-time positions and no capital purchases**.

Growth & Planning

The Mayor outlined city programs designed to attract and regulate business growth. The **Growth Master Plan** includes a two-mile area beyond current city limits. With new land becoming available following the Fargo Diversion project and the retirement of sanitation lagoons, the City is evaluating future development opportunities and is scheduled to meet with affected landowners.

Transparency & Public Access

The City of West Fargo publishes departmental reports and financial statements on its website, ensuring residents have access to information about city operations, spending, and progress.

This Fire Hall Chat provided residents with a clearer understanding of West Fargo's accomplishments in 2025, the practical realities of city governance, and the planning underway to support sustainable growth.