City of Grand Forks
Staff Report

Committee of the Whole – August 10, 2026
City Council – August 17, 2026

Agenda Item: Appointments to Grand Forks Historic Preservation Commission

Submitted by: Mayor Brandon Bochenski

Staff Recommended Action: Confirm the membership reassignment for Curt Hanson to Archivist. Confirm the appointments of Leif Fritzell and Jade Heinz to Members-at-Large.

Committee Action: Motion by Berg, second by Weigel to move staff recommendation to City Council with a recommendation to approve. Motion carried unanimously.

Council Action:

BACKGROUND:

The Grand Forks Historic Preservation Commission provides research, resources, and expertise in the exercise of the City's preservation goals and needs. The Commission provides local review for historic projects which would otherwise be reviewed by the state or federal government; time is saved and local control is maintained. The city's budget allocation is doubled through the Commission's grant writing efforts, and the City's economic development efforts are enhanced by historic building preservation projects which the Commission actively promotes and facilitates. Grand Forks is more attractive and vibrant as a result of its commitment to historic preservation evidenced by the work of the Historic Preservation Commission.

The Grand Forks Historic Preservation Commission consists of eleven community members from Grand Forks. Those members are appointed by the mayor and shall be persons who, in the opinion of the mayor, have demonstrated outstanding interest and knowledge in historical or architectural development. A majority of the commission members shall be made up of persons from among professionals in the disciplines of architecture, history, architectural history, planning, archeology or other historic preservation related disciplines, such as urban planning, American studies, American civilization, cultural geography or cultural anthropology, to the extent that such professionals are available in the community.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF FACT:

Curt Hanson has served as a Member-at-Large since March 2026. With the recent resignation of longtime Commissioner, Sandra Slater (Archivist), we recommend and support the change of status for Curt Hanson to assume to Archivist position, one of the required professional roles on the Commission. Hanson serves as Department Head and University Archivist in the Chester Fritz Library's Department of Special Collections at the University of North Dakota.

With Mr. Hanson's status change, we recommend the appointment of two recent applicants to fill his Member-at-Large position and one other Member-at-Large position recently vacated.

Leif Fritzell serves as the lead curator of the Grand Forks Public Library's local history and genealogy collection. Mr. Fritzell is a librarian with a focus on historical special collections and assists patrons with researching information on Grand Forks' residential and commercial buildings, past residents and past community events. Mr. Fritzell is willing to serve a two year term.

Jade Heinz is a Grand Forks native with a deep interest in state and local history with a desire to become more involved in preserving the places that add to Grand Forks' unique identity. Ms. Heinz recognizes that historic preservation contributes vibrancy, stability and character to our community. Ms. Heinz is willing to serve a two year term.