



Anna Paige / The Forum

Leo Dartoe, who is accused of killing his childhood friend, Sampson Bleh, appears on Wednesday, July 2, 2025, at the Cass County Couthouse.

Murder trial set

Man accused of killing friend in August 2024 shooting

BY APRIL BAUMGARTEN
The Forum

FARGO

A Cass County judge has scheduled a trial for a Philadelphia man accused of killing his childhood friend in Fargo.

Leo Dartoe, 25, is set to begin a four-day trial on Sept. 30. He faces felony charges of murder and unlawful possession of a firearm by a felon for the Aug. 23 shooting death of 35-year-old Sampson Bleh.

Prosecutors claim Dartoe shot Bleh at another person's apartment at 2202 12th Ave. S. Bleh was at the apartment with others when Dartoe knocked on the door, announced who he was, stepped inside and shot at

Bleh three or four times, according to Fargo Police Detective Justin Valenti.

One bullet hit Bleh in the chest and killed him, Valenti said earlier this year in Cass County district court. Several people escaped the apartment through a window, while Dartoe fled to Minneapolis, the detective said.

Dartoe was arrested nearly two months later in Atlanta.

Court documents suggest Dartoe vowed to get revenge on Bleh. The childhood friends who met in Philadelphia got into a fight outside The Arbors apartment complex in Fargo a day before the shooting, Valenti said.

According to rumors, Dartoe had a relationship with Bleh's girlfriend, who was pregnant at the

time, Valenti said in court, adding that the identity of the child's father was "in question."

Bleh punched Dartoe in the face.

Dartoe claimed Bleh had a gun, but law enforcement did not find a firearm on Bleh's body, Valenti said.

Dartoe's previous attorney, David Ogren, tried in February to cast doubt on the prosecution's case.

Initially, witnesses were not all forthcoming, Ogren argued. Valenti said the witnesses eventually gave statements, but Ogren questioned their credibility.

Ogren also noted that Geettoe Kamara took more than 300 fentanyl pills from Bleh's body. The defense attorney suggested Kamara could have taken something

else, like a gun, from Bleh.

Witnesses told police that Dartoe was the only person they saw with a gun, according to Valenti.

Kamara initially was charged with accomplice to murder in Bleh's death, but prosecutors dismissed the case against him.

Kamara pleaded guilty to possession of fentanyl with intent to deliver. He was sentenced in January to 30 months in prison.

Ogren asked to withdraw from the case as Dartoe's lawyer. He was replaced by attorney William Hartl.

Readers can reach Forum reporter April Baumgarten at 701-241-5417 or abaumgarten@forumcomm.com. Follow her on the social platform X @ [aprilbaumsaway](https://twitter.com/aprilbaumsaway).

LOCAL BRIEFS

Fire damages shop-style condo in Fargo

FARGO — No one was injured in a fire that damaged a large shop-style condominium unit in north Fargo, according to a release from the Fargo Fire Department.

Firefighters responded shortly before 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 1, to the shop at 1841 43rd St. N. The fire, which produced heavy smoke, required backup firefighters after the initial response, according to the release. "Firefighters worked quickly to contain the blaze, bringing it under control by 7:15 p.m.," the release said.

The cause of the blaze remains under investigation, and it's unclear how much damage was caused, the release said.

Individuals, families invited to apply for Habitat for Humanity home

MOORHEAD — The local Habitat for Humanity organization is seeking individuals and families to apply for the next round of home ownership opportunities.

Anyone "struggling to make ends meet" is encouraged to apply, according to a release from the Lake Agassiz Habitat for Humanity, especially veterans.

The homes are built by volunteers with donated materials, the release said, however selected families repay the cost of building the house through an income-based mortgage.

Applications can be picked up at Restore at 210 11th St. N. in Moorhead until Aug. 31. Those looking for more information can visit lakeagassizhabitat.org.

The release said there are more than 1,000 people who are homeless in the community and more than 10,000 people are living in "substandard or unaffordable housing."

Applicants encouraged to apply must meet the following criteria:

- Currently live in a place that is unsafe, unhealthy, unaffordable or overcrowded
- Have the ability to pay a mortgage on the new home
- Ready and willing to care for the new home, including basic tasks like yard care, snow removal and repairs
- Eager to partner with Habitat for Humanity by volunteering for at least 300 hours

Fargo City Commission to begin earlier public hearings next week

FARGO — The Fargo City Commission is switching things up.

Rather than beginning public hearings at 5:15 p.m. during regular meetings of the commission, legally required public hearings will be allowed to begin at 5:05 p.m., according to a release from the city of Fargo. The switch was approved by the commission on March 3.

During public hearings, the commission opens the floor for anyone to speak about the specific agenda item. No advanced sign-up is required.

"Changing the start time of public hearings to 5:05 p.m. will allow the Commission to begin public hearings earlier in a Commission meeting without taking up agenda items out of order while waiting for the previous public hearing start time," the release said.

Residents wishing to speak on items that do not have public hearings can do so at the end of each City Commission meeting during the public comment period. The public comment period is limited to 30 minutes, with 2.5 minutes allocated per speaker. Speakers are required to sign up in advance at FargoND.gov/ResidentComment.

The commission meets every 2 weeks at 5 p.m. inside City Hall, 225 Fourth St N.

Forum News Service

Rosales takes command of 319th Reconnaissance Wing at GFAFB

BY MATT HENSON
WDAY

GRAND FORKS — There's a new commander at the Grand Forks Air Force Base.

Col. Alfred Rosales has officially taken command of the 319th Reconnaissance Wing, one of the U.S. Air Force's most important missions. He succeeds Col. Timothy Monroe, who is now taking on a new role at the Pentagon.

Rosales comes to Grand Forks from Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico. With the Army Band playing patriotic music, he was formally welcomed at a ceremony in front of some of the base's 2,200 airmen.

By the direction of the president, Rosales was appointed commander of the 319th, a unit with a global intelligence



Matt Henson / WDAY News

Col. Alfred Rosales took command of the 319th Reconnaissance Wing at Grand Forks Air Force Base on Tuesday, July 1, 2025, succeeding Col. Timothy Monroe.

mission that includes surveillance and reconnaissance operations both at home and abroad.

"It's about championing innovation and future technologies for the Air Force so we are ready to fight and continue to be ready in the future," Rosales said.

The 319th's Global Hawk mission continues to expand. It provides intelligence and surveillance for the southern U.S. border and carries out global operations in Europe, the Indo-Pacific and the Middle East.

"(The 319 Reconnaissance Wing) is absolutely

in the fight. It's not only ready to fight, but in the fight across the globe," Rosales said.

As commander, Rosales will also oversee the High Frequency Global Communication System. The system at Grand Forks is one of only two in the world and plays a key role in linking national leaders during times of conflict.

"It links our strategic leaders together, not just for the Air Force, but for the Department of Defense and the President of the United States," Rosales said.

While Rosales emphasized the base's global mission, he also underscored the importance of working with the local community.

Reach WDAY reporter Matt Henson at mhenson@wday.com.

ASSAULT CONTINUED from A1

are looking for recordings of a Hispanic man in black clothing, possibly with a goatee or mustache, the release said.

The public should not approach the man, police said.

Anyone with information is asked to call the West Fargo Police Department at (701) 515-5500 or text WFPD and a tip to 847411.

Details about the assault, including the status of the victim or victims, were not shared with the public; police told WDAY the investigation is still open and

declined to share any additional information.

Officers blocked off a large area of Fourth Street East near Main Avenue as they investigated the incident Wednesday morning.

The road was taped off, and several police cars were on the scene just west of the post office. A WDAY News reporter saw a drone flying overhead and a K-9 unit and police canvassing the area.

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