

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
St. Francis City Hall 3750 Bridge Street NW
February 18, 2026
6:00 p.m.

1. **CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The regular City Council meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Robinson.

2. **ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Robinson, Councilmembers Sarah Udvig, and Joe Muehlbauer.

Members Absent: Mayor Mark Vogel and Councilmember Amy Faanes.

Also present: City Administrator Kate Thunstrom, Deputy Administrator-City Clerk Jenni Wida, Assistant City Attorney Dave Schaps (Barna, Guzy & Steffen), Deputy Administrator-Public Works Director Paul Carpenter, and Police Chief Todd Schwieger,

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: UDVIG APPROVING THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

Ayes: Muehlbauer, Udvig, and Mayor Pro Tem Robinson.

Nays: None

Motion carries: 3-0

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. City Council Minutes - February 2, 2026

B. Body Worn Camera (BWC) Audit

C. Acknowledgement for Raffle Permit

D. Rental License Approvals

E. URRWMO 2027 Budget Ratification

F. Grant Navigation Resolution Authorization

Resolution 2026-07 supporting a grant application to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for the outdoor recreation program

G. Payment of Claims

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: MUEHLBAUER APPROVING THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL CONSENT AGENDA

Ayes: Udvig, Muehlbauer, and Mayor Pro Tem Robinson.

Nays: None

Motion carries: 3-0

5. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

No one came forward to address the Council.

6. SPECIAL BUSINESS - NONE

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS - NONE

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. None

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. None

10. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - NONE

11. REPORTS

A. City Administrator Report

City Administrator Kate Thunstrom reported that the City received 14 applications for the Finance Director position and is interviewing five candidates. She noted that the legislative session began, and the City's bonding request for the underground utility project is on the floor. Thunstrom stated that the Charter Commission met and recommended moving all four items presented to the City Council, which will be on an upcoming March City Council meeting. She reminded the Council that the work session is scheduled for Monday, February 23rd, at 5:30 p.m., with approximately five topics to be discussed.

B. Police Department - 2025 Annual Report

Police Chief Todd Schwieger reviewed the 2025 annual report for the Police Department. He highlighted the department staff and noted that all officers and staff members bring unique qualities to the department. Schwieger stated that the Police Reserve Unit is an important group of volunteers who assist with traffic control, events, house checks, and park patrols. He noted that Reserve Officer Randy Narlock is a new addition to the reserves, and Reserve Officer Colton Hearn completed over 400 hours for an internship with St. Cloud State University. Schwieger recognized Officer Chanthapanya for his lifesaving award for saving a human life.

Schwieger reported that officers completed 697 hours of training in 2025. He noted that there were over 100 fewer traffic-related fatalities compared to the previous year and that St. Francis officers contributed 81 hours of Towards Zero Deaths (TZD) enforcement. Schwieger stated that the top contributing factors of fatality crashes continue to be speed, alcohol, distracted driving, and unbelted occupants. He noted that impaired driving continues to be an issue in Minnesota, with over

26,000 DWI arrests statewide, over 1,100 in Anoka County, and 67 in St. Francis.

Schwieger reported that total calls for service were 7,436, with response times averaging four minutes and 51 seconds for high-priority calls and five minutes and 20 seconds for low-priority calls. He noted that the department investigator was assigned 151 cases in 2025 and manages various responsibilities, including search warrants, criminal complaints, background investigations, forfeiture processing, and evidence room management.

Schwieger highlighted the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) program, which had 29 deployments in 2025 for threat assessment and monitoring of large public events. He noted that Officer Humann will be obtaining his UAV license through the FAA this spring and summer. Schwieger stated that the department transitioned to Axon cameras for both in-car systems and body-worn cameras last July and is satisfied with the equipment and systems.

Schwieger reported that the department brought back the dog clinic after a couple of years and partnered with St. Francis Vet Clinic. He noted that the department continues to serve the community through camera registration, home security checks, courtesy notice tags, prescription drug take-back programs, and permit services.

Schwieger announced that the department's new canine program will include a dog named Viktor, a 15-month-old German Shepherd from Germany trained for narcotics detection and apprehension. He stated that Officer Barck will begin a three-month training course with Viktor through McDonough Canines, and Viktor will be on duty by mid-June. Schwieger noted that the department will post updates and photos on social media and recognize sponsors, including Bob King and St. Francis Vet Clinic.

Udvig thanked Schwieger for his leadership and noted that the officers are well respected in the community and very involved. She stated that their community involvement is impressive.

Muehlbauer expressed appreciation for the report and asked that the Council's appreciation be extended to all staff and officers.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson thanked Schwieger for the report and noted that response times have improved. He praised the community involvement and outreach efforts, including the Citizens Academy scheduled for April 7th through May 12th, with a cutoff date of April 3rd. Robinson asked if there were any surprises in the report.

Schwieger stated that the numbers are consistent and there were no huge spikes. He noted that DWI numbers came down, which he attributed to increased education and messaging from both the department and the state.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson asked about future goals for the department. Schwieger stated that the canine program is the biggest project and will be the main focus over the next year or two. He noted that the department is always looking at equipment upgrades and other items that could help the community.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson asked about the effect of legalized marijuana on the department. Schwieger stated that the department is not seeing a ton of impaired driving situations in St. Francis. He noted that the state has seen over 600 cases with positive THC testing in the first quarter alone. Schwieger stated that the majority of what the department sees in St. Francis is open container violations rather than impaired driving situations.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson asked if there is a testing apparatus available for marijuana use or driving under the influence. Schwieger stated that the State Patrol uses swab testing to build probable cause, but St. Francis does not currently use that testing. He noted that the department uses driving conduct and field sobriety testing to determine impairment and would use a search warrant for official testing.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson asked if the traveler effect continues to be the norm for impaired driving arrests. Schwieger stated that the department sees a blend of St. Francis residents and outside residents. He noted that it is still likely that a majority of outside residents are traveling through the City.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson expressed appreciation for the Police Department's work and noted that not many towns the size of St. Francis have their own police department.

Muehlbauer asked about the school resource officer program. Schwieger stated that the last discussion on the SRO program was at least a year ago, and he has not had any discussions with school officials since that time.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson asked if there have been any discussions about pre-detection or prescreening at schools. Schwieger stated that he is not aware of any discussions on that front. He noted that the department monitors school board meeting notes from time to time, and school officials bring matters to the department's attention when needed.

C. Public Works Annual Report

Deputy Administrator-Public Works Director Paul Carpenter reviewed the Public Works annual report. He noted a staff change where Tom left after 13 years with the City and was replaced by Tony Bergmann. Carpenter gave a shout-out to Trevor Turner for his work on building maintenance and noted that he has been a great asset to the City.

Carpenter reported that snowplowing was looking up this year, but took a turn. He

noted that the City was planning to give kids a snowplow ride to school, but the snow situation did not work out as expected. Carpenter stated that building maintenance hours are up, particularly at the Police and Public Works facility, as the building ages and costs increase.

Carpenter reported that road maintenance in 2025 included rebuilding gravel roads, crack filling, and pothole patching. He noted that the hot patch trailer purchased last year worked amazingly and will pay for itself in three seasons. Carpenter stated that 2025 received a fair amount of rain, and the City did not turn on all irrigation systems. He noted that mowing was the majority of maintenance work.

Carpenter reported that the City completed the Rum River Woods Park playground replacement in 2025 with a very positive community response. He noted that the City partnered with installers to decrease costs and use the talents of the crew. Carpenter stated that grant work in 2025 included purchasing dog park benches with a SHIP grant, continuation of the EAV grant, and work with ACD for more grant work in Delwood Park.

Carpenter noted that grant work can span multiple years, and the EAB grant started in 2024, continued through 2025, and will finish by June 2026. He stated that grants starting in 2026 will continue into 2027 and probably into 2028.

Carpenter reported that other miscellaneous projects in 2025 included the replacement of the Woodbury Gazebo roof and a refresh and replant at Woodbury Park. He noted that the Public Works open house was a success with over 300 children attending.

Carpenter reported that the recycling program received a grant for \$19,000 for bin blocks to help with the separation of materials, and the City was able to put more recycling stations in the parks. He noted that with Tom's departure, the City will make some changes to the program to alleviate staff time.

Carpenter reported that stormwater continues to increase projects as infrastructure ages, including culverts, ditch work, and stormwater basins and ponds. He noted that the City has had a good response from the public, and staff go ahead of time, leaving door hangers and knocking on doors to let residents know about the work.

Carpenter reported that water sold in 2025 was equal to 2024, and the water treatment plant was inspected by the Department of Health with zero violations. He noted that the wastewater treatment plant continues to meet permit requirements and limits. Carpenter stated that the Fergus power pump processed approximately 1.2 million liquid gallons and turned them into 250 tons of biosolids.

Carpenter reported that the wastewater plant is at approximately 50% capacity in its ninth year of a 20-year design period, equating to about 1,300 residential

equivalent units. He noted that the wastewater team completed several projects, including pipe work, wellhouse work, hydrant generator load bank testing, water tower backflow preventer, water treatment VFD replacement, and ambassador lift station flow meter work.

Carpenter asked the public not to flushable wipes as the numbers are increasing and the City would like to return to previous levels.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson thanked Carpenter for the report and noted that it is very detailed and good. He asked if the snowplow ride with kids could be rescheduled for March. Carpenter stated that the City could reschedule, but does not want to push it out too far when spring breaks begin. He noted that the City wants to fulfill its promises and will make it fun either way with candy, hard hats, and high visibility vests.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson asked about the hot mix, where it comes from, how long it lasts, and if there are different mixtures. Carpenter stated that the hot mix is picked up in Saint Paul and is designed by them. He noted that it is more like sand and flows. Carpenter stated that once the trailer is full, it must be emptied that day, and the hot mix is packed or tamped. He noted that the City will try a roller to help with the process. Carpenter stated that the minimum crew is usually three or four people, and when they start, they finish with no stopping.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson asked about the software program for stormwater. Carpenter stated that Public Works sent out a mailing about it and has received back 12 calls so far. He noted that the City is waiting for more feedback from the public. Carpenter stated that chlorides are up at the plant because of the season and cars going through car washes, but Parish has it well under control.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson asked about Carpenter's visit to Champlin. Carpenter stated that he, Parish, Wyatt, and John visited Champlin to see their media replacement process at the water plant. He noted that Champlin was in the same situation, and the City learned a lot about the process. Carpenter stated that the radioactive material can stay in Minnesota, but goes to one of two places depending on the level. He noted that Champlin did not need to use the more expensive storage facility. Carpenter stated that the media replacement is still expensive, with Champlin's media costing approximately \$700,000, and there are limited providers of this product.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson asked for an update on the Warming House ice rink. Carpenter stated that the design is at 95% completion, and the City ran into some trust issues at the Warming House, so the design has not shared yet. He noted that the Park Commission also had not gotten to see it yet. Carpenter stated that once he gets the design, he will share it with everyone.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson noted that the Warming House will be a meeting place

that can be rented out and will have better ADA equivalent facilities. Carpenter confirmed that the facility will be used year-round and will become a pickleball and basketball court with an overhang and a burning pit.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson asked about gazebo use during the summer season for weddings or venue gatherings. Carpenter stated that residents can call Jen at Public Works to rent the space, and Public Works maintains it.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson asked about recycling days and if the City will condense some events. Carpenter stated that the City was originally going to shift to six different weekends in 2026, but pulled that back to four for now and will reevaluate toward the end of the year. He noted that the City is now accepting appointments for recycling, and residents can call to schedule a time. Carpenter stated that in 2026, the April recycle day will not accept trash and will only accept recyclables. He noted that the City was one of the last two cities in Minnesota accepting trash at recycling events, and the trash portion cost the City about \$6,000.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson expressed appreciation for the work of Carpenter's team and thanked him for the report.

Udvig stated that she does not have any questions and praised the detailed report with pictures. She thanked Carpenter and his team for their continued hard work and for educating the public.

Muehlbauer stated that he has no questions and thanked Carpenter for the great report, and asked that appreciation be passed on to everybody.

12. COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Muehlbauer stated that he does not have a lot to report and thanked the administrative staff and the Fire Department.

Udvig reported that she attended the Charter Commission meeting on Monday night. She noted that Malcolm Beck is the chair, and she is the vice chair. Udvig stated that the Commission discussed vacancies in office, improvement in levy assessments, gender provisions, and filing fees. She noted that the filing fee is being raised from \$5 to \$15. Udvig stated that the Commission discussed how ordered minutes work and how readings take place. She noted that the Commission has two vacancies after a commissioner resigned and is moving out of town. Udvig encouraged interested residents to contact the City office and find the application on the website.

Udvig reported that she had her Parks Commission meeting and gave a shout-out to Paul and Jen for going after grants. She noted that the Commission is a great group of people, and there is still room for another person. Udvig stated that the Commission meets once every three months, and it is not a huge time commitment.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson reported that he stopped in at the liquor store to check out the new walk-in cooler. He noted that the cooler came out of liquor store funds, and the place looked immaculate. Robinson stated that Joe Pfeifer said he was overdue for a report and would reach out to Kate to get that done.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson reported that the work session is scheduled for February 23rd with five items to discuss. He noted that work sessions are open to the public to observe and are a more casual atmosphere for brainstorming. Robinson stated that the Council is trying to get a jump on budget work this year rather than doing it all at the end of the year.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson mentioned the Citizens Academy scheduled for April 7th through May 12th, with a cutoff date of April 3rd. He noted that the Police Academy is highly recommended and the stuff learned is invaluable.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson reported that the Rum River Fire District meeting is scheduled for February 24th at 5:00 p.m. at City Hall. He noted that the Council is working on a YouTube channel to broadcast the meeting to make it more public. Robinson stated that the administration has worked hard to make a template that is functional in case other neighboring communities want to come aboard.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson reported that the City Council meeting is scheduled for March 2nd and the Upper Rum River meeting is on March 3rd. He noted that the City Council meeting is on March 16th and the Planning Commission meeting is on March 18th. Robinson stated that Jodie has been pretty quiet, but with the sun shining and things going on, there will be some stuff to talk about coming soon. He noted that interest rates seem to be stabilizing, and property is available.

Mayor Pro Tem Robinson stated that it has been a privilege to sit in for the Mayor.

13. UPCOMING EVENTS

February 23 - City Council Work Session - 5:30 p.m.

February 24 - Rum River Fire District Board Meeting - 5:00 p.m.

March 2 - City Council Meeting - 6:00 p.m.

March 3 - URRWMO Meeting - 6:30 p.m.

March 16 - City Council Meeting - 6:00 p.m.

March 18 - Planning Commission Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

14. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: UDVIG TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

Ayes: Muehlbauer, Udvig, and Mayor Pro Tem Robinson.

Nays: None

Motion carries: 3-0

There being no further business, Mayor Pro Tem Robinson adjourned the regular City Council at 6:44 p.m.

Jennifer Wida, City Clerk

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