

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
St. Francis City Hall 3750 Bridge Street NW
December 15, 2025
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 Mark Vogel.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Mark Vogel, Councilmembers Kevin Robinson, Sarah Udvig, Amy Faanes, and Joe Muehlbauer.

Also present: City Administrator Kate Thunstrom, Deputy Administrator-City Clerk Jenni Wida, Community Development Director Jodie Steffes, Assistant City Attorney Travis Lutz (Barna, Guzy & Steffen), Deputy Administrator-Public Works Director Paul Carpenter, Police Chief Todd Schwieger, and Fire Chief Dave Schmidt,

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Ayes: Faanes, Muehlbauer, Robinson, Udvig, and Mayor Vogel.

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. City Council Minutes - December 1, 2025
- B. Personnel Policy Updates
- C. Accept Resignations of Fire Department Personnel
- D. Accept Firefighter Evan Sturlz's Resignation
- E. Payment of Claims

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

Ayes: Faanes, Muehlbauer, Robinson, Udvig, and Mayor Vogel.

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

5. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Barb Anderson, Parks Commission Chair, came forward and shared that she is here responding to the suggestions made by some residents at the last Council

meeting to cut funding to parks. She explained that the Parks Commission follows a park system plan. She noted that this was adopted in 2022 and is still used today. She said that parks are not just parks; they are an avenue of connection for residents to come together as a community. She stated that parks in the City are used by both young and old. She shared that St. Francis is on the lower end when compared to other cities of similar size in their park spending. She added that the City and Commission are doing very well with a small amount of funding for parks. She shared that parks also improve property values. She said they need to think long-term when it comes to the impact of parks. She thanked the Council for its support of the Parks Commission.

6. SPECIAL BUSINESS - NONE

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS - NONE

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. 2025 Code Revisions – Second Reading

Ordinance 352 Modifying divisions 2,4,5,6,7,8, and 9 of the zoning code

Resolution 2025-61 Authorizing summary publication of Ordinance 352

Community Development Director Steffes reviewed the Staff report in regard to the 2025 code revisions.

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: FAANES TO ADOPT ORDINANCE 352 MODIFYING DIVISIONS 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, AND 9 OF THE ZONING CODE.

A roll call vote was performed:

Mayor Vogel	aye
Councilmember Muehlbauer	aye
Councilmember Robinson	aye
Councilmember Faanes	aye
Councilmember Udvig	aye

Motion carried: 5-0

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: MUEHLBAUER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2025-61 AUTHORIZING SUMMARY OF PUBLICATION OF ORDINANCE 352.

Ayes: Faanes, Muehlbauer, Robinson, Udvig, and Mayor Vogel.

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution of PERA-SVF Pension Transfer to the Rum River Fire District

Resolution 2025-60 Opting to transfer records, assets, and liabilities from City of St. Francis Fire Department to the Rum River Fire District

Fire Chief Schmidt reviewed the Staff report concerning authorizing the transfer of Fire Department records, assets, and liabilities in the PERA-SVF fund to the Rum

River Fire District.

Faanes asked if the City still puts in \$500 per firefighter to these accounts or if the Fire District will start doing this. Schmidt shared that the Fire District intends to continue this contribution.

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: ROBINSON TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2025-60 OPTING TO TRANSFER RECORDS, ASSETS, AND LIABILITIES FROM CITY OF ST. FRANCIS FIRE DEPARTMENT TO RUM RIVER FIRE DISTRICT.

Ayes: Muehlbauer, Robinson, Udvig, and Mayor Vogel.

Nays: Faanes

Motion carries: 4-1

B. Fiscal Agent Agreement with the Rum River Fire District
Resolution 2025-62, entering into a fiscal agent agreement with the Rum River Fire District and granting signatory authority

City Administrator Thunstrom reviewed the Staff report in regard to the fiscal agent agreement with the Rum River Fire District.

Faanes asked if the Fire District's money would still be controlled by the City through this agreement. Thunstrom shared that Finance Director Mulvihill will still be over the funds; however, all of the direction for payments and authorization will come from the Fire District. She added that Mulvihill will be a contracted employee of the Fire District.

Faanes asked how long St. Francis will be the fiscal agent. Thunstrom said it will be a five-year term with automatic renewal of five-year terms.

Faanes asked if changes to the terms of the fiscal agent agreement would have to be approved by the Council. Thunstrom said yes and noted that the Fire District Board would also have to approve the change.

Muehlbauer noted that the largest part of this will be setting the budget every year.

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: MUEHLBAUER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2025-62 ENTERING INTO A FISCAL AGENT AGREEMENT WITH THE RUM RIVER FIRE DISTRICT AND GRANTING SIGNATORY AUTHORITY.

Ayes: Faanes, Muehlbauer, Robinson, Udvig, and Mayor Vogel.

Nays: None.

Motion carries: 5-0

C. Shared Space User Agreement with the Rum River Fire District
Resolution 2025-63, entering into a shared space user agreement with the Rum River Fire District and granting signatory authority

Thunstrom reviewed the Staff report concerning the shared space agreement with the Rum River Fire District.

Faanes asked about the term being 99 years for this agreement. Thunstrom shared that they have the ability to terminate this agreement at any time by a vote from the Council and Fire Board.

Faanes asked what would happen to the assets if this agreement were terminated. Thunstrom shared that this is addressed in the JPA.

Faanes shared her concerns that they would be giving these assets and equipment to a third party with no way to get them back fully if this agreement is ever terminated. Schmidt explained that if the Fire District is to ever fall apart, then the equipment would still be used for its intended use and be given back to the City. He noted that the Fire District will assume all of the maintenance and liability of this equipment.

Mayor Vogel added that it is not like this third party is completely separate from the City, as the Fire Board will have two members from the Council serving on it.

Muehlbauer shared that he had similar concerns to Faanes but was able to talk with Staff earlier to clear up his concerns.

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: UDVIG TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2025-63 ENTERING INTO A SHARED SPACE AGREEMENT WITH THE RUM RIVER FIRE DISTRICT AND GRANTING SIGNATORY AUTHORITY.

Ayes: Muehlbauer, Robinson, Udvig, and Mayor Vogel.

Nays: Faanes

Motion carries: 4-1

D. Transfer and Donation of Equipment Agreement

Resolution 2025-64 Approving the Donation of Property to the Rum River Fire District and Granting Signatory Authority

Thunstrom reviewed the Staff report in regard to the donation of property and assets to the Rum River Fire District.

Faanes shared that she wished that there were an estimated value outlined for these items as part of the equipment agreement, as it is a large list that has a lot of value. She said she is not comfortable with donating this equipment that was purchased using taxpayer dollars. Schmidt shared that they are getting an assessed value of all of these items for the City's records, and he is happy to share this when they have this finalized.

Faanes asked if the Fire Station building would still be covered by the City's insurance. Thunstrom shared that both the City and the Fire District will have insurance coverage through the League of Minnesota Cities.

Muehlbauer asked if everything on this list of equipment depreciates. Schmidt said no.

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: MUEHLBAUER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2025-64 APPROVING THE DONATION OF PROPERTY TO RUM RIVER FIRE DISTRICT AND GRANTING SIGNATORY AUTHORITY.

Ayes: Muehlbauer, Robinson, Udvig, and Mayor Vogel.

Nays: Faanes

Motion carries: 4-1

E. Employment Transition and Separation Agreement

Resolution 2025-65 Entering into an Employment Transition and Separation Agreement with the Rum River Fire District and Granting Signatory Authority

Thunstrom reviewed the Staff report concerning an employment transition and separation agreement with the Rum River Fire District.

Faanes asked if the Fire District employees would have their own email addresses. Schmidt said yes and noted that they have already secured their domain name for the new email addresses and website.

Faanes asked if the language around the Fire Department would be taken out of the City's employee handbook. Thunstrom said they will not be taking it out yet since the Fire District is still being finalized; however, they will likely make housekeeping revisions to the Personnel Policy next fall.

Faanes asked how they would know the vetting process that was followed for the hiring of firefighters who were not hired by St. Francis. She noted that these employees will now have access to the City Hall Fire Station. Schmidt shared that Fire District employees will only have limited access to the City Hall portion of the building. He noted that only Captains and above would have this access. He added that they are not changing how they vet their employees.

Faanes asked if the employees who are transferring over into the Fire District will have to go through this vetting process. Schmidt said they have already gone through this during their initial hiring process.

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: UDVIG TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2025-65 ENTERING INTO AN EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION AND SEPARATION AGREEMENT WITH THE RUM RIVER FIRE DISTRICT AND GRANTING SIGNATORY AUTHORITY.

Ayes: Muehlbauer, Robinson, Udvig, and Mayor Vogel.

Nays: Faanes

Motion carries: 4-1

10. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Hunter Carlson came forward and thanked Schmidt, Thunstrom, and City Clerk Wida for getting them a step closer to the Rum River Fire District. He thanked the Council and Staff for serving its citizens so well.

11. REPORTS**A. City Administrator Year-End Report**

Thunstrom reviewed the year-end City Administrator report for 2025. She shared that they had two big administrative projects this year: the Rum River Fire District and the construction of Highway 47. She added that this year, they also opened the City Hall Fire Station. She noted that the Council met 24 times with no Special Meetings and only 7 Work Session Meetings. She shared that the Parks Commission met four times throughout the year and is continuing to work on the ice rink and warming house project. She stated the dog park and Farmer's Market were a huge success this year. She noted that six land use applications came through, and Eagle Point at Vista Prairie opened this year. She added that they currently have 20 City employees with over 10 years of employment in the City. She noted that there were no retirements this year. She shared that the Personnel Committee met this year, and they are continuing to look at ideas to better work for the St. Francis employees. She said all financial documents are available online. She explained that they are continuing to work on their cybersecurity efforts. She shared that they are wrapping up work with the Fire District and will be working with the Police Department next year with their new K-9 unit. She noted that they will continue to require funds for the Highway 47 utility project. She added that they will be updating their website for 2026.

Faanes said she would love to know more about the Personnel Committee and what they do. Thunstrom explained that this is a Committee made up of a few people from each department that gets together at least twice a year to talk about what is working and what is not from a Staff perspective.

Mayor Vogel asked if this Committee reports back to Thunstrom on what they discuss. Thunstrom said yes.

The Council thanked Thunstrom and Staff for all of their hard work in 2025.

12. COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

The Council shared the meetings and events they attended in the past few weeks, as well as highlighting upcoming events.

Muehlbauer shared that he takes accountability for not knowing that they were voting on the budget at the last meeting. He explained that he researched some ideas that the City could pursue to save money, including leasing the 40 acres off of Roanoke, reducing community events, or possibly raising sales tax; however, he needs to research this further to see if it would be possible without having a project tied to it. He noted that residential and commercial growth is still the best

option. He added that they could look into different incentives to attract new businesses to the City. He said that tax abatement and TIF are two of the biggest incentives they can offer, and while they would not be getting the new tax for these businesses right away, they are also not covering the tax for these new businesses. He stated that if they stay stagnant when it comes to growth, then costs will continue to rise for those who are in the City. He read the guidelines around TIF and its benefits.

Faanes thanked Ms. Anderson for coming forward this evening to give more information about the Parks Commission. She noted that parks are not only beneficial for the children, but also for their parents. She shared that she attended the School Board budget hearing last week, and there were about the same number of residents in attendance at this meeting as there were at the City's budget hearing. She noted that the School portion of her taxes increased 27% this year; however, the budget was passed in a 5-2 vote. She added that the budget was high primarily due to the need to replace the HVAC system. She said she would like the City to redo its webpage to help people find information more easily.

Thunstrom shared that they are already underway with a website revamp, moving to a newer platform.

Udvig shared that she attended the tree lighting event this year, and it was a great event. She thanked Ms. Anderson for her continued involvement in coming to City meetings and her leadership on the Parks Commission. She also thanked firefighter Sturlz for all he has done for the Fire Department and said he will be greatly missed.

Robinson shared that he has been attending the Fire District meetings and noted that they are going to start recording these meetings for the public. He thanked Ms. Anderson for continuing to show up for the City. He shared that the Chamber of Commerce has a podcast and encouraged residents to listen in.

Faanes thanked Public Works Director Carpenter and his Staff for their work clearing the snow in the recent snow events.

Mayor Vogel shared that he attended the tree lighting, and it was a fantastic event. He added that he attended a smart salt webinar put on by the State concerning chloride. He encouraged residents to stop into the hardware store to meet the new owners. He wished the residents a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

13. UPCOMING EVENTS

December 17 - Planning Commission Meeting - Cancelled

December 18 - Santa at the Police Station 5:00 - 7:00

December 24 - City Offices closed

December 25 - City Offices closed

January 01 - City Offices closed

14. ADJOURNMENT

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

Ayes: Faanes, Muehlbauer, Robinson, Udvig, and Mayor Vogel.

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

There being no further business, Mayor Vogel adjourned the regular City Council at 7:04 p.m.

Jennifer Wida, City Clerk

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