

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

St. Francis Area Schools District Office 4115 Ambassador Blvd. NW

November 6, 2023

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 Joe Muehlbauer.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Mayor Joe Muehlbauer, Councilmembers Robert Bauer, Kevin Robinson, Crystal Kreklow, and Sarah Udvig.

Also present: City Administrator Kate Thunstrom, Deputy City Administrator/City Clerk Jenni Wida, Community Development Director Colette Baumgardner, Assistant City Attorney Dave Schaps (Barna, Guzy & Steffen), Public Works Director Paul Carpenter, Fire Chief Dave Schmidt, Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill, City Engineer Craig Jochum (Hakanson Associates, Inc.), and Police Chief Todd Schwieger.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

Ayes: Bauer, Kreklow, Udvig, Robinson, and Mayor Muehlbauer.

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

**4. CONSENT AGENDA**

A. City Council Minutes - October 16, 2023

B. 2022 Street Rehabilitation Project – Final Payment

C. 2023 Street Rehabilitation Project – Pay Estimate No. 1

D. Embedded Systems Contract Renewal

E. Assessing Contract

F. Potential Change Orders (PCO) – City Hall / Fire Station Project

G. Surplus Property

*Resolution 2023-62 Declaring Surplus Property and Authorizing the Disposal of said Property*

H. Rink Management Agreement

I. Tobacco License – Saint Francis Tobacco Inc

J. Arbitrage Monitoring-Ehlers

K. Geotechnical Services RFP

L. Payment of Claims

MOTION BY: BAUER SECOND: KREKLOW APPROVING THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

Ayes: Bauer, Kreklow, Udvig, Robinson, and Mayor Muehlbauer.

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

**5. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Mayor Muehlbauer asked City Clerk Wida if they had anyone wanting to speak. She said they did not.

**6. SPECIAL BUSINESS - NONE**

**7. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

A. Miscellaneous Special Assessments

Resolution 2023-63 Authorizing and directing certification of municipal utility services, maintenance of private property, administrative civil notice fees, and repair of leaks as a lien upon premises

Finance Director Mulvihill reviewed the Staff report regarding the special assessments and the request to certify delinquent bills to the 2024 taxes.

Udvig state that it is disappointing that residents are not paying their utilities and storm water payments each year.

Bauer explained that storm water charges are dictated by the State. He noted that if residents do not pay the \$60 fee then they will end up paying for it on their taxes with an additional \$6 charge.

Kreklow shared her concerns with the amount of delinquent utility bills.

Robinson reiterated that the storm water charges are due to a State mandate.

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: ROBINSON APPROVING RESOLUTION 2023-63 AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING CERTIFICATION OF MUNICIPAL UTILITY SERVICES, MAINTENANCE OF PRIVATE PROPERTY, ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL NOTICE FEES, AND REPAIR OF LEAKS AS A LIEN UPON PREMISES.

Ayes: Bauer, Kreklow, Udvig, Robinson, and Mayor Muehlbauer.

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

**8. OLD BUSINESS - NONE**

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Ordinance Update – Fee Schedule, First Reading

Ordinance 324 - Amending section 2-9-1 of the city code regarding the fee

schedule

Thunstrom reviewed the Staff report concerning the fee schedule changes and updates from all departments.

Robinson asked what a micro-unit is. Baumgardner explained that during the 2023 legislative session they approved that any religious institution would be able to establish a sacred settlement community on their property for low-income or previously and actively homeless people. She noted that these fees are for processing the permit and inspection that goes along with the establishment of one of these communities. She added that they have not yet updated the zoning code to match this new State legislature but will be coming forward to the Council for review soon.

Robinson asked if these would be mobile units or units with a foundation. Baumgardner stated that it would be very similar to a tiny home with not having a permanent foundation underneath but would have to be anchored to the ground. She added that they have not been given the exact specifications at this time. She stated that this fee is the same as a manufactured home set-up fee.

Robinson asked if these units would need to have sewer and water run to them. Baumgardner explained that each of these units would not need to have their own bathing facilities and could have a shared bathroom facility within the primary structure of the religious institution.

Robinson asked about the establishment of these communities. Baumgardner shared that she is not sure what the Planning and Zoning Commissions overview will be of the establishment of one of these communities. She stated that she will know more about this in the coming months.

Kreklow asked if these types of communities are being established anywhere else in the country or State. Baumgardner explained that there are a few communities in the State that are being established.

Kreklow asked about the increase in the water rates and if there is a way to take this piece out to have a separate conversation about the water rates. She shared that she is concerned with the increase in water rates as she has already received two calls from residents about the water rates. Mayor Muehlbauer stated that they were able to lower the water rates by about 20% in the past which caused them to have to dip into the reserves. He noted that they were told when they did this that they would have to increase the rates in 2023 by about 3%. He stated that they were able to give relief at the time but it ended up hurting the budget in the long run. He added that if they do not increase this then they will end up being in a harder place than they are currently.

Finance Director Mulvihill shared that the Council did approve a two step rate increase in the fall of 2022. She noted that this has already been approved but has

not been put in the fee schedule yet. She explained that this is all based on the cash flow looking ahead to what the debt service is. She shared that the Council had previously agreed that they would rather do small incremental increases over time rather than having to do a huge rate increase at one time. She noted that when they did the 20% decrease in the past they did set where their minimum cash balance was at. She shared that she watches the cash balance to make sure it does not go below a certain amount.

Bauer explained that the fee schedule is set to recuperate Staff time and these numbers have actual meaning behind them. He asked about the storm water increase going to \$72 a year with the late fee due in July. He asked if they are doing a \$10 late fee and if they will also do a 10% late fee on top of this if not paid by the end of the year. Thunstrom said yes.

Mayor Muehlbauer added that due to the increase in labor and material costs is another reason that they are having to increase some of these fees. He noted that these increases are not meant to make the City money but to rather cover the costs of the work the City does.

Bauer shared that another issue he has with people not paying their storm water bill is that the City sends out multiple notices which also costs the City additional money in supplies and Staff time. Mulvihill added that they have cut down their mailings to only sending two notices, the original notice and the second notice with the special assessment.

Bauer stated that he would rather this money be used somewhere else than on sending notices to residents.

Robinson asked if Mulvihill could check with cities in the surrounding area of similar size to see what their water charges are. Mulvihill shared that she had looked at this as a part of the long range plan. She noted that she can send this information to the Council.

Mayor Muehlbauer shared that he was curious as to how the potentially dangerous dog and dangerous dog registration is determined and explained that it is determined by State statute.

**MOTION BY: BAUER SECOND: ROBINSON APPROVING ORDINANCE 324 AMENDING SECTION 2-9-1 OF THE CIDE CODE REGARDING THE FEE SCHEDULE.**

A roll call vote was performed:

Mayor Muehlbauer	aye
Councilmember Robinson	aye
Councilmember Udvig	aye
Councilmember Bauer	aye

Councilmember Kreklow                      aye

Motion carried 5-0

B. 2023 COLA

Thunstrom reviewed the Staff report in regard to the requested 2023 COLA for the non-union cost of living increase of 3%.

Bauer explained how they come up with the 3% COLA. He shared that they do have labor unions that have already settled their contracts so it is typical to give the same rate to the non-union employees.

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: KREKLOW APPROVING THE 3% COLA FOR NON-UNION EMPLOYEES.

Ayes: Bauer, Kreklow, Udvig, Robinson, and Mayor Muehlbauer.

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

C. Administrative Captain Hybrid Position

Thunstrom reviewed the Staff report concerning the request for an Administrative Captain hybrid position with administration at City Hall and the Fire Department. She reviewed the role and the outlined budget for this position. She stated that they would be looking to post this position right away.

Kreklow shared that she met with Thunstrom and Fire Chief Schmidt earlier who were able to answer many of her questions about this.

Bauer stated that he struggles to see these two positions being combined. He asked how this person would get percentages to be qualified when this position does not allow overtime. He also shared that requiring a degree for a clerical person does not make sense to him. He stated that he cannot get on board with this currently.

Robinson shared that the St. Francis Fire Department is looked up to in the community. He added that Staff would not put this personnel request in front of Council unless it was needed. He reiterated that Council and Staff exist to serve the people and this position would help enhance the services for the people. He shared his support for this position.

Udvig shared that she thinks this is a good way to move in the right direction to address the needs in both the Fire Department and at City Hall.

Mayor Muehlbauer agreed that this is a step in the right direction. He shared that at the work session meeting the Council had requested that the department heads give the Council their wish lists of things that they will need over the next 10 years.

He added that both Thunstrom and Schmidt were looking for assistants in their role which is how this position came about. He stated that he is not in favor of a full time Assistant Fire Chief; however, he is in favor of providing the City with the services that the City is here to provide. He added that they need to give the City departments the tools they need to succeed. He noted that with Nowthen and Bethel looking to extend their fire contracts with St. Francis. He stated that this is a compromise that was reached.

MOTION BY: KREKLOW SECOND: UDVIG APPROVING THE ADMINISTRATIVE CAPTAIN HYBRID POSITION.

Ayes: Kreklow, Udvig, Robinson, and Mayor Muehlbauer.  
Nays: Bauer  
Motion carries: 4-1

**D. City Hall Public Business Hours - Update**

Thunstrom reviewed the Staff report in regard to the update to the City Hall public business hours. She shared that they have discussed opening City Hall on Fridays from 7:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. She noted that the new weekly hours would be Monday-Thursday from 7:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and Fridays from 7:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. starting on January 2, 2024.

The Council shared that they are happy to see that City Hall will now be open to the public for a few hours on Fridays.

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: BAUER APPROVING THE UPDATE TO CITY HALL PUBLIC BUSINESS HOURS.

Ayes: Bauer, Kreklow, Udvig, Robinson, and Mayor Muehlbauer.  
Nays: None  
Motion carries: 5-0

**10. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

A member of the St. Francis Student Council, Leslie, 23378 Jonquil Street NW, came forward and shared that she the St. Francis Student Council had just returned from a retreat that taught them about happy leaders and the importance of saying 'yes' and jumping at opportunities. She noted that they also discussed their ideas with other councils and what they can do in their schools. She shared that in November and December they have upcoming events, such as a food drive, a community night, and snow days week. She added that the Multicultural Student's Union Club will be hosting craft sessions for Indigenous People's month. She shared that more information will be coming forward about these and other events.

**11. REPORTS - NONE**

## **12. COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS**

The Council shared the meetings and events that they attended for the last few weeks.

Udvig shared that the Parks and Recreation Commission is having their first meeting on November 16 at 6:00 p.m.

Bauer shared that the school district 15 has a vote on November 7, asking for school funds for a levy. He encouraged people to get out and vote.

Kreklow shared that she has been meeting with Staff to learn more and plans to tour the Public Works facility soon.

Robinson thanked Public Works for their Halloween Trunk-or-Treat event. He discussed the fire contract with Bethel. He added that there will be a recycling day on November 18 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Public Works.

Mayor Muehlbauer also shared about the Bethel fire contract. He added that it is likely that they will have a fire district of some sort coming in the future.

Robinson asked the residents in the audience if they had anything that they would like to discuss with the Council.

Trenton Trovik, 23462 University Avenue came forward and shared that he received a letter that says he owes a \$9,000 fine.

Mayor Muehlbauer stated that they have already gone through the meeting open to the public and public hearing portion of the meeting and asked Assistant City Attorney Schaps how to proceed. Schaps stated that if they were to revisit the public hearing portion then they would have to motion to reopen this.

**MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: BAUER TO REOPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.**

Ayes: Bauer, Kreklow, Udvig, Robinson, and Mayor Muehlbauer.

Nays:

None

Motion carries: 5-0

Mr. Trovik shared that the first letter he received about this fine was delivered a few weeks ago. He stated that it seems unfair that nothing was ever taped on his door or come to his address before this.

Baumgardner shared that they did visit this property in August at which time they did put something on the door. She added that they have been mailing the citations to both the owner address and the property address. She noted that they also tried

to contact the phone number that was listed for the property. Mr. Trovik stated that he does not have a phone number associated with this property. Baumgardner shared that there is a sign on the gate to the property with a phone number which is the number they called. She explained that they can discuss this moving forward on how to clean up the property.

Baumgardner asked if Mr. Trovik had a good understanding of the notices within the citations. Mr. Trovik said yes; however, he stated that he does not rent out his property and does not use it for a business use.

Baumgardner explained how this process works. She shared that Staff received a complaint that has different items within it which is when Staff sends out the notice issuing the items that were received in the complaint. She noted that if they do not receive any information from the property owner at this time then they do move forward with citations based on this complaint. She stated that they have not been able to verify all of the items that are on the citation. She added that they can discuss a plan to clean up the property.

Mr. Trovik shared that he started to clean up the property after he received the first notice. Baumgardner reiterated that they have attempted contact in the past for this.

Mayor Muehlbauer asked why Mr. Trovik did not come into City Hall sooner to ask about this fine. Mr. Trovik shared that he does not have a driver's license and could not find a ride.

Mayor Muehlbauer shared his frustration with this as he knows that Staff has been continually trying to reach out to the property owner. He explained that these fines are not to produce revenue but just to cover Staff time.

Udvig asked if the certified mail has been going to the Ramsey address. Baumgardner shared that they have been going to the Ramsey address as that is what is listed in the Anoka County property records.

Udvig stated that there was a phone number listed with one of the responses that they received and Staff did reach out to this number and they never received anything back.

Thunstrom stated that they have until November 30 to identify with the County. She noted that there is one Council meeting before the deadline for these assessments. She recommended continuing this individual assessment to the next Council meeting contingent upon a meeting with Staff prior to the November 15 deadline. She noted that if some of the items in the citation are not accurate it is possible that they can be reduced. She noted that there has been a lot of Staff time spent on this issue.



Kreklow asked if the phone number that was provided in the letter is a current phone number. Mr Trovik stated that he is not sure what his phone number is.

Kreklow asked if the conversation with Staff can be a phone number or needs to be an in person meeting to review this. Mayor Muehlbauer stated that an in person meeting should be required.

Baumgardner stated that the meeting would be held at City Hall.

Mayor Muehlbauer stated that they want to be fair with this; however, the cost of the Staff time already spent on this adds up quickly.

**MOTION BY: MAYOR MUEHLBAUER SECOND: UDVIG TO CONTINUE THE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT PROCEEDING IN REGARD TO THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 23462 UNIVERSITY AVENUE NORTHWEST.**

Ayes: Bauer, Kreklow, Udvig, Robinson, and Mayor Muehlbauer.

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

### **13. UPCOMING EVENTS**

November 10 - City Offices Closed in observance of Veteran's Day

November 14 - URRWMO Meeting - 6:30 pm @ Oak Grove City Hall

November 15 - Planning Commission Meeting - 7:00 pm

November 18 - Recycling Event - 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

November 20 - City Council Meeting - 6:00 pm

November 23 - City Offices Closed in observance of Thanksgiving

November 24 - City Offices Closed in observance of Thanksgiving

### **14. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: BAUER TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

Ayes: Bauer, Kreklow, Udvig, Robinson, and Mayor Muehlbauer.

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

There being no further business, Mayor Muehlbauer adjourned the regular City Council at 7:12 p.m.