

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

St. Francis City Hall Fire Station 3750 Bridge Street NW St. Francis MN 55070

December 16, 2024

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 Kevin Robinson, Crystal Kreklow, Sarah Udvig, and Mark Vogel.

Also present: City Administrator Kate Thunstrom, Deputy Administrator-City Clerk Jenni Wida, Community Development Director Jessica Rieland, Assistant City Attorney Dave Schaps (Barna, Guzy & Steffen), Deputy Administrator-Public Works Director Paul Carpenter, Fire Chief Dave Schmidt, Police Sergeant Ryan Larson, Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill, Liquor Store Manager Joe Pfeifer, City Engineer Craig Jochum (Hakanson Associates, Inc.).

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

4. CONSENT AGENDA

A. City Council Minutes - December 2, 2024

B. Establishing Polling Locations and Mail Ballots for 2025

Resolution 2024-46 Establishing Polling Locations and mail ballots for 2025

C. Hiring Part-Time Firefighter- Contingent

D. Hiring of Captain

E. Trade In/Replacement of BOBCAT TOOLCAT

F. Planning Commission Appointment

G. Acknowledgement for Exempt Permit - Raffle

H. Stahl Construction – Pay Applications No. 14 – Labor & Material

I. Stahl Construction – Pay Applications No. 15 – Labor & Material

J. Payment of Claims

Vogel asked about Item H and what material changes were approved this month for \$14,879. City Administrator Thunstrom stated she would have to look back over past PCOs to see which materials this reflected.

Vogel asked if these changes are the total of those made over the last 30 days. Thunstrom said they have not had any PCOs come through for the last 60 to 90s.

Vogel asked about the property insurance for 19 different properties. He asked what properties this included. Finance Manager Mulvihill stated these policies are for all of the City's properties, vehicles, and other risks.

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

Ayes: Kreklow, Udvig, Vogel, 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 - NONE

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Ordinance of the City of St. Francis to Regulate Cannabis Business Registration – 2nd Reading

Thunstrom reviewed the Staff report in regard to the regulation of cannabis businesses.

MOTION BY: KREKLOW SECONDED: ROBINSON TO ADOPT ORDINANCE 338 CHAPTER 6 SECTION 13 REGULATING CANNABIS BUSINESS.

A roll call vote was performed:
Mayor Muehlbauer aye
Councilmember Vogel aye
Councilmember Robinson aye
Councilmember Kreklow aye
Councilmember Udvig aye

Motion carried: 5-0

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: ROBINSON TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-47 FOR THE SUMMARY OF PUBLICATION OF ORDINANCE 338.

Ayes: Kreklow, Udvig, Vogel, Robinson, and Mayor Muehlbauer.
Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Memorandum of Agreement for LELS 319 Police Officers

Thunstrom reviewed the Staff report concerning a memorandum of agreement for LELS Police Officers to extend the holiday hours from four hours to eight hours on Christmas Eve.

Kreklow asked why this was not requested during LELS negotiations. Thunstrom shared that this had been discussed at the beginning of the year and when it came time for the formal contract request, this was not included.

MOTION BY: VOGEL SECONDED: UDVIG TO APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT FOR LELS 319 POLICE OFFICERS.

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

B. Memorandum of Agreement for LELS 411 Sergeants

Thunstrom reviewed the Staff report in regard to a memorandum of agreement for LELS Sergeants to extend the holiday hours from four hours to eight hours on Christmas Eve.

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECONDED: KREKLOW TO APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT FOR LELS 411 SERGEANTS.

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

C. Comprehensive Sanitary Sewer and Municipal Water Plan

City Engineer Jochum reviewed the Staff report concerning the comprehensive sanitary sewer and municipal water plan.

Robinson asked if the line was at capacity. Jochum said yes.

Robinson asked if the line was concrete or PVC piping. Jochum said it was PVC.

Jochum explained that they would reline the sewer rather than pulling everything out and putting in new manholes.

Robinson asked about the resident on Pederson who came to the Council a few months ago who was having issues with their water and was having to use bottled water. Public Works Director Carpenter shared that this resident is hooked up to water and everything is squared away. He added that he spoke with this resident about a month ago and he was delighted with the City's water pressure.

Robinson asked if the City helped this resident with any of the fees associated with hooking up City water to them. Carpenter shared that a majority of the project was covered by a grant from the County and the City did help with the costs as well.

Vogel asked if they will have to make the necessary fixes before they can move on to the other phases. Jochum said they do not necessarily need to wait for all of the fixes to be complete before they move on. He stated they are getting close to capacity.

Vogel asked if they will be redoing the lines along Highway 47 during the reconstruction on that road. Jochum said yes.

Mayor Muehlbauer asked how the rates will be affected for current users as part of this plan. Jochum said they could look at the trunk fees and see if they are reasonable.

Mayor Muehlbauer noted that these types of things that could affect the rates for municipal sewer and water is not something that the Council and Staff look forward to; however, they are necessary costs.

MOTION BY: VOGEL SECONDED: ROBINSON TO APPROVE THE COMPREHENSIVE SANITARY SEWER AND MUNICIPAL WATER PLAN.

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

10. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - NONE

11. REPORTS

A. Fire Department Monthly Report - November

Fire Chief Schmidt reviewed the Fire Department report for the month of November. He shared the average response time for the month was eight minutes and 46 seconds. He noted that there were 62 calls for service with 43 EMS calls and 18 fire calls. He added that there was an average of 7 firefighters per call. He shared that there were two ambulance response times over 20 minutes for the month. He said there were a total of four inspections for the month with three inspections and one re-inspection.

Vogel asked about the number of calls for service versus the number of firefighters reporting to a call. He asked why they needed seven firefighters reporting for calls. Schmidt explained that the challenge that they have is that every one of their firefighters gets to make their own schedule based on their availability. He noted that if they are requiring someone to be on call or at the station, they will have to be compensated for their time. He stated they try to front-load those who report to these calls as they do not know what kind of calls they will get. He shared there

have been two calls recently where he was the only one who reported to the call. He added that it is about trying to create some level of predictability in an unpredictable system. He noted he would be more than happy to discuss this further.

Robinson asked about the progress with Bethel. Schmidt shared that they have the initial draft of the evolution from the consultant. He added that they are doing internal reviews and will be setting up a time to meet after the holidays. He noted that they are getting closer to being able to draft an official JPA. He shared that things are continuing to work very well internally.

Robinson asked when they expected to have this wrapped up. Schmidt said he hopes to have things wrapped up within the next year.

Robinson asked if Bethel had much change to their Council. Schmidt shared that he believes one Council seat changed so there should be consistency.

Robinson asked about the calls where only Schmidt reported. Schmidt explained that these calls were single-station calls and if he would not have been available, they could have called the other station.

Robinson asked if there is a minimum amount of hours that they give to firefighters when they respond to calls. Schmidt shared that every firefighter who responds to the incident gets paid the minimum amount of time which is one hour of pay.

Robinson added that it is great to see the Fire Department's involvement at different City events.

Kreklow asked what is driving ambulance response times over 20 minutes. Schmidt shared that this is a staffing issue as EMS, fire and police services have all been struggling to recruit and retain staff. He added that volume is another issue. He explained that baby boomers are starting to get to the age where their health care concerns are getting more extravagant and are requiring more care. He shared that there is also a significant lack of senior living facilities across the country which causes people to age at home which creates a higher risk.

Mayor Muehlbauer asked how things are going with Nowthen as he has not heard anything recently. Schmidt shared that Nowthen's Council met last week and they will be offering a contract for an interim Fire Chief for up to six months; however, this contract has yet to be executed. He said it will likely be after the holidays before this contract is executed. He added that he met with Nowthen's incoming Mayor and they had a great discussion about ensuring the transition is as smooth as possible.

The Council thanked Schmidt and his team for their hard work.

B. City Administrator Year End Report 2024

Thunstrom reviewed the City Administrator report for 2024. She shared that they completed four elections this year, all of which were completed successfully. She stated they are continuing to watch for municipal and employment impacts in the legislation. She added that they went through eight ordinances this year. She shared that the EDA held one meeting this year. She discussed the Highway 47 reconstruction and added that they received their regional solicitation funds this year. She noted that the new City Hall Fire Station was completed and they moved into the new building. She thanked Stahl and Brunton for all of their work on this project. She reviewed all of the Council and Commission meetings held in 2024. She added that they reviewed eight land use applicants and are continuing to work on two residential development projects, Vista Prairie and NorthShore. She reviewed staffing and turnover. She shared that all finance documents are now available on the City's website. She noted that Highway 47 will be a big topic over the next few years as they are still having to work hard to get through this project. She added that she has seen the first draft of a bill that would get them help for this project. She thanked Council and Staff for all that they have accomplished in this year.

Udvig shared that she has been a part of a lot of different councils in different cities and she has never worked with a Staff as exceptional at St. Francis.

Robinson asked what the NorthShore development is. Thunstrom explained that this is the multi-family property that they met with back in February about TIF.

Vogel asked if legislators Bryan Lawrence and Andrew Mathews had ever attended a Council meeting. Thunstrom said they have not and explained that one of their goals in working with their lobbyist is to get their representative to St. Francis.

The Council thanked Thunstrom and all Staff for their incredible work in 2024.

12. COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

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

Kreklow shared that she has enjoyed her time on the Council and hopes they continue to do great work moving forward.

Mayor Muehlbauer shared that he has enjoyed serving as Mayor for the last 17 months and is happy to be turning the role over to Vogel for 2025. He gave a special thanks to the late Steve Feldman and shared that he wishes he could have been here to see the new building.

13. UPCOMING EVENTS

December 18 - Planning Commission - 7:00 PM

December 24 - City Offices Closed - Christmas Eve

December 25 - City Offices Closed - Christmas Day
January 06 - City Council Meeting - 6:00 pm

14. ADJOURNMENT

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

Ayes: Vogel, 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 6:51 p.m.

Jennifer Wida, City Clerk

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