

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
St. Francis City Hall 3750 Bridge Street NW
April 21, 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 Jessica Rieland, Assistant City Attorney Dave Schaps (Barna, Guzy & Steffen), Deputy Administrator-Public Works Director Paul Carpenter, Police Chief Todd Schwieger, Fire Chief Dave Schmidt, Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill, City Engineer Craig Jochum (Hakanson Associates, Inc.),

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: MUEHLBAUER 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 - April 7, 2025

B. Dust Control Maintenance

C. Acknowledgement for Exempt Permit

D. Acknowledgement for Off-Site Gambling Permit

E. Acknowledgement for Application for Temp On-Sale Liquor License – St. Francis Lions Club

F. Stahl Construction – Final Pay Application– Labor & Material

G. Accept Donation from the Relief Association

H. Payment of Claims

Faanes requested to remove Item G from the Consent Agenda.

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: FAANES APPROVING THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS A-F AND H.

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

Faanes shared her concern with the donation from the Relief Association as this money was intended to go into the retirement account for the firefighters. She does not think it is right for the City to accept this donation. She noted that this money is going towards things like furniture for the City Hall Fire Station, and she thinks these items should be paid out of the regular budget and not with this donation. She added that the Council had discussed in the past that the City can only do fundraisers for certain things and asked if this even qualified. She asked what Bethel was doing with their Relief Association money. She said she does not feel good about giving this money that was raised for the firefighter's retirement to the City for things like furniture and other capital assets.

Fire Chief Schmidt explained that the Relief Association managed two different accounts, the special fund, which was for the firefighters' retirement, and the general fund, which cannot be used for retirement expenses. He said this general fund was for equipment. He noted that the Relief Association has chosen to dissolve and where the money left over in the fund would go and they have decided to give it to the City.

Robinson asked if this money could have gone anywhere else. Schmidt explained that they could have donated to another non-profit.

Muehlbauer noted that he did not like the way Faanes made assumptions about this and that the City does not budget properly resulting in them needing to take money from the firefighters' retirement fund to cover other items. He disagreed with this and he knows how seriously Staff takes their jobs.

Faanes explained that she shared her concerns about this based on how she understood the situation. She noted that she knows the full background of this fund and wants to make sure they are looking out for their firefighters and all Staff. She shared that this money is the only retirement that the firefighters get.

Robinson added that the Relief Association decided to dissolve and give these funds to the City.

Faanes said she still does not feel comfortable with this as this money was donated with the intent of being used for firefighter retirements.

Muehlbauer noted that this money was in the general fund and cannot go towards retirements. He reiterated that the members of the Relief Association voted and wanted this money to be donated to the City.

Mayor Vogel shared that he would like to have a deeper discussion about

donations at an upcoming meeting, as this item shows how messy donations can get.

Faanes said she wants whatever is best for the firefighters, and using this money that was raised for equipment is not the right thing for the firefighters.

Udvig stated that the Relief Association is requesting that the Council approve this donation of funds that they decided to give to the City and she thinks they should respect that.

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: ROBINSON APPROVING THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL CONSENT AGENDA ITEM G.

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

Nays: Faanes

Motion carries: 4-1

5. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mike Fisher, the broker working with Rum River Consultants, came forward and shared that they need to expand, and the sale of 23340 Cree Street is the perfect property for them. He asked the Council to think hard about the sale of this property because if the Rum River Consultants cannot purchase this property, then they will be looking to expand in another City. He urged the Council to consider their offer over the other on the table.

John Faanes, 23318 Salish Street NW, came forward to discuss the Relief Association donation. He shared that he was the President of the Relief Association and gave a background of it. He explained that the Relief Association was started in the 1970s to raise money for firefighter retirements. He noted that when their general fund would get over \$12,000, they would move the excess to the special fund which would be for the firefighters. He said there was an issue with documentation of how much the City would be contributing to the Relief Association which led to two years of negotiations. He stated that when Schmidt joined the Fire Department, he had a different idea of what this money was to be used for. He noted that he was voted off the Relief Association for disagreeing with Schmidt. He explained that the State was no longer accepting the Relief Association as an entity, yet he was still included on IRS documents as the President. He shared that he was assured that nothing would happen with the funds until everything was squared away with the legalities. He said they worked with an attorney who suggested they refile the association with the State to get back in good standing and have a CPA file the taxes for the association, as they had not been done for years. He stated the City will be accepting a donation from an unregistered, non-profit organization that has not filed taxes in several years. He added that he does not benefit from anything he is pushing for this evening; however, he wants to support the firefighters who will be retiring in the future.

Amy Bening, 22983 Kiowa Street NW, came forward and shared her concerns with Bridge Street and her son's safety as he crosses this road often. She wanted to voice this concern not only for her son, but for the rest of the community. She added that she is applying for the Planning Commission, and she wants to voice her concerns to be a part of the solution for these issues. She said she would like to see the speed reduced in this area.

Muehlbauer noted this is a County Road and encouraged Ms. Bening to reach out to their County representatives.

6. SPECIAL BUSINESS - NONE

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS - NONE

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Highway 47 Design Discussion

City Administrator Thunstrom reviewed the Staff report in regard to the design of Highway 47.

Mayor Vogel noted that four roundabouts will be cheaper than two stoplights. He added that roundabouts are also the preference of MnDOT.

Muehlbauer asked if the public preferred the roundabouts or stoplights when they were asked. Thunstrom said they did a lot of community engagement in 2019 after the tragic accident on Pederson. She said there was a lot of support for the stoplights. She explained that when they have gotten stakeholder groups together more recently, there has been support for both roundabouts and stoplights. She noted that residents are supportive of what they know and what they are used to and they wanted a tunnel or bridge.

Muehlbauer noted that the water table is too high for a tunnel and the cost for a bridge would be very expensive. He added that the State favors roundabouts as the collisions that happen in them are less severe.

Faanes asked how much they would save by doing four roundabouts rather than two roundabouts and two stoplights. Muehlbauer said that each light costs \$1,000,000.

Faanes shared her support for the roundabouts; however, she is concerned with the access for pedestrians.

Muehlbauer asked if they will also be reducing the size of Highway 47 during these projects. Thunstrom said yes and noted it would go from four lanes down to two lanes, regardless of which options.

Udvig shared that the residents she had spoken to were supportive of two

stoplights and two roundabouts. She said they went to great lengths to come up with the current design and does not want to see it thrown to the side.

Faanes asked how these different intersections tie into continuing Bridge Street to Highway 47. Thunstrom stated the Highway 47 and Bridge Street connection is not considered in any of this at this time.

Robinson agreed with Udvig that a lot of work was put into the current design to get everyone to agree on it. He said he would still be supportive of the two stoplights and two roundabouts as this seems to be what the residents want.

Muehlbauer shared his main concern is with what happened to the girls who were killed a few years ago in this area. He said with roundabouts, drivers will be more likely to pay attention to the road and what is going on, which could reduce pedestrian accidents.

Robinson said that roundabouts could deter people from taking this route, which could hurt the businesses in the area.

Mayor Vogel asked when the roundabouts opened on Bridge Street. Public Works Director Carpenter said they opened in 2014.

Mayor Vogel said he sees the cost savings associated with four roundabouts and is leaning towards these rather than the two stoplights.

MOTION BY: FAANES SECOND: MUEHLBAUER TO DIRECT STAFF TO CHANGE THE HIGHWAY 47 DESIGN TO FOUR ROUNDABOUTS.

Ayes: Faanes, Muehlbauer, and Mayor Vogel.

Nays: Udvig and Robinson

Motion carries: 3-2

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Sale of City Owned Property

Resolution 2025-19 Declaring surplus property and authorizing the disposal of said property

Ordinance 346 Authorizing the sale of city surplus property to R&R Capital Investments, LLC

Thunstrom reviewed the Staff report concerning the sale of the old City Hall building on Cree Street.

Muehlbauer shared that he had spoken with the lower two bidders on their willingness to continue to rent out the community space in the building. He asked if this was a part of the original bid. Thunstrom explained that if they were to lease the space, it would be very complicated. She noted the purchaser could use this space as rental space; however, the purchaser leasing it back to the City to be rental space would be extremely difficult. She said they did not fully review this bid

as they were directed to go with the highest bidder.

Muehlbauer asked what process this follows since one of the bidders has changed their bid. City Attorney Schaps said the City has laid out a process and the Council has the discretion to decide who it gets sold to.

Mayor Vogel shared that he was initially in favor of selling the property to the highest bidder; however, he is leaning towards the lower bidder as they are more of a known entity locally.

Thunstrom explained if they will not be approving the purchase agreement that Staff has recommended, then they will need to have legal counsel review the purchase agreement of the lower bidder as it has not yet been reviewed, and they are already aware of concerns that would need to be addressed.

Robinson said he does not think the bidders should be able to change their bid and the Council should just decide based on these bids who they would like to sell to.

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: MAYOR VOGEL ADOPTING RESOLUTION 2025-19, A RESOLUTION DECLARING SURPLUS PROPERTY AND AUTHORIZING THE DISPOSAL OF SAID PROPERTY.

Ayes: Faanes, Muehlbauer, Robinson, and Udvig.

Nays: Mayor Vogel

Motion carries: 4-1

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: FAANES ADOPTING ORDINANCE 346, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF CITY SURPLUS PROPERTY TO R&R CAPITAL INVESTMENTS LLC.

A roll call vote was performed:

Mayor Vogel	nay
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Councilmember Muehlbauer	aye
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Councilmember Robinson	nay
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Councilmember Faanes	nay
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Councilmember Udvig	aye
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Motion fails: 2-3

Schaps asked if the Council would like Staff to reopen this process or just review and negotiate the existing bids.

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: FAANES TO DIRECT STAFF TO NEGOTIATE WITH RUM RIVER CONSULTANTS.

Ayes: Faanes, Muehlbauer, and Mayor Vogel.

Nays: Robinson and Udvig.

Motion carries: 3-2

B. Accepting Bids and Awarding Contract for the 2025 Street Reconstruction Project

Resolution 2025-20 Accepting and awarding bids for the 2025 street reconstruction project

Carpenter reviewed the Staff report in regard to accepting bids and awarding contracts for the 2025 street reconstruction project.

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: FAANES ADOPTING RESOLUTION 2025-20 ACCEPTING AND AWARDING BIDS FOR THE 2025 STREET RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT.

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

C. Patriot Parkway Final Plat Submittal Extension

Resolution 2025-21 Extending the final plat submittal deadline for the Patriot Parkway Development

Community Development Director Rieland reviewed the Staff report concerning the Patriot Parkway extension request for their final plat.

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: FAANES ADOPTING RESOLUTION 2025-21 EXTENDING THE FINAL PLAT SUBMITTAL DEADLINE FOR THE PATRIOT PARKWAY DEVELOPMENT.

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

10. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - NONE

11. REPORTS

A. Police Department Report - First Quarter 2025

Police Chief Schwieger reviewed the first quarter report for the Police Department. He shared that they spent some time at the beginning of the year planning out their community engagement events for 2025. He noted there were 1,944 instances that occurred during the first quarter, which is an increase over last year. He said there were 25 Group A offenses, 1251 Group B offenses, and 668 traffic stops, which resulted in 92 citations being issued. He added that Staff completed 263 hours of training during the quarter. He said they are back at full Staff and are staying busy.

The Council thanked Schwieger and his Staff for their great work.

Mayor Vogel asked if the Police respond to every medical call. Schwieger said they do get dispatched to every medical call; however, they rely more heavily on the

firefighters to respond to these calls.

Mayor Vogel encouraged the residents to participate in the upcoming Citizen's Academy.

B. Fire Department Monthly Report - March

Schmidt reviewed the Fire Department report for the month of March. He shared that there were 85 incidents for the month with an average en-route time of seven minutes and 33 seconds and on-scene time of 13 minutes and six seconds. He noted they are projecting a volume increase for the year of 11.6%. He reviewed the times of day and days of the week when all calls came in. He shared that there was \$6,000 in fire loss for the month. He added that they gave mutual aid ten times throughout the month and received mutual aid five times.

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

Robinson asked how often they are getting calls for the glucometer and if those who are calling for it often have decreased with the education being provided. Schmidt said they still get a fair amount of use for this device. He noted that when one repeat user moves out of the City or stops calling for this, another moves in or starts up. He said the usage of this has been stable.

12. COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

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

Robinson noted he attended the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, and it was great to see so many residents attend.

Faanes shared that she attended the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting and there were 15 residents who came forward to speak about the proposed apartments. She said that when this item comes forward to the Council level she will be sharing the feedback and concerns from these residents.

Muehlbauer shared that he watched back the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting and encouraged those who have shared their thoughts and opinions to focus on facts and real concerns when discussing these projects, and not just hypotheticals.

Mayor Vogel added that he also attended the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, and he was pleased to see how many people showed up. He noted that he met with Thunstrom, their lobbyist, and Senator Andrews this weekend and he is feeling hopeful.

13. UPCOMING EVENTS

April 26 - Spring Recycling Day - 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
May 03 - Dog Clinic - 9:00 AM
May 05 - City Council Meeting - 6:00 PM
May 15 - Parks Commission Meeting - 7:00 PM
May 19 - City Council Meeting - 6:00 PM
Citizens Academy 6:00 PM - Starts May 6, 2025

14. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY: ROBINSON 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 7:29 p.m.

Jennifer Wida, City Clerk