

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA  
St. Francis City Hall 3750 Bridge Street NW  
January 5, 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 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 Dave Schaps (Barna, Guzy & Steffen), Deputy Administrator-Public Works Director Paul Carpenter, Police Chief Todd Schwieger, and Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill,

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: ROBINSON 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 15, 2025
- B. Council Appointments
  - Resolution 2026-01 Approving the appointments for 2026
- C. Job Description Update – Finance Director
- D. Payment of Claims

Robinson asked about item C regarding whether the updated Finance Director job description would impact the salary analysis that was completed previously. City Administrator Kate Thunstrom explained that the review completed by Abdo was compared against other finance director positions, and she did not anticipate any changes to the salary survey.

Robinson asked if the updated job description was a custom fit for the City's needs and whether it would shift workload distribution. Thunstrom stated that the previous job description was from 2007, and the revised description was updated to reflect current needs; she noted workflows are fairly balanced and the transition will

involve the Finance Department.

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: ROBINSON 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**

No one came forward to address the Council.

**6. SPECIAL BUSINESS - NONE**

**7. PUBLIC HEARINGS - NONE**

**8. OLD BUSINESS**

A. 2025 Code Revisions – Second Reading Revised

*Resolution 2026-02 authorizing the Summary Publication of Ordinance 352, modifying Chapter 10 zoning in the City Code*

Community Development Director Jodie Steffes reviewed the revised second reading for Ordinance 352 regarding housekeeping amendments to Chapter 10. She noted that the amendments were required to be sent to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for review and certification due to impacts to properties in the Rum River Management Overlay District. She stated the City received conditional approval from the DNR on December 17, 2025; she noted the DNR requested a revision to clarify that accessory buildings under 200 square feet within the Rum River Management Overlay District still require a zoning permit. Steffes requested Council approval of the clarification so the ordinance can receive final certification.

Mayor Vogel stated he was concerned that residents may assume accessory buildings under 200 square feet do not require permits without recognizing the Rum River Management Overlay District exception. Steffes noted that Staff receives zoning calls regarding sheds, and residents along the Rum River tend to be more aware of requirements; she added that the clarification is intended to make the requirement more noticeable. Mayor Vogel asked if the City could make the information more prominent for residents. Steffes confirmed that Staff can include information in the spring newsletter and can adjust the wording to highlight the requirement.

Mayor Vogel asked about DNR enforcement. Thunstrom explained that Staff has a good relationship with the DNR; she noted the DNR may become involved if a complaint is received or if Staff identifies an issue beyond the City's control, but unpermitted work can go unnoticed if not reported.

Mayor Vogel asked to include a prominent notice in the ordinance language;

Council provided consensus to add language at the top, noting permits are needed within the Rum River Management Overlay District.

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: FAANES TO ADOPT ORDINANCE 352 MODIFYING DIVISIONS 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, AND 9 IN THE ZONING CODE, AS AMENDED.

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: FAANES TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2026-02 AUTHORIZING THE SUMMARY PUBLICATION OF ORDINANCE 352, MODIFYING CHAPTER 10 ZONING IN THE CITY CODE.

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carries: 5-0

**9. NEW BUSINESS - NONE**

**10. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - NONE**

**11. REPORTS**

A. City Administrator Report

City Administrator Thunstrom reviewed the City Administrator report. She pointed out that Staff is working through payroll changes and employment law changes; she added that Staff is resuming items that were delayed due to recent Fire Department priorities. Thunstrom noted that Staff expects to hear within the next one to two weeks regarding a \$2 million federal appropriation for a utility project.

Mayor Vogel asked for an update on the Highway 47 project and whether there will be opportunities to keep the public informed and allow questions. Thunstrom stated that Staff previously laid out the design at Night to Unite and has asked MnDOT to write an article for the spring newsletter. She added that Staff will work to share updates through MnDOT and City communications and can provide additional opportunities for questions at events.

Mayor Vogel asked for a recap of funding for the Highway 47 project. Thunstrom explained that the pavement project is fully funded through a \$7 million Regional Solicitation grant and MnDOT. She pointed out that the \$2 million appropriation is intended for utilities underground, and Staff is also requesting additional funds from

the State.

Robinson suggested sharing the funding summary in the newsletter. Udvig recommended sharing information on Facebook to reach more residents.

Mayor Vogel suggested holding additional work sessions in 2026, particularly for budget discussions. Muehlbauer noted he would like to discuss gambling proceeds in a work session or regular meeting.

## **12. MAYOR REPORT – DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **A. Returning to the 1957 MN State Flag**

Mayor Vogel stated that he wanted Council feedback on returning to the 1957 Minnesota State flag. He explained that he believed changing the flag should have been voted on by the public, and he wanted to represent citizen sentiment. Mayor Vogel pointed out that there is no statutory requirement for local buildings to display the new flag; he referenced Minnesota Statute 1.141 and stated he wanted to verify compliance and confirm the City still has the old flags.

Deputy Administrator-Public Works Director Paul Carpenter stated he believes the City still has the old flags.

Faanes expressed her support for switching back and stated she has heard residents express preference for the old flag. Udvig agreed that she had no issue switching back, but the City should consider that the older flags may not be made in the future. The City should consider what happens when replacement is needed.

Robinson explained that he supported switching back and added that he did not understand why the flag was changed. He pointed out that the process did not appear serious to him.

Mayor Vogel asked if this should be handled by resolution. Staff indicated a resolution would be appropriate for a future meeting.

### **B. Post Election Review Discussion**

Mayor Vogel stated that he wanted to discuss the City's ability to request a post-election review. He clarified he was not discussing poll pads, and he did not suspect fraud. Mayor Vogel explained that he believed the City should have the right to request a review at City expense if concerns arise.

Deputy Administrator-City Clerk Jenni Wida explained that Anoka County is required by statute to review four precincts at random based on population; she stated that the County reviewed eight precincts in the 2024 election. Wida noted that the review involves election judges hand-counting ballots from selected precincts and matching totals to the election night tape. Wida pointed out that she is not aware of any discrepancies.

Udvig noted that she did not support a political statement at the City level and preferred a simple letter rather than a resolution; she pointed out that she would rather focus on saving Staff time. Robinson stated he supported sending a letter.

City Administrator Kate Thunstrom suggested that Staff can draft a letter and bring it to the next Council meeting.

Mayor Vogel reviewed additional Mayor report items, including a Fire Board meeting on December 16, attendance at a Chamber meeting on December 17, an audit call with Abdo, and a meeting with Public Works to discuss MS4 and Smart Salting. Mayor Vogel stated that he and Robinson toured the Bethel fire station with Fire Chief Dave Schmidt on December 23; the tour was helpful as the City moves forward on fire-related planning.

### **13. COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS**

Udvig noted she will attend an upcoming meeting and highlighted a Pioneer Days planning meeting on Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Legion.

Robinson explained that he attended the Fire District meeting on December 16 and toured the Bethel fire station with the Mayor. He encouraged residents to support the local hardware store.

Faanes pointed out she did not have meetings to report due to the holidays and noted she looks forward to 2026.

Muehlbauer stated that he attended the Vista Prairie open house and shared that he has provided compliments and concerns to Public Works as appropriate.

### **14. UPCOMING EVENTS**

January 06 - URRWMO Meeting 6:30 pm (Oak Grove City Hall)  
January 19 - City Offices Closed  
January 20 - City Council Meeting (Tuesday) 6:00 pm  
January 21 - Planning Commission Meeting \*CANCELLED\*

### **15. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: ROBINSON 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 6:36 p.m.

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Jennifer Wida, City Clerk

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