

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

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

May 20, 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, and Sarah Udvig.

Also present: City Administrator Kate Thunstrom, Deputy City Administrator/City Clerk Jenni Wida, 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.), Liquor Store Manager Joe Pfeifer, and Police Chief Todd Schwieger

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 4-0

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Muehlbauer shared that will be discussing items F, G, and K before approving the Consent Agenda.

- A. City Council Minutes - May 6, 2024
- B. Stahl Construction – Pay Applications No. 8 – Labor & Material
- C. Dollar General #23780 – Annual Tobacco License Renewal
- D. DNR ReLeaf Grant RFP
- E. Rum River Streambank Stabilization 2024
- F. St. Francis Dog Park
- G. 2024 Waste Prevention and Recycling Grant
- H. Change Orders – City Hall / Fire Station Project
- I. Bottle Shop New Hire – Colin Reed
- J. Pioneer Days Fireworks Permit Application – Northern Lighter Pyrotechnics, Inc (NLP)
- K. Chesters Small Town Tavern & Eatery – Public Dance Permit
- L. Payment of Claims

Robinson stated that he believes this item is worthy of being called out. He shared that the Council discussed this at their last Work Session and noted that there will be a dog park installed near Community Park. He said they are working on getting this space cleaned up for the dog park. He added that this is one of the top five requests from residents. He stated that this dog park will bring a lot of value and will require minimum maintenance. He shared his hope that it is well utilized and used respectfully. He also thanked and congratulated Tom Koep for the work that he does constantly for recycling. He noted that Mr. Koep has taken time to continue to apply for grants to help St. Francis to be a model for other cities in regard to recycling. He explained that a lot of effort has been put into Pioneer Days and Chesters Small Town Tavern & Eatery is asking for a parking lot dance during the event. He asked if they will be able to cover this event from a security perspective. Police Chief Schwieger explained that they are well prepared for this weekend and are working with Public Works and City Hall Staff to ensure they will be able to staff all of the events that will be taking place.

Robinson asked if the application will need to be amended in regard to security needed for the event. City Clerk Wida explained that she reached out to Elise Chester, the owner of Chesters, and she did confirm that they will be providing security for this event.

Robinson asked if the people who will be used as security at this event will be capable of doing their job. Schweiger explained that they have management contacts for this event so they will be sure to reach out if there is anything they feel needs to be addressed.

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

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 4-0

5. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Wendell Gordon, 23487 Cree Street, came forward and asked how the State was able to pass a new flag without the public voting on it. Mayor Muehlbauer said the City does not have this kind of information and he would have to go to the State to get the answer.

Mr. Gordon explained that there have been a lot of cities that are selling their weapons back to gun dealerships and then the weapons have been found with illegal people. He asked what St. Francis does with weapons when they expire. Schwieger explained that with expired handguns, they give the officers the option to buy the gun or trade them in to a licensed gun dealer.

Mr. Gordon asked why they trade them in rather than giving them somewhere that can melt them down. Schwieger noted they trust their licensed gun dealers to make sure they know who they are selling these guns to. He added that when they trade the guns in they also get a discount on a new gun.

Mr. Gordon asked what the public is to do with their grass clippings. Public Works Director Carpenter shared that they did accept clippings at the recycling event.

Mr. Gordon asked if there was some way that the City could set up a program where people could drop their clippings and have someone from the City take the clippings down to the center on Hanson Boulevard. Carpenter explained that they are currently working on a compost situation with the MPCA and Anoka County.

6. **SPECIAL BUSINESS**

A. 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Audit

Justin Nelson from Abdo Solutions came forward and presented the 2023 financial audit report.

The Council thanked Mr. Nelson for his thorough presentation and the great work that Abdo Solutions has done for the City over the years.

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: KREKLOW TO ACCEPT THE 2023 ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL AUDIT.

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 4-0

7. **PUBLIC HEARINGS - NONE**

8. **OLD BUSINESS**

A. Solar Farm Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Second Reading

Ordinance 329 Amending the zoning code to allow solar farms in the I-2 District

Resolution 2024-18 Authorizing Summary Publication of Ordinance 329

City Administrator Thunstrom reviewed the Staff report in regard to the zoning code amendment to allow solar farms in the I-2 district.

MOTION BY: KREKLOW SECOND: UDVIG TO ADOPT ORDINANCE 329 AMENDING THE ZONING CODE TO ALLOW SOLAR FARMS AS A PERMITTED WITH STANDARDS USE WITHIN THE I-2 DISTRICT, SECOND READING.

A roll call vote was performed:

Mayor Muehlbauer aye

Councilmember Udvig aye

Councilmember Robinson aye

Councilmember Kreklow aye

Motion carried: 4-0

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: ROBINSON TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-18
AUTHORIZING SUMMARY PUBLICATION OF ORDINANCE 329.

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 4-0

B. Recreational Motor Vehicles Ordinance Amendment, Second Reading
Ordinance 330 Amending Chapter 7-3-6 Recreational Motor Vehicles- Redline
Version
Resolution 2024-19 Authorizing Summary Publications of Ordinance 330

Thunstrom reviewed the Staff report concerning the recreational motor vehicle ordinance amendment.

Mayor Muehlbauer asked if there are any additional concerns that they could see coming from this change. Schwieger noted that the main concern with this is people taking these golf carts on roads they are not supposed to.

Mayor Muehlbauer shared that he has the same concerns as Schwieger. He added that someone shared a photo with him of some young teenagers driving golf carts out on the roads. He said his biggest fear is that if parents are not policing their children on this then it could ruin things for everyone.

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: KREKLOW TO ADOPT ORDINANCE 330
AMENDING CHAPTER 7-3-6 RECREATIONAL MOTOR VEHICLES, SECOND
READING.

A roll call vote was performed:

Mayor Muehlbauer aye

Councilmember Udvig aye

Councilmember Robinson aye

Councilmember Kreklow aye

Motion carried: 4-0

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: UDVIG TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2024-19
AUTHORIZING SUMMARY PUBLICATION OF ORDINANCE 330.

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 4-0

9. NEW BUSINESS**A. Work Session Request**

Thunstrom shared that Staff is requesting a Work Session for the end of June to discuss items related to the budget. She shared the suggested meeting dates of June 24 or 25.

The Council agreed to schedule the meeting for June 24 at 5:30 p.m.

Mayor Muehlbauer asked if they would be able to have residents come earlier in the budget process to give their feedback rather than waiting for the taxation hearing. Thunstrom explained that if residents want to provide any individual comments on the budget, then she would recommend they come forward to speak to the Council in June or July.

Mayor Muehlbauer encourages any residents who may be concerned with their taxes to come and give the Council comments and feedback on the budget in either June or July, so they have time to make the best decisions for the City and its residents.

10. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - NONE**11. REPORTS****A. Fire Department Monthly Report**

Fire Chief Schmidt reviewed the monthly report for the month of April. He shared that they did see an increase in their response times from this time last year with an average response time of eight minutes and 46 seconds. He added that the total calls for service has decreased since this time last year to a total of 65 calls for the month. He noted that staffing remains stable with an average of 5.7 firefighters per call. He shared there were 18 fire runs and 47 EMS runs for the month. He noted that variance usage also remained stable; however, there were five ambulance response times over 20 minutes. He said they conducted 10 initial fire inspections and two re-inspections for the month.

The Council thanked Schmidt and his Staff for their great work during April.

Robinson asked if there are any issues that they are working through with being in their new, temporary location. Schmidt said they have had a few minor issues come up; however, they have been able to work through all of this. He noted that it has been a pleasure to work with the Public Works Staff on any issues they have faced.

Robinson asked how things are going with Nowthen. Schmidt shared that he attended the Nowthen Council meeting last week and has had a few meetings with the Nowthen City Administrator to help them narrow the bandwidth of what they are looking for. He said he is optimistic that they will have a job posting created and approved within the next 30 days.

Robinson asked what will happen if they get to September and Nowthen is not ready to take on their work independently. Schmidt said this will generate a lot of discussion and he is not sure what options will and will not be on the table. He noted they will see how this process goes and will remain flexible moving forward.

Robinson asked if they are prepared to take on this contract for another year if needed. Schmidt said he is not sure at this time. He noted that they would never want to leave them hanging. He added that when there are significant events that take place, the Fire Department does rely on Nowthen. He stated that having a functional partner to the west is very important for both the City and the County. He said there are still a lot of contingencies on this.

Robinson noted if they do need to renew the contract he would like to see if it be another year long term rather than a shorter term. He asked how things are going with Bethel. Schmidt stated that things are going better than expected through this process. He shared that they hope to get more data soon, but everything is going very smoothly operationally. He added that they will also be bringing a presentation to the Bethel Council at one of their June meetings to show them where they started, where they are currently, and where they plan to go.

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 shared that the tentative date for the localization for Vista Prairie is scheduled for June 10.

Mayor Muehlbauer shared that they discussed many items that the residents have expressed interest in at the Work Session, including parks. He added that he is looking forward to Pioneer Days. He stated that buttons are still for sale at City Hall. He thanked the Fire and Police Departments for all the work that they will be putting in for this event.

Robinson asked if there are any updates on the grants for the Highway 47 project. Thunstrom shared that they just learned that they received a \$7,000,000 Federal grant. She added that the \$4,500,000 appropriation for the water and sewer is moving to the list for consideration; however, this is a very competitive list nationally. She said they should hear back on this within the next six to eight weeks.

Robinson asked if there are any missing pieces that they should be considering during their budget discussions. Thunstrom stated that the water and sewer project will cost around \$6,000,000 and about \$1,500,000 of this total will be the City's portion. She said there is a local cost share for Highway 47; however, she does not have any idea what these numbers could be. She added that they will be continuing to work with the State to see if there are any gaps in their funding for this project. She noted there are a lot of moving pieces with this project.

Robinson encouraged residents to get out and vote this year to make their voices heard.

Thunstrom explained that next year will be another bonding year and noted that they will want to make sure they get a funding request on the bond appropriation at the State.

Mayor Muehlbauer asked how the Citizens Academy turned out. Schwieger shared that they had great participation and feedback as usual.

Mayor Muehlbauer encouraged anyone who has not participated in the Citizens Academy to participate next year.

Thunstrom shared that the City has launched their communications survey in the newsletter as well as on the website. She asked the Council to encourage residents on social media to complete the survey. She added that the survey will run through August 15. She noted they will also be putting out a request for memorabilia and photos for the new City Hall Fire Station and a time capsule.

Mayor Muehlbauer asked when the next tour of the City Hall Fire Station will be. Thunstrom stated they do not have another date scheduled at this time. She shared that the sheetrock is in on the second floor and is going in on the first floor and they are moving into the finishes. She added that the doors and windows will be going in any day now. She said if they schedule their next tour for July then they would likely be able to see some significant progress be made. She noted that if everything stays on schedule, they could be looking at a substantial completion of the building by the end of October.

Robinson asked if any of the fencing around the retention pond will be staying intact. Thunstrom explained that this will be a dry pond and the fencing around the building will come down. She shared that there are some funds available for landscaping as a part of phase two.

13. UPCOMING EVENTS

May 27 - City Offices Closed for Memorial Day

May 31-June 2 - Pioneer Days

June 3 - City Council Meeting @ 6:00 p.m.

June 6 - Bike Rodeo @ 5:00 p.m.

14. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 4-0

There being no further business, Mayor Muehlbauer adjourned the regular City Council at 7:00 p.m.

Jennifer Wida, City Clerk

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