

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

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

December 19, 2022

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 Steve Feldman.

2. ROLL CALL

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

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, Liquor Store Manager John Schmidt, Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill, City Engineer Craig Jochum (Hakanson Associates, Inc.), and Police Chief Todd Schwieger.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Ayes: Udvig, Robinson, Bauer, Muehlbauer, and Feldman

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

4. CONSENT AGENDA

A. City Council Minutes - December 05, 2022

B. Separation of Employment Sergeant Daniel Allen – Non-Disciplinary Resolution 2022-67 Separation of Employment for Sergeant Daniel Allen

C. 2022 Street Rehabilitation Project – Pay Estimate No. 2

D. Turtle Ponds 4th Addition Letter of Credit Reduction

E. Rivers Edge 3rd Addition Acceptance of Public Infrastructure Improvements and Release of Financial Security Resolution 2022-71 River's Edge accepting Improvements and Release of Financial Security

F. Rivers Edge 4th Addition Acceptance of Public Infrastructure Improvements and Release of Financial Security Resolution 2022-72 Rivers Edge 4th Addition Acceptance of Public Infrastructure Improvements and Release of Financial Security

G. Rivers Edge 5th Addition Acceptance of Public Infrastructure

- Improvements and Release of Financial Security
Resolution 2022-73 Rivers Edge 5th Addition Acceptance of Public
Infrastructure Improvements and Release of Financial Security
H. Establishing Precinct & Polling Locations for 2023
Resolution 2022-74 Establishing Precinct & Polling Locations for 2023
I. Payment of Claims

MOTION BY: BAUER SECOND: ROBINSON APPROVING THE CONSENT
AGENDA ITEMS

Ayes: Udvig, Robinson, Bauer, Muehlbauer, and Feldman

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

5. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mayor Feldman asked City Clerk Wida if they had anyone wanting to speak. She said yes.

Amy Faanes, 23318 Salish Street Northwest, came forward and shared that she sent an email to the City Administrator, Finance Director, and one Councilmember and she did not hear back from anyone. She read aloud her email concerning her donation that she made at the Fire Department French Toast Breakfast being deposited into the City of St. Francis general fund rather than the Fire Relief Association. She shared she did not intend to donate to the City, which is why she made her check out to the Fire Relief Association. She stated that this is not transparent and it has been widely publicized that the donations from that event go to the Fire Relief Association. She said the Lions donated their time and supplies to this event and they also were not aware that the donations were going to the City.

Fire Chief Dave Schmidt explained that they did not advertise this year or last year that the donations would benefit the Relief Association. He said the breakfast was previously supported by the Relief Association which meant it was all volunteer time for the firefighters; however, Staff was concerned that the firefighters were not getting paid for their efforts. He shared that in the last few years, the Fire Relief Association has not been making donations to the fire prevention efforts, which is why it is no longer advertised as a Fire Relief Association event and the firefighters are paid for their efforts. He explained that the first part of the donation goes back to the Lions to cover the cost of food and the rest of the money goes back into the fire prevention fund which is received by the City.

Mayor Feldman asked Mrs. Faanes if she was satisfied with this response or wanted her donation back. Ms. Faanes asked if the Relief Association donated anything for the expenses that day. Schmidt said he was not sure as the Relief Association has not met in over two years. Ms. Faanes asked if it would have been proper for them to have made a donation. Schmidt stated that Evan has worked

with them and asked for donations but there have not been many donations given in the last few years. Mrs. Faanes stated that if the Fire Relief Association did donate any money towards the event, she would like her money back. Schmidt said he will have an answer for her by tomorrow.

Mrs. Faanes shared that this lacks transparency. She stated she did not even know how the City deposited the check into the general fund account as it was made out to the Fire Relief Association. She reiterated that she would like her money back if the Relief Association did donate to the event. She stated she donated a higher amount than usual as the event had not taken place in 2020 and she was not able to attend in 2021.

Mayor Feldman stated there was no ill intent in this matter. He said they will correct the error of their mistake. Mrs. Faanes said this did not seem like a mistake and the intent of the donation was to go to the City. Mayor Feldman explained that it would have been a mistake if the relief fund was not giving any money and the City was paying the employees for the event and paid the Lions for the event.

Mrs. Faanes noted that the Lions should be made aware that the funds are going somewhere else. Schmidt stated they have had these discussions with the Lions. He said it was important to keep in mind that the Relief Association is a completely third entity and he has no authority over the Association nor does the Council.

Mayor Feldman stated that this event was going to happen regardless of the funding because the French toast breakfast has happened for years. Mrs. Faanes reiterated her frustration with the seeming lack of transparency. Schmidt apologized and again stated that this event was not advertised to support the Relief Association.

Ms. Faanes explained that she understood that the event used to be a volunteer event and that the firefighters wanted to get paid so the City had to pay them. She stated that when Schmidt came to the City, Evan clearly told John (Mrs. Faanes husband) that he was not needed at any public events even though he had been in charge of all of them before Schmidt's arrival. Schmidt stated he did not remember this. He reiterated that he would have an answer from Evan in the morning.

Mayor Feldman thanked Mrs. Faanes for bringing this to the Council's attention and stated that from now on, it should be clear at the breakfast where the money is going. He said this event will always take place regardless of funding and donations.

6. SPECIAL BUSINESS – NONE

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS – NONE

8. **OLD BUSINESS**

A. 2023 Tax Levy Approval

Resolution 2022-63 Adopting Levy for 2023

Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill reviewed the updates made to the levy based on the work session after the last City Council meeting. She stated that they were able to bring the levy down to a total of \$5,107,690, which is only an increase over the 2022 levy of \$438,100 and the estimated tax rate is 44.657%.

Mayor Feldman noted that this has been reduced by \$450,000 after the discussion at the work session. He stated that the tax increase was 19.1% and has not decreased to 9.38%. He said that the Council listened to the public and through the work session, gave the residents some relief in property taxes and kept the momentum going forward for the City Hall Fire Station. He shared they prioritized and took advantage of the ARPA money that is available and redirected the money for the long term gain of the City, while still listening to the residents. He complimented Staff, Council, and the public that took the time to bring their concerns to the Council.

Udvig thanked Staff and Council for the hard work at the work session.

Bauer echoed Udvig's thanks to the Staff, Council, and residents.

Muehlbauer stated that the building maintenance fund and park fund are going into the new building. He stated they put a lot of work into this, similar to the street program. He shared that he thinks it is great that they were able to give the residents some relief.

Robinson appreciated the resident's input and shared that he received an email from someone who attended the meeting expressing their appreciation for the work that was done. He stated that he saw many posts on social media of people upset who had the opportunity to attend meetings to voice their opinions and they did not attend. He stated the project will not be done if it is out of budget for the City. He is slightly disappointed that the parks had to take a hit in order to bring down the levy; however, he sees the fire and administrative Staff as the priority.

Mayor Feldman explained that part of government is prioritizing. He stated that they looked at the two items up for discussion and determined which was a better fit in the current time frame and economy. He added that the parks are not off the table, they are on the back burning for a short time. He stated the City and Council has to run off of a matter of needs not wants. He said the Council exhibited good governing and listened to the Staff and residents. He encouraged everyone to not go on social media for their information.

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: MUEHLBAUER, ADOPTING THE 2023 TAX LEVY APPROVAL, RESOLUTION 2022-63 ADOPTING LEVY FOR 2023.

Ayes: Udvig, Robinson, Bauer, Muehlbauer, and Feldman

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

B. 2023 Proposed Budget

Resolution 2022-64 Approving Budget for 2023

Muvihill reviewed the proposed budget now that the levy has been set.

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: BAUER ADOPTING THE 2023 PROPOSED BUDGET, RESOLUTION 2022-64 APPROVING BUDGET FOR 2023.

Ayes: Udvig, Robinson, Bauer, Muehlbauer, and Feldman

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Application Submission for Joint Service Planning Grant

City Administrator Kate Thunstrom reviewed the request to submit an application for a Joint Service Planning Grant. She stated the City of Bethel approved this to move forward and has been working with St. Francis on an application if interested.

Mayor Feldman read that it says the intent is to utilize the grant on legal services provided by BGS and consulting expenses directly related to the strategic planning of service coordination within the Fire Departments. Thunstrom explained that they are having joint meetings and discussions and if it comes down to a shared agreement and any consultation used to make major decisions, these funds will be eligible to cover the expenses.

Udvig said this looks good and it speaks volumes that the City is able to help out neighboring cities.

Robinson stated he is a part of the group that is meeting with the other parties. He said this is a great idea and hopes it is an example for other agreements in other neighboring cities.

Muehlbauer explained that regionalization helps provide better service and spreading costs.

Bauer noted that combining services can be a great thing and he hopes it spreads to other cities around.

MOTION BY: MAYOR FELDMAN SECOND: MUEHLBAUER TO APPROVE THE SUBMISSION OF THE PLAN AGREEMENT TO THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY FIRE MARSHALL OFFICE.

Ayes: Udvig, Robinson, Bauer, Muehlbauer, and Feldman

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

10. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – NONE

11. REPORTS

A. Fire Department Monthly Report - November

Fire Chief Dave Schmidt reviewed the Fire Department November review, highlighting response times, calls for service of 68 including 49 EMS runs, staffing numbers being down due to a firefighter being on long term injury and one on military leave, variance usage, and 3 fire inspections performed.

Mayor Feldman said it was a great report and is glad that there was only one COVID call. He noted the response time and said that the response times will be affected by the new City Hall Fire Station, should it happen.

Udvig said it was a great report and thanked Schmidt and his staff for their great work, no matter the weather, doing the job they need to do.

Bauer said it was a great report. He asked Schmidt to explain the glucometer usage. Schmidt stated that it is used for known diabetics and also used for differential diagnoses to figure out a treatment plan for the patient. Bauer said he is glad the department now provides that service. He thanked Schmidt and his staff for their work.

Muehlbauer stated it was a great report and asked Schmidt to send Christmas well wishes to the staff.

Robinson said it was a great report and it was nice to meet some of the firefighters and learn more about the facility at the open house.

Mayor Feldman pointed out the trend on the graph of the increase of EMS services from 2019 to current. He said that Schmidt has done a great job bringing on EMS capabilities. He said that the City's public safety always responds quickly. He mentioned he attended the joint power agreement with Bethel and during the meeting, the fire department was called to a fire and they left to fight the fire then came back to the meeting which he found very impressive.

B. Administration Annual Report - 2022

Thunstrom reviewed her year-end administrative report, highlighting the accomplishments of the Administrative Staff members at City Hall and at Police and Public Works. She listed the administrative projects of 2022 some of which will be continued in 2023, including new software, elections, legislations and ordinances, and the biggest projects being the City Hall Fire Station and the Highway 47 project. She highlighted the Council's accomplishments, including nine work sessions, park accomplishments, fleet management accomplishments, and

12 land use applications. She reviewed the City goals. She stated there were many department head changes this year. She noted the creation of the personnel committee. She discussed the finance goals and accomplishments.

Udvig said it was a great report and a great glimpse into what the Council has seen this year. She thanked all the new and current Staff. She stated that all of the new Staff has transitioned amazingly to their roles and she is happy to be working with such a great Staff.

Muehlbauer said it was a great report and loved looking back over the year in review of all that had been accomplished. He congratulated all Staff for doing a great job.

Robinson noted that the report was very detailed and thorough and it was nice to see. He said it is great to reflect back on all that has been done this year. He added he is blessed to be on Council for the next four years. He thanked all of the Staff for their work.

Bauer stated it was a great report and emphasized the work of Staff. He mentioned that the milestones show the department head's leadership. He thanked all department heads and Staff for their work for the City and residents.

Mayor Feldman stated that there is a portion of Highway 47 that the grant will not cover. He asked if the Federal Infrastructure Act will be looked at for this. Thunstrom stated they are reviewing a few different federal grants that are available.

Mayor Feldman discussed that this report defines the hard work that this government does. He noted Council and Staff's hard work in getting work done in the City. He said that everything that has been done in the City over the last six years has been done openly and transparently. He mentioned that mistakes will be made but they are always learned from and corrected. He emphasized that things in the City get done on all levels by hard work from all Staff. He likes seeing constructive input from the residents. He stated that as they move forward with the bidding process for the City Hall Fire Station, if the bids are higher than the Council projected, a hold will be put on the project and the Council will do right by the residents they serve. He thanked all Staff for the hard work put in through 2022 and every year prior. He said one of the best decisions this Council made was replacing the engineering and finance companies. He thanked Thunstrom for a great report.

12. COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Udvig shared that she went to the 7th grade boys basketball tournament, the St. Francis Dance Team meet, and the 7th-8th grade choir concert. She stated she attended the open houses for the Fire Station and City Hall. She thanked Staff for the excellent job at these open houses. She reminded residents that this is a hard

time of year for people and there are resources available. She wished Staff and residents a safe and happy holiday season.

Muehlbauer shared he was happy to be home and is disappointed he missed the open houses. He congratulated Staff members who contributed to the milestones listed. He wished everyone a happy holiday and encouraged everyone to be safe and smart through the upcoming blizzard.

Bauer shared he attended the work session. He thanked Sergeant Dan Allen for his service and encouraged residents to thank him for his service as he leaves the Police Department.

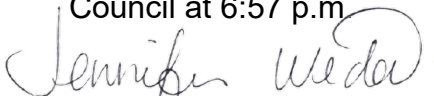
Robinson wished everyone a Merry Christmas and safe travels with the snow coming. He stated he attended the joint power agreement discussion with Bethel. He said it is great to see the cities work together and hope it will be an example to those around. He shared he attended the open house at the Fire Station and the City Hall and got to know that Staff at both better. He said he is looking forward to the upcoming year and to give the people what they expect.

Muehlbauer brought up the residents who had mentioned a lack of transparency from the Council and City and stated he understands how they could feel that way as the Council felt the same after the waste water situation. He added that residents need to take responsibility for themselves as well as no one is going to knock on their door and explain what is happening in the City; they need to pay attention to what is going on in the City. He said the Council is always here and encouraged residents to reach out to the Council with questions or concerns.

Mayor Feldman added that residents should take initiative. He asked the residents to get off social media and come to the City with questions. He asked everyone to be patient with the Council as nothing in government happens quickly and they are trying their hardest for the residents. He stated he will keep the City informed when progress is made on the projects. He would rather give out information a little later and it be thorough and solid, so there are no promises made that cannot be kept. He is looking forward to next year and progressing the City forward. He wished everyone safe travels over the holidays and wished everyone a healthy and merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

13. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Feldman adjourned the regular City Council at 6:57 p.m.



Jennifer Wida, City Clerk