

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
St. Francis Area Schools District Office 4115 Ambassador Blvd. NW
MARCH 21, 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 Kevin Robinson, and Sarah Udvig, and Joe Muehlbauer (attended via Zoom)

Members Absent: Councilmember Robert Bauer

Also present: Interim City Administrator Kate Thunstrom, Deputy City Administrator/City Clerk Jenni Wida, Assistant City Attorney Dave Schaps (Barna, Guzy & Steffen), City Engineer Craig Jochum (Hakanson Associates, Inc.), Fire Chief Dave Schmidt, Finance Director Darcy Muvihill, Police Chief Todd Schwieger, Liquor Store Manager John Schmidt, Water and Sewer Supervisor Parish Barten, and Streets and Parks Supervisor Jeremy Shook

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: ROBINSON APPROVING THE REGULAR CITY COUCIL AGENDA.

A roll call vote was performed:

Councilmember Muehlbauer	aye
Councilmember Robinson	aye
Mayor Feldman	aye
Councilmember Udvig	aye

Motion carried 4-0.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

A. City Council Minutes – March 7, 2022

B. Approve Application for On-Sale Wine and 3.2% Malt Liquor License for Burro Loco

C. Payment of Claims

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: MAYOR FELDMAN APPROVING THE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS A-C.

A roll call vote was performed:

Mayor Feldman	aye
Councilmember Udvig	aye
Councilmember Robinson	aye
Councilmember Muehlbauer	aye

Motion carried 4-0.

5. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mayor Feldman asked if anyone wanted to speak. No one came forward.

6. SPECIAL BUSINESS

A. Life Saving Awards and Citizen Awards

Mayor Feldman stated this is a special time in the meetings where they give awards and tonight there are life-saving awards and citizen awards. He stated he will pass it on to the Chiefs.

Police Chief Todd Schwieger detailed the emergency event that took place at the Kwik Trip in St. Francis and the life-saving actions that were taken. He publicly recognized Officer Amanda Dzuris and Officer Nate Schwieger by presenting them with Life Saving Awards. He also presented St. Francis residents Robert Larson and Kathleen Swing with Citizen Awards for their outstanding performance and superior dedication to the community during this emergency situation. He noted Cody, the patient, was in the audience. He highlighted the great working relationship between the Police and Fire Departments.

Mayor Feldman commented this is truly what community is all about and thanked them.

Fire Chief Dave Schmidt presented Life Saving Awards to Fire Fighters Aaron Hill, Carl Johnson, and Bridgit Marshall for their efforts during the life saving emergency.

Mayor Feldman commented the department heads, or chiefs, have taken St. Francis to a different level; they are able to save a life here. He stated that if someone is lucky enough to have an ambulance close by, then the chances of being saved are high. He continued, on the other hand if that ambulance is in another city and has to get to them, the services the St. Francis public safety people, the Police and Fire do, is the difference between life and death. He stated he is proud himself of the staff that are in place, and the feelings the community have in working with government, that is how it all comes together. He applauded

everyone for the services and for Cody being able to be present today.

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS – NONE

8. OLD BUSINESS – NONE

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Assessing Update

MN Assessor Erik Skogquist presented an update on the property valuations for this year. He reviewed the staff report, highlighting the market sales rates for residential as well as commercial properties in the City. He explained the process for setting the assessment and stated that a value increase doesn't mean taxes are going to go up at the same rate.

Mayor Feldman asked how much commercial went up. Skogquist replied commercial, industrial together was around 11%.

Mayor Feldman asked if market trends play a role. Skogquist confirmed this, that it is factored in the valuation.

Mayor Feldman commented with the pandemic, it is causing people to have less of a commute so they are able to move farther out, which is what is being seen in St. Francis.

Skogquist replied he serves some other areas as well and this year is the most consistent he has seen in his career where there are increases. He stated it has been a unique situation where people are living and working in their houses now. He emphasized, for the public, that if they have questions his number will be on the letter and they are encouraged people to call him or City Assessor Chris Larson. He stated every five years, they are required to visit every property to verify information.

Mayor Feldman stated for the public that if they have a question about the valuation of their property, to call. Instead of getting mad to call, talk it over, and get a valuation based on facts and the market that goes with it. He referenced the staff report and stated he wanted to understand the annual State trend of 17% because as he did the math, he and Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill couldn't figure out how the State gives 17%. He continued because they can't figure it out, he wants to know how and why.

Skogquist replied there are only a few people in the State that could actually explain it. He stated a spreadsheet is provided to the County and assessors and the time trend is based on a two-year study. He stated 2020 may not have been as hot as 2021 and those two years are looked at in combination. That is where the 17% comes from.

Mayor Feldman asked if they are not just picking it out of the air. Skogquist replied, no there is a bunch of mathematics that create a situation that if there is 90% significance then they feel comfortable doing it.

Mayor Feldman commented all the other math pans out but he didn't understand how they got to 17% and how they came up with 311. He was sure they look at all the data on a larger scale to come out with that.

Skogquist replied this is one of the years that helps people understand because the sale prices are changing. He stated there are a lot of homes in St. Francis that have been built in the last 15- 20 years in neighborhoods that are similar. Because of that, sale prices for similar models can be looked at and see how the trends have increased. He stated labor, land, and material prices have gone up which have effected everything across the board. At this point, people are still paying for those.

Mayor Feldman stated the problem the public sees is, with the example of a home he was talking about, they bought it 30 years ago and if no improvements have been done on the land and their price has gone up, they are not looking at the market around then. But it's the market trends that dictate the assessment.

Skogquist confirmed this and added that in Minnesota, they are statutorily required to put things at the market value, which means what is the most typical sale price for that property. So as acreage or extra land sells, that dictates, as he said land increases because people have been paying more for land. As the prices for property closer to the City go up people tend to move out. The aspect of virtual working has changed things.

Mayor Feldman stated the public has to be educated because no one likes their taxes going up. They don't understand why it's going up because they haven't done anything to their property, as he's mentioned. But it is what is around them that has. The home that sold last year, or six months ago, now costs \$100,000 more than we paid for it, that is what makes the difference for their property. He stated he brought this up for the public so they wouldn't take it out on the Assessor.

Skogquist emphasized for people to call with questions so they can come out. He added there is something called an open book session that is on the letter and that is where the City of St. Francis has the Assessors sit in the Court House in Anoka to be available.

Mayor Feldman replied, right, open and transparent. He turned it over to Council for comment and question.

Muehlbauer didn't have any questions but thanked Skogquist for his work the last couple of years.

Udvig commented she liked how everything was broken down so they could understand. She thanked him for his work.

Robinson asked Skogquist what area of the City they will be working in. Skogquist replied they are starting in the more urban portion of the City. He stated when they go out there are notes to check on different things to follow up on so if residents don't like the zone listed in the newsletter, they still may come out if there are questions that need to be answered.

Robinson asked if he was in charge of doing raw land, not just structures. Skogquist confirmed this, adding they are in charge of doing every parcel in the City whether it is a ditch or an expensive property.

Robinson asked if he used any algorithms when they can't get into certain places or if other information is used other than physically walking and measuring. Skogquist replied there are a few things that primarily make up the value. One is the square foot size of the house, another is a quality factor, a third factor is depreciation. He stated if they don't have the information or don't know for sure, a basement finish for example, if there is no indication they will ask the homeowner to call them back with updates or they will base it on the assumption that it is typical. If the home sells and corrections need to be made, they will correct the record.

Robinson asked if deficiencies such as lack of upkeep is also taken into consideration. Skogquist replied absolutely. He stated in the case where homes are around the same age but one has had updates to windows, kitchen, a percentage of depreciation would be considered. He stated this is why it is important that they come around every five years because sometimes, there is damage so adjustments can be made up or down. He repeated that if there are questions to call them.

Robinson asked about 2005 and 2008 when the housing market went down, but now people are paying over the asking price. He asked where the guidelines come from to change their theories and if he thinks things will slow down based on the current trends. Skogquist replied they have to go by what things sell for over the prior year. He explained to set values for 2022, which people will be getting in the mail shortly, they looked at sales from October 2020 through September 2021 and what is typical. He recalled angry phone calls from 2008 when he had to explain that values are based on sales from the prior year. An appraiser that comes out bases their valuation on sales from the last three months. He stated that is where a difference comes in. He stated regarding trends, he hasn't seen things slow down yet but in his experience, people will buy based on the payment versus the overall price.

Mayor Feldman commented that trend is changing too. Skogquist agreed that it is, adding it'll be interesting to see what happens. He stated the values are based

on sale prices.

Robinson asked if it was correct that he was asking residents to call him. Skogquist confirmed this, that his number will be included in the letter along with the open book event. He stated there is a cut off date for appraisal adjustments, he thought it was the middle of June, it will be listed on the appraisal letter. He stated that phone calls from residents helps educate them with development and to make sure their information is accurate.

Robinson thanked Skogquist for his work and his time.

Mayor Feldman commented on the current market, because of the increase of mortgage rates and inflation are in play, it will be interesting to hear the next report. He asked if it was correct that Skogquist assesses the value but that actual tax amounts come from the County. Skogquist confirmed this adding they set their valuation and classification, that is their job. The calculations are done by Anoka County and they send the valuation notices out.

Mayor Feldman referenced the example of the house with an unfinished basement, but the assessors don't have access to the house and assumes it is similar to other homes in the area and give it a higher value. He asked what happens if next year they go out and it doesn't have what they assume, it is actually less than that and has a lesser value, but the taxes have been based off the higher level. He asked where does the correction come in?

Skogquist replied typically when corrections are made, as with the example, it isn't retroactive. He stated the only case that could happen is if there is a significant clerical error on the part of the Assessor. He stated even with those it goes through a process at the County.

Mayor Feldman commented he liked the open and transparent policy and the opportunity for residents to question the assessment. He added he is stating this more for audience that may be listening, that the Assessor assesses the property and it is the County that sets the taxes. Residents may be paying high off of an averaging of what the basement may be more than what it might actually be, as the example. It is not reflective backwards, that it will catch up in the long run. He emphasized that the Assessor shouldn't be blamed because it is the County that sets the taxes.

Skogquist replied he appreciated that. He stated most people are understanding and reasonable, especially once the process is explained.

Mayor Feldman thanked Skogquist for the report. He stated he is glad the decision to put him in place is working out.

B. Final Plat Recording Extension- Turtle Ponds 4th and 5th Additions

1. Resolution 2022-13 Extending the deadline for the final plat of Turtle Ponds 4th Addition
2. Resolution 2022-14 Extending the deadline for the final plat of Turtle Ponds 5th Addition.

Interim City Administrator Kate Thunstrom reviewed the staff report and presented on the final plats for the Turtle Ponds additions.

Mayor Feldman commented they are looking for September 22, 2022 because of the sale. He asked if anything was known about the new people taking over. Thunstrom replied she has been working with them for the last six months. They are looking at a couple different parcels within the City of St. Francis. One is acquiring this from the current owners. The son of the original owner, who passed away, is now transferring it to these new developers. She stated they have been in constant communication with them.

Mayor Feldman asked if Blue Waters Construction is not what was seen in Meadows One. Thunstrom confirmed this.

Mayor Feldman replied that is important, to have reputable and long term development. Thunstrom confirmed this.

Mayor Feldman commented he didn't have any issues with it, if it goes forward that is a big deal. He asked for Council input.

Robinson asked, circumstances aside, if the City is being compensated for the extra time that she and other City staff put into this. Thunstrom confirmed this, adding that all of the extension of City Planner Richmond's time, legal time, and engineering time is paid through their escrows. She stated it is paid for directly by the Blue Water's group.

Mayor Feldman added it states that at the time of closing, the fees owed to the City will be paid so the obligation will be cleared with the City and moving forward. Thunstrom confirmed this.

Robinson interjected the City probably haven't been paid up to this point and the invoice has been out there. Mayor Feldman confirmed this, adding he will pay that and then Blue Waters will continue for the new extension.

Muehlbauer and Udvig didn't have any questions.

Mayor Feldman commented there are two extensions of deadlines, two different resolutions, so two votes are needed.

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: UDVIG TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2022-13 EXTENDING THE DEADLINE FOR THE FINAL PLAT OF TURTLE PONDS 4TH

ADDITION.

A roll call vote was performed:

Councilmember Muehlbauer	aye
Councilmember Robinson	aye
Mayor Feldman	aye
Councilmember Udvig	aye

Motion carried 4-0

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: MUEHLBAUER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2022-14 EXTENDING THE DEADLINE FOR THE FINAL PLAT OF TURTLE PONDS 5TH ADDITION.

A roll call vote was performed:

Mayor Feldman	aye
Councilmember Udvig	aye
Councilmember Robinson	aye
Councilmember Muehlbauer	aye

Motion carried 4-0

C. Consortium Seal Coating and Crack Filling

Street and Parks Supervisor Jeremy Shook reviewed the staff report and recommendation to allow participation along with the City of Coon Rapids on this Consortium.

Mayor Feldman asked if it is correct, that the price they are paying is for 25 areas. Shook confirmed this, adding 25 different streets. Mayor Feldman commented it is \$286,586 by 25. Shook confirmed this.

Mayor Feldman commented this consortium is working out. Shook confirmed this, adding he expected an increase this year just in petroleum prices which is what happened when they got the bids.

Mayor Feldman replied if they didn't have the consortium it wouldn't have been a lot higher. Shook confirmed this. Referring to the staff report, he commented that the fluctuation with the different companies can be seen.

Mayor Feldman asked about the break down on the bids and asked if it was the top company they were going with for the different services they offer. Shook confirmed this, adding what happens is although a lot of them will bid on the same thing some will be cheaper for different services.

Mayor Feldman pointed out for the Council that is the advantage through the consortium. They bid things out and piece it together with individual service items and get a bigger price because it is bulk. Shook confirmed this. Mayor Feldman continued if they didn't have that right now, they would be paying a lot more than \$286,000 so this was a good move.

Udvig commented this looks good and she looks forward to improvement on these streets.

Muehlbauer replied he is glad to be participating in the consortium and pool the funds together similar to how Met Council does sewer or Joint Powers works that they all benefit and save money.

Mayor Feldman commented that consortiums, Joint Powers (JP's), and regionalization are the key to saving money, supplying more effective services, and benefitting residents on all sides which is good governing.

Robinson asked if Shook and his department spot check the areas where work is done to ensure quality. Shook confirmed this, adding staff is out there most of the time the work is being done to ensure the proper amount and specifications are being met.

MOTION BY: MAYOR FELDMAN SECOND: MUEHLBAUER TO AUTHORIZE THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE BID TABULATION AND SUMMARY OF BIDS FROM THE STREET CONSORTIUM. AUTHORIZE STAFF TO CONTINUE PARTICIPATION IN THE STREET MAINTENANCE PROGRAM ANTICIPATING THE CITY OF ST. FRANCIS PORTION TO BE APPROXIMATELY \$286,586.00 AS PRESENTED.

A roll call vote was performed:

Councilmember Muehlbauer	aye
Councilmember Robinson	aye
Mayor Feldman	aye
Councilmember Udvig	aye

Motion carried 4-0

Mayor Feldman thanked Shook and asked him to keep up the good work. He commented he is glad they went that route. He stated it is no different than going preemptive and proactive in their thinking with the City and maintenance on the buildings that it is a smart businesses. He stated it shows government can do that if it wishes to.

D. Poppy Street & 229th Lane Reconstruction

1. Resolution 2022-15 Approving Plans and Specifications and Ordering Advertisement for Bids for the Poppy Street and 229th Lane Reconstruction and Watermain Improvement Project

Mayor Feldman commented it has taken two years to get to this point.

City Engineer Craig Jochum reviewed the staff report. He stated this resolution is to take this project to the next step.

Mayor Feldman referenced the staff report on page 78 and asked about a line that says “remove and replace existing driveways and driveway aprons within the street right of way.” He asked how far of the driveways are going to be replaced, cutting off the amount to get the sidewalk in and dig out the culvers. He asked how much of the driveways are they replacing. Jochum replied most of the driveways that would go back to the right of way.

Mayor Feldman asked if the apron is against the house. Jochum replied no, they call the apron on the curb and gutter. Mayor Feldman replied okay, because when he looks at an apron as a contractor he is looking at the apron at the garage part. Jochum replied no.

Mayor Feldman asked if he was going to get a new driveway. Jochum replied they call that aprons also, but everyone will require an apron now that they have a curb.

Mayor Feldman replied, okay that is the apron there. He noted Jochum will get some questions on this. He thought if people think about aprons as he does, it is the three-foot sections in the front of garage doors. He thought that is how contractors define it and novices as well.

Mayor Feldman asked about parking and if it was true that parking would be on the east side, not the west side. Jochum replied it is proposed to park on the east side of Poppy Street and the south side of 229.

Mayor Feldman asked about sod versus seeding. Jochum replied he is going to try to get that letter out this week. He added this won't go online for another week or two.

Mayor Feldman referenced the staff report and stated, for the benefit of the Council, that the total amount for the project is \$967,436, of that \$152,000 is Oak Grove's end. He stated this is what boggles his mind is that it has been dropped down to their \$152,000. And they have over \$600,000 in their MSA account and yet St. Francis is picking up \$815,436 on the St. Francis side and of that \$448,856 is coming from the Minnesota State Aid (MSA) program. So, what will be assessed for utilities, water and storm water, will be \$366,578.

Mayor Feldman stated his point is that this has taken two years of having a city

with the only road in common, eleven hundred feet, for \$152,000. He emphasized two years. He stated if he had taken the amount of time it has taken between engineering and Staff and Council, \$152,000, that is it like pulling teeth out of a mule. He continued that his point was, as they just did recently about the fees for SAC and WAC to non-residents, that is why they drew the line in the sand.

Mayor Feldman stated it is time for Oak Grove to act like a real city and work with St. Francis with reasonable requests and mutually beneficial situations that benefit residents on both sides. He stated he can't emphasize that enough, that as he looks at these numbers and thinks to himself two years of trying to convince them to spend \$152,000, which comes out of an MSA account of theirs. He asked if that makes sense. He stated he calls it illogic logic.

Mayor Feldman wanted to point that out, how hard St. Francis has worked to be a sister-city and the reciprocation they get on the other end isn't as good as it could be. He stated if it was, the JP's the regionalization, these cities would be working like a fine tuned machine and benefiting residents on both sides.

Mayor Feldman stated Fire Chief Dave Schmidt has pointed out to him, they are looking at remodeling and building a new fire station so it is a great time to talk to St. Francis and put the cost together for a better project, better services for both sides, and cost savings. He stated this would be the time, but he is not going to go there. He hoped to see the road done this year but would believe it when he sees the shovels in the ground. He asked for Council comment.

Udvig commented the Mayor stated a lot and she thought the Council may agree with some of it. She stated she is glad Oak Grove is going to contribute even the little bit to get it done. She stated St. Francis has fought with Oak Grove and taken staff time all to benefit Oak Grove. She stated she is done doing that for them.

Mayor Feldman stated he appreciated that. He added, for emphasis, that the numbers he has shown show how progressive St. Francis is in doing the right thing for residents. He continued the roads and how they don't assess for overlays and how they have done plowing, they have taken a preemptive and proactive approach to running the City in the last six years and it really has paid off. He wished the cities could do just that because the potential is limitless, what they could do together.

Muehlbauer commented he didn't have anything to add.

Robinson asked if there was a hand-shake agreement or a signed agreement that the \$152,000 is where Oak Grove is at and they will participate. Jochum replied as far as he knows it is a hand-shake agreement.

Robinson stated he knew there were some members of their council that are still wishing they had voted no across the board on this so he is not holding his breath.

He stated he was glad to see it come to this point and hoped they could get it done.

Mayor Feldman replied he agreed with that and will have to wait and see. He stated Jochum's job has been exemplary. He thanked Jochum for his effort and for patience of Staff that has worked with Oak Grove over the years. He stated it boggles his mind that they are asking for so little on a big project, that it isn't their money, and they aren't raising taxes.

Mayor Feldman stated he wanted to go on record saying that after handling the 220 residents on the Ponds and how well St. Francis treated them, to get them to hooked on to the system, that they wanted to annex. That after, they went through the whole process of eight months of discussion and only one participating meeting from them. He thought Oak Grove would have dealt with St. Francis a little nicer and kinder on Poppy Street.

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: MAYOR FELDMAN TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2022-15 APPROVING PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS AND ORDERING ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS FOR THE POPPY STREET AND 229TH LANE RECONSTRUCTION AND WATERMAIN IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.

A roll call vote was performed:

Mayor Feldman	aye
Councilmember Robinson	aye
Councilmember Udvig	aye
Councilmember Muehlbauer	aye

Motion carried 4-0.

Mayor Feldman commented they will see how this plays out and hopefully Oak Grove will start working with them and they can have some benefits to residents on both sides. He stated he only says that because, as he campaigned, that there are residents on both sides that want them to act like sister-cities but because it has been only one side that hopefully that will catch on as time goes on.

- E. Parking Restriction on Municipal State Aid Routes for the Poppy Street and 229th Lane Reconstruction and Watermain Improvement Project
 - 1. Resolution 2022-16- Relating to Parking Restrictions on S.A.P. 235-117-002 Poppy Street NW and S.A.P. 235-147-001 229th Lane NW

Mayor Feldman asked for an explanation on that. City Engineer Craig Jochum replied this is required and he has to submit this to MnDOT for the final plan approval. He stated there will be no parking on the west side of Poppy Street and the south 229th.

Mayor Feldman asked if there was parking on the east side and no parking on the west side. Jochum confirmed this.

Mayor Feldman asked for Council comment before the vote. There were none.

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: MUEHLBAUER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2022-16 RELATING TO PARKING RESTRICTIONS ON S.A.P 23-117-002 POPPY STREET NEW AND S.A.P 235-147-001 229th LANE NW.

A roll call vote was performed:

Councilmember Muehlbauer	aye
Councilmember Robinson	aye
Councilmember Udvig	aye
Mayor Feldman	aye

Motion carried 4-0.

Mayor Feldman asked if there has to be agreement with Oak Grove of if MSA decides. Jochum replied both cities would have to agree. He stated parking is allowed on one side of the street.

Mayor Feldman replied it has been talked about at a public hearing that there is no way parking can be done on the west side. Jochum confirmed this and added it is designed now so the mailboxes are on the west side and the hydrants are on the west side making parking difficult.

Mayor Feldman confirmed this and added Fire Chief Dave Schmidt wants to have hydrants accessible at all times. He stated hopefully that logic will follow though.

F. City Administrator Search Update

Assistant City Attorney Dave Schaps stated a panel interviewed the semi-final candidates for the City Administrator search process on March 15, 2022 via Zoom. He thanked Mayor Feldman and Udvig for participating. He thanked City Clerk Jenni Wida for making sure all the technology went off flawlessly. He stated three final candidates will be coming in on Thursday, March 31, 2022. He asked if a 3:00 p.m. start time would work with everyone's schedule. He stated it would be three different interviews with one hour each. He asked Council to email him any topics or questions they wanted included in the interview process.

Mayor Feldman commended Schaps for his work on this, stating it was excellent. He liked the format of Schaps asking the questions and there was time to write notes down. He stated at the end, they were able to have a conversation about their thoughts on it. He stated it was a long day but it went really well and he thought it made the participants more comfortable.

Schaps asked if that timing would work.

Muehlbauer asked about the day. Schaps replied Thursday, March 31, 2022.

Muehlbauer replied he will have to make it work but he is two hours behind now where he is.

Mayor Feldman replied this is very important. Schaps replied that is why he wanted to check in with the Council.

Mayor Feldman asked if there was consensus.

Schaps stated some similar questions will be asked that were at the semi-finalist stage because the full Council has not heard the answers to the questions. He repeated if Council has additional questions they would like candidates to respond to, to let him know by the end of this week and he will format them and provide the Council with the planned questions ahead of time.

Mayor Feldman commented that while the other three Councilmembers didn't have the knowledge he and Udvig have through the interview process, they can get some information from that time. Schaps confirmed this and added if other topics will be include, that can be done.

Mayor Feldman asked if this will be at City Hall or the Community Room. Deputy City Administrator/City Clerk Jenni Wida replied she has the Community Room reserved right now.

Muehlbauer asked if it is possible to get answers to questions the candidates have already answered. Schaps replied he can provide that.

The consensus of the Council was to conduct final interviews on Thursday, March 31, 2022 starting at 3:00 p.m. at the Community Room.

G. Work Session Request

Interim City Administrator Kate Thunstrom stated she is requesting two separate Work Sessions. She stated one is requested for April 11, 2022 to talk about some City business and emergency management updates. MnDOT and WSB are scheduled to come May 9, 2022 to discuss the Highway 47 project. She asked if those dates work.

Mayor Feldman replied April 11, 2022 is a Monday. He asked if it would start at 5:30 p.m. Thunstrom confirmed this. Mayor Feldman asked where that would be. Thunstrom replied the conference room at City Hall.

Mayor Feldman asked if April 11, 2022 would work for Muehlbauer.

Muehlbauer replied that should work. He asked if it was 5:30 p.m. Minnesota time.

Mayor Feldman confirmed this, adding that would be 3:30 p.m. for Muehlbauer. He stated the next day is Monday, May 9, 2022. He asked where that would be held.

Thunstrom replied she would like it to be at the Public Works building.

Mayor Feldman asked Muehlbauer if that would work. He asked about if it would be the same time, 5:30 p.m.

Muehlbauer replied he could make that work.

Mayor Feldman asked if it would work for the rest of the Council.

Robinson asked if there was a Work Session on Tuesday as well.

Thunstrom replied Monday, March 28, 2022.

The consensus of the Council was to have a Work Session on Monday April 11, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. in the conference room at City Hall. Muehlbauer will attend remotely. A Work Session was also scheduled for Monday, May 9, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. at the Public Works Building. Muehlbauer will attend remotely.

10. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – NONE

11. REPORTS

A. Bottle Shop Annual Report- 2021

Liquor Store Manager John Schmidt gave the 2021 annual report. He stated 2021 was the second best year for sales even with the construction. He highlighted that credit card intake was higher than cash which got them thinking about credit card processors.

Mayor Feldman asked if credit card processors are not being done now. Schmidt replied they are, but they should shop around.

Mayor Feldman commented shopping around is always good. He continued that he just got a debit card that he can tap to pay which is really easy. He said he sees mostly cards coming to the store and very few pay cash even for little amounts.

Schmidt reported the customer count and sales were down 10% but multiple customers have said it is the first time back in the store after the construction and

there are many compliments on the construction.

Mayor Feldman commented that 10% is very good with construction going on, they could have closed the store but that would have been really hard and it wasn't known how long it was going to take. It could have taken five months or seven months and they could have been left with no income. He commended the Schmidt and his staff for their work. He stated that they knew there would be a reduction in revenue because they were not at full capacity with product or space so by limiting those two items it was still really good to get 10%.

Schmidt replied they also adjusted the hours.

Mayor Feldman replied he was glad he brought that up. He stated they adapted to the construction but were not down 50% or 60% which he would have questioned. They also weren't down 100% by being closed, so being down 10% was ok. He stated he figures when he bids out projects that if it is within a 5-10% range, because they all use the same vendors, he is fine but he isn't going to get beat by 25-50%. He stated his point is that 10% is acceptable through a construction period. Now as promotion is being done through a new digital sign, that is the key now, to promote the store to let people know it is a new Bottle Shop because it may not be known that the addition is to the back.

Mayor Feldman continued if the addition was side-by-side it would be perceived as a new building but once people come in they will see the difference. He stated regulars are always important but to expand revenue the base has to be expanded. He complimented Schmidt, Crystal and Corrine for keeping the store running as they did. He stated Schmidt has a real rapport with customers, which he feels is a part of their purchasing. He thanked Jeremy and Parish and Paul for helping him out on his end, it was a lot of hard work. He stated he is still getting the paperwork adjusted, he stated it is usually within 30 days to get thing finished and it has gone longer but he'll get it finished. He asked for Council comment.

Muehlbauer thanked Schmidt and his staff. He asked Schmidt to pass that on to his staff.

Udvig commented it was a great report. She stated with the reduced hours and limited space available, that 10% reduction was already. She asked if there was still a difficulty in getting some of the product.

Schmidt replied, yes, it improved since his original concern of having a brand new store and not being able to fill the shelves. He stated he doesn't have an issue with filling the shelves, but if he couldn't get one product, he could get something else.

Robinson commented it was a great report. He asked about future marketing plans, if there is a visual calendar of events coming up. Schmidt replied, there isn't

anything yet but once the weather warms up they will start getting more tastings set up. With advertising, they are doing better with the webpage, Crystal is doing Facebook, he is doing Instagram and they are putting things up to get people in. He stated they are going to do an in-store advertising where there are different businesses around town advertising because they have the space.

Robinson asked if a grand re-opening has been thought about as the weather gets nicer. Schmidt replied they did a grand re-opening in December. Robinson said it was pretty cold then and suggested another re-opening. Schmidt replied he hasn't thought about it because they already did one.

Mayor Feldman commented they have a food truck coming every Tuesday and Wednesday starting in April and through the summer. He stated he posted that on his Facebook page and the City is also.

Mayor Feldman stated he will have information for the Council at the March 28, 2022 Work Session about the new digital sign that they are considering putting off of 47. He stated it will be two sided, five feet by eleven, a big sign 20 feet up with 10mm pixel spacing, Cloud based, and more up to date. He stated they will decide which way to go with that at the March 28, 2022 Work Session. He stated they are taking advantage of the 12,000-16,000 cars every day that go down that road.

Robinson asked if product growth or change was going to be tracked to look at beer sales versus wine. Schmidt replied they have that ability and he likes spreadsheets. He stated they track things like that.

Robinson asked about credit card fees and commented that some restaurants are charging a small fee and that some stores refuse to accept some cards because of the complicated fees. He stated it was a good report and he was happy about the new building which looks nice.

Mayor Feldman complimented Staff and Council for the fiber-optic that went into that building because they couldn't be in the credit card level they are with the old system they had. He stated software and hardware are just as important as plows, cars for patrolling, and firetrucks for fighting fires.

Mayor Feldman stated there are some issues that will be discussed at the Work Session on March 28, 2022 about software and it is time to bring St. Francis into the modern day because software is on a 10-year cycle, just as digital signs are on a 15-year cycle and when the end of the cycle comes changes need to be made. He stated it is important to keep current.

B. Fire Department Monthly Report

Fire Chief Dave Schmidt gave the monthly fire report. He highlighted that response time goals were met, statistics on EMS runs versus Fire, and call volume as listed in

the staff report. He stated three fire fighters are currently out on leave. He stated the fewest COVID related calls were flagged during the month. He stated four fire inspections were completed for the month.

Mayor Feldman commented he was glad about the COVID number and hoped that continues to decrease. He pointed out to Staff and Council that the runs for EMS versus Fire calls is not just in St. Francis but that he has been in contact with Fire Chiefs in multiple areas who report the same thing. He continued that if that is expanded to the whole United States that it is there.

Mayor Feldman stated as he talked to the Fire Chiefs he mentioned how nice it would be to have an ambulance service in every city and they recognized how hard that is going to be to achieve. He stated that is time and money. He complimented Schmidt and Police Chief Todd Schwieger for bringing the EMS capability, for the awards they did today.

Mayor Feldman emphasized the importance of having a safety department, which is two thirds of the budget, to be counted on to actually save lives. He stated having the gentleman in the audience shows the positive of that because that person could have been gone. He was glad to have community members step up to the plate because that is what community all about. He thought the two chiefs have done a good job in brining that and it has changed the structure of public safety and how it is perceived. He stated if he has to have a heart attack this is where he would like to have it, although he had one in Ramsey and they did fine too. He asked for Council comments.

Muehlbauer thanked Schmidt and his staff and asked that he pass that on.

Udvig commented it was a great report. She liked the decrease in COVID calls and hoped they would continue. She asked if things are still going well with Nowthen. Schmidt replied they are. He stated it is very time consuming but they continue to have a high degree of success over there.

Robinson commented it was a great report. He stated that he appreciated having the Mayor and City Administrator of Nowthen come and express their gratitude for the work they are doing.

Mayor Feldman added it shows that Schmidt leads by example.

C. Public Works Monthly Report- February 2022

Water and Sewer Supervisor Parish Barten gave the Public Works monthly report for February. He highlighted that lift stations had plugs again.

Mayor Feldman stated those two lift stations tend to be problematic. Barten replied that they had talked about how DL6 got better since the newsletter but that is not

the case anymore. He stated there were no meters that were unable to read this month.

Mayor Feldman asked if that is unusual because he didn't think he has ever seen that. Barten replied it has happened a couple of times but is sporadic throughout the year. He stated the new equipment is working well.

Mayor Feldman asked if that is the new equipment they had just asked for. Barten confirmed this.

Mayor Feldman asked if the new locates were working for them. Barten replied that no fields locates have been done yet but guessed that would be done some time in April.

Robinson commented it was a good report and he appreciated the work they do. He asked about the granite that is spread around if that sweeping will be done again this year because there are more in some areas and questioned if that effected driveways. Shook answered yes, he just talked to the street sweeping company they use and was told they will be starting next week.

Robinson asked if the company will do any vacuuming along the edges because there is a lot of stuff that is going to be in the grass. It seems like an exceptional amount. Barten replied there are a lot of factors for that including how plowing is done. He stated vacuuming is not typically done.

Mayor Feldman asked if the public could rake it into the street and let the company sweep it. Barten replied definitely, then it will get swept up into their machine.

Robinson stated they are repurposing a product which he supports.

Udvig commented it was a great report. She hoped the pumps could be worked on and get people to stop flushing things they shouldn't be.

Muehlbauer expressed gratitude to all the staff for stepping up at a time when they are needed.

D. Streets and Parks Monthly Report- February 2022

Streets and Parks Supervisor Jeremy Shook gave the Streets and Parks report for February 2022. He stated it was pretty typical February for the department where the majority of time is spent snowplowing. He highlighted an increase in salt usage due to ice.

Mayor Feldman asked how much more salt it was. Shook replied it was probably 30% higher.

Mayor Feldman asked it was weather dependent. Shook agreed it depended on the type of snow and ice.

Mayor Feldman commented they didn't want to not use enough and not be able to get around. Shook agreed.

Mayor Feldman stated both Sewer and Water, and Streets and Parks do a great job. He was glad the Council was open minded enough and forward thinking to give the equipment that was needed, noting the update to the grader, the two beasts and tool cats have made their lives safer. Having the right equipment is a big key and he was glad the Council had the foresight to put those things in place six years ago.

Mayor Feldman stated there are trucks scheduled for 2029 for a change but he knows the trucks are maintained well. He complimented them for being innovative with the improvements they have done. He stated the grader upgrade was done by Paul and Jeremy. Shook replied everything held up well.

Mayor Feldman commented the Council appreciated how each department along with Police and Fire takes care of the equipment because it makes things last longer and allows for a better trade in value. He stated it makes the Council's job easier and spending money wiser. He stated that is their job to get the equipment that they need and at a savings that are effective spending for the City and the residents they serve. He asked for Council comment.

Muehlbauer indicated he didn't have any comments.

Udvig stated she noticed Shook had been out inspecting the parks and asked if he found anything with the buildings.

Shook replied yes, there are some things they will be addressing once it warms up. He stated they are seeing an increase in garbage and parks being used more.

Robinson asked about the salt and if that is something that is purchased ahead of time and what he sees happening with supply chain. Shook explained it is a consortium thing, so each year cities, counties, and MnDOT go together and a bid is given. He stated last year, there was an increase of about \$10 per ton for delivery costs and he expects something similar this year.

Robinson asked if much salt gets carried over from year to year or if it has a shelf life. Shook replied as long as it is stirred it can be reused. He stated this year he will end up taking the max quantity because they could get it for a cheaper price than they could get it the next year.

Robinson asked about the recycling survey and if anything was learned from that.

Shook replied definitely there is an interest in compostables so they are looking at doing a station at community parks for compostables.

Mayor Feldman asked if it has been considered to do daily recycling like Andover has where there is a place where residents don't have to wait for recycling days but cardboard and things can be brought anytime. He questioned if that is something they should be looking in to. Shook replied definitely but that is going to require Staff time.

Mayor Feldman replied there is a domino effect to it but it is a service he thought they could do. He stated when he lived in Andover, he loved it because he didn't have to wait for recycling to be picked up at certain times but could get things out of the garage faster. He stated staff should look in to that. Shook replied the City of Nowthen offers that as well; they have a full-time recycling center.

Mayor Feldman replied if they can do it, we can do it.

12. COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Muehlbauer reported he is still out of town so he didn't have much to report.

Udvig didn't have anything to report.

Robinson welcomed two new members to the Planning and Zoning Board. He commented it is nice to see new faces and have a full crew. He stated Kate and Beth did a great job, as they always do, and it was great to see community involvement. He stated they also have some senior transitional housing coming before the Council soon. He stated it is a big deal for the community. He commended Kate for the work she has done.

Mayor Feldman reported he is going to bring information about the new digital sign for the Liquor Muni to the Work Session. He stated they are also looking at a digital sign for the community park but that will be on the Capital Improvement Plan for 2023.

Mayor Feldman stated tomorrow the construction committee will be taking tours of Fire Stations and City Halls in different cities as they vet architectural firms. He stated there are three firms that are in the vetting process which are all professional but they want to ensure they are getting the best. He stated reference checks have already been done and they will be vetting the projects. The committee will put together a wish list of what they would like to see in the project and then with the expertise of the architectural firm they will see how it all starts to get together. He stated, for the public, that the City has been planning for this for quite a while and it is time for St. Francis to have activities in the city for residents so they don't have to go to other cities to enjoy those activities. He stated this facility will be able to do just that. He stated they are looking at meeting rooms with full kitchens for weddings, graduations, and continuing education courses. They are also looking for indoor playgrounds and activities to benefit the residents. He stated it is time for the City to start thinking like this because St. Francis is growing.

Mayor Feldman noted that Siwek is a park that is coming into play this year. He commended Community Development for getting the grant dollars together. He stated broadband is expanding coming up. He complimented Staff and Council for having the foresight to think ahead, think farther out, because this city, in the five to ten years, is going to look a lot different than it does today, especially as they get to the magic number of 10,000 in population. He stated they are about 1,800 shy of that. He stated they are going in the right direction.

Mayor Feldman stated once the City Administrator position is filled, they will have a coach again. He stated the owner of the team is the residents, the managers are the Council, the coach of the team is the City Administrator and then there is the team. He stated Staff has shown that they are willing to work with residents because they are a customer service business. He hoped residents will see that. He thought that has highlighted during the public hearing on Poppy Street when residents came with misinformation and once they had it explained, they were on board. He stated residents need to talk to City Council and Staff, get off Facebook, and talk to them to get answers. They are open and transparent.

Mayor Feldman thought the Assessor was a good idea because it brought it more on a personal level without the County being involved. He thanked Staff for putting up with Council and for their patience. He thanked Muehbauer for his participation the best he could from where he was. He reported there was a cleaning on the contracting end on the Liquor Muni and there are minor replacements such as fans that will be taken care of and little things that will be done. He reported he is getting to the final paperwork end with Webber. Usually within two to four weeks after a project ends, paperwork is done but this company takes a little longer and he is trying to be as patient as he can.

Mayor Feldman stated then he will move on to the City Hall/Fire Station project. He pointed out for the public that the City Hall/Fire Station project is a long-haul process and they are just in the preliminary parts of it. It will be a long process to vet the architectural firms and talk to the Council. He stated they do want public input and they will notify the public at the time their input is requested. He hoped this will be a situation that will benefit the City in a big way with activities and more efficient Fire Department.

Mayor Feldman stated the only building that has ever been built and is being used for what it has been built for is the Police/Public Works building. This will be the first building, other than that, that will be designed for a purpose for City administration and for Fire. This is huge to bring them into the next decade which is why they need to be smart and build a building that will last 40 to 50 years. He stated he knows they can do that, as shown at the Liquor Muni. He stated he sees the team they have and any problem that comes before them they will solve in a matter of time and with the dollars behind it.

Mayor Feldman stated in the first two years they had problems from past administrations which took them longer timewise and moneywise to solve. He stated there will always be problems, but because they are preemptive and proactive, the problems will be a little less severe, not as time consuming, and solvable because they are on top of it. He stated

government is hard work. He noted one thing about this City and Staff is that they do the work which is important and makes the difference from the cities around them. He thanked everyone for their service.

13. UPCOMING EVENTS

March 28, 2022 – Work Session

March 31, 2022 – Special Meeting

April 4, 2022 – City Council Meeting – 6:00 p.m.

April 18, 2022 – City Council Meeting – 6:00 p.m.

April 20, 2022 – Planning and Zoning Meeting

14. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Feldman adjourned the regular City Council at 7:53 p.m.



Jennifer Wida, City Clerk