

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA  
St. Francis City Hall 3750 Bridge Street NW  
October 20, 2025  
6:00 p.m.

**1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The regular City Council meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Mark Vogel.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Mayor Mark Vogel, Councilmembers Kevin Robinson, Sarah Udvig, and Amy Faanes.

Members Absent: Councilmember Joe Muehlbauer.

Also present: City Administrator Kate Thunstrom, Deputy Administrator-City Clerk Jenni Wida, Assistant City Attorney Dave Schaps (Barna, Guzy & Steffen), Deputy Administrator-Public Works Director Paul Carpenter, Police Chief Todd Schwieger, Fire Chief Dave Schmidt, and Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

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

Nays: None.

Motion carries: 4-0

**4. CONSENT AGENDA**

A. City Council Minutes - October 6, 2025

B. Appoint Jodie Steffes as Community Development Director and post a Community Development Specialist vacancy.

C. Approval of Pay Estimate No. 3 for the 2025 Street Reconstruction Project

D. Payment of Claims

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: MAYOR VOGEL APPROVING THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL CONSENT AGENDA

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

Nays: None.

Motion carries: 4-0

**5. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Mike Rodger came forward and thanked the Council for everything they do. He noted that at the last Council meeting, there was a resident who asked about the EDA. He asked how someone is appointed to the EDA. City Administrator Thunstrom explained that EDA members are appointed by the Council.

Mr. Rodger asked how the EDA is funded. Thunstrom said the EDA is funded through the Anoka County HRA/EDA funds, Liquor Store Funds, and general fund funds for acquisitions.

Mr. Rodger asked who approves these funds. Thunstrom shared that the Council and Anoka County approve these funds.

Mr. Rodger asked when the last Comprehensive Plan was done. Thunstrom said this discussion started in 2016 and was finalized in 2018.

Mr. Rodger shared that back in 2016, the City paid to have an economic study done. He asked the Council if they had read it. The Council said no.

Mr. Rodger encouraged all Council and Staff to read this study.

Robinson shared that while the Council approves funds spent by the EDA, he does not see purchase agreements for acquisitions.

Mr. Rodger noted that at the last Council meeting, a resident called the EDA corrupt and not a single Councilmember stood up for the EDA. He said that as a member of the EDA, he would never give a business any TIF funding unless they had a solid business plan. He asked if there had ever been a situation where TIF was granted but the development fell through. Thunstrom said no, as there has only been one application.

City Attorney Schaps explained that there is language in the TIF contracts that says if the developer does not perform, the EDA can pull back the property.

Mr. Rodger stated that the EDA only meets once per year. He said he would be happy to have joint meetings with the Council and the EDA.

Faanes shared that she is on the EDA, and she was the only one who asked why they were selling such a large property for \$5,000. She noted that this was her first meeting, and she was the only person to vote against this sale.

Robinson said that he was not in favor of selling this land for \$5,000; however, he understands why they did it to promote development. He added that he voted against TIF for this property.

Mr. Rodger shared that the previous Council was supportive of TIF for this project, and this was the understanding that the EDA had when they decided to sell this

property.

Mayor Vogel said he would love to set up a future Work Session meeting with the EDA and the Council.

Mr. Rodger asked if they had gotten any offers on the piece of property that is listed on Bridge Street. Thunstrom explained that there are a lot of layers and timelines that go into the development of properties being sold by the EDA, regardless of the price. She said they have discussed a potential project on the Bridge Street site with one buyer; however, they do not have any agreements in place.

Mr. Rodger said they need to have a vision for how the City can prosper.

Tina Carrol came forward and shared that she does not believe that the EDA should have any say in how much the City sells a property for, as they are not elected officials. She asked why the City would purchase empty lots if they were not going to be used for City property and be resold. Thunstrom shared that this property was acquired by the City because the building on it was extremely dangerous. She said no one else was purchasing it, so for the purpose of safety, the City acquired it.

Ms. Carrol asked how much the City paid for this property. Thunstrom said they paid \$170,000 for the property.

Ms. Carrol noted that they spent an additional \$25,000 to clear the trees on this property. She said they need to stop spending money that they do not have. She added that the City needs to stop buying new properties until it can pay off the properties it already owns.

Robinson explained that there are some decisions that they have to make for the future and not just for the current state of the City. He noted that they have paid off bonds early in the past. He said he is very conscious about how he votes to spend City money.

Ms. Carrol shared that she met with Public Works Director Carpenter recently, and she learned a lot about what he does. She noted that he applied for many grants for different projects and encouraged the City to continue to do this to help fund projects. She asked why TIF money is being promoted on the City's website. Thunstrom explained that the City adopted a business subsidy policy in 2016, so this option is laid out on the website just like any other application.

Ms. Carrol asked what they need to do to make sure the Council approves how much a purchase agreement is for. Thunstrom said that EDA has its own authority, and every project that goes to the EDA has been pre-discussed with the Council. She noted that everything that goes to the EDA has been discussed at the Council level for years. She said nothing that the EDA does is a secret to the Council. She

added that two of the five EDA members are on the Council.

Ms. Carrol asked if they are legally required to have an EDA. Thunstrom explained that cities and counties have EDAs for the purpose of redevelopment. She noted that every city in the area has an EDA and the County taxes for HRA and EDA purposes.

Ms. Carrol asked if they could give the authority of the EDA to the Council. Thunstrom said they could look into this, but it would give away the ability to make substantial improvements for economic development. She noted that they have funds from the County that cannot be used by a different body. Schaps added that HRAs and EDAs have different powers and are under different statutes. He noted that they have more authority to move forward on projects, with final City Council approval.

Ms. Carrol thanked the Council for hearing her concerns and shared that she just wants to look out for the City and have it maintain its small-town feel.

Bryan Lawrence, State Representative for St. Francis, came forward and thanked the residents who have shared their feedback this evening, as it is great for him to hear the concerns people have in the City. He shared that there has been a date set for the Bonding Committee for November 13, and they will be working on the City's request.

The Council thanked Representative Lawrence for his attendance this evening and all he has done to represent the City.

Pam Gonzales came forward and shared that she has lived in the City for 34 years. She noted that Minnesota is one of the top ten highest-taxed states. She said she has to watch her spending at home and expects elected officials to do the same to not cause more financial hardships on the residents.

**6. SPECIAL BUSINESS - NONE**

**7. PUBLIC HEARINGS - NONE**

**8. OLD BUSINESS - NONE**

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Ordinance Amendment to Chapter 2 of the City Code – First Reading  
Ordinance 350 amending Chapter 2 of the City Code regarding Council  
Procedure at Regular Meetings**

City Clerk Wida reviewed the Staff report in regard to amending the City Code to remove the requirement for residents to state their name when coming forward to speak at Council meetings.

Mayor Vogel said he is supportive of this change as it helps the residents maintain a level of privacy.

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: FAANES TO ADOPT ORDINANCE 350 AMENDING CHAPTER 2 OF THE CITY CODE REGARDING COUNCIL PROCEDURE AT REGULAR MEETINGS.

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carried: 4-0

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

## **11. REPORTS**

### **A. City Administrator Report**

Thunstrom shared that they are still working on the Highway 47 design. She said that soil work is currently being completed by WSB. She added that they are working on housekeeping items in the City Code regarding zoning.

### **B. Fire Department Monthly Report - September**

Fire Chief Schmidt reviewed the report for the Fire Department for the month of July. He shared there were 60 calls for service, with an average en route time of four minutes and 47 seconds, and at scene time of eight minutes and 42 seconds. He noted they are projecting a volume increase for the year of 7.69% and the trend seems to be continuing into October. He reviewed the times of day and days of the week when all calls came in, with the late afternoon and early evening hours being the busiest time of the day and Tuesdays being the busiest day of the week. He noted there were 16 fire events and 44 EMS events, with the average time on scene of 39 minutes and 19 seconds. He said there was \$1,000 worth of property loss for the month, \$500 for contents, and \$500 for property. He shared that they provided mutual aid three times, two to Oak Grove and once to Andover, and received mutual aid twice.

Robinson asked about the turnout of the French Toast Breakfast event. Schmidt said it was a great event, and they had around 400 people come through the station that morning.

Robinson asked how things are going with Nowthen. Schmidt said he does not have any new specific information. He stated that they have helped them out a few times in the last month on some training burns.

The Council thanked Schmidt and the Fire Department for their great work.

### C. Police Department 3rd Quarter

Police Chief Schwieger reviewed the third quarter report for the Police Department. He discussed the community outreach events that they held, including Cone with a Cop, National Night Out, and Stay Home Safe. He noted that calls for service decreased slightly to a total of 1,760. He shared that there were a total of 36 cases referred to investigations. He added that they made 34 arrests in the third quarter, with the most common reasons being DWIs, warrants, and thefts. He said they issued 165 citations, with the most common types being speed, seatbelts, and no proof of insurance. He noted that officers are being very proactive with enforcement and stopped 764 vehicles for the third quarter. He shared that officers also dedicated a lot of hours over the summer to Towards Zero Deaths initiatives. He added that traffic-related fatalities are down this year.

Faanes asked about the status of the K-9. Schwieger shared that the K-9 is in place and the MOU has been signed. He said the squad is in place and the dog should be received soon. He noted that after it is received, the handler will start to work with and train the dog to get it ready for the force. He anticipated this would be early spring 2026.

Robinson asked about the seatbelt infractions. Schwieger shared that a seatbelt ticket is likely a few hundred dollars. He noted that they were the highest City in the County for seatbelt tickets.

Robinson asked if they ever write warnings instead of tickets for seatbelt infractions. Schwieger said either officer has different standards for what they write tickets for versus warnings.

The Council thanked Schwieger and the Police Department for all of their hard work.

## **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 new Fire District, the Rum River Fire District, had their first meeting last week, where it chose directors. He said that this is a joint powers agreement between Bethel and St. Francis to help make both cities operate more efficiently.

Mayor Vogel shared that he also attended the Rum River Fire District meeting, and they have a lot to work through at future meetings. He added that residents will begin moving into Vista Prairie shortly.

Robinson noted that the Chamber of Commerce has started a podcast that can be found on their website.

**13. UPCOMING EVENTS**

October 27 - City Council Work Session @ 5:30 pm  
October 28 - Truck or Treat Event 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm  
November 3 - City Council Meeting 6:00 pm  
November 11 - City Offices closed in Observance of Veterans' Day  
November 13 - Parks Commission

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

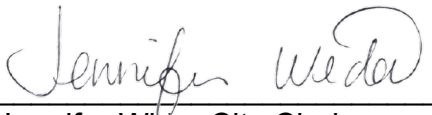
MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: FAANES TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

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

Nays: None.

Motion carries: 4-0

There being no further business, Mayor Vogel adjourned the regular City Council at 7:03 p.m.

  
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Jennifer Wida, City Clerk