

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA  
St. Francis City Hall 3750 Bridge Street NW  
May 4, 2026  
6:00 p.m.

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

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

**2. ROLL CALL**

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

Also present: City Administrator Kate Thunstrom, Deputy Administrator-City Clerk Jenni Wida, Community Development Director Jodie Steffes, City Attorney Travis Lutz, Deputy Administrator-Public Works Director Paul Carpenter, Police Chief Todd Schwieger, Fire Chief Dave Schmidt, Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill, Finance Director Natalie Santillo, and City Planner Beth Richmond (HKGi).

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

**4. CONSENT AGENDA**

A. City Council Minutes - April 20, 2026

B. Acknowledgement for Off-Site Gambling Permit

C. Acknowledgement of Exempt Gambling Permit

D. Dust Control Maintenance

E. Vista Prairie at Eagle Point Warranty Period

F. First Baptist Church Warranty Period and Financial Security Reduction

G. Payment of Claims

MOTION BY: UDVIK SECOND: FAANES APPROVING THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL CONSENT AGENDA

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

**5. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Josh Fisher came forward on behalf of the St. Francis Basketball Association. Fisher stated that the Association operates under the St. Francis Area Booster Club and is unable to obtain an exempt permit because the Booster Club has a limited number of exempt permits available each year. Fisher asked the Council to consider how the City's 10 percent charitable gambling tax is handled, noting that the \$1,900 collected would be a significant benefit to the Association's youth program. Fisher requested a simple and feasible solution that would allow the Association to retain those funds.

**6. SPECIAL BUSINESS - NONE**

**7. PUBLIC HEARINGS - NONE**

**8. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Ordinance Amendment - Adding Small Wireless Facility - Second Reading  
Ordinance 357 amending City Code Chapter 7, Section 5, subdivisions 3, 7, 9, 10, 14, and 20 relating to small cell wireless facility  
Resolution 2026-15 Summary Publication of Ordinance 357

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: ROBINSON APPROVING SECOND READING OF ORDINANCE 357 AMENDING CITY CODE CHAPTER 7, SECTION 5, SUBDIVISIONS 3, 7, 9, 10, 14, AND 20 RELATING TO SMALL CELL WIRELESS FACILITY

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carries: 5-0

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: VOGEL ADOPTING RESOLUTION 2026-15 SUMMARY PUBLICATION OF ORDINANCE 357

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

**B. Gambling Funds - Continued**

Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill presented a continuation of the gambling funds discussion from the prior meeting. Mulvihill noted that the City Attorney had additional information and that the Council needed to determine how to use the existing funds and whether to change the current 10 percent tax rate. Mulvihill confirmed that the rate must be either 10 percent or zero, and that any change

would require an ordinance amendment taking effect at the beginning of the following year.

Robinson stated that returning the accumulated \$246,000 to prior organizations would be difficult to administer. Robinson asked whether gambling funds could be used for community events such as Pioneer Days fireworks, allowing liquor store funds to be redirected toward the Warming House project. Mulvihill confirmed that community celebrations are a qualifying expenditure, but that further research would be needed on specific uses.

Robinson expressed that he did not want the City to be in the business of redistributing funds from one group to another. Robinson stated his preference was to go to zero. Udvig and Mulvihill clarified that only zero percent or 10 percent are permitted options.

Udvig stated she was inclined to agree with Robinson and suggested a work session would be needed if the Council intended to distribute the existing fund balance. Udvig expressed concern that going to zero could result in every community group requesting funds from the City.

Faanes agreed with Robinson and Udvig. Faanes noted she would prefer a way to reduce the financial burden on youth athletes. Still, they acknowledged that City Attorney Travis Lutz confirmed all licensed organizations must be treated equally, regardless of their purpose.

Muehlbauer asked City Attorney Lutz whether the Association could restructure its fundraising to qualify for an exemption. Lutz stated he could not provide that legal advice to a member of the public. Muehlbauer expressed a preference for maintaining the 10 percent rate and directing funds toward the Police Department, noting the City averages approximately \$17,500 per year in gambling tax revenue. Muehlbauer stated that eliminating the tax would shift administrative costs to the taxpayer and suggested a work session to determine how to allocate the existing fund balance.

City Clerk Wida confirmed that processing a gambling permit application takes approximately 30 minutes of Staff time.

Mayor Vogel stated his preference was to go to zero, noting it was a clean solution that returned funds directly to charitable organizations and avoided the complexity of managing and distributing the fund.

The Council reached consensus to direct Staff to prepare an ordinance amendment eliminating the 10 percent charitable gambling tax, to take effect at a future date. Lutz confirmed that Staff direction to prepare the amended ordinance was the only formal action needed. The Council confirmed the change would apply going forward only and would not affect the existing fund balance.

## 9. **NEW BUSINESS**

### A. St. Francis Area Schools Field Lighting CUP

#### *Resolution 2026-13 approving a Conditional Use Permit for the St. Francis High School Field Lighting*

City Planner Beth Richmond presented a request for a conditional use permit for field lighting at the St. Francis High School athletic fields located between Rum River Boulevard and 235th Avenue. Richmond stated the applicant is requesting an exemption from the 25-foot maximum lighting height to allow 70-foot poles, consistent with the six existing poles already in place on the northern two fields. The request includes replacing the lighting system on the existing poles with a new LED system and installing six additional 70-foot poles on the southern two fields.

Richmond stated the site is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's public and institutional designation and is a permitted use in the R-1 zoning district. The photometric plan submitted by the applicant demonstrates that light intensity at the eastern property line and the centerline of 235th Avenue does not exceed code limits. The conditional use permit allows outdoor recreational uses to be lit until 11:00 p.m., and the applicant indicated anticipated hours of operation from early dusk to approximately 9:30 p.m., spring through fall. Richmond noted the Planning Commission held a public hearing in April and unanimously recommended approval.

Udvig stated she supported the additional lighting, noting that fall events often run late and the 11:00 p.m. limit is reasonable.

Faanes asked whether the lights would be on only during games. Richmond confirmed the lights would be on whenever the fields are in use, including practices. Faanes expressed support for the request, noting that limited lighting has impacted game scheduling.

Muehlbauer asked about the height of the new poles. Richmond clarified that the existing poles are already 70 feet high, and the new poles match that height. Richmond also confirmed that the standard notification process was followed, and only one resident responded.

Robinson stated his only concern was neighbor notification and confirmed he had no objection, given the 350-foot notification radius and lack of opposition.

Mayor Vogel stated he had no issues with the request. Vogel noted he had met with the resident who raised concerns about the parking lot and acknowledged those concerns as legitimate, but confirmed that the issue is separate and will be addressed through a commercial parking lot permit. Community Development Director Jodie Steffes confirmed the parking lot plans include improved lighting and exit access to Rum River Boulevard and will not come before the Council.

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: UDVIG ADOPTING RESOLUTION 2026-13  
APPROVING A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR THE ST. FRANCIS HIGH  
SCHOOL FIELD LIGHTING

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

B. Willow Ridge Business Center Site Plan

Resolution 2026-14 approving a site plan for Willow Ridge Business Center

City Planner Richmond presented a site plan request for the Willow Ridge Business Center, proposed on a vacant 8.5-acre parcel located between Cree Street and St. Francis Boulevard. Richmond stated the site is guided for commercial use in the Comprehensive Plan and is zoned B-2 General Business, and the proposed business center office use is consistent with both. The plan includes a 6,400-square-foot commercial office building and associated parking lot on approximately 1.6 acres of the northern portion of the site, with the remaining land available for future subdivision and development.

Richmond outlined several staff-noted conditions of approval. The proposed exterior materials do not meet the code requirement that 100 percent of the front facade consist of high-quality materials such as brick, stone, or glass, and revisions to the front wall are required. The parking lot surface material must be specified, as code allows concrete, bituminous, or pavers. Additional detail is needed on the dumpster enclosure to confirm it meets code requirements for height, opacity, and materials; Staff also recommended adding vegetation near the enclosure, given its visibility from Highway 47. The landscaping plan requires revisions and must be prepared by a licensed landscape architect per City code. Richmond noted the Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval at their April meeting.

Robinson welcomed the development and expressed that it was good to see activity on that corner.

Mayor Vogel asked whether the applicant had been receptive to Staff feedback. Richmond confirmed no concerns had been raised.

MOTION BY: FAANES SECOND: ROBINSON ADOPTING RESOLUTION 2026-14  
APPROVING A SITE PLAN FOR WILLOW RIDGE BUSINESS CENTER

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

C. Code Enforcement Extension Request

Community Development Director Jodie Steffes presented a code enforcement extension request from property owner Brent Black at 23386 Salish Street. Steffes stated the property received a notice for excessive outdoor storage of junk and refuse, as well as a large storage container. Black is requesting an extension to bring the property into compliance, with a proposed cleanup schedule of May 30 for the first section of the property and July 15 for final compliance.

Black came forward and addressed the Council. Black stated he is a long-time resident who purchased the property as a hobby farm and has been working to develop it for his family. Black explained that the outdoor storage consists largely of recycled and repurposed materials used for farm projects and that the shipping container is located approximately 300 feet from the road in the rear of the property. Black cited significant financial hardship, including his retirement from Federal Cartridge after 19 years and his wife's upcoming spinal surgery, as reasons he could not meet the original compliance deadline. Black committed to full compliance by July 15 and asked the Council to grant the extension.

Muehlbauer noted the container had previously been moved from the front of the property to the rear rather than removed. Muehlbauer stated that while he was not opposed to an extension, he would have preferred a June 15 deadline, and that financial circumstances do not change code requirements. Muehlbauer also noted that the City's code enforcement system is complaint-driven and that complaints from neighbors trigger the obligation to enforce.

Faanes disclosed that she lives two doors from the property and has not been the complaining neighbor. Faanes asked Black what would change between now and July 15 to allow compliance. Black stated he would sell equipment, including trailers and his skid steer, if necessary to fund the removal of the container. Faanes stated she was in favor of granting the extension but would not support extending it further.

Udvig stated she was in favor of granting the extension to July 15.

Robinson stated he was in favor of the extension and noted the tiered inspection schedule, with a May 30 inspection of the first section of the property, provided a reasonable structure. Robinson encouraged Black to prioritize the most visible items at the front of the property. Steffes confirmed the May 30 inspection was already scheduled as a benchmark for the first section.

Mayor Vogel stated he was sympathetic to Black's situation and in favor of the extension, but noted that if the matter returned to the Council, he would not be as accommodating.

**MOTION BY: FAANES SECOND: MUEHLBAUER APPROVING THE CODE ENFORCEMENT EXTENSION REQUEST FOR THE PROPERTY AT 23386 SALISH STREET WITH A FINAL COMPLIANCE DATE OF JULY 15, 2026**

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

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

## **11. REPORTS**

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

City Administrator Kate Thunstrom stated she had nothing to report at this time, noting the City is in a holding pattern pending updates from the legislature and the Highway Program. Thunstrom indicated she was available to answer questions. No questions were asked.

### **B. Police Department Report - First Quarter**

Police Chief Todd Schwieger presented the first quarter Police Department report. Schwieger highlighted the launch of the City's new canine program, noting that Canine Viktor and his handler, Officer Derek Barck, have been in intensive training since mid-March at 40 hours per week, with an anticipated on-duty date of mid-June. Schwieger reported that officers generated 1,648 incident offenses during the quarter, including 35 Group A offenses and 31 Group E offenses, and completed 107 hours of training.

Udvig expressed appreciation for the officers' community engagement efforts. Muehlbauer asked about the status of the Citizen Academy. Schwieger stated the Academy is well-attended, with Week 5 upcoming, and has included activities such as helicopter landings, impairment goggle demonstrations, CPR training, and first aid training.

### **C. Public Works 1st Quarter Report**

Deputy Administrator-Public Works Director Paul Carpenter presented the first quarter Public Works report. On the streets and parks side, Carpenter reported that reduced snowfall allowed crews to complete significant drainage basin work during the winter. The department partnered with the Anoka Conservation District on the Dellwood Prairie Restoration Project, which included the removal of buckthorn and Chinese elm and preparation for a controlled burn. The remaining Emerald Ash Borer grant funds were used to remove the remaining ash trees on the site.

Carpenter reported that grant applications were submitted during the winter, including the Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Grant for the warming house project, with results expected by the end of June, and the Anoka County Community Development Block Grant, with early indications described as positive. The department also partnered with the Police Department to fabricate roadside speed reader signs in-house at a fraction of the commercial cost.

On the wastewater side, Carpenter reported that Staff identified and received

Department of Health approval for 20 lead and copper sampling sites. Carpenter noted that chloride is primarily entering the sanitary sewer through car washes rather than road runoff, and that Staff continues to work with the MPCA. The wastewater treatment facility capacity study indicates approximately 1,100 units of remaining capacity at full build-out, including the recently added Vista Prairie development.

Muehlbauer asked whether the 1,100-unit figure represented 75 percent or 100 percent capacity. Carpenter confirmed it represents 100 percent capacity based on engineering estimates.

Robinson commended the in-house fabrication of the speed reader signs and asked about the street sweeping program. Carpenter explained that sweeping is required twice per year under the MS-4 permit and that collected granite chips are recycled for use on gravel roads during icy conditions. Robinson asked about the primary chloride source. Carpenter confirmed it is car wash discharge into the sanitary sewer, not road salt runoff. Robinson also asked about the new mower. Carpenter stated the mower is currently at the dealership, awaiting a cab, and has not yet been put into service.

Mayor Vogel encouraged Council members and the public to consider ride-alongs with Public Works Staff to better understand department operations.

#### D. Rum River Fire District Report - First Quarter

Fire Chief Dave Schmidt presented the first quarter Rum River Fire District report. Schmidt reported 205 incidents for the quarter, with an average en-route time of 5 minutes and 13 seconds and an average at-scene time of 9 minutes and 21 seconds, meeting the district's goal of remaining below the 10-minute average at-scene benchmark. The incident response breakdown included 44 fire runs and 150 EMS runs. The district provided mutual aid 15 times and received mutual aid three times during the quarter. Year-to-date, the district is at 267 calls, approximately 10 percent below the same period last year.

Robinson noted that the Rum River Fire District website is now live. Schmidt confirmed the website is operational and that Staff are working to enable online burn permit applications, and that social media outreach has been well-received.

Robinson asked about the impact of Vista Prairie at Eagle Point on EMS call volume. Schmidt stated that response volume to Vista Prairie has been reasonable and that other addresses in the City are generating more calls.

Muehlbauer asked Schmidt to provide the total number of responses to Vista Prairie, noting his interest in the data, given the tax abatement associated with the development. Schmidt confirmed he would provide that information.

Mayor Vogel noted that Schmidt has been appointed chair of the Anoka County

Fire Protection Council. Vogel stated that the Council is working toward a capital improvement planning model that would set aside funds annually for major equipment replacements to stabilize the budget and avoid large year-to-year fluctuations.

## **12. COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS**

The Council shared the meetings and events they attended in the past few weeks, as well as highlighting upcoming events.

Muehlbauer reported attending the Rum River Fire District meeting and noted that the proposed flattened Capital Improvement Plan for the Fire District, while beneficial for budget management, is estimated to result in approximately a 2.4 percent increase to the City's budget.

Faanes reported attending the Rum River Fire District meeting. Faanes asked City Clerk Wida about the City website's agenda search function, which has been temporarily discontinued during a transition to a new agenda management system. Wida confirmed the search capability will be restored within 8 to 10 weeks and that historical agendas will be made available. Faanes also asked about public notification for the upcoming candidate filing period (May 19 – June 2, 2026). Wida confirmed that notifications will be distributed via Facebook posts, the City website, the local newspaper, and the bulletin board at City Hall. Faanes noted that three Council seats are on the ballot.

Udvig reported no meetings during the past two weeks. Udvig encouraged residents to purchase Pioneer Days buttons, which provide discounts at food vendors and event entry, and to sign up to volunteer.

Robinson noted that Pioneer Days volunteer sign-ups are available on the event website. Robinson reported attending the Joint Law Enforcement Council meeting with Police Chief Schwieger and the Rum River Fire District meeting.

Mayor Vogel reported attending the Rum River Fire District meeting and the Anoka County Fire Protection Council meeting. Vogel also reported that he, City Administrator Thunstrom, and Deputy Administrator-Public Works Director Carpenter traveled to the State Senate on short notice to testify in support of the Highway 47 project. Thunstrom confirmed the City was one of 38 communities selected to testify before the Senate. Vogel expressed appreciation to Senator Matthews and Representative Lawrence for facilitating the City's participation. Vogel reported participating in the Citizens Academy and attending the Anoka County local government officials meeting, where a presentation on e-bikes and growing safety concerns was given. Vogel noted that Anoka County does not anticipate changes to local government aid for the upcoming year.

## **13. UPCOMING EVENTS**

May 18 - City Council Meeting - 6:00 pm

May 19 - Town Hall with Representative Lawrence and Senator Matthews - 6:00 pm

May 20 - Planning Commission Meeting - 7:00 pm

May 25 - Memorial Day - City offices closed

May 29 - May 31 - Pioneer Days

Candidate Filing begins on May 19, 2026, and ends June 2, 2026

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

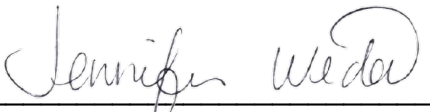
MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: UDVIG TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

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

Nays: None

Motion carries: 5-0

There being no further business, Mayor Vogel adjourned the regular City Council at 7:27 p.m.



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Jennifer Wida, City Clerk