

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
St. Francis Area Schools District Office 4115 Ambassador Blvd. NW
NOVEMBER 15, 2021
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 Joe Muehlbauer, Robert Bauer, Kevin Robinson, and Sarah Udvig

Also present: City Clerk Jenni Wida, City Administrator Joe Kohlmann, Police Chief Todd Schwieger, Fire Chief Dave Schmidt, Public Works Director Jason Windingstad, Assistant City Attorney Dave Schaps (Barna, Guzy & Steffen), City Engineer Craig Jochum (Hakanson Associates, Inc.), Liquor Store Manager John Schmidt, Community Development Director Kate Thunstrom, Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Ayes: Udvig, Muehlbauer, Feldman, Bauer, Robinson

Nays: None

Motion carried 5-0

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. City Council Minutes – November 1, 2021
- B. Embedded Systems Contract Renewal
- C. Establishing Precinct & Polling Locations- Resolution 2021-56
- D. Transfer for Park Land Purchase- Resolution 2021-57
- E. Weber Inc- Pay Application #5
- F. Police Officer Resignation, Police Officer Opening
- G. Payment of Claims

MOTION BY: BAUER SECOND: UDVIG APPROVING THE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS A-G

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

Nays: None

Motion carried 5-0

5. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC-

Zack Stadum, 6938 Ambassador Boulevard NW, commented about a development that will be on an upcoming agenda.

Mayor Feldman stated it won't be on the agenda until February 2022.

Mr. Stadum stated that the Planning Commission told him it would be on one of the upcoming meetings.

Mayor Feldman stated it has been delayed by the developer.

Mr. Stadum stated it's the Green Valley Development and that he is opposed to it. It is right next to his property and he has had trespassing on his property by the development company, cutting down fences and fence posts that he put in and numerous other problems. When it comes on the agenda, he plans to be present to oppose it again. Mr. Stadum felt it should have been voted down and removed by the Planning Commission, especially because there is pending litigation. The Council shouldn't give consideration to this development because land is being developed that doesn't belong to the City and has caused trouble. The neighbors are all opposed to it as well.

Gene Rechtzigel 6533 160th Street, Apple Valley, stated that the legal issue that Mr. Stadum referenced has been running in the local newspaper of Anoka. Mr. Rechtzigel stated his understanding is that issue should freeze any forward action with this development. He inquired about the exact name of the development.

Mayor Feldman replied that it has been slated to be on the agenda in February 2022 and any comment will be considered at meetings for which notification will be given. Any comments made today will have to be restated during those meetings.

Mr. Rechtzigel stated the State of Minnesota has revoked the license of Green Valley Development so that also should also halt the project. He quoted language on the legal issue from a Minnesota State Statue which indicates that a boundary line has to be developed not by GPS but by what is on the ground, called a "ground truth." That is what the legal action is to determine. He stated the website has language to that effect. The developers of Green Valley Preserve are putting stakes in the ground without regard to where the boundary line is on the ground. The developers are subdividing his land which isn't permissible. He can see why the license has been revoked.

City Administrator Joe Kohlmann stated for clarification that the application could be heard between now and February 2022 if the work is completed ahead of schedule.

Mayor Feldman stated the emails the Council has received to date have indicated February 2022. The public will be notified if the timeline changes.

6. SPECIAL BUSINESS - NONE

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS - NONE

8. OLD BUSINESS - NONE

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. MESB Storage

Fire Chief Dave Schmidt introduced an agreement to provide storage services to the Metropolitan EMS Board which has a mobile emergency room that can be used to treat 12 patients. The agreement has been reviewed by legal teams by both the City and the State. The EMS Board is willing to pay \$1,000 a month for storage. As part of the agreement, the City will also work with the EMS Board to have our Staff trained to be able to be deployed throughout the State which will provide potential additional reimbursements.

Mayor Feldman stated this is already being done?

Fire Chief Schmidt confirmed this, stating they starting on a trial basis to see if any Public Works activities would be impacted by where it is being stored. Logistical issues have been worked through to allow late night access.

Mayor Feldman asked where it is being stored.

Public Works Director Jason Windingstad replied they have it in the garage by the wastewater storage, where the old firetruck was.

Mayor Feldman commented that he liked the \$1,000 per month storage fee and asked what the money would be used for.

Fire Chief Schmidt replied that right now it is not allocated for anything specific. The intent would be to offset any needs that Public Works has regarding storage. If they wanted to send Staff for training the money could be used for that purpose. The entire \$12,000 wouldn't be needed and could become revenue for the City, Fire Department, Fire Station or General Fund depending on the need.

Mayor Feldman asked Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill where she thought the money would go.

Finance Director Mulvihill replied the money could go in the General Fund.

Mayor Feldman commented there is always a need at the Fire Department because the budget isn't very high. He asked what the exact type of vehicle is that is being stored.

Fire Chief Schmidt replied it is a retired MTC bus that is completely outfitted now and has 12 emergency beds. Deployment would occur in the event of a mass casualty incident. There would be a team of doctors on site who would send someone to get the vehicle. The Fire Department would likely send one or two people along once they are trained to help facilitate logistics on the scene.

Mayor Feldman clarified the vehicle is an empty seat bus that has been outfitted.

Fire Chief Schmidt replied the vehicle as been retrofitted to be a mobile emergency room unit.

Mayor Feldman commented that the storage place is big but questioned if there was still enough room.

Public Works Director Windingstad replied the vehicle is on the south end in a place where it can be pulled out and the Staff can still get access to their things.

Robinson asked if the vehicle required a source of power to keep it ready for service.

Public Works Director Windingstad replied it has a battery and that the vehicle is maintained and checked by the EMS Board. He feels it is a win-win in that now the City has access to a bus that is equipped to handle mass casualty situations if needed and payment is being made to store it.

Robinson commented that electricity bills should be covered by the monthly storage fee.

Public Works Director Windingstad replied the electricity use is being tracked.

Muehlbauer asked where the money would be allocated. He also asked if there would be a security concern as far as anyone getting access to the vehicle.

Public Works Director Windingstad replied there are a select few that have access to the vehicle. Some of the people are his staff and some are officers within the Fire Department.

Bauer and Udvig both commented that they didn't have any concerns.

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: UDVIG APPROVING THE AGREEMENT AS PRESENTED FOR STORAGE OF THE MESB VEHICLE.

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

Nays: None

Motion carried 5-0

B. Schedule a Work Session

City Administrator Joe Kohlmann stated that he would like to schedule a work session to settle a project from 2016 with Anoka County. After discussion, the work session was scheduled for Monday, November 29, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall in the conference room.

10. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - NONE

11. REPORTS

A. Fire Department Monthly Report

Fire Chief Dave Schmidt gave the report for the month of October. He reported that response times continued to stay under their goal of ten minutes with an average time of 7 minutes and 58 seconds. Schmidt corrected two errors on the staff report, the first not aggregating the years out appropriately, and the number of run calls should be 61 instead of 60. The average number of firefighters per response was 5.7. The distribution was 13 for Fire and 48 for EMS runs. Six cases were flagged as meeting COVID criteria and eight runs had over 20-minute response times for the ambulance. Schmidt noted for the month of November so far, nine runs have been flagged as COVID related. Numbers have been trending upwards. 13 fire inspections have been completed.

Mayor Feldman asked for confirmation on the response times and number of firefighters per call. He noted as has been the case in past months, that there are more EMS calls than Fire as a trend.

Schmidt confirmed this, adding that as of today they are at around 600 runs for the year to date, compared with 541 for the entire year of 2020. The run totals have far exceeded last year's run totals which is occurring all over the County as well as the State.

Mayor Feldman asked if the trends for EMS being higher than Fire are being seen all over the State.

Schmidt confirmed this, adding that one of the things that the experts suggest is that in the early days of COVID a lot of people were foregoing routine cares and even some necessary follow-ups. The consequences for that are starting to be seen. The EMS calls are going up for the delay in care that would normally have been gotten in any other environment. The COVID numbers are also adding to the

run volume as well.

Mayor Feldman commented that he noticed runs that are COVID related but also other things. He stated that someday ambulances may be located in each city.

Schmidt replied there is a push State wide regarding ambulance services.

Muehlbauer commented it was a good report. He asked for an update on Nowthen.

Schmidt replied they are doing well. It has been busy. They have had a couple of significant crashes in that area lately and some other issues in that town. Every road through Nowthen has a speed limit of 55 miles per hour. Generally, things are going well, people are happy, and slow progress is being made.

Udvig commented it was a great report and thanked Schmidt for his work.

Bauer commented it was a great report. He asked if shared training is happening with Nowthen.

Schmidt replied that some is happening. The department is also utilizing some cost share initiatives by sharing the EMS training.

Bauer asked about when Santa would be on the Fire Truck this year.

Schmidt replied December 9, 2021.

Robinson commented it was a great report. He referenced the ambulance response times being approximately 20 minutes and asked if that is the trend with other municipalities as well.

Schmidt confirmed this and added it isn't just a St. Francis problem, nor just an Anoka County problem. At a Chief's conference he attended in Duluth where he spoke with the Brooklyn Park Fire Chief who reported 40-minute response times, even in the metro area.

Robinson asked if it was employment or equipment related.

Schmidt replied there are a number of factors but employment is one of the biggest factors. There is a national paramedic shortage that has been going on for a number of years. It is getting harder and harder to recruit and retain personnel. There is a business model issue that doesn't work well from a worker welfare standpoint. As a paramedic, it's not the career that sees the most longevity in. It is a very difficult career mentally, emotionally and physically so a higher rate of turn over is seen. Pay equity compared to most other health care fields is also a big factor. A solution is hoped for. A lot of Fire Chiefs have been involved in discussion but unfortunately until things change legislatively the municipality has no authority

to make changes. This is a pattern has been occurring long enough that data will need to be gathered to address it.

Robinson asked if there is a City, County, or State contribution to the ambulance services. As the trends change would money be shifted to departments such as the Fire Department to help the City bare the cost of having an ambulance service.

Schmidt explained that in the private ambulance industry, the State of Minnesota has an EMS taxing district rule. The problem is that the taxing district only applies to nonprofits and municipalities, most of the ambulances that provide coverage are private for-profit entities that don't leverage the taxing district. They offset by reducing costs in other places. The other challenge is with hospitals and clinics continuing to struggle for reimbursement rates, they take revenue from the ambulance fund to go back to the hospitals and clinics to ensure they have financial solvency throughout the entire organization. As far as funding available, EMS relies on billables when they transport patients, as the margins gets smaller it becomes harder to pay more, to hire and retain staff. Legislative changes would have to take place to make an impact but it is something that municipalities are paying very close attention to.

Robinson asked what the cost is to have a municipally run ambulance service.

Schmidt replied it is likely between \$300,000- \$600,000 to get up and running before potentially generating some revenue from transporting.

Muehlbauer asked how it would work with going to a hospital that has their own ambulance service.

Schmidt answered they cannot refuse an ambulance unless they are at capacity which is occurring due to COVID.

Robinson asked with municipalities that have an ambulance in their Fire Department if it is likely included as part of a levy.

Schmidt replied they are billed.

Robinson asked if that could be a reality of St. Francis in the next ten years.

Schmidt replied it could be a possibility through direct billing and utilizing the EMS taxing district.

Mayor Feldman commented if the calls continue according to the trend, it may be where the City is heading.

B. Public Works Monthly Report

Public Works Director Jason Windingstad reviewed the staff report. The order for the road grader was completed by Staff and is ready for use along with the other equipment for the plow. Fall sweeping is complete and the last road grading. Biosolids are being brought to the fields and are two thirds done. The emergency response plan will go into effect on December 31, 2021. The new employee is being trained in. By next week he should be able work independently which is ahead of schedule. There have been some work orders for re-reads on the meters. Most were due to leaks, not faulty meters. There were two meters that weren't able to be read.

Mayor Feldman asked about the meters that weren't able to be read.

Windingstad replied that sometimes there are glitches in the frequency for a variety of reasons.

Mayor Feldman asked what is done in that situations.

Windingstad replied they correct the problem.

Mayor Feldmann commented there were no clogged lift stations for a second time. Windingstad confirmed this.

Councilmembers Bauer, Robinson, Muehlbauer and Udvig all commented it was a good report and thanked Windingstad for his work.

12. COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Muehlbauer- reported he is back in town. He will be meeting with Staff to catch up with things.

Robinson- thanked the Mayor Feldman on his work and oversight of the Liquor Store which will be an asset to the community when it opens.

Bauer- reported he is looking forward to the rest of the year.

Udvig- announced on Wednesday, December 1, 2021 at 6:00 pm will be the St. Francis community tree lighting at Woodbury Park.

Mayor Feldman- reported on the LiquorMuni. He stated it was shut down from November 7- 14, 2021 to redo the floor on the south end. The LiquorMuni grand opening will be the week of December 13-18, 2021. There are still some final items to be done but the store is fully open now. The staff has done a great job throughout the project. The Bottle Shop is at full operational hours which are Monday through Friday 10:00 am to 10:00 pm; Saturday from 9:00 am to 10:00pm, and Sunday 11:00 am to 6:00 pm. These hours are also listed on the website. The store will be fully operational for all three holidays including Thanksgiving,

Christmas and New Year's which are the big holidays for the year. He commended all who were involved in the project. The project management difficulties were corrected through consistency and perseverance on his part. Mayor Feldman stated for the record that removing the project manager with a new one they accomplished more in four weeks than the five months prior. With the experience, knowledge, and support the Mayor had, the team was able to complete the construction. He commended the Public Works staff that were involved and the full time Staff, John, Crystal, and Corrine that helped to pull it off. He invited the Council to come to visit the store.

Mayor Feldman commented that the City didn't have a team mindset with past administrations but that is what they have established now. They also put preventative maintenance and proactive thinking which has pushed the City in the right direction. They are making wise decisions and passing the savings onto the residents. They are also building the trust of the residents even though issues may arise. He addressed the residents, and stated that the Council listens to the residents with issues and concerns that are brought forward but the Council has to look at the broader picture. This is done by the strategic plans and codes that are in place. They don't designate one neighborhood over another but look at how it all fits together for the betterment of the City and the residents that they serve. The City is a customer service business and the residents are the customers. Decisions are done as a team and are based on what is best for the City at large. Other cities may have a perception that the City does what it wants, St. Francis doesn't have that attitude. They do their due-diligence and take input seriously and give answers with full vetting.

13. UPCOMING EVENTS

A. Meetings/ Events

November 25, 2021- City Offices Closed - Thanksgiving Holiday

December 1, 2021 – Christmas Tree Lighting Woodbury Park – 6:00 pm

December 6, 2021- City Council Meeting - 6:00 pm

December 9, 2021 – Fire Truck with Santa 5:30 pm

December 15, 2021- Planning Commission Meeting - 7:00 pm

December 20, 2021- City Council Meeting - 6:00 pm

14. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Feldman adjourned the regular City Council at 6:46 p.m.



Jennifer Wida, City Clerk