

**CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
ST. FRANCIS MN
ANOKA COUNTY**

**CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
September 21, 2020**

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

The regular City Council meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Mayor Steve Feldman through a virtual setting via Zoom.

2. **ROLL CALL**

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

Also present: Assistant City Attorney Dave Schaps (Barna, Guzy & Steffen), City Administrator Joe Kohlmann, Community Development Director Kate Thunstrom, Police Chief Todd Schwieger, Fire Chief Dave Schmidt, Public Works Director Jason Windingstad, Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill, and City Clerk Barb Held.

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

Ayes: Robinson, Udvig, Feldman, and Muehlbauer.

Nays: None

Motion carried 4-0.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. City Council Minutes – September 8, 2020

B. October Domestic Violence Month Proclamation – Resolution 2020-35

C. ~~Siwek Park – Phase 1 Archaeological Survey~~

D. Pay Estimate No. 3 – 2020 Street Reconstruction and Watermain Improvement Project \$726,743,81 to Kuechle Underground, Inc.

E. ~~DNR Matching Grant – Fire Department~~

F. Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA) Safety Management Program Contract 2020-2021

G. Payment of Claims \$1,174,768.53 (ACH 296E-297E \$201,091.52 and Check #'s 78034-78090 \$973,677.01)

Mayor Feldman stated Councilmember Robinson asked to have item C. and I would like item E. pulled from the consent agenda to discuss further.

MOTION BY ROBINSON SECOND MUEHLBAUER APPROVING THE CONSENT AGENDA AS AMENDED ITEMS A – B, D, F and G.

Ayes: Udvig, Robinson, Muehlbauer, and Feldman.

Nays: None

Motion carried 4-0.

C. Siwek Park – Phase 1 Archaeological Survey

Councilmember Robinson said he was curious of the significance of this area, is it because it being close to the Rum River. Community Development Director Kate Thunstrom stated one grant requirement of the State of MN Historical Society was that

the City complete a Phase 1 Archaeological Survey prior to construction. Robinson said interesting that the lower quote was much more detailed. Council had no further questions.

E. DNR Matching Grant – Fire Department

Mayor Feldman wanted to clarify for the Council that the \$8,624.16 grant from the MN DNR is a matching grant. The DNR amount will be \$4,462 and the City's portion will be \$4,162.16. The \$8,624.16 will be used to purchase new nozzles for Engine 2, additional blitz fire nozzle for Tanker 1 and small tools for wildland/grass fire operations.

MOTION BY MUEHLBAUER SECOND UDVIG APPROVING CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS C AND E.

Ayes: Muehlbauer, Feldman, Udvig, and Robinson.

Nays: None

Motion carried 4-0.

5. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

City Administrator Joe Kohlmann asked if anyone watching would like to speak to the council on an item not on the agenda. Hearing none the council continued.

6. SPECIAL BUSINESS

None

7. PUBLIC HEARING

None

8. OLD BUSINESS

None

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Assessing Contract Renewal – Erik Skogquist (Continued)

Mayor Feldman reported this was a carry over from the last City Council meeting. The City received a 3-year contract renewal proposal from Erik Skogquist with a onetime 3% increase that will be held flat for the remainder of the contract. The City did not receive a proposal from Anoka County.

Erik Skogquist stated thank you for the last 3 years and being able to work with the City. We did start out asking for a 5-year contract but the council wanted a 3-year contract. At this time, we are asking for a 3% increase that will be held flat for the remainder of the contract. I was unable to attend the last council meeting but heard there was a concern. I am a council member in another city and would like to keep them separate. In our business Mary, Chris and myself work and listen to people. If for some reason and there are times we run into people not happy with us we will send a different person in to assess their property value. In regards to my council member position, I didn't handle that situation well.

Feldman reported the increase for the assessing contract will be:

- \$10.40 (was \$10.10) for each improved parcel of residential, seasonal recreational residential, and agricultural type property.
- \$ 4.65 (was \$4.50) for each unimproved parcel of residential, seasonal recreational residential, and agricultural type property.
- \$62.00 (was \$60.00) for each improved and unimproved parcel of commercial and industrial type property.
- \$62.00 (was \$60.00) for each improved and unimproved parcel of apartment or mobile/manufactured home park type property.

Just for reference the 2017 Anoka County contract was \$40,513 and Erik's company was \$32,819.70.

Udvig thanked Erik for joining us tonight. I was the one that brought up the concern. Elected Officials should be held to higher standards. Not that attacking staff is okay but also the contractor is concerning. People in general don't like people coming on their property. Hope this doesn't happen in St. Francis. We can't have anyone representing St. Francis acting like what you did. That type of behavior will not be tolerated.

Erik Skogquist said I apologized but the citizens were not happy with what happened in the park. I am pretty passionate about my city but also my day job. Mostly resolved, should not affect my license. I apologized a lot.

Udvig then discussed the incident with Erik briefly. Erik said not sure the article was 100% accurate.

Feldman stated if you were to treat/address our residents with four letter words we would revisit the contract.

Robinson said he agrees with what the Mayor has said. Do we need something in the contract regarding the court case to look out for the betterment of our residents?

Muehlbauer said he understands Udvig's concerns. It is up to your council how they will deal with the situation.

Feldman said I agree, I think a lesson was learned and move on, we have not received any complaints.

MOTION BY MUEHLBAUER SECOND ROBINSON APPROVING THE AGREEMENT FOR ASSESSMENT SERVICES BETWEEN THE CITY OF ST. FRANCIS AND ERIK A. SKOGQUIST, SAMA AND MARY WELLS, CMA IN THE CITY OF ST. FRANCIS.

Ayes: Feldman, Robinson, Udvig and Muehlbauer.

Nays: None

Motion carried 4-0.

B. Broadband, Fiber and Internet

Mayor Feldman said he read through the emails of concerned residents regarding

internet service.

Thunstrom reported staff have been in discussion with providers and Anoka County regarding unserved and under-served areas of the City. In March residents were faced with issues of a remote workforce and distance learning with K-12 and colleges. Residents began to express concerns regarding the lack of service and the poor quality of service. Maps were provided in the Council packet showing the underserved areas. Started mostly on the west side of the City then we began hearing from more residents, specifically on the east side of the City in the Pine Valley Acres development. Staff heard from several residents by email and phone. The emails received were in the Council packet. Residents asking to be heard were notified of tonight's meeting. In some of the emails many residents mention that the City was not acting upon an opportunity with CenturyLink. It has been found that the information the residents were given was from work between CenturyLink and another city. St. Francis has not been presented an opportunity to improve the services as identified. Thunstrom stated staff also inquired with Midco on where services were as it related to the east side. Melissa, from Midco is viewing the meeting this evening. In the Staff report there were two possible projects listed. First the immediate attention to Pine Valley Acres development and internet concerns and second, a long-term plan for service to all residential areas of the city in need which would take a couple years. Unfortunately, CenturyLink staff have been reached out to but we have not received any response needed for tonight's meeting.

Feldman said the City not doing anything in the Pine Valley Acres development was because we were not aware of the problem. The need for higher speed internet is not going away.

City Administrator Joe Kohlmann stated he would call on the people viewing if they would like to speak on the topic. I will go in the order they appear on my screen. First was;

Amy Lockman – no comment.

Jason's iPhone – 23953 Cobalt Street, we just moved here from Wisconsin and home school our children. We can not have more than one person using the internet at a time.

Sue Harstad – no comment but also is having problems too.

John Marshall – 24097 Dysprosium Street, said we have 2.5 mbps with CenturyLink and that is our only option. Midco said they are not in our area. We have four kids and that speed is a problem.

Beth Giese – St. Francis Area Schools Superintendent, stated obviously we are in desperate need. No one expected this to happen and no one is to blame. Anything would help. Currently we are putting hotspots in busses and having them going out to remote areas. I appreciate this conversation is happening, if the school can help in any

way, a letter of need or whatever just let us know.

Dani – it's Dani's husband, 24222 Erkium Street NW, CenturyLink is our only option. Worried it will get worse and Midco said they are not in our area. Appreciate any help we can get.

Melissa Denning, 23215 Tamarack Street, currently sitting out in my yard because it is the only area I could get service. We have only satellite. I am employee in the school district. I have to take my three kids to McDonalds; library and they work in the back of my car. Appreciate that you are working on this.

Lori/Albert – 5358 241st Avenue, said they have slow internet. We asked the cable provider 13 years ago in Windsor Farms and they said it would cost then, \$1,000 to get cable to them. East and West of us have cable. Work in civil engineering and CenturyLink by far is the worse utility company to work with. Question I have, did the developer pay for cable to be put in?

Steve Weidell – no comment

Ava/Dusty Hoff – 23034 Goldenrod Street, I second with what everyone else is says, insanely poor service, very difficult to get anything done.

Mike Herbst – no comment

Erin, 24068 Dysprosium Street NW, thank you for having this conversation. We have been told there is a creek in our area and that is why they can't get cable to us. We have a 15-year-old and a younger son. When I work from home I can only get things done is when the kids are not online. My youngest has therapy online. I believe Midco has a golden opportunity here if they can get cable to us. So difficult to function with just normal things going on. Thank you, Kate, for bringing this up.

Taylor Just – no comment

Feldman said so what I am hearing it is in mostly rural lots. Thunstrom said we have a mix of both, rural lots and the outer edge of the urban lots. Feldman said I would be frustrated as heck. I would like to see what we can do at least temporarily. Let's hear from Midco representative who is also viewing the meeting.

Melissa, of Midco said we are here to service St. Francis. Unfortunately, we can not be on top of all new developments. Kate (Thunstrom) has been great to work with. She had identified areas in the eastern and western portions of the city that are underserved. I will forward that information on to our team. Geography is a huge factor. We are always wanting to expand our foot print and grow. I plan to keep in touch with Kate and see how we can partner. Glad we opened the line of communication. We were not aware of all these areas of concern.

Mike Herbst – been in the area for 20 years, the last 10 years in St. Francis. Hughes Net is in Oak Grove but very limited service, then Comcast came in the area. I live off of 243rd and Nightingale Street. CenturyLink now has increase speed in our area. I work for the State and the bandwidth that I had just didn't work – room to improve. Saw things on social media where people have been complaining and a need to increase speed. Due to COVID-19 the infrastructure is being taxed.

The council asked do we need a work session to discuss this further? They asked Thunstrom if she could get the information needed in a week or two. Kohlmann said maybe she can do some more research to see when she would even be able to get some information.

Feldman said he appreciates Midco being here tonight, I wish CenturyLink could have heard this. Council then discussed hotspots, CARES Act funding and temporary cable service. Council asked Thunstrom when she has more information to let the council know and they can set a work session.

C. EDA Funds Transfer to the City – Resolution 2020-36

Thunstrom reported the EDA is looking to purchase the property for the new Fire Station/City Hall on Bridge Street and is requesting the funds for the purchase and demolition. The amount being requested to be transferred from the General Fund to the EDA is \$187,000. Thunstrom also reported there is no closing date scheduled and will need to relocate the renters.

Robinson had questions for Thunstrom on the relocation. He also looking at this to be in 2-4 years and didn't take into account liability issues.

MOTION BY MUEHLBAUER SECOND UDVIG TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2020-36 A RESOLUTION ALLOWING THE TRANSFER OF \$187,000 FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO THE EDA FUND.

Ayes: Robinson, Feldman, Udvig, and Muehlbauer.

Nays: None

Motion carried 4-0.

10. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

City Administrator Joe Kohlmann asked if anyone watching would like to speak to the council on an item not on the agenda. Hearing none the council continued.

11. REPORTS

A. Department Reports – Public Works Monthly Reports

Public Works Director Jason Windingstad wanted to give some quick updates, the electronic sign is up and running. Currently we have three HVAC companies contracted in the city doing various jobs. We are getting quotes to see if anyone of the three could do all the jobs. Will come back to council with a report. Also, the MN Department of Health was out to look at our system. We have filed for an extension for the wastewater permit. The biosolids are being land applied this week. Working with Telcom on the fiber from City Hall to the Bottle Shop, waiting for permits with

MnDOT.

In regards to the Monthly Report Windingstad spoke on building maintenance, grading, park maintenance, events, mowing, replacing signs, no pumps needed to be pulled, cleaning catch basins and mowing along trails. The guys take a lot of pride in what they do, each and every employee does.

Council stated excellent report.

B. Councilmember Reports -

Udvig – checked out the food truck, saw a Unicycle Unicorn is coming to a secret location tomorrow and I am limited in the length of screen time due recovering from severe concussions.

Muehlbauer – attended EDA meeting.

Robinson – attended Planning Commission meeting, citizens rallied for the food truck, thank people who volunteer like Colleen Sievert on the Planning Commission. Came up with a great suggestion at the planning commission, like traffic flow. Help the development of common people to do uncommon things.

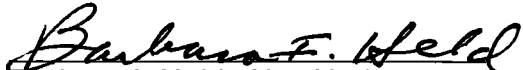
Feldman – we now have contacts with food trucks. CASA Rio has requested to be here every Tuesday through October. We took it upon ourselves to get the food trucks here. Received an email from a resident on Riverbank Lane. Believe it is part of the punch list items. Want police to be aware of the poll watchers that they say might be out there this year. If you have a concern you need to bring it to our attention. With this council or staff, it doesn't fall on deaf ears. Come to us and not social media. Kate (Thunstrom) when you have the information let us know to set a date for a work session. One additional business came forward for a grant. Thank you to everyone, staff and council.

C. Upcoming Events -

Oct 5 City Council Meeting 6:00 pm, Zoom meeting
Oct 19 City Council Meeting 6:00 pm, Zoom meeting
Oct 21 Planning Comm. Meeting @ 7:00 pm
Oct 24 Recycling Event @ PW Facility 8 am- Noon

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Feldman adjourned the regular city council at 8:31 pm.


Barbara I. Held, City Clerk