

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS  
ST. FRANCIS MN  
ANOKA COUNTY

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES  
June 4, 2018

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

The regular City Council meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Mayor Steve Feldman.

2. **ROLL CALL**

Members present: Mayor Steve Feldman, Councilmembers Jerry Tveit, Joe Muehlbauer, Robert Bauer and Rich Skordahl

Also present: Assistant City Attorney Dave Schaps (Barna, Guzy & Steffen), City Engineer Craig Jochum (Hakanson Anderson), City Planner Ben Gozola (Sambatek), City Administrator Joe Kohlmann, Community Development Kate Thunstrom, Police Chief Todd Schwieger, Public Works Director Paul Teicher, Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill, and Acct Tech/Deputy Clerk Lori Streich.

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION TO APPROVE TONIGHT'S AGENDA BY MUEHLBAUER, SECONDED BY SKORDAHL; ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSES.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA** - *All matters listed within the Consent Agenda are considered routine items to be enacted upon by one motion by the City Council. Items on the Consent Agenda are reviewed in total by the City Council and may be approved through one motion with no further discussion by the Council. Any item may be removed by any Council Member, staff member or person from the public for separate consideration.*

A. City Council Minutes –May 21, 2018

B. SFACOC – Pioneer Days Parade Permit June 9, 2018

C. Payment of Claims

MOTION TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA BY BAUER, SECONDED BY MUEHLBAUER; ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSES.

5. **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

NOTHING

6. **SPECIAL BUSINESS**

A. Roers Development: Presentation on Assisted Living/Letter of Intent

Paul Keenan from Roers Investments, LLC gave a presentation on the letter of intent regarding City owned property on Bridge Street. Roers Investments, LLC is in a partnership with Walker Methodist, who is a non-profit operator of senior housing. Roers Investments provides the financial engine for Walker Methodist. The site plan is showing a 3-4 story building with 80-90 units, with the longer portion of the building along the Rum River to take advantage of those views, and the parking lot would shelter from the Casey's site. This is first stab at it and he would imagine based on local feedback and work on the site, that this site plan may change as we go forward. Most of these units would start off as independent living mixed with assisted living and 20% or less of memory care.

Mayor Feldman asked Keenan when construction would begin on the assisted living building.

Keenan answered that if they bought the land this fall, it would be the spring of 2019 at the latest.

Tveit said it was discussed in the workshop pretty thoroughly and feels that it's a good solid plan. He likes that idea that any concerns that were raised at the workshop with the layout and traffic will get worked out by our P&Z and the County.

Muehlbauer also didn't have questions and appreciates their interest in the city.

Bauer said welcome to St Francis.

Skordahl said that he thinks they had a very positive workshop and although a lot of things can be done with that piece of property, it looks like a very nice site to get a 3 or 4 story building tucked in there in the trees. It will be a nice addition to the community and he's all for it.

Mayor Feldman said that what impresses him the most is that there are two long term reputable companies, Roers Development and Walker Methodist, and that's the key to success for the city. He looks forward to this project coming to fruition.

MOTION TO APPROVE ASSISTED LIVING/LETTER OF INTENT FROM ROERS DEVELOPMENT BY TVEIT, SECONDED BY BAUER; ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSES.

7. **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

NOTHING

8. **OLD BUSINESS**

NOTHING

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. Ordinance 240, Second Series – Rivers Edge Rezoning to Planned Unit Development -2<sup>nd</sup> Reading

City Planner Gozola explained that the first two business items being presented before them tonight are related to the final approval of the River's Edge Development off of County Road 72. The first one to be looked at is the rezoning of the PUD, and ultimately we are also looking at the approval of the final plat plans here tonight along with two developers agreements. One for the preliminary grading and one for what is essentially the first addition.

No questions from council.

ROLL CALL   AYES:   TVEIT, SKORDAHL, MUEHLBAUER, FELDMAN, BAUER  
                  NAYES: NONE

B. Rivers Edge –       (1) Final Plat Approval – Resolution 2018-20  
                                  (2) Pre-Approval Grading Agreement  
                                  (3) Development Agreement

Gozola explained the final plat approval, pre-approval grading and development agreement as shown in the agenda packet. He stated that the plans before them are in substantial compliance with the preliminary plan approval and there's nothing outstanding that would make them not recommend approval here tonight.

Mayor Feldman asked City Engineer Craig Jochum about the letter of credit amounts. We are doing 130% for both, and once the grading wears off it goes to full amount for the development, so we are protected on both sides. He wants to make that perfectly clear to council. Basically at 150% once the grading is complete.

Kohlmann said once the grading is complete there will be no reduction in the letter of credit and 150% of the construction cost will be covered per the development agreement.

Feldman stated that this was to get the project up and running in a timeframe that's conducive to spring and summer, and wanted everyone to understand that once the grading is done, the big ticket items like water mains, sewer mains, stormwater and everything else will be at 150% letter of credit.

No questions from any of council.

MOTION TO APPROVE FINAL PLAT APPROVAL – RESOLUTION 2018-20 BY MUEHLBAUER, SECONDED BY TVEIT; ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSES.

Moving on to the pre-approval grading agreement, Kohlmann explained that this is what was talked about with the 130% letter of credit that's going to carry over with no reduction, because the developer wanted to start grading before construction was lined up, that's why there are two different developer's agreements. One is just for grading and one is for actual development.

Feldman said that grading is not as costly as putting in a water main, sewer main, stormwater, etc., This is to get this project up and running.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE PRE-APPROVAL GRADING AGREEMENT BY SKORDAHL, SECONDED BY MUEHLBAUER; ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSES.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT BY MUEHLBAUER, SECONDED BY BAUER; ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSES.

#### C. Meridian – Conditional Use Permit - Resolution 2018-21

Gozola explained that the applicant is seeking re-approval of the Meridian Behavioral Health Facility. The company received approval of this use on this site back in 2013 but economic considerations forced them to not build at that time. Failure to establish the CUP use forced it to go away.

Gozola explained in detail the report as described in the council packet.

Applicant, John Seymore, VP of Meridian was in attendance to answer any questions.

Mayor Feldman mentioned that he was not the acting Mayor in 2013 when this was initially approved, so he had a few questions. How many locations do they currently have running? When was Meridian first established?

Seymore responded that they have thirty programs in five states, and they were established in 1980.

A concern Feldman had was that he can see this building is built for 60, two in a room for 30 and if there was ever a situation where they ever go over what their capabilities are, or are they strict to that number.

Seymore said they have to stay with what they are approved for. They would have to come back and get approval if they want to increase that.

Feldman asked if this was a volunteer center, if the site is monitored, and when they plan to break ground.

Seymore replied that it is a volunteer center, highly structured, state licensed program supervised 24/7, and they would like to break ground in the fall.

Tveit said that one of his questions was when they would be breaking ground since this CUP has had to be renewed a couple times now. His second question is a legal question. Since we have already approved prior CUP's, this is in his mind an extension of prior CUPs. Legally, if nothing has changed, can we turn it down? Unless we have a finding we are forced to approve this.

Gozola said you would look at what has changed since 2013 surrounding the property, maybe a build out has occurred. You would also have to look at your code and if that has changed. You would need to come up with a finding specific to your criteria to say why this doesn't work.

Mayor said he likes the row with the townhomes not being a drivethru. He likes that this is a volunteer facility. He likes the looks of the facility, the monitoring capability, and the police department would probably also like that. What do you estimate completion to be if you start in fall, and how many people would this building employ?

Seymore said 6-9 months build time and will employ approximately 60 people.

Muehlbauer said he was at one of the planning meetings and there were two people that spoke as well as himself. He's looking forward to them changing the stigma about how these places are referred to. One gentleman he spoke to sounded very against it, but after talking about it, he wasn't against it at all.

Bauer commented that with both projects coming, there's a lot of great St Francis residents looking forward to applying and working at either one of these facilities. He appreciates that they picked St. Francis.

Skordahl said he thinks this is a good use of land and serves a need for this part of the world. The only question he has is directed more towards the state in regards to the traffic on 47, but here we are with another project that's going to put more traffic on 47. Woodhaven is coming not too far down the pike. We all know the issues that will be at 233<sup>rd</sup>, we already have issues by the high school. Are we making any progress on that? It won't change his thoughts on this because this is a good thing and we need to keep moving forward with this, but he's just taking this opportunity to query staff on where we stand with the State of Minnesota & 47.

Kohlmann said staff has met with state officials, and discussions are still moving forward.

Skordahl asked what needs to happen to turn up the heat on this? We are putting a lot of houses on 233<sup>rd</sup>, employing 60 employees, and the problem is not going to go away.

Feldman said what we should do is let the County and MNDOT know that there are some things in the works that could create some problems and we need some direction on. We need to push them and Skordahl is correct that we should put the heat on them.

Skordahl asked if the state sees this and if they just aren't chiming in.

Gozola said that out of courtesy, he did send this to MNDOT and didn't receive any comments back.

Feldman said that he does like the landscape buffer around the facility.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MERIDIAN CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT BY BAUER, SECONDED BY MUEHLBAUER; ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSES.

D. Requesting Funds from Anoka County HRA/EDA – Resolution 2018-22

Thunstrom said that tonight the EDA met to discuss moving forward with the acquisition and demolition of a property on Bridge Street. At this meeting, the EDA determined that it would like to move forward with the overall budget and overall project and fund this project using county EDA and HRA funds. Council is being presented with a Resolution to request those funds from Anoka County.

Feldman asked what the monetary decision from EDA was.

Thunstrom said EDA's decision was to increase the acquisition price in regards to what they had proved before.

Feldman asked how much would come from Anoka and how much from the city.

Thunstrom answered that all of the funds for this project will be through the Anoka County HRA/EDA. There won't be any requests from the city. That will be for the purchase, closing and property costs to acquire the title, any pre-demolition, demolition and site prep costs.

Skordahl thinks it's a good idea and sounds too good to be true. How big is the pot of money if we keep dipping into it with the County? This isn't our first request for their help, correct?

Thunstrom said this will bring us to about our end of our balance for the current year. This revenue source through the County is funded annually with a tax base. This will bring us into some of the 2018 allocation but will not deplete our pot 100%.

Skordahl asked if this was the highest priority property to use that fund for and said that he is all for it.

Bauer has no questions but struggles with the value as probably most of EDA does. He thinks that's going to be a great location and we can hopefully redevelop into commercial and try to get our Bridge Street 2040 plan heading down the right road. He approves of it.

Muehlbauer, seems to be a general consensus that they weren't happy that they were raising the value but given that it's a key property to redevelop our plan on Bridge Street. Given that it met the budget similar to the other properties in the area that it was worth it.

Tveit said the he met with City Administrator Kohlmann this afternoon because he was a little concerned. Although this money from HRA/EDA is money that is taxed from our citizens and held at the county level and then given back to us just for these types of projects. He was a little concerned with the corner lot. There's no issue with the other lot just because it's over market value and what he's seen in the past is if just anybody is interested in it, you can buy it for \$150,00, but if the city is interested, they've got deep pockets, so all of a sudden the price is higher. He's not really

opposed to it, however he thinks since it doesn't give us a direct access to the other property that's behind it, that the city owns, perhaps maybe we should look at acquiring a different property that gives us better access to that. If that other property becomes available, it would be nice to have the funds to jump on that vs. putting all of our eggs in his basket. He can go either way. He can see the value of owning this property. It is on a corner and if you want to make a good showing for St. Francis forward plan, having a corner lot would steer that to the right business use. He's not really opposed to it, but he's also not all the way for it.

Feldman said that he agrees 100% and asked Thunstrom if any developers have contacted the city.

Thunstrom said that we have not had anyone contact the city. She did have a party interested in this property contact about leasing ours while they purchase or rent that property. But we have not had any developers come forward requesting to develop on our property as it is.

Feldman asked about the other property behind Subway and if it would cause a problem with the HRA funding.

Thunstrom said that the property behind Subway was funded utilizing the liquor store funds last November.

Feldman said that he agrees with Muehlbauer that the dollar amounts are close in proximity but he has to say that he's not a fan of paying for something more than what it's valued at, so he has to agree with Tveit on that one. He's trying to look at the big picture and see what we are trying to do here. First of all, in his opinion, the building is unsightly and having it down would be a good thing. But he can't see paying more for it than it's worth, especially when he sees that there was no realtor involved and it was for sale by owner. He understands that the funds come through the HRA but this is a hard one for him. He knows the bigger picture and the plan they have for St Francis coming forward and he knows what he wants to see. Everything needs to be done on a case to case basis. It can't hurt to have it down. He also does not want to block progress with the city but this is a tough one.

MOTION TO REQUEST FUNDS FROM ANOKA COUNTY HRA/EDA-RESOLUTION 2018-22 BY SKORDAHL, SECONDED BY MUEHLBAUER; MAYOR FELDMAN OBSTAINED, OPPOSED BY TVEIT, MOTION PASSES 3-1.

Mayor Feldman wanted to let the public know that he abstained from this vote because of a conflict of interest. He has known the person selling the property for 23 years and has worked with him in the past. If he were to vote, it would only be for the best of the city, but feels that the right thing to do would be to abstain.

E. Public Works – Streets:     (1) Pothole Patching  
                                              (2) Dust Control

Teicher explained the information in the packets on some of their more routine street maintenance activities that they do year after year. They've developed a strategic plan to help carry them forward with some of the larger projects for years to come. He thought it might be useful to give council an idea of some of their more routine items that they have to continue to do. We have to continue to repair potholes and replace gravel, dust control, crack filling but they are not identified in the strategic plan. So they put together some information looking for general approval of quotes that they've received. They do go out and ask for quotes on these projects as they come to fruition and they take a look at them year after year. With pothole patching it's definitely a difficult task to go year after year without knowing how many potholes they will have to patch in the spring. It all depends on the winter. It's a tough item to put their thumb on and is always a moving target.

The same is true with crack filling. They do look at some additional crack filling that may be on the street that may be newer. They want to make sure they are prolonging that street as long as they can and then they will focus on coming through with their district and strategic plan process.

Muehlbauer said that we joined the consortium and we plan for districts at a time and it says that the contractor didn't want to take on additional work. He asked Teicher if that was beyond what was already planned?

Teicher said that the additional work was identified this spring. Pederson Drive is a newly paved road (in 2016), and once spring came we saw where the cracks were and thought they should include this in our crack filling in that district but the contractor that was awarded the project through the street consortium may have over extended themselves, so he's choosing not to take on any additional work. Teicher said that you will see reflective cracking in newer roads especially in areas where it was a mill and overlay, you will see reflective cracking come through based on cracks that were in the base pavement.

Tveit asked if they contacted another contractor to look at Pederson?

Teicher said they used the quotes received from the street consortium to compare to and they felt that Bergen would be in the area, so they've given us a quote not to exceed \$4,940.

No other questions.

MOTION TO ACCEPT POTHOLE PATCHING BY TVEIT, SECONDED BY MUEHLBAUER; ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSES.

Teicher explained that dust control is similar to the routine asphalt maintenance activity. In 2010 they identified high traffic, high volume roads that they see less need for routine grading when they apply dust control on some of these higher volume, higher traffic roads. By putting dust control down, it helps keep the road in shape, and they have to go out less to grade the road. This is a routine item looking for an approval of the quotes that they've received. They are about a month behind schedule due to the winter that we've had. This is a budgeted item.

Feldman asked if this will cut it down by 50%?

Teicher said approximately 50% less by applying dust control.

Feldman stated that we would be spending the money, but saving the money on the other end.

Teicher agreed.

Skordahl asked if high volume, rural roadway encompass all gravel roads.

Teicher said no, there are a lot of dead end segments or roads. The Kings Highway portion of that area and the Riverbank Lane north of Kings Highway is the thru area. They do not do the cul-de-sac portion of that.

Bauer asked why we can't do this ourselves with all of the clean water that we are pumping out from our wastewater treatment facility for \$0.00/gallon? Is this water we are using at \$.91/gallon coming out of our water tower?

Teicher said if you look at the information, there's a spec that they've identified product that they use. It's either calcium chloride or a magnesium chloride. We do not mix this or prepare this chemical on site. It's brought in on transport trucks. They transfer to delivery or application trucks as they are moving down the street applying.

Feldman said water alone just dries out without some chemical in there to last longer.

Teicher agreed and said that the chemical they use penetrates and holds the binder into the ground.

Muehlbauer asked if they had any history working with the companies that provided the two quotes.

Teicher said that they have history working with both, and the low quote is actually the quote from last year. They are very happy with the work they did last year.

Tveit had no questions and is familiar with how it works.

Skordahl asked if we do this every year, have we ever gone out and asked for a 5 year quote to see if we can get it cheaper?

Teicher said that is something they can explore with the contractors. He has seen fluctuation in prices because of the chemical they use, so they might not want to commit to that.

**MOTION TO APPROVE DUST CONTROL BY TVEIT, SECONDED BY MUEHLBAUER; ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSES.**

#### **F. Nixle Communications**

Kohlmann explained that we acquired Nixle Communications within the last year because a neighboring city had water was not drinkable, and our Emergency Management Director, Chief Schwieger looked at ways and how we would go about notifying the public. Nixle was the one that stood out.

The Nixle renewal is coming up in the next couple weeks. With that, as we've shuffled staff at City Hall, our new website and everything else, we looked at all of the capabilities and what we would use this tool for and wanted to present this renewal to city council and also outline a new implementation plan as this will be a major undertaking if we are going to move forward. It's definitely do-able, if we commit to using this tool to maximize it. One of the major selling features is the alerting and advisory text messaging and you can sign up via text and then you would be on the city's contact list for emergencies. It enhances the communication that we do right now and definitely offers public safety and public works the ability get major public safety alerts out there. He thinks there may have to be a small consulting fee if we are going to push promotional materials out they should be professional in his opinion. That would be a total of about \$7200.

Feldman said after reading the information in the packet, it's stating that there are only twenty subscribers, and it's \$4300 to renew, and \$3,000 to advertise it. He questions how much advertising is going to push any more subscribers. Are we getting a return of \$7300?

Kohlmann said the twenty subscribers are the people that have subscribed up to today. Staff agrees if we had text messaging sign up we could expand that to a larger number.

Schwieger said he thinks it can be a great tool, it's how we use it. There's a lot of need for information to get out with the public nowadays, and a lot of people like to get the information instantaneously. This would allow us to get some of that information out in other ways that we currently via Facebook, website, things like that. This would allow us to get certain messages out to people that opt in and want that information to their cell phones. The nice thing about Nixle is that the people that sign up for it have the option of what kind of information they want to receive. If they don't want to get community notifications on basic things like city events, they have that choice. It could be a great tool in the event of an emergency or major event, road closures, etc.

Feldman agrees it's a great tool, he just doesn't know how to promote it for \$3,000. Can we promote within our own city through our websites. Twenty people of a population of 7400-7500 people doesn't make sense to him. In the beginning he was a big advocate for it, and still is in a way, but now he sees this \$3000 promotion tied to it and he read some of the things they plan to do to promote it, and it sounds like a ridiculous for that kind of money. His problem is not with Nixle itself, it's the promotion of it to get people to sign on. He thinks we should do more in house awareness to it. The Police Department Facebook page, City Facebook page, the website, letting people know that this is there. If there's a lack of use of it then there's no reason to have it. We are the guardians of the public's money. We need to spend the money but do it wisely.

Bauer opposed this last year with flying colors and was proven right that we've only had twenty subscribers. This program is not for the City of St. Francis. The Chief of Police said it too, you can get a person to subscribe to it and they can whittle it down to where they are getting no responses for it. He did the math and \$150 per subscriber for the twenty we paid last year – to spend this kind of money on a program where our website is a beautiful thing now, he just doesn't think this is a ticketed price that he's willing to pay.

Skordahl disagrees. It's not the Nixle system, it's not the subscribers to Nixle, that's simply saying to subscribe via email when you click on the website. It's similar, but it's the step above the process we have now. It's the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and we need to communicate with our residents in 21<sup>st</sup> century fashion. They were in their house for a couple years, and their neighbor's house was surrounded by officers and a state patrol helicopter was flying over their house. It would have been nice to know what was going on without having to call a 911 dispatcher and bother them.

A few years later their house was surrounded again and it would have been nice to know that they were looking for an autistic child who was simply going to a friend's house. Something like this is very useful to get timely information out to people, whether it's a car accident that has Bridge Street closed. If you want to cut down on Facebook running amuck, this kind of tool would help. He thinks it's a good idea to renew with the plan and this tool. The plan that was put together looks good, but looks like a lot of work. We struggle to try and get our message out to people for a lot of things. Is the approach that's outlined here with door hangers the right thing to do, he's not sure but is willing to try it. He's fully on board with this communication tool but how to promote it is where he questions. We seem to be able to communicate with who wants to be communicated to but we struggle with trying to communicate with the rest that just seem to be happy if their road gets plowed or the pothole right in front of their driveway gets fixed.

Tveit said he agrees with Skordahl. He thinks that if we use Nixle to it's potential, it could help with other things that we have been spending money on that could whittle our budget down. One thing he has always enjoyed was when the phone rang and there was a recorded message from school letting them know what's going on and not to be alarmed. He likes to know what is going on because Facebook is always running amuck and you hear a lot of crazy stuff. A lot of times it's not true. Sometimes it is, but that's how rumors get started. People that want to be in the know are already subscribing to our web page and already liking the Fire Department page and the Police Department page. Sometimes it's something like this that you need to spoon feed them the information. It would be a good way to get some back and forth from our community and it's something we've been looking for for a long time. He's in favor of it. In the big scheme of things, when we are talking about buying properties for a couple hundred thousand dollars, \$3,000 for this, plus \$4,300, our general fund is over funded now.

Muehlbauer said this is a year to year subscription from what he understands. He thanked Chief Schwieger for taking the initiative to try to get more community involvement. Last year Muehlbauer said he was against it because the website was just coming out and thought we should take slower steps. He wishes we would have waited until this year and we would have used the same amount of money or less, this way with promoting it. It didn't get a fair shot with promotion to gauge whether or not it's done a great job. He can go either way with it, but doesn't like the \$3,000 to promote it. People that gossip on Facebook are going to do it anyways, and people that want to be in the know are in the know already for the most part. To keep it as is without promotion, he doesn't know if we will see any increase in value. He doesn't want to waste the money but doesn't have an issue with giving it a fair shot. He can go either way.

Feldman agrees with Tveit and Skordahl as far as the tool itself. He doesn't agree with the \$3,000 to promote it. What can we do in house, between the website and Facebook pages. Are we ever going to let people know about Nixle? Door knockers and postcards end up in the trash.

Tveit said we are getting into election season and there are already enough door knockers and hangers.

Bauer asked how many emergency broadcast posts were put out on Nixle this year.

Kohlmann responded that there weren't any sent out last year.

Bauer said that we put no emergency broadcast posts out and right now we know that if you pushed a list out of something happening in our city, twenty people would get it.

Skordahl answered that this was not true. If something happened today, and Chief Schwieger pushed a button, he would reach every land line in St. Francis, not just the twenty.

Kohlmann said this would bring e-mail, Facebook and text messaging, and tie it all together.

Bauer said the program sounds great, but nobody can prove to him that more than twenty subscribers would receive this. How many land lines are there in St Francis anymore?

Chief Schwieger said there are currently several thousand land lines that they would be able to reach. All those landlines were put into our Nixle last year.

Feldman asked how we could get the idea out there in house?

Kohlmann said that we could do a digital push through Facebook and the website and just keep it all digital. He thinks the \$3,000 was to get some design work & printing. If we just did a digital push out, it would only take a couple hours.

Tveit said this could be a good topic for the next newsletter, possibly a letter from the Mayor, explaining how it works. Anything to get that in the hands of the citizens.

Feldman said we need to educate people, and nothing against the tool itself, but he has a problem with the \$3,000 to promote it. He thinks that we need to put it out on the website and Facebook and let people know that we want to keep people informed. He doesn't think we've done that right yet.

Bauer asked if the council has signed up for Nixle yet, and none of them have. He doesn't understand why the council wants to charge the residents \$7,000 for a system that they don't even use.

Muehlbauer said he's willing to see if this tool is going to be worth our money. He doesn't think the \$3,000 is worth it.

Tveit said being on the council is a unique position because we already get the updates. They get an e-mail or a text letting them know. That negates the need to be signed up. Once they are no longer on the council they will want to know what's going on.

Feldman said they didn't do it justice, and now we have to decide what to do. He doesn't have a problem with the tool. If Schwieger and Kohlmann would agree with the idea of Feldman working with staff to help spell it out on the website pages and getting the word out because education is making people know. That's something we need to do but don't need to spend \$3,000.

Skordahl said every August the community gets together at Night to Unite but we don't have a city booth. He's not advocating having a city booth, but wonders if it would be worth it to have staff hand out 200 business cards with all the information. That event gets good local traffic. Skordahl said he would like to give it a fair shot.

Tveit said we also have Pioneer Days coming up this weekend.

Bauer said he listened to everyone's comments and understands what the program can do. He opposed it last year whole heartedly because we did have the Facebook page coming out and we were trying to promote that. He doesn't think that this is a program that is worth our taxpayer's money with only twenty subscribers. We will be going through this again next year. You are blowing their money.

Feldman asked the audience members if they would like to comment.

One audience member said if you want to market this you need to have a contest. Get a bicycle, and for everyone that likes or shares Nixle get entered into the drawing. He also asked if the neighborhood watch representatives were in this program. He felt that you would be throwing away the \$3,000. We have a website page already. Nobody reads flyers and handouts. Councilmember Tveit stated that he receives emails when something happens in the city. Why isn't that being broadcast on the St. Francis Facebook page? He quoted Steve Jobs where he said "for any business out there that's not using the technology today, you lose". There are five council members and not one person has a table set up at Pioneer Days. You could have had someone there promoting this.

This audience member also mentioned that along Bridge Street it's all weeds along the boulevard and wanted to know who was in charge of taking care of that. He continued by saying that education is there, but it's not in mailings. We have to approach it in a different way, like social media. We should be researching how many views we get on our social media sites. If you look around at any gathering, you will see people looking at their phones.

Feldman said that he did ask staff to put an FYI tab on our website.

Another audience member stepped up and said with everything that goes amuck on Facebook, if it's coming from the Police Department or Fire Department, we will get rid of some of those rumors. Everyone is just speculating until one of them reaches someone on the council or we know someone who is directly connected to actually find out. Let's be ahead of the game. There's a lot of activity on several of the social media sites, but if we have something that's official from the city or the Police Department, that we could put on those Facebook pages, we would have hundreds and thousands of people seeing it. We have to utilize it. She also agreed that a better job needs to be done at Pioneer Days to promote our city. There's no booths or council there so that people can meet you. It wouldn't have to be all day. In Ramsey, Anoka and Nowthen, their city officials are there. People want to connect with people and want to know their elected officials.

Bauer agrees with the residents that we need to communicate better with residents. We had a crime spree a couple weeks ago and that was not put out on Nixle. We did our hydrant flushing, we set all of our signs out, and that was not put out on Nixle. We will be sitting here next year talking about how we can communicate better with residents. There's no clear understanding of who's going to update this. We gave it a fair shot, nobody utilized it and nobody subscribed. Again he asks, is it something we want to spend our taxpayer's money on?

Feldman said that he doesn't think that they gave it a fair shot. He stated that if we get this going, we can utilize it differently whether it be live phone, texting or whatever, his thought would be that people will use it. Then we would have the communication doors open. He asked Chief Schwieger if there is someone designated to keep this updated?

Schwieger said that staff has talked about this and they will have a designated list of personnel that would be responsible for sending different messages out.

MOTION TO APPROVE NIXLE COMMUNICATIONS RENEWAL, BUT NO PROMOTION BY MUEHLBAUER, SECONDED BY SKORDAHL; OPPOSED BY BAUER, MOTION PASSES 4-1

## 10. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mike Rodger, 2770 232<sup>nd</sup> Lane, stated that there is a grant out there right now that we can apply for through one of the rural community farm development deals, and they will give us money to put up another tornado siren so all of the citizens in this town can hear it. He doesn't have all of the details but will try to get the information and give it to staff.

## 11. REPORTS

### A. Councilmember Reports -

Skordahl said that he doesn't want to beat a dead horse but everyone at city hall has a 40 hour a week job, and it isn't one staff member's job to manage Facebook. That's one thing we struggle with. Facebook is a wonderful tool. It takes work to do it consistently and make sure that the city, police

and fire department webpage says the same thing you almost have to come up with a communication strategy and give it to somebody as their job. Nobody has spare time. It's not the easiest thing to do and make sure it's a coordinated effort. Maybe Kohlmann has a better idea on how to use that tool and use it more efficiently.

In regards to Pioneer Days, we get wrapped up in our day to day activities, and all of a sudden an event is just weeks away. If you are going to assign homework assignments and come up with a plan to get in front of the community, we have to make up our mind in January and discuss what we are going to do in that coming year and go off and do it. The wheels of city government just keep going and we get wrapped up in the daily duties that we don't make a point to go out and do it. We need to make a point earlier in the year on what we want to focus on. Maybe we focus on getting people to turn out on Pioneer Days and then we don't focus so much attention on Night to Unite. You only have so much staff and they already have 40 hour a week jobs already. Could we be doing a better job? Probably. Is it worth a Work Session in January to put our heads together and discuss all of the ways we could reach out to the people? Maybe just a thought, but he thinks they do pretty good with the staff that we have and we are getting to the point where we don't have enough bodies for all the "nice to have" stuff that will make the wheels of progress turn faster.

Feldman said that for Council, they have to prioritize what they can do. The main thing was to get these water rates down and that can only be done by expanding our user base and that's through development. Tonight we've approved River's Edge for a PUD, Walker Methodist & Rohr's Investments on a Letter of Intent. We are talking about \$18-\$20 million dollar projects, 200 homes coming up within 5-8 years, the Woodhaven project, and the Meridian project. There is never enough time in the day, and staff already has a lot too. It will get easier once some of these projects get into the ground, but we are dealing with past councils and problems that shouldn't have become problems. That's one of the things staff faces now is trying to correct some of these past errors. With any mistake, you can learn from it and not repeat it, or you can not learn from it and then repeat it. You have the development side of it with the economy with the way it is today, and nobody knows what tomorrow will bring but we have to get these things in the ground. The Council and staff have done really well in prioritizing. We can't see everything and that's why there's staff behind us, the help from public input and St. Francis forward that's got plans on making decisions on using EDA in a better way to prepare for future development. If you recall, EDA was only used for one purpose in 2011 to pass a Public Works/Police Department bid under a lease bond vs a referendum, so now we will actually use the EDA for what it is actually meant to be designed for.

Bauer said it's been about a year and a half now since he's been elected. He got elected because he wanted to cut water rates and lower taxes. This year is an election year and he wants to let the residents know that you need to elect someone on the City Council who will cut taxes for our residents and work hard to get our water rates down. We've made a great movement toward development to get those water rates down but he has sat here since April when they are going to have a water rate study completed, May, June, and now we are probably going to look at the July meeting before we even hear that our water rates should not go down. We have money within this city that we can move around, lower our water rates, give money back to our taxpayers, and track spending. We have seen it right here today with Nixel. We can put more money in the taxpayers pockets. We need to elect officials that are going to do that. Every city employee is going to get a 9% pay raise. If you are outraged by that, you need to call your city government and tell them. He hasn't seen a 9% pay increase in 15 years. Our residents here in St. Francis are hard workers and I bet they will not see a 9% pay raise over the next three years. He can guarantee that you will see that at the polls this year. He will try his best to get out to Pioneer Days and push for an election that's going to put people on this board that is going to cut your taxes.

Feldman said cutting taxes to save money without any gain solves nothing but a headache down the road. This city has run lean and mean for many years. How do we expect the city to go anywhere without investing in it. He's said all along between keeping the rates the same and using the market forces out there, to gain that money for road improvements so we don't assess is a good thing. Spending the money wisely is the key. One of the things that was done in the past in this city was taking two bulbs out of four bulb light fixtures to save money, which is totally ridiculous. A better way to save money would have been to put a motion sensor switch on the wall. If someone's in the room, the lights go on, when nobody is in the room, lights go off. Saving money just for saving sake, and cutting, cutting, cutting only hurts people in the long run. The city right now is going in the right direction, but we had to spend money because it wasn't being spent in the last years properly. When we sat in the audience, we always heard talks about a community center, remodeling the county library, and a lot of other wasted kinds of spending which we couldn't afford.

Right now we are in the development stages and our user tax base will get larger. Just to sit up here to cut just to cut without a gain in it, to him is totally ridiculous. That is his thought, and he will campaign on that himself. As far as what we are doing here, because this is a long term plan, as he's said before, it's long term reputable development and thinking that will get us out of this hole. Before, all he saw was short sided thinking. For example, when the Florida plow truck was purchased, they thought they saved some money, and ended up getting it stuck, having to plow the roads twice, and spending more money. Now we bought a new plow truck and can plow the roads better and more efficiently. He's actually gotten compliments from city residents that we are plowing our roads better. How you spend the money is the key. But what he's seen here in the past is that it hasn't been spent wisely. We have Plan-it Software in place now, which was a good investment to show us how to prepare for capital equipment expenditures long term so we don't go out of budget. So when you say cutting, show me a cut with a gain down the road that will benefit the city and he's all on board. Show me a cut just to cut, he can't abide by that. That's his opinion.

Tveit had a couple things to bring up. The first was the ordinance that was passed earlier, and it was a second reading, but he didn't see a motion to pass the summary publication and wanted to know if that was something that they would like to pass? They can discuss that after the Council reports.

The second item Tveit brought up was that they had Meridian representatives in here talking about site plans and the trail system. He knows this week there was a posting on Facebook on what's going on in St. Francis, about somebody trying to cross Bridge Street where the trails are and they talked about an access. He was curious if someone from the city could contact the county to see if there's any possibility of maybe getting something to manage pedestrian and automobile traffic. With summer coming, more people are outside, riding bikes, roller blading & walking their dogs, etc. See if they've thought of a plan, and if they have a long term plan about trying to manage that traffic crossing Bridge Street from the trails. If we could have that information come back to Council and share it on our website, that would be great.

The last item he wanted to discuss, and it's just an observation, and it's nothing personal, but sometimes he thinks they get bogged down in the minutia. They spent about 4 minutes talking about spending \$225,000 and then they talked for a half hour, maybe even 45 minutes about \$3,000. In his mind we could have taken a quick poll on spending the \$3,000. To him it doesn't have to be that hard of a discussion. The ideas that came out of the discussion were good. In comparison, we really breezed through the purchasing of the property, spending infinitively more money. To him, we are focusing on the tree and not seeing the whole forest. Nothing personal against any councilmember.

The last thing he mentioned is that we have a big weekend coming up. Rides are getting staged for set up and he would like to invite everyone to come out not just for Pioneer Days but also the local businesses. Lots of them are promoting bands, bingo, dances, etc. When you are out there and seeing the local charities, like the Lions Club, the St. Francis Ambassador's Club, & more. Those are the clubs and the Chambers that are putting this on. Visit them, thank them, have a good time in St Francis, and be safe.

Muehlbauer said that he's been busy at work, working 10-12 hour days. He did attend the EDA meeting. He agrees with Tveit that the bigger purchases were breezed through. But the smaller things can add up. Look at the big picture and seeing whether or not our investments are panning out and giving them proper time to pan out, we will have to see. He encourages everyone to check out Pioneer Days and they are always looking for volunteers. Listed at the St. Francis Area Chamber of Commerce website. He would like to see the community get involved with that.

Mayor said that it has been mentioned to him that they will be doing something with the water rates in June. He's had multiple discussions with our auditors, City Administrator Kohlmann & Finance Director Mulvihill, so something will be coming forth regarding the water rates. They looked at a lot of options and made sure they are doing the right thing so it wasn't fast out of the gate.

In regards to what Councilmember Tveit said, whether you are discussing something small or large, the difference in this concept is the mentality of the staff, along with this council, is that we discuss things. He sat in the audience for two years and saw one gentleman bring things up, and nobody else bringing things up. This council discusses things. We all get involved and have input as our minutes show. We discuss it, we work on it, we have multiple work sessions. We do a lot of things behind the scenes that people don't see, where it may be a fast decision on a piece of property but the EDA had already discussed it before we got to it. He's had multiple discussions with Thunstrom and Kohlmann on it, so whether we are seeing the tree or the whole forest, or a mixture of both, and Nixel may be just a tree, and the development a whole forest. They've always got something they are working on. The main thing is we've got some good development going forward and we are in the right time and the right place and hopefully these things will pan out in full fruition and we will be able to see that. Seeing cranes on Bridge Street building a four story building, and seeing shovels in the ground putting in models in River's Edge along with 55 lots. These are all good things. Small steps become big steps.

There will be a work session at the Community Center on Monday, June 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm for Riverbank residents. We have been working on this for quite a long time and now we will finally put it out to the residents. That problem is 30 years in the making. Things had not been looked at in the proper priority and he won't blame anyone from the past because that gets us nowhere.

We can't make everyone happy but we will try to make the majority happy. Discussions like what we do here, whether we agree or agree to disagree, makes this council stronger, it makes the staff stronger, and it makes the city better. There's going to be big and small problems. What we've done here though, with protecting the TIF, by going with a different, reputable company with the assisted living project took time to come into fruition. The council was receptive, did their homework on it, their due diligence, asked the right questions, and we now have something in play here which we didn't have before.

It's easy for residents to come out and critique the council, rather than looking at what they are doing, and he's mentioned this on his own Facebook page, that if you want to know what's going on, go to the city website, click on the Community Development tab and it will tell you what is currently going on in our city. You can also call our Community Development Director and she will give you an update. You can find out the information, but we can't make the call for you. We want you to know what's going on here because these are all good things. But, when we got slapped with a 45/85 hike, that wasn't going to disappear overnight, it takes time. There are other things they are working on too, and as they go through the process and become approved, the public will know about those too.

Feldman reminded everyone about Pioneer Days this weekend. Last year he was directing floats and this year he got bumped up a little bit and will be in the parade.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE SUMMARY OF PUBLICATION OF ORDINANCE 240 BY TVEIT, SECONDED BY BAUER; ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSES.

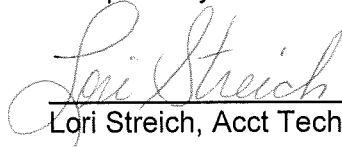
B. Upcoming Events –

|               |                                                             |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| May 22-June 5 | Filings for Local Races; Mayor and Two Councilmembers       |
| June 8-10     | Pioneer Days Weekend                                        |
| June 18       | City Council Meeting @ ISD #15 Central Services Center 6 pm |
| June 20       | Planning Commission Meeting - CANCELLED                     |

12. ADJOURNMENT

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:50 PM BY FELDMAN

Respectfully Submitted by:

  
Lori Streich, Acct Tech / Deputy Clerk