

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
ST. FRANCIS MN
ANOKA COUNTY

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
NOVEMBER 6, 2017

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; Joe Muehlbauer, Robert Bauer and Rich Skordahl. Jerry Tveit 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 Paul Teicher, and Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill.

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION BY SKORDAHL SECOND BAUER APPROVING THE AGENDA AS AMENDED. Motion carried 4-0.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor added 4 G. Text Amendment adding a signature line to the "Kwik Trip CUP". Bauer asked to pull from the consent agenda 4 C and 4 E.

MOTION BY MUEHLBAUER SECOND FELDMAN TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS AMENDED:

- A. City Council Minutes – October 16, 2017
 - B. City Council Minutes – Special Meeting October 23, 2017
 - C. ~~Homerun Club – Ice Rink Management Agreement~~
 - D. Hire Michael Harris as a Water/Wastewater System Operations Specialist at Step 2
 - E. ~~Assistant Chief Declaration into PERA – Resolution 2017-35~~
 - F. Payment of Claims \$192,699.24 (Check #'s 73279-73372)
 - G. Add Text Amendment, signature line to the "Kwik Trip CUP"
- Motion carried 4-0

4C. **Homerun Club – Ice Rink Management Agreement**

Bauer questioned why the City is hiring the Homerun Club for attending to the warming house. With the high water rates, storm water fees we are asking our residents to pay, we need to stop spending like we have an open end

checkbook. That is why I pulled this from the consent agenda to discuss why we are paying out for this 51-day project.

Feldman asked Public Works Director Paul Teicher to explain the reasoning. Teicher stated for the past several years we have experimented with different ways to operate our ice rinks efficiently while still being able to plow snow and getting that done in a timely manner as well. We did try another company previously that maintained the ice and warming house. But with the number of complaints of the ice conditions and overall management we decided not to renew the contract with them. We were approached by the Homerun Club to run it and tried them for a year and thought it worked out well. We did take back the making of the ice so we could get a good quality of ice. We looked at what we paid the other company and split it in two being we are maintaining the ice. The Homerun Club is a non-profit organization and this is their main fundraiser.

Bauer stated we are asking our residents to spend \$7,373.58 and I personally don't think the city is getting back \$144 a day and recouping the cost.

Feldman asked do a lot of people use these rinks.

Teicher said we do see a lot of traffic on these rinks. I don't know daily counts right off hand. The community has been maintaining ice rinks for a long time. Publicly open all the time. Whenever the rink is open, it is staffed. I believe the city received a grant to build the warming house.

Feldman asked if anyone from the public had any comment on this issue.

Mike Rodger, 2770 232nd Lane, I don't think we want to take away the ice rinks away from the kids. Maybe in the future look for some sponsorships and place their names on the boards to help offset the cost.

Sarah Hunt, 23246 Kerry Street, does the city not own the correct equipment to maintain the rinks? Why can't the city do it themselves? Teicher said we do make the ice. We pay the Homerun Club to shovel the rinks and maintain the rinks during use and provide the staff to supervise the rinks and warming house. We are not providing part time staff to do that. We use to hire part time staff but it became very difficult. They wouldn't show up for their shifts, so we would have to close the warming house.

Feldman said so they care take the rinks, warming house and have some concessions there. Muehlbauer asked what about the Lions Club volunteering, just a thought. Feldman said I like the sponsorship idea. We are limited of what the kids can do here during the winter.

Teicher said the beauty of having an organization like the Lions Club is these two groups are already working together. We have not had any issues with the Homerun Club and they are a non-profit organization.

Skordahl said I do not think one month before this is to start is good timing. Research, sure if there a more cost effective way let's look into it. Muehlbauer agreed with Skordahl.

Feldman said plowing is our number one concern for the public works department.

MOTION BY MUEHLBAUER SECOND SKORDAHL TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE ST. FRANCIS HOMERUN CLUB TO MANAGE THE OUTDOOR ICE SKATING FACILITY. Motion carried 3-1. Bauer voting nay.

4E. Assistant Chief Declaration into PERA – Resolution 2017-35

Bauer stated it is my understanding with the little bit of background I have with the fire department, isn't the assistant chief already in PERA?

Fire Chief Dave Schmidt stated Lawrence is currently in part time Paid On-Call PERA Fund, which is fairly new. This would transition him to Police/Fire PERA Fund. We are looking at moving the assistant chief position to this fund for the reason of creating retention and a succession tool for this position. We hired someone to maintain and help grow and lead this fire department and hopefully be the next person in line for the fire chief position.

Muehlbauer asked about how that financially affects the budget. Schmidt stated roughly \$500 a year.

Feldman said you are asking a fire fighter to an assistant chief to take on more responsibility and leadership role so I think it should come with some compensation.

Bauer said I would just reiterate to our residents again, the city cannot just keep rolling out money with every project. We need to limit spending and I don't agree with it.

Feldman stated to run to be lean and mean and not be effective to me is futile. We need to spend some money to get to where we need to be. We need to spend it wisely.

Bauer said over the first year on the council, I have seen the City promote people in hopes they get a boiler license or whatever, pay raise before they pass the test, promote people before they even perform. We are rolling out

cash before we get performance. We have to start getting the dollars down for our residents.

Feldman said when our operator received his Class A license for the wastewater treatment plant did he get a raise. Teicher said no, his pay did not change.

MOTION BY SKORDAHL SECOND MUEHLBAUER TO ADOPT
RESOLUTION 2017-35 DECLARING THE ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF
POSITION INTO THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES POLICE AND FIRE PLAN.
Motion carried 3-1. Bauer voting nay.

5. **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

- A. Sarah Hunt, 23246 Kerry Street said I have something to say about the fire department issue. Remember how angry the residents were when the fire fighters asked to switch over to PERA and to receive an additional \$500. For you to say it is no big deal, you have forgotten how anger the residents were. Regarding Chief 1 and Chief 2, do they live in the city? Assistant Chief does live in the city. Hunt asked doesn't the assistant chief get paid more than the regular fire fighters already? Answer was yes. Hunt said so he knew what he was getting when he applied for the job. So all of a sudden now, he is getting more money and benefits, absolutely ridiculous.

Feldman stated Bauer you pretty much lead that fight when asking for the fire fighters to join PERA and the additional pay.

Bauer said that was one of the reasons why I ran for city council.

Feldman asked Chief Schmidt about the assistant chief pay. Does he get paid a large amount more than the regular fire fighters?

Schmidt stated the assistant chief gets paid \$400 a month plus call and training pay that was what was approved by the city council. I would advise that fire fighters in this town get paid \$12.00 per call per hour with zero other benefit other than PERA. The fire fighters are going into burning buildings, performing CPR on community members, working in the roadways and taking on insurmountable amount of risk because they love this community. They are vested in this community; I am vested in this community regardless of what my mailing address is. We are here to help this community and help each other. I realize \$500 is real money, real taxpayer dollars but I believe this is a good decision base on value.

Feldman asked how we compare to other cities regarding chief and assistant chief pay. Schmidt said most communities outside of St. Francis, if you go any

further south, except for Oak Grove such as Andover, they have a full time chief and part time assistant chiefs, East Bethel has a full time chief and part time assistant chiefs. Probably one of the reasons the St. Francis Fire Department wanted to go to PERA for the part time and I am sure Councilmember Bauer can speak better on this than myself but St. Francis retirement amount was falling short for a number of years. We will need to make adjustments as we go along.

Feldman said we are paying for the lean and mean years when we didn't have the people to get the job done and be effective. I don't believe \$500 a year is going to break the city.

Kohlmann said I would like to add something to clear the record. The Chief did have a proposal for the meeting tonight to increase fire fighters pay as well this was going to be a package deal. I pulled it off because there were a number of policy changes as well and we just didn't have enough time to review it for this council meeting. So he is just not looking out for the assistant chief's pay. This will be coming forward after the policy changes are reviewed.

Feldman stated the leadership change for the fire department is a big plus. I appreciate all input.

6. **SPECIAL BUSINESS**

None

7. **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- A. Public Hearing: Certifying Assessments for Delinquent Utilities, Miscellaneous Invoices and Administrative Fines: Resolution 2017-36
Mayor Feldman opened the public hearing at 6:31 pm.

Sarah Udvig, 3709 229th Lane, some people have some questions on the delinquent utilities being from previous owners. Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill stated before closing on a property the title companies are supposed to contact the city to see if there is a water/sewer bill still owing. If they don't call the bills do stay with the property. Rental properties stay with the property owner. Mulvihill stated they could go back to the title company and ask why it was not paid.

Feldman so the one-year assessment will just be on next year's tax statement. Mulvihill said they could still pay the city until the 15th. Notifications were sent out in September stating what they owed.

Council discussed the Stormwater fee and the mandates.

Mayor Feldman closed the public hearing at 6:44 pm.

MOTION BY BAUER SECOND SKORDAHL ADOPT RESOLUTION 2017-36 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING CERTIFICATION OF MUNICIPAL UTILITY SERVICES, MAINTENANCE OF PRIVATE PROPERTY, ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL NOTICE FEES, AND REPAIR OF LEAKS AS A LIEN UPON PREMISES. Motion carried 4-0.

8. **OLD BUSINESS**

A. Assessing Contract

Erik Skogquist again gave a brief overview of his proposal. Anoka County was not present.

Council discussed the length of contracts and length of the notice to terminate. Some of the councilmembers questioned Skogquist old quote versus the new quote. Council did reference checks. Proposals need to be part of the packet and not handed out at the meeting or right before.

MOTION BY MUEHLBAUER SECOND SKORDAHL TO CONTINUE THE APPOINTMENT OF THE ASSESSING CONTRACT UNTIL THE NOVEMBER 20, 2017 CITY COUNCIL MEETING COMING BACK WITH A PROPOSAL FOR A THREE YEAR CONTRACT AND A TWO YEAR OUT CLAUSE. Motion carried 4-0.

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. Amending the Personnel Policy – Health Insurance Resolution 2017-37

The City researched the possibility of offering group health insurance to full time employees. After discussion, Health Partners was recommended and would be administered through the A.T. Group. Discussion was held on the implementation, cost and the grandfather clause.

MOTION BY BAUER SECOND MUEHLBAUER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2017-37 A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE CITY'S PERSONNEL POLICY RELATING TO HEALTH INSURANCE. Motion carried 4-0.

B. Approving the Transfer from Liquor Fund to EDA - Resolution 2017-38

The EDA is looking to purchase the property at 3731 Bridge Street and is requesting the funds from the purchase and demolition to be transferred from the liquor funds. The request is for \$225,000 for acquisition, title and demolition.

MOTION BY MUEHLBAUER SECOND BAUER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2017-38 A RESOLUTION TRANSFER FROM LIQUOR FUND TO THE EDA FUND. Motion carried 4-0.

C. New Fire Fighter Training Manual

The fire department previously has never had a prescribed training process or manual for new fire fighters. Over the past few months, the fire department has been developing a handbook for new firefighters to provide consistent, structured training and instruction on how to be successful as firefighter with the city of St. Francis. The New Firefighter Training Manual will provide all of our new employees with tools and training they need to be a successful member of organization. We would like to assign all new firefighters a mentor. We are also going to be working on updating our policy and procedure manual and operating guidelines.

MOTION BY MUEHLBAUER SECOND BAUER APPROVING THE NEW FIREFIGHTER TRAINING MANUAL AS PART OF THE ST. FRANCIS FIRE DEPARTMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES. Motion carried 4-0.

D. Hiring of Fire Fighters

Chief Schmidt said currently, we have seventeen fire fighters on the fire department excluding himself, the assistant chief as well as one member currently on leave. Three new members will be graduating on November 14th from the Fire Fighter Training Academy. The goal of the fire department is to achieve a staffing level of 25 fire fighters. I will like to begin the recruitment and hiring of eight firefighters. Recruitment would begin immediately and run through December 31, 2017. Upon successful completion of the screen process, formal job offers and initial training would occur early in 2018. They handed out some applications during the French Toast Breakfast and already one turned back in.

Bauer said it saddens me that I cannot do both, serve on the city council and be a firefighter.

The council as a whole likes the new leadership of the fire department.

MOTION BY BAUER SECOND FELDMAN APPROVING THE FIRE DEPARTMENT TO BEGIN THE RECRUITMENT AND HIRING PROCESS FOR NO MORE THAN EIGHT FIREFIGHTERS. Motion carried 4-0.

10. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- A. Mike Rodger, 2772 232nd wants to thank both chiefs and Public Works Director Paul Teicher for their work and realize we will have a busy winter and you did a good job last year. Regarding the fire department, maybe they could help with the hockey rinks. Maybe the fire department could also do some code enforcement at night to offset cost and report to the enforcers. Regarding the rental fees, do some of them go back to the fire department, when you check for smoke detectors? I am looking for a facility to hold meetings to start

a local fishing group for teens and start holding some meetings. I don't know if anyone knows but I am a retired professional fisherman and I would like to get this started for the area, I do have some sponsorships already. So any help in getting a facility would help.

11. **REPORTS**

A. Police Department Report:

Police Chief Schwieger gave his quarterly report. Happy to report the compliance checks for tobacco and alcohol completed twice annually had no violations this time around. The police department also saw increase in the number of DWI's in the third quarter and several of the drivers had numerous violations. Council asked about extra patrol and neighborhood watch programs.

Because we have a closed meeting coming up Feldman said he is moving the Councilmember Reports before the closed meeting. That way no one has to stay for the councilmember reports.

C. Councilmember Reports-

Muehlbauer said tomorrow is the school election, polls open until 8:00 pm.

Bauer asked Fire Chief about Santa on the Fire Truck and wanted to know what the dates are. Chief Schmidt said the fire department is working with County Market this year and hopefully the date will be set soon. We collect food for the local food shelves. We are working on trying to lower the water rates for the resident, my number one reason for running.

Skordahl would like to see people take pride in their properties and clean them up.

Feldman said I think the city is going in the right direction, government does not move as fast as I would like. In addition, the new website should be ready this month. I know we first said August, then September now hoping by the end of this month. Look forward in hearing your comments hope you like it. It is a work in progress. I would also like to remind everyone to vote. Watch out for children on the streets now that it is darker sooner. Speed study that was done by the city on Bridge Street was discussed. We are in the midst of a rate study and it is about a 2-3 months process and hopefully the tiers will change. Hoping to see the old buildings come down soon on the new Kwik Trip site.

Bauer asked about the speed radar and are they working? Chief Schwieger said they do collect data even if the speed is not displayed unless the batteries are not working.

B. Attorney's Report - Closed meeting to Discuss Union Negotiation Strategy Pursuant to Minn. State Statute 13D.03

Feldman stated in a few minutes, I am going to close the meeting. Under Minnesota Statutes Section 13D.03, Subd. 1 et seq. the City Council has the ability to move into a closed meeting to: the governing body of a City may by a majority vote in a public meeting decide to hold a closed meeting to consider strategy for labor negotiations, including negotiation strategies or developments or discussion and review of labor negotiation proposals. The labor negotiations are a proposal between the City of St. Francis and City Local 363 (Public Works).

MOTION BY SKORDAHL SECOND MUEHLBAUER TO MOVE THE MEETING INTO A CLOSED SESSION AT 8:02 PM FOR DISCUSSION OF LABOR NEGOTIATIONS. Motion carried 4-0.

MOTION BY MUEHLBAUER SECOND FELDMAN TO REOPEN THE CLOSED SESSION AND MOVE THE MEETING BACK INTO OPEN SESSION at 9:01 pm. Motion carried 4-0.

D. Upcoming Events - Nov 20, 2017 City Council Meeting

12. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Mayor Feldman adjourned the regular city council at 9:01 pm.

Barbara I. Held, City Clerk