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

1. **CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
The regular City Council meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Mark Vogel.

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

Also present: City Administrator Kate Thunstrom, Deputy Administrator-City Clerk Jenni Wida, Deputy Administrator-Public Works Director Paul Carpenter, Police Chief Todd Schwieger, Finance Director Natalie Santillo, City Engineer Craig Jochum (Hakanson Associates, Inc.), and City Planner Beth Richmond (HKGi).

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: ROBINSON APPROVING THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carried: 5-0

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**
A. City Council Meeting Minutes June 15, 2026
B. Routine Sewer System Cleaning/Jetting
C. Water Tower Fill Station Rehab
D. Tobacco License – Cloud Kings Smoke
Resolution 2026-22 approving a tobacco license for APM RZA LLC DBA Cloud Kings Smoke
E. Police Department Canine Donation
Resolution 2026-26 accepting Donation for St. Francis Police Department
F. Acknowledgement of Exempt Gambling Permit – Support the Troops MN
G. Acknowledgement of Exempt Gambling Permit – Support the Troops MN
H. Development Agreement, Turtle Ponds 6th Addition
I. Site Improvement Performance Agreement, Top Tier Automotive

J. Bill List

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: MUEHLBAUER APPROVING THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL CONSENT AGENDA
A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carried: 5-0

5. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mike Powell raised concerns about the vacant property behind Subway, questioning the developer's long-term intentions given prior apartment and townhome proposals. City Administrator Kate Thunstrom stated the EDA has closed on the property with the developer and that no construction or concept plans have been formally introduced. Powell expressed frustration with the city's tax abatement arrangement for Vista Prairie and with code enforcement actions on Ambassador Avenue, including a citation issued to a neighbor whose husband is in hospice. He questioned whether the enforcement was retaliatory following his prior public comments and called for a more compassionate and community-centered approach to code compliance. He also suggested the city utilize school electronic signs to promote council meetings and increase public engagement.

Tina Carroll raised similar concerns about the code enforcement citation issued to her neighbor, noting the driveway had minimal grass and that circumstances warranted a phone call rather than a citation. Carroll expressed that community members should be more involved in shaping city policies and that the fine structure was excessive.

Ashley Rodger provided information on EV charging grant programs available to cities, including the federal NEVI program administered by Minnesota DOT, the Community Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) grant program, and the Greater Minnesota Infrastructure community program. Rodger also spoke in support of her father's character and his contributions to the Saint Francis community.

Robinson gave for clarification on Vista Prairie's financial obligations, noting that while the city is foregoing property taxes during the abatement period, Vista Prairie still pays sewer, water, and stormwater fees and has payroll taxes and employees in the city. Robinson stated the $45,000,000 facility is an asset to the community and that its value will increase over the abatement term.

6. SPECIAL BUSINESS

A. Recognition of Darcy Mulvihill

Mayor Vogel recognized Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill for her 16 years of service to the City of Saint Francis and 29 years in municipal finance. Mayor Vogel stated the city has been fortunate to have someone of her caliber leading its financial operations and expressed deep appreciation for her dedication, professionalism, and positive presence. Mayor Vogel introduced incoming Finance Director Natalie Santillo and remarked that Santillo has big shoes to fill.

Mulvihill thanked Mayor Vogel and the Council and stated she looks forward to remaining connected to the city family.

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. 2027-2031 Capital Improvement Plan

Finance Director Natalie Santillo presented the 2027-2031 Capital Improvement Plan, noting that an updated plan must be approved by the City Council by August 15 of each year and that a public hearing is required as part of the approval process. Santillo explained the CIP is a five-year schedule of proposed public projects and purchases intended as a planning and financial tool, not a precise budget. Approval does not authorize spending. She outlined the city's three self-supporting enterprise funds (water, sewer, and liquor), the capital equipment fund supported by property tax levy and enterprise transfers, a proposed street levy increase of $120,000 for 2027 to $840,000, a building fund proposed at $75,000 for 2027, and a park improvement levy proposed at $300,000 for 2027.

Mayor Vogel opened the public hearing at 6:31 p.m. No public comment was received. The public hearing was closed at 6:32 p.m.

Robinson stated he had met with Mulvihill and Santillo to review the plan and found clarification helpful. He suggested the liquor fund revenues could potentially support parks or other priorities and expressed interest in a future work session, though he acknowledged the plan is a road map and not binding.

Udvig agreed with Robinson's sentiments, noting that department heads are frugal and do not ask for more than needed. Udvig acknowledged the timing challenge of receiving county levy numbers after the August 15 approval deadline.

Thunstrom confirmed that by the time the city receives county levy numbers, the August 15 deadline would have passed, making adjustments for that purpose impractical.

Faanes expressed hesitation about approving the plan without more time to review and suggested a two-week delay to the next meeting to allow for individual follow-up meetings with staff.

Muehlbauer stated he had no issue with the plan, noting it is not a budget but a forward-looking savings framework. He expressed confidence that staff exercise responsible judgment and do not spend unnecessarily.

Mayor Vogel stated he had also met individually with Santillo and Mulvihill and received satisfactory answers to his questions. He expressed a preference to vote on the plan that evening, noting the August deadline and that the plan is a guideline, not a rulebook. Mayor Vogel noted his primary takeaway was the $120,000 annual increase to the Street Fund and expressed a goal of holding the levy to under 10 percent growth.

Faanes indicated she was comfortable proceeding with a vote.

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: UDVIG TO APPROVE THE 2027-2031 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carried: 4-1

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Ordinance Amendment — Chapter 6, Business Regulation, Section 5, Gambling — Second Reading

City Administrator Kate Thunstrom presented the second reading of the ordinance amendment, noting it was a formality following the Council's prior determination that the change would take effect on August 1. No questions were raised.

MOTION BY: FAANES SECOND: ROBINSON APPROVING SECOND READING OF ORDINANCE 358 AMENDING CITY CODE CHAPTER 6, SECTION 5, SUBDIVISION 3 REGARDING BUSINESS REGULATION AND GAMBLING

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carried: 4-1

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: UDVIG TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2026-23 AUTHORIZING SUMMARY PUBLICATION OF ORDINANCE 358

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carried: 5-0

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Plans and Specifications for the Trunk Highway 47 Utility Improvements

City Engineer Craig Jochum presented an overview of the proposed Trunk Highway 47 utility improvements. MnDOT is planning the reconstruction of Trunk Highway 47 in 2028 from 227th to 241st Avenue, and the city is considering reconstructing its utilities in the corridor in 2027. The primary goal is to replace or rehabilitate sewer and water trunk lines from 1973, which are now 53 years old. The project scope includes sewer and water south of 233rd Avenue to the wastewater treatment plant, two segments of trunk sewer on the west side of Highway 47 north of 233rd, and the sewer forcemain from Ambassador. Jochum presented three alternatives with varying scopes and cost estimates and recommended Alternative 3 as providing the most comprehensive improvement. Staff is requesting authorization to prepare plans and specifications with Alternative 3 as the design alternative.

Faanes asked about the project's funding sources and timeline for the 2027 construction year. Thunstrom and Jochum provided clarification on the funding approach and scheduling.

Udvig expressed support for moving forward and asked about coordination with MnDOT. Jochum confirmed coordination is ongoing.

Robinson noted the importance of addressing the aging infrastructure proactively and expressed support for Alternative 3.

Muehlbauer stated he had no additional questions.

Mayor Vogel stated the presentation was well organized and clearly explained, and confirmed he was ready to move forward with a vote.

MOTION BY: MUEHLBAUER SECOND: ROBINSON TO APPROVE STAFF TO PREPARE PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE TRUNK HIGHWAY 47 UTILITY IMPROVEMENTS WITH ALTERNATIVE 3 AS THE DESIGN ALTERNATIVE

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carried: 5-0

B. City Hall Chambers Rental Policy

City Administrator Kate Thunstrom presented a proposed rental policy for the City Hall Chambers, which also includes the small kitchen and conference room. Thunstrom noted that professional groups currently use the space during business hours without issue, and that there has been interest in making it available in the evenings and on weekends. After-hours use would require a staff attendant to manage access and supervise the building. The policy establishes two tracks: staffed-hours use and after-hours use with an attendant. Thunstrom noted the city would need to recruit staff for the attendant role before after-hours rentals could begin.

Udvig asked about the staffing structure and whether the attendant's role included cleaning. Thunstrom clarified that the attendant's role is access and supervision only, not cleaning.

Robinson asked about the rental rate structure and expressed support for establishing a clear, consistent policy.

Muehlbauer agreed that the policy is reasonable and expressed support.

Faanes asked about how reservations and scheduling would be managed. Thunstrom indicated that the process would be developed once the policy is approved and staffing is in place.

Mayor Vogel stated he had discussed the policy with Thunstrom earlier that day and supported moving forward. Mayor Vogel proposed a rental rate of $50 per hour with a two-hour minimum for after-hours use.

MOTION BY: UDVIG SECOND: FAANES TO APPROVE THE CITY HALL CHAMBERS RENTAL POLICY

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Councilmember Robinson aye

Motion carried: 5-0

C. Top Tier Automotive Site Plan
City Planner Beth Richmond presented the site plan review request for Top Tier Automotive, proposed for a just-over-one-acre vacant parcel between Highway 47 and Aztec Street. The site is guided for commercial use in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and zoned B-2 General Business. The proposed use, a minor auto repair and service facility, is permitted in that district. The applicant proposes a single-story, 6,800-square-foot building with eight vehicle bays and two driveways accessing Aztec Street. Richmond noted that two architectural standards were the focus of discussion: the requirement that 100 percent of the front wall exterior finish consist of materials comparable in grade and quality to brick, stone, glass, stucco, or concrete; and the requirement for facade articulation at least every 60 linear feet and windows at regular intervals on all street-facing elevations. The proposed building features Dakota Steel paneling with stone accents along the base. Richmond indicated the Planning Commission determined the Dakota Steel paneling, which carries a 45-year limited warranty, meets the grade and quality standard, and that updated design elements and windows were added to satisfy facade articulation requirements. Outstanding items include finalizing driveway widths, landscaping revisions, potential additional screening along the south boundary, and confirmation of vegetation impacts near a proposed infiltration basin. The Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval at its June 17 meeting.

Muehlbauer stated he had no questions, having watched the Planning Commission meeting, and indicated he liked the proposal.

Robinson noted he had attended the Planning Commission meeting, had communicated with the property owners, and had suggested the addition of stone accents, which he felt significantly improved the building's appearance. He expressed support.

Udvig stated she had reviewed the Planning Commission meeting and was in favor, noting the building would be an attractive addition to the corridor.

Faanes agreed that the building looked nice and expressed support.

Mayor Vogel stated he was in favor and noted the stone facade at the base addressed his concern with the primary cladding material.

MOTION BY: ROBINSON SECOND: FAANES TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2026-24 APPROVING A SITE PLAN FOR TOP TIER AUTOMOTIVE

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carried: 5-0

D. Turtle Ponds 6th Addition Preliminary and Final Plat
City Planner Beth Richmond presented requests for preliminary and final plat approval for the Turtle Ponds 6th Addition, a two-and-a-half-acre parcel located along 229th Avenue within the city's urban service area. The site is part of the Turtle Run Planned Unit Development, guided for Medium Density Residential use, and was rezoned to Turtle Run PUD in 2023. The applicant proposes two four-unit townhome buildings, with each unit on its own lot, for a total of eight lots and one outlot encompassing the private street continuation, wetland, and stormwater areas. The plat density of approximately 4.8 units per net acre falls within the required range of three to seven units per net acre. Access would be provided via 229th Lane, a private street currently owned and maintained by the Turtle Ponds 4th Addition HOA, which would be expanded to include the 6th Addition. An existing pole shed and its access to 229th Avenue would be removed. The applicant proposes to remove approximately one-third of an acre of trees and fill approximately 800 square feet of wetland, with Wetland Conservation Act credits to be obtained and reviewed by the city before final acceptance. A landscaping plan has been provided with minor revisions pending, and a wet sedimentation basin is proposed on the southwest side of the site. The final plat includes a dedication of 60 feet of right-of-way to Anoka County along 229th Avenue. The Planning Commission held the public hearing for the preliminary plat at its June 17 meeting, received no public comment, and unanimously recommended approval, noting that this design is the best fit for the site of all iterations reviewed. Minor condition updates include a landscaping plan revision and an updated engineering review memo date.

Faanes asked whether the townhomes would be for sale or for rent. The applicant confirmed the units would be for sale. Faanes expressed support for the proposal.

Udvig, Robinson, and Muehlbauer stated they had no questions.

Mayor Vogel asked about a noise comment submitted by Anoka County, referenced in the packet. Richmond indicated that language is standard county correspondence and not unusual.

MOTION BY: FAANES SECOND: MUEHLBAUER TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2026-25 APPROVING THE PRELIMINARY PLAT AND FINAL PLAT FOR THE 6TH ADDITION OF THE TURTLE PONDS DEVELOPMENT

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carried: 5-0

10. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - NONE

11. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

A. Finance - Darcy Mulvihill

Finance Director Darcy Mulvihill addressed the Mayor, Council, residents, and staff, noting that the evening marked her final council meeting after 29 years in municipal finance, the last 16 with the City of Saint Francis. Mulvihill reflected on the city's accomplishments during her tenure, including maintaining structural budget balance through economic uncertainty, protecting fiscal health, modernizing core financial systems, and securing the community's long-term fiscal future. She extended thanks to the City Council and administration for their trust and commitment to fiscal discipline, to her coworkers for their diligence and camaraderie, to the city's consultants for their ongoing support, and to her family for their patience through nearly three decades of budget seasons. She noted the city's reserves are strong and long-term fiscal plans are in place. She closed by looking forward to motorcycling, crafting, and time with family in retirement, and offered a closing quote as her parting words to the Council.

Mayor Vogel thanked Mulvihill, stating she embodies a good and healthy public servant and that her service is greatly appreciated.

12. CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

City Administrator Kate Thunstrom stated she had no formal updates to report, noting that many agenda items that evening tied into ongoing work, including highway-related matters, funding and appropriations, and e-bike planning. No questions were raised by the Council.

13. COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

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

Udvig thanked Mulvihill for her years of service and for the closing quotes she would bring to each meeting, noting they often stayed with her throughout the week. Udvig wished Mulvihill a well-deserved retirement.

Robinson reported attending a recent Planning and Zoning meeting and commended the Police Department on the quality of its off-week reports. Robinson noted he had met with Mulvihill and Santillo the prior week to review the CIP and encouraged those available to attend Mulvihill's retirement celebration on Thursday from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Muehlbauer extended thanks to Mulvihill on behalf of himself and former Councilmember Steve Elvig. Muehlbauer also addressed several of the points raised during the public comment period, including clarifications on the Vista Prairie tax abatement, code enforcement procedures, and the city's approach to property maintenance. He noted the city does not weaponize enforcement and that the abatement arrangement was reviewed and supported by multiple financial institutions and is subject to public process. Muehlbauer stated he was participating in the meeting remotely.

Faanes expressed gratitude to Mulvihill for her service and stated she had no additional items to report.

14. UPCOMING EVENTS

July 08 - Farmers Market - 3:00 - 7:00 pm
July 14 - Rum River Fire Board Meeting - 5:00 pm
July 15 - Farmers Market - 3:00 - 7:00 pm
July 15 - Planning Commission Meeting - 7:00 pm
July 20 - City Council Meeting - 6:00 pm
July 22 - Farmers Market - 3:00 - 7:00 pm
July 29 - Farmers Market - 3:00 - 7:00 pm

15. ADJOURNMENT

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

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carried: 5-0

There being no further business, Mayor Vogel adjourned the regular City Council at 7:49 p.m.

Jennifer Wida

Jennifer Wida, City Clerk