

**CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS**  
Regular Meeting of the City Council  
City Hall  
2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

**MINUTES**  
September 28, 2016 at 7:00 P.M.

- A. CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 pm
- B. ROLL CALL: LINDSTROM X HARRIS \_\_\_\_ BROWN THUNDER X  
FISCHER X GUSTAFSON X
- STAFF PRESENT: THONGVANH X
- C. PRESENTATIONS:
- D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
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| 1. August 24, 2016 City Council Meeting Minutes            | Approved |
| 2. September 7, 2016 City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes | Approved |
- E. PUBLIC HEARINGS:
- F. CONSENT AGENDA:
1. General Disbursements through: 9/20/16 \$177,364.74  
Payroll through: 9/15/16 \$41,126.07
  2. SCORE Grant
  3. MN Historical Grant-Interpreted Sign at Curtiss Field for \$2,500
  4. Administration Coordinator (Katie Thrasher) 18 Month Employee Step Adjustment
  5. Community Development Coordinator (Paul Moretto) 18 Month Employee Step Adjustment
- Council Member Fischer Moved, Approved 4-0
- G: POLICY ITEMS:
1. Adopt 2017 Preliminary Levy  
City Administrator Sack Thongvanh stated that each year the city must set a preliminary levy by September 30.
    - There are no levy limits imposed by the legislature for the 2017 budget
    - The amount of local government aid that the city received this year increased by \$4,200. LGA increased from \$540,617 to 544,817.
    - Fiscal disparity distribution dollars for 2017 increased by \$56,779.
    - This year city staff looked at the long-term fiscal stability. The proposal for 2017 is to set aside \$20,000 for capital replacement. Currently the city uses vehicle certificates to bond for the vehicles and debt service for street projects. The purpose is to set aside on a regular basis going forward so that there aren't

spikes in impacts to the residents in terms of improvements or large equipment purchases.

- The dollar amount increase is similar from last year. Last year was a \$40-\$50 increase annually for a median-value home, and this year it will be \$26 annually for a median-value home. The total taxable market value has increased in the city in part due to the introduction of The Good Acre.
- The preliminary 2017 tax levy is 1,278,231. Staff recommends a budget hearing meeting for Wednesday, December 14 at 7pm.

Council Member Gustafson agreed that it makes sense to build up a reserve again.

Council Member Gustafson Moved, Approved 4-0

## 2. SolSmart Program

Mayor Lindstrom states that this is a national program through the Department of Energy. If the city signs up for SolSmart, we will get free technical advice from a local representative on how to become more of a solar-friendly community. The city would be certified at bronze, silver, or gold level based on a set of criteria. SolSmart is hoping for a dozen or more cities to be involved in this program. This is the first year.

Council Member Fischer Moved, Approved 4-0

## 3. Minnesota Local Government Project for Energy Planning (LoGoPEP) Application

This application is a recommendation coming out of the Environment Commission, similar to the SolSmart Program. This is an initiative of the University of Minnesota and the Energy Transition Lab, partnering with the Great Plains Institute, the Department of Energy, and other experts. The purpose is to utilize the expertise of the University, Great Plains Institute, and other energy experts. The Environment Commission and city will be presented with case studies and best practices on energy reduction from similar-sized cities. LoGoPEP will take a close look at the city's energy usage and create easily digestible baseline data on energy and greenhouse gas emissions. LoGoPEP would do a wedge analysis to help bridge the gap between our goals and the state's goals.

Council Member Brown Thunder Moved, Approved 4-0

## H. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

### Council Member Fischer:

Thank you to the Environment Commission for all the work they've been doing.

### Council Member Brown Thunder:

Northeast Youth and Family Services is doing their "Taste of Northeast" fundraiser on Thursday, October 6 at 5:30-8:30pm at the Vadnais Heights Commons. Tickets are \$30 in advance and \$40 at the door. He also welcomes a new business to the City of Falcon Heights. Fit Lab recently opened off Hamline and Iowa.

### Council Member Gustafson:

Saturday, October 1 is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Fire Department Open House and Chili Cook-Off. It costs \$5 for adults to eat chili and \$3 for children under 12. Saturday, October 7 is National Coffee

with a Cop day. The events on October 7 are taking place at the Rosedale Caribou from 10-11am and at the North Oaks Brueggers Bagels from 9-10:30am.

City Administrator Sack Thongvanh:

The Falcon Heights Fall Fete is on Thursday, October 13 from 5-7pm. One thing to keep in mind for the winter months is keeping the fire hydrants clear. Please adopt a fire hydrant, keep it clear, and help out the Falcon Heights Fire Department for emergency situations.

The application process went live this morning for both the Tri-City Work Group and Falcon Heights Task Force. For the e-form, download the application first, fill it out, and then click submit for an email to be sent to the City Administrator. The application deadline will be October 12, 2016. He and the Mayor will also be looking into the option of having facilitators for the group.

Mayor Lindstrom:

No updates.

I. COMMUNITY FORUM:

Paula Mielke- 1868 Arona St:

She wants to know if the 2017 budget will show a lower dollar amount for court fines for revenue. Something they have asked is to seriously reduce ticketing in Falcon Heights. She is assuming the court fines budget line item includes police ticketing. It is currently at \$73,000 and she is hoping that it will be less.

Chuck Laszewski- 1713 St. Mary's St:

He is thrilled that the city is doing the SolSmart program and LoGoPEP application. Has the budget been released on the website yet?

City Administrator Sack Thongvanh:

The actual budget won't be compiled until the truth in taxation hearing. What's in front of us today is an amount for the levy. The Council has the opportunity to lower the levy in between now and December 14.

Chuck Laszewski- 1713 St. Mary's St:

As a way to show our seriousness about the death of Philando Castile, the Council should seriously consider making the traffic stop fees a zero for revenue. We do not want the police collecting fees on our behalf. Is anyone on the Council thinking about doing that?

Mayor Lindstrom:

- Due to recent work on solidifying the roles of the task force, rolling out the application, reading through the recommendations on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing Report, along with many other tasks, he has not solidified his views on that particular subject matter. The topic is certainly on the table. He would be interested in knowing what the makeup of those fees is.

Council Member Gustafson:

- He echoes the Mayors comments. He would like to see where these fees are specifically coming from.

City Administrator Sack Thongvanh:

- The city does not depend on the dollar amount given. Those fines are automatically issued to the city from the state. We receive about 25% of all tickets, and when we receive the money from the state they do not break it down into categories. In terms of impact to the budget, for every \$10,000 decline that equates to a 1% increase. This would mean a 7-8% increase on top of the current levy or cutting services to offset the cost.

Council Member Fischer:

- Our policing strategy is not being driven by fines. He believes it is a result of our policing strategy. He believes that what is in the budget reflects expectations, but that could change in the next six to eight months.

Council Member Brown Thunder:

- He would like more information on what we are collecting on and how we would replace that money. He is open to looking into that.

Melissa Harrel- Sullew- 1588 Vincent St:

She is hopeful that it would be possible through the task force to direct our police not to make traffic stops for things that seem mostly exploratory. If there is no incentive for ticketing that could reduce the amount of fines the city is taking in. Is there a way to request that the state break down the type of fine when they are distributing to us? Speaking as a tax payer in an above median-value home, she would be willing to pay more taxes.

J. ADJOURNMENT: 7:29 pm

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Peter Lindstrom, Mayor

Dated this 28<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2016

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Sack Thongvanh, City Administrator