

Falcon Heights City Council Workshop
City Hall
2077 W Larpenteur Ave
6:30 P.M.

MINUTES

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

ROLL CALL: LINDSTROM HARRIS BROWN THUNDER
FISCHER GUSTAFSON

STAFF PRESENT: THONGVANH

Call to Order: 6:38 pm

- 1) Ramsey County Sheriff's Office- Law Enforcement Services

The City Attorney and the League of MN Cities have reviewed the police contract because of the liabilities. The plan is to have the contract on the next Council meeting agenda for approval.

In January the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office will host a Citizen's Academy, and the hope would be that Falcon Heights residents would participate to have more insight as to what law enforcement is like. They can host up to 25 people in a class.

This is a four year contract. The decision to terminate requires nine calendar months prior to the end of the year. The contract would still be in effect if there isn't an agreement as to who would be policing for the city.

In regards to data collection, they do not put narratives with their data. They make their data usable to review trends. They present reports to the city managers group quarterly. Sheriffs get a weekly update that contains a narrative, but it's not public because it would violate data privacy laws. They put out a weekly summary report that can be shared with cities, and they produce these reports for newspapers. Their reports run from Wednesday-Tuesday. More public data can be found online at communitycrimemap.com. Some calls of a sensitive nature cannot be found on there. There is an option to receive reports via email based on a selected location.

In regards to interactions with the public, there will be a monthly meeting with the City Administrator, and most of the communication will go through him. Some communication may even be daily or weekly.

Community engagement would be through events such as Night to Unite, regularly scheduled community engagement, and representatives attending public safety commission meetings. Typically there would be consistency in the schedule.

They will be hiring six deputies to patrol in Falcon Heights. They work a four on, four off schedule. For six hours during the day there will be overlap between two officers. They also hopes to have everyone

come through Falcon Heights to familiarize themselves. Training for new officers lasts a year. It would be unheard of to have a patrol deputy with less than a year of experience. They typically get to patrol after one to three years on the job.

What does Ramsey County offer to help work towards the recommendations?

- Some of the things that cannot be done is the ownership component of dealing with personnel.
- Things that can be done are attending Council meetings, Commission meetings, and events.

The recommendations that are addressed in the contract are ownership, regular communication, and data collection. It's important to have consistent expectations between the contract cities so that the deputies can be effective between policing cities.

If the situation would arise with a cause, a deputy can be moved to not police Falcon Heights. Seniority allows them to bid a shift but not an area. Risk management is taken very seriously, and there is also an indemnification clause.

An appropriate outlet for giving suggestions and feedback is through the City Administrator.

2) Xcel- Franchise Fee

Jake Sedlacek from Xcel is the manager of Community Relations and Economic Development. The anticipated annual revenue from gas and electric is \$129,000. This is paid out quarterly. If this was approved, the soonest it would be on a utility bill is in February. It is best to make sure the community is engaged and aware of the franchise fees when they come around.

The approval would require a public hearing posted in newspapers and hearing notices posted on Facebook, Twitter, newsletters, the website, and via a US mailer postcard. The ratio of the fees is based on usage. Communities nearby such as St. Paul and Maplewood are utilizing this franchise fee. Franchise fee agreements are on a twenty-year term. They request that fee changes don't change more than once a year. This fee is collected from individual premises. The ballpark range is 40% commercial and 60% residential.

The ordinance requires cities to plan their street projects well. When they relocate utilities out of the right away, it is initially at their cost. If they are asked to relocate again within five years, it would be the city's cost. The franchise agreement formalizes the relationship. There is a formal dispute language in the agreement if things go south. There is also language about restoration within the city and right of way work. Currently, there are over 300 agreements in place for franchise fees.

3) Vacant Home Ordinance

The purpose is to allow the city to address vacant homes. This provides staff a guideline and authority to go into homes and provide some type of requirement. This would create a registry for vacant homes to be identified in the city. The city receives a number of complaints about upkept homes and the appearance of homes in neighborhoods. This causes some concern because of the safety and condition of the home, specifically if there are utilities still turned on.

The wording still needs to be defined more in this ordinance, as it may not be getting at the point with some of the wording of lawfully residing in the dwelling. The cities of Crystal and St. Paul were used as models to the ordinance. Crystal's ordinance was used for the practicality of not having direct access to a legal department.

Having a vacant home registered would allow us to already have standards and not have to go through such a long legal process. With a vacant home being registered, there would be contact information and a line of communication with the proper person. This also allows the city access to inspect with cause for concern. There will also be an additional component, with given concern, that the Fire Marshal is involved to enforce fire code. For example, this would be the case with a home that does not have clear paths to exit due to hoarding.

Input from the Government Affairs Director at the Minnesota Realtors Association, Forest Cyr, is that there should be definition in the fee schedule of whether or not it's residential or commercial. There should be reasonable notice given if inspecting the premise. Other cities that are working on this type of ordinance are St. Paul and West St. Paul. Most communities set aside money to purchase problem properties.

Adjourn: 8:10 pm

Peter Lindstrom, Mayor

Dated this 18th day of October, 2017

Sack Thongvanh, City Administrator