

**CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS**  
Regular Meeting of the City Council  
City Hall  
2077 West Larpenteur Avenue  
**MINUTES**  
January 12, 2022 at 7:00 P.M.

- A. CALL TO ORDER: 7:02 PM
- B. ROLL CALL: ANDREWS \_\_X\_ GUSTAFSON \_\_X\_ LEEHY \_\_X\_

MEYER \_\_X\_ WEHYEE \_\_X\_

STAFF PRESENT: THONGVANH \_\_X\_

Council Member Wehyee requested to amend the agenda and change Consent Item F7 to Policy Item G2 for further discussion.

City Administrator Thongvanh requested to amend the agenda and add Policy Item G3 Appoint Public Works Director Tim Pittman as Interim City Clerk.

Motion by Council Member Wehyee to adopt the amended agenda;  
Approved, 4-0.

- C. PRESENTATION
1. Oath of Office for Eric Meyer to City Council Member
  2. Oath of Office for Melanie Leehy to City Council Member
- D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
1. September 22, 2021 City Council Regular Minutes
  2. October 13, 2021 City Council Regular Minutes
  3. October 27, 2021 City Council Regular Minutes
  4. November 10, 2021 City Council Regular Minutes
  5. December 1, 2021 City Council Workshop Minutes
  6. December 8, 2021 City Council Regular Minutes
  7. December 22 2021 City Council Regular Minutes

Council Member Leehy requested to amend the December 22, 2021 Minutes to fix a typo.

Motion by Council Member Andrews to approve the minutes;  
Approved, 5-0.

- E. PUBLIC HEARINGS:
- F. CONSENT AGENDA:
1. General Disbursements through: 1/05/22 \$175,986.39  
Payroll through: 12/31/22 \$21,197.34
  2. Approval of License(s)
  3. Designation of Official Depositories for 2022

4. Review Elected Official Out-of-State Travel Policy
5. Review and Adopt Council Standing Rules and Council/ Advisory Commission Roles and Guidelines
6. Council Appointment as Liaison for City Commissions
7. ~~Appointment of Acting Mayor~~
8. Mile Reimbursement Rate for 2022
9. Appointment of Amy Christiansen to the Environment Commission
10. Appointment of John Pellegrini to the Environment Commission
11. 2022 Commission Re-Appointment(s)

Motion by Council Member Leehy to approve the Consent Agenda;  
Approved, 5-0.

G: POLICY ITEMS:

1. City Administrator Hiring Process Timeline

Administrator Thongvanh gave a brief overview of the hiring timeline and what processes the City has utilized in the past. The job posting closed today at 4:30 p.m. and a total of 18 applications were received. There are a number of qualified candidates and he was excited to present them to the council for initial review. Thongvanh asked council members to decide who will be on the community panel for interviews. In the past, residents from various city commissions were selected.

Mayor Gustafson asked if an additional meeting would be scheduled this month so the council would have additional time to review applications and discuss which candidates will move forward for interviews.

Thongvanh agreed and stated that he and the mayor could review all applications and form a list of those who meet the minimum requirements. Then, the list would be sent to the rest of council for review and each council member would select their top 5 candidates. If everyone is comfortable with that timeline, another workshop meeting could be held next week to confirm interview candidates.

Council Member Leehy stated she has been a part of the hiring process in the past and the community panel is an important part of the process. Therefore, once it's decided who should be on the panel it's important to have a few alternates in case there are scheduling conflicts.

Thongvanh agreed. In the past each council member has selected a community member to be on the community panel.

Wehyee asked if the city could send a message out to the community to inform residents of the opportunity to provide input and serve on the panel.

Thongvanh responded that was an option and the city has done that in the past when assembling taskforces. However, keep in mind that doing so would add at least 2-4 weeks to the overall hiring process. Additional time would be needed to advertise, review applications, and have further discussions with the council before moving forward.

Council Member Meyer agreed with Wehyee and thought it would be ideal to expand community involvement if they had enough time.

Leehy added while it was a good idea, it was a very time-consuming process when they appointed community members to the task force and may not be appropriate in this hiring process since there is limited time.

Wehyee disagreed stating that since the city administrator position is an important role and the hiring process shouldn't necessarily be expedited. He wanted to ensure that community members felt they had been given ample opportunity to participate.

Meyer stated that was a fair point. He asked whether there were any cons to employing an interim administrator for longer should the council wish to spend more time on the hiring process.

Thongvanh responded that since city administration is such a small operation, it can be critical for staff to have that position filled as quickly as possible since it guides all other positions.

Leehy added that the longer the process takes, the higher the potential is to lose some applicants to other positions. This has happened before. Thongvanh agreed.

Council Member Andrews expressed concerns regarding the current number of openings on city commissions impacting the amount of commissioner participation in this process.

Mayor Gustafson added that council members could post on their social media to advertise the opportunity to participate on the community panel. Each council member would have the discretion to choose any resident they wish to represent them during the community panel interviews. It does not have to be a current commission member.

Leehy agreed and stated that seemed like the best option. Council members could either have the option to pick community members that are already serving on city commissions, or reach out to other community members who are qualified or want a chance to participate. Thongvanh agreed.

Wehyee responded that while this was not his first choice, he understood the concerns on adhering to the timeline. It would not be ideal to jeopardize city operations by prolonging the absence of a city administrator.

Gustafson stated that every council member should try to recruit at least one community member to be part of the interview panel as soon as possible. At the workshop meeting next week, the council will go through the top applicants and decide who will move onto the interview process. The council will also confirm the list of community panelists.

All council members agreed to call a workshop meeting next Wednesday, January 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the following:

1. Create a list of top candidates from the job applicant pool that will move forward to the interview process
2. Each council member will bring forward a recommendation for the community panel
3. Confirm which council members will serve on the community panel
4. Solidify the interview questions for the job applicants

Motion by Council Member Leehy to set the workshop meeting and agenda;  
Approved, 5-0.

## 2. Appointment of Acting Mayor

Gustafson stated that he had originally chosen Council Member Leehy as the 2022 Acting Mayor. This is standard each year, especially if any absences from the current mayor are anticipated.

Wehyee stated he had taken this item off of the consent agenda because he would like to have more discussion about this decision. Historically, there had been a rotation so that each council member had an opportunity to share the responsibilities and experience. Wehyee pointed out that Leehy had already served as Acting Mayor in the past.

Thongvanh agreed that this had been done in the past, however, as time went on it became more difficult to adhere to the rotation system with council member transitions. The default became selecting a council member with experience in the city and community. It is normal for this item to be on the consent agenda since the mayor is choosing who will represent them in their absence and typically there's not much discussion on this item.

Gustafson added that he had chosen Leehy since she is not serving as a council liaison to a commission this year and thus had more availability. If the council were to follow the rotation system technically Council Member Andrews should be selected for 2022. Andrews also has the most experience on the council after Council Member Leehy.

Meyer thanked Wehyee for opening up this discussion, stating it's important to know how these decisions are made and the processes that go behind them.

Motion by Council Member Meyer to appoint Council Member Andrews as the 2022 Acting Mayor;  
Approved, 5-0.

## 3. Appointment of Public Works Director Tim Pittman as Interim City Clerk

Thongvanh stated that the City had not hired an interim administrator in the past. Typically, another staff member would temporarily fill in. Now that the City is hiring an interim administrator it will be important to give a trusted staff member the power to sign off on checks, payables and bills. Tim Pittman would act as temporary city clerk until the new administrator is hired.

Andrews and Wehyee asked if this would change his current salary or hours.

Thongvanh responded that it may slightly increase his hours but ultimately, he is only needed to review financials and sign off on them. He also noted that Pittman has served as Interim City Administrator in the past and is relatively familiar with these duties.

Motion by Council Member Leehy to approve Public Works Director Tim Pittman as the Interim City Clerk.  
Approved, 5-0.

## H. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Meyer stated that he is happy to be here and appreciative of the residents of Falcon Heights for giving him this opportunity. He also thanked Gustafson for walking him through the council processes.

Leehy thanked residents for reelecting her to serve the community. She is excited for the positive change that can be made in the term ahead.

Andrews updated the council on the winter event that will be held mid-February. It is being planned by the Community Engagement and Parks Commissions. She had concerns with the city having an event when there are currently many health concerns occurring in the state.

Gustafson provided more information on the winter event, newly named Snowstravaganza, and explained that necessary COVID-19 precautions will be put in place. He stated that the League of Women Voters is holding a virtual event on January 20<sup>th</sup>. He also encouraged residents to reach out council members if they would like to participate in the hiring process through the community panel.

Thongvanh stated that the council will need to decide whether a workshop will be held in February. He planned to have the interim administrator in place by then. He also planned to have the draft vaccine mandate to the council by the next regular meeting.

I. COMMUNITY FORUM:


*Please limit comments to 3 minutes per person. Items brought before the Council will be referred for consideration. Council may ask questions for clarification, but no council action or discussion will be held on these items.*

J. ADJOURNMENT: 8:55 PM



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Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor

Dated this 26th day of January, 2022



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Sack Thongvanh, City Administrator