

**CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS**  
City Council Workshop  
City Hall  
2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

**MINUTES**

December 1, 2021

6:30 P.M.

**NOTE: THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD BY WEB CONFERENCE\***

- A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:35 PM
- B. ROLL CALL: ANDREWS\_X\_ GUSTAFSON\_X\_ LEEHY\_X\_  
MIAZGA\_X\_ WEHYEE\_X\_  
  
STAFF PRESENT: THONGVANH\_X\_ PAVEK\_X\_
- C. PRESENTATIONS:
- D. POLICY ITEMS:
  - 1. Law Enforcement Services Update

Administrator Thongvanh

The City Council approved an agreement with the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office (RCSO) to provide law enforcement services for 2022. It was estimated that the City would save roughly \$46,000 than what was originally anticipated since RCSO would also be providing services to the State Fair. In a recent development, the Ramsey County Board has discussed whether or not they actually want to pursue a contract with the State Fair. All cities in the area who have similar contracts, including Vadnais Heights, Shoreview, Arden Hills, White Bear Township, and Little Canada, would like to team up and send a letter to the County Board. The purpose is to ask the board to reconsider and continue on with the original plan of providing services to the State Fair in 2022.

Council Member Miazga

If Ramsey County does not provide law enforcement services for the State Fair will this change our one-year contract with them for 2022? I thought we were getting a better deal since they were also providing State Fair coverage?

Administrator Thongvanh

The City is still waiting for the County Board to approve our contract for 2022. In the past, the board was never involved in these types of negotiations, however, there is a very political climate right now. I can't guarantee they will approve it but I am anticipating that they will.

Council Member Wehyee

If we move forward with the contract but other cities leave, will the price increase? What is the status with St. Paul? Can we use them as a back-up plan?

Administrator Thongvanh

We would cost share a portion of the price if other cities were to leave. If we left it would not impact other cities since RCSO should be able to relocate or completely eliminate some personnel costs. Regarding St. Paul, we do not have an update. We can plan on having more discussions with them in 2022.

Council Member Andrews

When will the County Board approve our contract?

Administrator Thongvanh

They will have to decide by the end of the month. The purpose of the letter is to remind them of the importance of our working relationships and continued collaboration.

Mayor Gustafson

The County Board has yet to make an official decision regarding the State Fair. Everyone is wondering what the repercussions will be since every city and the county has already set their budgets for 2022.

Administrator Thongvanh

This was a recent development that caught all of us off guard. We hope the County Board will recognize how much this impacts the surrounding communities. In the meantime, we will work with other cities to send a letter and each council member should reach out the county board members as well.

2. COVID Vaccination Requirements

Administrator Thongvanh

A few weeks ago, there was a COVID-19 exposure at City Hall and 50% of staff had to miss work and quarantine for at least 10 days. If one more staff member had fallen ill, City Hall would have been shut down. Policies need to be put in place to prevent this from happening. I contacted the City Attorney to ask about vaccine mandates.

It seems that at first other cities and counties were offering weekly testing as an alternative, but as time went on more moved toward requiring the vaccine. Council should consider this, especially since we need to be fully staffed in the winter to provide plowing services. We need to ensure the City is operational and a similar exposure could jeopardize this again. We should also consider putting a new COVID-10 relief measure forward as there is currently none in place. Moving forward, at least 80 hours of COVID leave should be available for those who may need to quarantine.

Council Member Andrews

What if employees refuse to get vaccinated?

Administrator Thongvanh

Enforcing a vaccine mandate is becoming the norm in a lot of cities and counties. If employees refuse to get vaccinated, they could be disciplined up to terminated. While we value our employees, we need to remain operational and put the best interests of the city first.

The majority of the council members were supportive of this action. They asked that all employees are given a reasonable amount of time (no more than 60 days) to get the vaccine.

Administrator Thongvanh

This will most likely be on the regular meeting agenda in January. Staff needs more time to do research and create a policy.

Council Member Leehy

I have a hard time mandating the vaccine. The vaccine is not 100% effective and if they already had COVID-19 recently they will now have natural immunity. I respect everyone's opinions and their right to make decisions about their own bodies and health. I don't want to open up the City to a lawsuit and am not supportive of this policy.

3. Mayor/Council Appointments

Administrator Thongvanh

Each year we rotate council members to a new commission. Open it up to discussion and please let me know which commission you would like to serve on as a council liaison.

Council Member Miazga

It may be beneficial to have residents serve on the NineNorth and Northeast Youth and Family Services (NYFS). They may have more qualified backgrounds and be able to contribute more.

Mayor Gustafson

I can be a placeholder at the NYFS meetings for the time being while we advertise the openings and interview the viable candidates.

4. Levy and Budget Updates

Administrator Thongvanh

The levy hasn't changed. Typically, we do not modify the preliminary. There is money set aside in the storm sewer fund which will cover \$80,000 of the seminary ponds project and our culvert. The City has reduced its capital since we no longer have a Fire Department.

Council Member Wehyee

Are we going to make any contingency plans in case we need to pay more for law enforcement services?

Administrator Thongvanh

We can assume it won't change but we always have a back-up plan just in case. Any changes will come back to council and we would have to redirect some funds and make changes to the

proposed 2022 budget. The City will also be closing out a fund since we have sold all of our fire trucks. The remaining funds will be transferred over to park services.

Council Member Leehy

Regarding the street work that needs to be done on Lindig, are we planning to rebid or are we waiting until the spring?

Administrator Thongvanh

2021 PMP - Right now, we are dealing with some of the subcontractors who are waiting to be paid. It has been a bit of a mess. The City has some retainers that should be able to cover the cost of restoring the curbs. We will wait until spring.

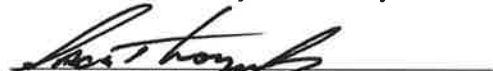
E. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

F. ADJOURNMENT: 8:06 PM



\_\_\_\_\_  
Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor

Dated this 12<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2022



\_\_\_\_\_  
Sack Thongvanh, City Administrator