

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

AGENDA  
**March 27, 2019 at 7:00 P.M.**

A. CALL TO ORDER:

B. ROLL CALL: Vacant Seat \_\_\_ LEEHY\_X\_\_\_ HARRIS\_X\_\_\_ MIAZGA\_X\_\_\_  
GUSTAFSON\_X\_\_\_

STAFF PRESENT: THONGVANH\_X\_\_\_

C. PRESENTATION

1. Appointment of Council Member Randy Gustafson to Mayor and Oath of Office

City Administrator Thongvanh

The Agenda is to appoint Councilmember Randy Gustafson as Mayor and do the Oath of Office. The Council will have to take a vote to elect Randy Gustafson as the mayor and adopt the resolution to appoint Randy to the seat and declare of a vacancy on the Council.

Mayor Pro-Tem Leehy stated that they would need a motion for Resolution 19-12 to appoint Randall C. Gustafson as Mayor and declare a vacancy on the Council.

Council Member Harris Moved, Approved 4-0

2. NYFS Annual Report – Jerry Hromatka

Jerry Hromatka

NYFS has been around for 42 years, and the primary population is from 5 - 21 years old (youths, adults, and families). The annual budget is \$3.3 million (Day Treatment 38%, OPMH 35%, Com Service 12%, Admin 4%, Development 6%, and Building 5%) and the organization focuses on Mental Health, Day Treatment, and Community Services. NYFS revenue sources come from Contracts, Fees, Grants, and Contributions. Your support buys services for residents are assured, benefits (Educational attainment, Effective workforce, Citizenship), reduce costs to public, and leverage outside resources.

The 2017-2018 Service Summary provides the number of Falcon Heights households that received services from NYFS. In 2017, Counseling was \$450, Diversion was \$1,237, Senior Chore (seniors/youth) was \$120, Cost of Contracted was \$1,807, Non Contracted was \$12,790, and City Contract \$9,017. As of September 2018, Counseling was \$3,387, Diversion was \$620, Senior Chore (seniors/youth) was \$1,308, Cost of Contracted was \$5,315, Non Contracted was \$63,406, and City Contract \$9,399.

NYFS future events are Leadership Lunch on May 1st and Taste of Northeast on October 10. Everyone is welcome to attend the event.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. March 13, 2019 City Council Meeting Minutes

Council Member Leehy

Prior to the meeting, I sent the grammatical errors to City Administrator Thongvanh.

City Administrator Thongvanh

Another change is the spelling of the word Mayor.

Council Member Leehy Moved, Approved 4-0

E. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

F. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. General Disbursements through: 3/20/19 \$173,448.97  
Payroll through: 3/15/19 \$19,377.07
2. Approval of City License(s)
3. Council Appointments as Liaison for City Commissions
4. University of Minnesota Good Neighbor Fund

City Administrator Thongvanh

Item F3: Council Appointments as Liaison for City Commissions

Due to Mayor Peter Lindstrom's resignation, there is an open seat for a liaison in the Environment Commission. Council Member Miazga used to be the Chair for the Environment Commission, and with his experience and passion, I think it is a good idea for him to be the liaison.

Item F4: University of Minnesota Good Neighbor Fund

The city continues to apply for the University of Minnesota Good Neighbor Fund to enhance operations throughout the city. In the past, we used the fund for Piano in the Park and Fix-it stations. We are applying for the fund again, and it will focus on "Cultivating a Caring Community" theme. The funds will go towards building a storage shed for sports equipment at Curtiss Field, story time with Falcon Height's Elementary students and area seniors, and Rec on the Go.

Council Member Leehy Moved, Approved 4-0

G. POLICY ITEMS:

1. 2018 Ramsey County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan

City Administrator Thongvanh

The Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (MHMP) is a requirement of the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000). The development of a local government plan is required to maintain eligibility for federal hazard mitigation grant funding programs. For communities to be eligible for future mitigation funds, they must adopt an MHMP. The plan intends to reduce the actual threat of specific hazards by limiting the impact of damages and losses.

City Council asked Bryan Mayer from Ramsey County to elaborate Number 16, Severe Winter & Summer Storms, because the status is new. Mr. Mayer stated that one of the larger items is to bury the power lines. One of our biggest concerns are ice storms because power lines primarily come from trees or built from ice. In the wintertime, it takes a long time to get heat back on. Heat does not work in houses unless the power is working. In Minnesota, if the temperature drops down below zero and following an ice storm, it will be dangerous. It is a new development and we will work with power utilities to bury the power lines. It will also be in zoning, planning and 2040 Comprehensive Plan and it will point to the mitigation plans. If funds become available, it is certainly something we can pull it in to assist with it.

Council Member Leehy Moved, Approved 4-0

2. Resolution of Support for Grant Application for Redevelopment at 1667 Snelling Ave (Formally TIES Building)

City Administrator Thongvanh

The building at 1667 Snelling Ave (formally TIES/Sourcwell) is in the final phases of being sold. The new owner, Buhl Investors, is making plans for how to redevelop the property. In order to recover some of these clean-up costs, Buhl Investors, and Braun Intertec Corporation plan to submit a grant application for the Metropolitan Council's Tax Base Revitalization Account. If awarded, the City would be the grantee and agree to be a legal sponsor to administer the funds appropriately. A separate agreement between the City and Buhl Investors will be needed if the grant is awarded.

Peter Deanovic (Buhl Investors)

Resolution 19-13 is to proceed with a plan we have to reinvigorate at the TIES Building. As you may be aware, Sourcwell recently vacated the property and is looking to sell the building. Buhl Investors stepped in and are in the purchase agreement process with Sourcwell. As a 1940s building, it needs asbestos mitigation and other maintenance that was deferred over many years. We are asking the City's support in customary and requesting grant funds from a group like Met Council to assist with the expenses associated with removing the asbestos.

Council Member Miazga asks if he can distinguish Falcon Heights being in the legal sponsor versus a partner. Mr. Deanovic stated that he does not know, but the letter before Council is

what the Met Council request from any municipality that would be receiving grants and put them towards an individual project such as the TIES Building.

Council Member Harris asked Mr. Deanovic why Buhl Investors want to buy the property, how they would use it, and are they leasing it to others. Mr. Deanovic answered that the firm has a long history of acquiring assets that do not have occupancy. When it was identified as a property that was going to be vacant, we thought it was well suited for our skills and step in to improve something that becomes vibrant to the city. We plan to lease it to others for office use and believe it is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Council Member Miazga Moved, Approved 4-0

### 3. City Council Vacancy

#### City Administrator Thongvanh

In the last Regular City Council meeting, the Council accepted Peter Lindstrom's letter of resignation and declared a vacancy on the Falcon Heights City Council. Minnesota Statute states that the City Council "shall" appoint, but it does specify when the City Council has to fill the vacant seat. The Council does have to appoint someone before the end of the term, which is December 30th, 2019. There are three options, and the City Council must choose the following three:

- **Option #1: Take Applications and Interview**
- **Option #2: Hold a Special Election** - This can only be during designated dates and times (August and November) allowed by Ramsey County. It will cost the city up to \$10,000.
- **Option #3: Appointment** - The City Council can appoint a person for the vacancy. The Council does have the option to appoint after the November election when the voters have decided a candidate.

Council Members Miazga, Leehy, and Harris like Option #3 because it saves the city money, can appoint a person for the vacancy, and citizens can choose someone in the November election. Mayor Gustafson likes Option #1 where the city takes applications and interviews.

Council Member Harris Moved, Approved 3-1

#### H. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. April 3, 2019 City Council Workshop Rescheduled for April 10, 2019 after the Regular City Council Meeting

#### Council Member Miazga

- NYFS and the Bonding work are keeping me busy.

#### Council Member Leehy

- I received an invitation to speak on Sunday at the Falcon Heights United of Christ. It was an enjoyable opportunity to interact with everyone. I represented two presentations that were brought to the city already and looked at the essential items. The two things

that stood out were the food trucks and surveys (S.O.S and Community Survey). They appreciate the efforts that the city is doing to create more inclusive and cultivating a caring community.

- Parks Commission is meeting Monday, April 1st at 6:30PM.

#### Council Member Harris

- Last night, the Planning Commission met and discuss the changes to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan because the Met Council made some comments. We decided on recommendations that would be presented to the City Council, and one of them is building heights. Also, we had two residents who attended the meeting. One was a parent and a high school student. The high school student was interested in a planning career, and we invited them to contact anybody who works in planning; such as Justin and continue to attend our meetings.

#### Mayor Gustafson

- Community Engagement Commission met on Monday. We discussed Spring Together, Neighborhood Liaison, Neighborhood Watch Program, and youth engagement ideas that revolves around "Cultivating a Caring Community".
- Spring Together is on June 8, 11AM - 2PM at Curtiss Field Park.

#### City Administrator Thongvanh

- Due to a death in Ron Rabinovitz's family, we had to reschedule the event to Thursday, May 23, 7pm at City Hall. We hope everyone can make it.
- We will continue to work with the Fire Department in terms of structure. Mayor Gustafson, Council Member Leehy, and I will schedule individual meetings with Assistant Fire Chief, Captains, and all fire department employees.
- Tim Pittman, Public Works Director and I have been working together to replace the dump truck. The good news is that it will not cost the city \$150-160,000 and is looking at \$80-90,000. The bad news is that the county is going the dual axle route instead of a single axle. This means the turning radius will be wider and it will be difficult to go through the University Grove and narrow roads in the community. That is a concern for us. The best option is to retain the old truck as a backup. We need to look at different options and structures.
- Regarding the half basketball court in Curtiss Field, we originally wanted it in last fall, but with the rain for three straight weeks and snow, we did not make it in time. Once the snow thaws and the ground is dry, we will put the half basketball court in.

#### I. COMMUNITY FORUM:

##### Bryan Sullivan (1802 Eustis, Lauderdale, MN)

I want to talk about your management team. You stated that the safety of the community and fire department is a priority and I call BS on that. The Fire Department is in a very vulnerable state right now. If we get a real emergency, it is not going to be good. You expect one of those management team members to run complex fire incident baffles me. None of them has been in command or leadership roles. I have a newborn son at home, and I do not know if I am going to go in a burning house with someone who is in command and have never walked in those

shoes. If that does not bother all of you, then I do not know what will. Nobody here has the experience, knowledge, certifications, and insight scope on this City and Fire Department more than Rich did. You made a big mistake. It is very evident when all the community members came up and spoke in the last few weeks. Make this department safe again and bring Rich back.

In addition, I want to address about the names that appeared in the newspapers. It was embarrassing to Ben Smith and me. We were both told that this incident was classified and would remain in personal files. It is the city's responsibility to protect the names and by releasing it shows the incompetence of our administration and the lack of compassion you have for your employees. I trust the administration and council to have the names remain confidential, yet you betrayed my trust and faith. In last week's meeting, Ben wanted to know who was responsible for releasing the information to the news stations and so far, no one took responsibility for it. It upsets me because my file was not requested yet my personal information was released. This leads me to file a Workplace Hostile Work Environment against our city administrator because this was blatantly careless and hurtful. You fired Rich for the wrong reasons, and you owe it to the community to make it right.

Dale Huff (1795 Fry St)

I am a former firefighter for about ten years. I received an email that Rich was terminated and it is unbelievable. You made a big mistake. I do not know what were you thinking when you released the files but whoever released them should be fired as well. Hire him back because you can never replace him. You made a mistake.

Daryle Goodmanson (1803 Malvern St, Lauderdale, MN)

I want to talk about the 22 minutes fire response. In the last meeting, one of the council members stated that the fire chief had the highest percentage of being the first one on the job but not over 50%. Rich has his phone on whether he was on vacation or not. He does what he has to do whether he is in Florida or other places. His mind is always in the fire department. Rich does not just go on vacation and be on vacation. He is a firefighter, he is the chief, and more knowledgeable than anybody. I do not see the fire department getting any better unless he returns.

The City Administrator said that "one person does not make a fire station" and I am here to disagree with that. If you have a person in any business, I don't care what it is. If he is knowledgeable, get the business going, and good with his employees then his business will thrive. If not, his business will not last. Rich has built this Fire Department, and you fired the wrong person.

Steve Scott (Arden Hills Council Member)

My wife and I are part of the Ramsey County yellow ribbon network and assist veterans who are currently deployed and after when they return. Ramsey County oversees the north metro cities, and Falcon Heights is one of them. I will send some network information to you and get more representations from Falcon Heights. Ten years ago, a group of three Gold Star (a family that lost a service member in combat) families decided to establish an education fund to fallen soldiers. They hosted an Ice Cream Social event in their backyard and did not expect over 400 people. They continue to host the event at an outdoor venue park and added a 5K run and

other outdoor activities. The event continues to grow throughout the years, and five years ago, they moved the event to Arden Hills Army Training Site. This year's Ice Cream Social is on Sunday, April 28, at Arden Hills Army Training Site from 10 AM - 3 PM. This year's guest speaker is Chaplain John Morris. If you are interested in participating in the 5K run or 3K run, please register at [www.scoopsfortroops.net](http://www.scoopsfortroops.net).

Mayor Gustafson asked Mr. Scott to send the electronic flyer to City Administrator and the city will put it on the newsletter.

Tom Brace (1433 Idaho Ave)

Have you considered hiring someone that is skilled in conflict resolution that can help bridge this situation? It is not common for a fire chief to get crosswise or uncoordinated with the council and mayor. What is the level of fire suppression activities of your current management staffs? Fighting fire requires a great deal of training, experiences, and leadership. As a city, you want to make sure that whoever is in charge has the experience to do it. I am not putting a negative on the staffs and council, but Falcon Heights has enjoyed a good fire department for a long time.

J. ADJOURNMENT: 8:47 P.M

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Randy Gustafson, Mayor

Dated this 27th day of March, 2019

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Sack Thongvanh, City Administrator