

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

Minutes
April 24, 2024 at 7:00 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 7:01 PM

B. ROLL CALL: GUSTAFSON_X_ LEEHY_X_ MEYER_X_

WASSENBERG_X_ MIELKE_X_

STAFF PRESENT: LINEHAN_X_

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Meyer motions to approve the agenda;
Approved 5-0

D. PRESENTATION

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. March 12, 2024 City Council Joint Open House Minutes
2. March 13, 2024 City Council Joint Open House Minutes
3. March 26, 2024 City Council Joint Open House Minutes
4. March 27, 2024 City Council Joint Open House Minutes
5. April 10, 2024 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Councilmember Leehy motions to approve the meeting minutes;
Approved 5-0

F. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

G. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. General Disbursements through 04/18/24: \$387,554.67
Payroll through 04/15/24: \$23,160.19
Wire Payments through 04/15/24: \$15,056.57
2. Amendment to the Saint Paul Academy and Summit School Project Refunding Note and Loan Agreement
3. Appointment of Ross Allard to State Fair Task Force
4. Change Order for F450 Ford Truck Outfitting and Fund Change

Councilmember Meyer motions to approve the consent agenda;
Approved 5-0

Councilmember Wassenberg poses a question regarding the F450 Ford Truck Outfitting. Administrator Linehan answers the City received the truck, but it still needs outfitting and safety equipment. He explains they switched vendors that offered the same services at a better price and they also want to change the budget funding location.

H. POLICY ITEMS:

1. Consideration of Policing Partnership with the City of St. Anthony Village

Mayor Gustafson explains the Council has been engaging the public about a potential police partnership with St. Anthony Village since March of 2024. He notes the main concern was to ensure the relationship could be rebuilt and the partnership's operational and financial side would be determined at a later point.

Administrator Linehan explains both St. Anthony Village and Falcon Heights have been exploring the potential of renewing a police services partnership and goes on to provide a high-level overview of the presentation and updates. St. Anthony Village currently provides policing services to Lauderdale and previously provided policing services in Falcon Heights from 1994 through 2017, which was highly valued. This contract with Falcon Heights was terminated by both communities following the shooting death of Philando Castile by a St. Anthony Police Department (SAPD) officer in July 2016. Falcon Heights has contracted with the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office since January 2018, and the contract will expire at the end of 2024. Falcon Heights is seeking a long-term fit for its policing services beginning in 2025. If the partnership moves forward, St. Anthony Village will add additional officers to support the expanded area while maintaining the high level of service the St. Anthony Village and Lauderdale communities currently receive. Administrator Linehan provides an outline of the process stages, specifically the stakeholder input process. Both communities ran a survey and potential benefits identified are increased SAPD capacity, proximity, and financial benefits. Some residents expressed they need more information about the pros and cons before considering a decision. The survey also asked about priorities, residents' questions, and concerns. A key stakeholder is the SAPD, and they engaged Dr. Weinstein from Ethical Leaders in Action to gather input. They are open to a new partnership if conditions surrounding the relationship and operational concerns are met. Lastly, Administrator Linehan provides a preliminary staffing and contract approach and next steps.

Linehan continued by answering some of the questions that arose from the Town Hall. The questions and answers were:

Questions from Town Halls: Falcon Heights (4/17/24)

- How does the estimated cost compare to the current RCSO contract or options from Saint Paul and Roseville?
 - *In 2024, the City pays RCSO \$1.75M.*
- What is the longest distance or response time from St. Anthony Village to Falcon Heights?
 - *St. Anthony Village to Corner of Hoyt/Hamline: 6.4 miles, 13 minutes if you follow speed limits. Comparably, Arden Hills Patrol Station to same location is 7.2 miles or 13 minutes.*
- Has the City considered a partnership with Roseville Police Department?
 - *Yes, we met with City Manager and Police Chief. They did not have capacity or interest to expand police services*
- How will the City address the gap between the current RCSO contract and a new partnership with St. Anthony Village?
 - *This is a question and challenge for the City Council to consider as we enter our next phase*
- Who is responsible for policing the State Fair?

- *The State Fair has their own police department. However, our contracted agency helps manage issues that arise in FH during the fair. Historically with SAPD, we would have officers work on OT and bill back these costs to MN State Fair*
- **Has the City looked at creating its own police department for Falcon Heights?**
 - *Yes, it has been a consideration. Comparable-sized communities such as Oak Park Heights, Corcoran, Elko New Market and others were looked at for cost and staffing. Average police budget is \$2.4M in these communities. Cost and capacity are a major challenge with small departments.*
- **Do all officers need to carry weapons?**
 - *No, a Community Service Officer model is utilized by many agencies.*
- **What policies have changed? What 21st century policing practices is SAPD following?**
 - *The St. Anthony Police Department has evolved since the termination of the previous agreement, completing extensive work with the United States Department of Justice's Collaborative Reform for Technical Assistance team in 2016 through 2018.*
 - *From this process, the department developed an overall strategic plan following input from the community. This plan is a guiding document that defines every action that the department takes as individual officers and as an agency, including implementing significant policy changes and body-worn cameras along with an internal auditing process to ensure officer compliance and accountability.*
 - *The department also conducts an annual use-of-force analysis and shares the reports publicly on the City's website.*
- **Will the City of Falcon Heights see cost savings by returning to a partnership with St. Anthony Village?**
 - *This will be determined during contract discussions.*
- **Are there problems with the current partnership with RCSO?**
 - *There are challenges from the RCSO leadership's perspective on how Falcon Heights fits into the contract cities model. These concerns were raised by Sheriff Fletcher in 2020 and reiterated in his letters to the City. The City of Falcon Heights is seeking a community-oriented policing model that doesn't necessarily meet the model offered by Sheriff Departments, which still has many positives.*

Questions from Town Halls: St. Anthony Village (4/18/24)

- **What is the typical response time to Falcon Heights?**
 - *According to study from Ramsey County ECC Data as analyzed by CVBI, from 2018-2022 the average response time was 7 minutes, and median was 5 minutes.*
- **Will the City share a cost-benefit analysis? (squads, people, etc.)**
 - *Yes, the proposal includes Falcon Heights paying for all direct / indirect costs, paying for two swing patrol, investigator, and Community Outreach Officer that will benefit all 3 cities, as well as a significant capital contribution.*
- **What is the Police Chief's perspective?**
 - *I'm not going to speak for Chief Spiess. We've had good conversations with him and his team.*
- **What is the community profile of Falcon Heights? What does the residential/commercial mix look like compared to St. Anthony Village?**
 - *Very similar profile to SAV, with less commercial and significantly more non-profit or government property that is outside of police jurisdiction.*
- **What happens if the City signs a contract and can't fill the new roles? What is the City's liability?**
 - *This will be a discussion in the next phase. Falcon Heights currently accepts liability for RCSO up to \$4M.*

Councilmember Leehy thanks Administrator Linehan for providing the information.

Councilmember Wassenberg wonders about response time. He also agrees Falcon Heights and St. Anthony Village have a similar urban model. Administrator Linehan utilized distance in calculating response time but he explains every call is different.

Councilmember Meyer is concerned about policing in 2025. Administrator Linehan notes this would need to be discussed further by the City Council.

Councilmember Mielke wonders if recruiting becomes an issue if there is an exit clause. Administrator Linehan states this will be part of contract discussions.

Mayor Gustafson comments the City could participate in providing recruiting assistance. He allows the public to provide comments.

- Tom Beach – 1803 N Pascal St. Tom wonders if this would be a 1-year contract that renews each year and if there could be a clause on preventing price increases.
 - *This would be part of contract discussions.*
- Nancy Peterson – 1442 Iowa Ave. Nancy echoes Councilmember Leehy’s comment. She is appreciative of the information provided and wants to ensure all residents have the opportunity to learn all the information.
- Georgiana May – 1477 California Ave. Georgiana is also appreciative of the information provided. She wonders what the SAPD means by needing a commitment to support the use of force incidents, what the SAPD Chief’s perspective is, and what the SAPD means by having the partnership done right.

Councilmember Leehy motions to close the public comment section by consent.

Councilmember Mielke is grateful for St. Anthony Village City Council being open to the discussion, and all the feedback provided. Mielke notes she is cautiously optimistic. But ready to continue the conversations.

Councilmember Meyer echoes Councilmember Mielke’s comments. He shares conversations he had with SAPD officers around mental health issues and provides examples of community policing. He is also ready to continue to explore the partnership.

Councilmember Leehy explains she did not want to leave the SAPD after what happened in 2016 and is grateful for St. Anthony Village wanting to continue the conversations around the partnership. The SAPD shows they continue to better themselves. She acknowledges these are difficult conversations for all parties involved, but looks forward to continuing and notes healing is possible.

Councilmember Wassenberg is appreciative of being able to learn more about St. Anthony Village City Council, residents, and the police department. He agrees this needs to be a beneficial partnership for all parties involved and is ready to continue.

Mayor Gustafson is in favor of moving forward and is hopeful we can find a police partner in SAPD. He acknowledges that policing is a difficult topic, but is encouraged by the community conversations.

Councilmember Leehy and Wassenberg motion to formally consider a partnership with the City of St. Anthony Village and to authorize the City Administrator to enter into contract discussions with the City of St. Anthony Village
Approved 5-0

I. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Councilmember Wassenberg encourages residents to attend Spring Together on Saturday, May 18 from 3:00 – 5:00 PM at Curtiss Field for free ice cream, neighborly fun, and a music open mic.

Councilmember Leehy looks forward to Spring Together and encourages participation in the music open mic. The CEC met on April 15 and the top two things discussed were reaching out to apartments, and reviewing and updating the Neighborhood Liaison Handbook. Their next meeting will be on Monday, May 20 at 6:30 PM at Falcon Heights City Hall.

Councilmember Meyer is excited about the music open mic. The Planning Commission met on April 23rd, where they discussed some city code changes around parking spot minimums and accessory dwelling units.

Councilmember Mielke explains the Environment Commission held a pollinator party on Monday, April 22nd. It was a well-attended community-building event with a presentation from Ross Henry. She is hoping to see more bee-friendly lawns in Falcon Heights.

Administrator Linehan notes City Council will have their annual retreat on Saturday, April 27 at City Hall. For Earth Day on Monday, April 22nd there was a paper shredding and e-waste recycling event in the morning, that was well attended. In the evening there was the pollinator event. Public Works has been working with Forest Lake Contracting on removing and replacing the decorative streetlights on Larpenteur Ave. Public Works is also working on refreshing the City monuments.

J. 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.

K. ADJOURNMENT: 8:20 PM

Councilmember Mielke motions to adjourn;
Approved 5-0

Dated this 22nd day of May, 2024



Jack Linehan, City Administrator



Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor