

**CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS**  
City Council Joint Town Hall Meeting

Saint Anthony Village City Hall  
Council Chambers  
3301 Silver Lake Rd NE  
St. Anthony, MN 55418

**AGENDA**

Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
6:30 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 PM

B. ROLL CALL:  
Falcon Heights  
City Council

GUSTAFSON\_X\_ LEEHY\_X\_  
MEYER\_X\_ MIELKE\_X\_ WASSENBERG\_X\_

St. Anthony Village  
City Council

WEBSTER\_X\_ DOOLAN\_X\_ JENSON\_ \_RANDLE\_X\_  
STEPHENS\_X\_

STAFF PRESENT:

Falcon Heights LINEHAN\_X\_  
St. Anthony Village YUNKER\_X\_

C. POLICY ITEMS:

1. Joint town hall meeting with the St. Anthony Village City Council to present the results of community engagement efforts and hear from the public regarding a potential police partnership.

Mayor Webster states the purpose of this meeting is to share data gathered in the exploratory phase of a potential police partnership with Falcon Heights. Mayor Webster emphasizes the purpose of the St. Anthony Village City Council is their commitment to governing with a servant leadership mindset. She then provides an overview of the exploratory process. After both mayors and city leaders met for the first time to ask for a conversation about a potential partnership, Mayor Webster, council members, and city staff made it a priority to engage with key stakeholders and inform them of the decision prior to a press release. She continues to explain that over the last 8 years, the St. Antony Police Department (SAPD) has become an even better organization, focused on community-based policing. She explains in short, the policing model implemented, and that the SAPD now serves as a national leader for small police departments. A community engagement plan was rolled out to gather feedback from the community and allow the public every opportunity to present their views. Goff Public gathered and analyzed survey data. The Council also wanted to gather feedback from the police department and a consultant was hired to provide an independent opinion. She briefly explains the rules of the town hall.

Administrator Linehan provides background information about the exploration of renewing a police services partnership with St. Anthony Village. He explains St. Anthony Village currently provides contract policing services to the City of Lauderdale and previously provided contract law enforcement services to Falcon Heights from 1994 through 2017. The former policing partnership with Falcon Heights was highly valued in both communities. The 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. The SAPD is currently authorized for 20 sworn officers, increasing to 22 on July 1, 2024. If the partnership moves forward, St. Anthony Village will add additional positions to support the expanded area while maintaining the high level of service the St. Anthony Village and Lauderdale communities currently receive. Linehan describes the process as divided up into stages and they are currently in phase 2, stakeholder input to gather and analyze the feedback received from both communities and the police department. Allison Winters from Goff Public will provide an outline of the stakeholder process and some common themes.

Winters explains, that Goff Public has been providing both cities with communications and engagement support. The engagement period began in March and to date, it included online surveys with about 450 total responses. The survey was promoted through various platforms. There were also 4 open houses, 2 in each city. There was a period of door-knocking and discussions at community meetings by City Council members and staff, as well as dedicated engagement with SAPD officers. This week there are the 2 town halls to provide updates. Winters provides key themes from survey responses. Potential benefits identified by both communities are proximity between the two, increased capacity for SAPD, and financial benefits. She notes many respondents felt more information was needed to fully identify benefits and some saw no potential benefits. The top themes in Falcon Heights are community-based policing and an increased level of service. Both communities were asked to provide questions and concerns. Common topics are SAPD staffing levels, trust, cost, policing style, and current St. Anthony Village and Lauderdale residents who don't want to see a decrease in current levels of service as a result of the potential partnership.

Dr. Weinstein, president of Ethical Leaders in Action, Inc. specializes in engagement with public safety. He explains the SAPD reached out for engagement with the police department, not to influence any decision-making. He is very impressed with the SAPD, specifically their commitment, professionalism, and compassion exhibited in their work. He continues to explain their confidence and eagerness to learn and improve. The SAPD has a high degree of trust in their city and departmental leadership. Dr. Weinstein interviewed everyone at SAPD and rode along for 2 nights. When discussing the potential partnership renewal there were various perspectives, some have strong reservations, and some are extremely enthusiastic. All noted that if the partnership is pursued it should be done right and certain operational, and relationship concerns should be addressed.

City Manager Yunker provides a preliminary staffing and contract approach. Staff believes a total of 9 additional personnel is needed to service Falcon Heights and to maintain service levels in St. Anthony Village and Lauderdale. This would consist of 4 patrol officers, 2 swing shift patrol officers, 1 investigator, 1 community engagement officer, and 1 person for administrative support. Yunker then provides the methodology utilized to determine a contract price. They allocated costs based on a 50/50 blend of population percentage and call volume percentage, which was then applied to the total police costs. For population numbers, the 2020 US census was utilized. For calls for service, St. Anthony used their numbers and collected numbers from the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office for Falcon Heights aligned to St. Anthony Village practices. Based on this draft methodology, a preliminary contract price would be \$1.6 - \$1.8 million. Yunker explains each City Council will discuss moving to the next step at their upcoming regular meeting. He adds, that each city also has web pages dedicated to the process for residents to learn more.

Mayor Webster explains the rules of the town hall and opens the public comment section.

- Gary Huss - 3224 Croft Dr. Gary Expresses concerns about response time, staffing, cost, and benefits to St. Anthony.
- Laura Laberge- 2909 Townview Ave. Laura does not see an advantage to the partnership. She is worried about increases in taxes, legal risks, and hiring shortages.
- Randy Stille - 3717 Rankin Rd. Randy notes as a previous council member in 2016 they learned police partnerships can come with additional reputational and operational risks. He believes the model that is presented is risky and asks the Council to use common sense.
- Joan Petersen - 3200 Hilldale Ave. NE. Joan understands how Falcon Heights wants the SAPD back in their community as they are a great force. Joan is concerned about some animosity still existing in Falcon Heights. She feels this is a lot to ask from the police department and she expresses concerns about the cost of building a new police center.
- Patricia Grimes - 3201 Townview Ave. Patricia believes it is a great idea to continue with the contract. The additional officers can be available for St. Anthony. They survived a tragic incident through tireless efforts that will be well served to provide policing for both communities.
- Jerry Faust - 4033 Silver Lake Terrace. Previous Councilmember and Mayor. Jerry believes recruiting will be an issue and is worried about the cost. He questions the validity of the survey responses. He is also worried about the proximity and familiarity between Falcon Heights and St. Anthony. Lastly, he touches on the improvements of the SAPD over the years.
- Mike Petersen - 3200 Hilldale Ave. NE. Mike believes a partnership should be a win for all parties involved and in his view it's only a win for Falcon Heights. He is concerned about the cost of building a facility, proximity, and recruiting. He believes the survey data presented was subjective and hopes the Council does not rush into a decision.
- Dena Larrabee - 1358 Larpenteur Ave. W. Expresses gratitude for the SAPD and asks the Council to consider the partnership.

- Carol Ann Paulson – 3039 Harding St. NE Carolyn is very pleased with SAPD. She wonders about commercial areas and the number of residents in Falcon Heights.
- Gloria Dheilly – Legends of St. Anthony Senior Community. Gloria explains most seniors in the community are concerned about the diminishing service of SAPD if the partnership goes through.
- Duane Pulford – 1757 Eustis St. Duane explains he is a Lauderdale resident and loves the SAPD in their community. He sees advantages to expanding to Falcon Heights as it might make patrolling Lauderdale easier.
- Jerry Faust – 4033 Silver Lake Terrace. Jerry doesn't believe there is a need for a new facility with the current staffing level, but it would be needed if the force is adding 9 officers and that would burden the taxpayers. He looks at the contract price the Sheriff's Office is charging and understands why Falcon Heights is interested in a partnership as they would receive better service for the same price. He reiterates that the Council does not have the responsibility to provide policing services, but to take care of its residents.
- Joan Petersen – 3200 Hilldale Ave. NE. Joan wonders what happens when a contract gets signed and there are issues with recruiting enough officers.

Mayor Webster motions to close the Public Hearing by consent

Mayor Webster thanks residents for providing feedback. Both Councils will further discuss the potential partnership at their next scheduled meetings.

Councilmember Randle expresses his main concern with putting the opinion of the SAPD officers first and he feels they were not involved from the start of the partnership process.

Councilmember Doolan thanks Dr. Weinstein for his involvement as an external consultant. She also thanks Goff Public and Allison's observation of the data through an unbiased lens. She believes the processes put in place was transparent from the start and both communities have communicated in various way to the public that they are seeking input. Proceeding with a partnership will have to come with a financial benefit and not a tax burden to St. Anthony residents.

Councilmember Stephens appreciates residents for providing their feedback and echoes Councilmember Doolan's comments. She ensures residents all comments will be taken into consideration.

Mayor Gustafson thanks everyone involved for providing their participation and feedback. Falcon Heights has a journey providing public safety for its community. He stresses that SAPD has always provided excellent service and they are an example for many, with always introducing innovate ideas. He notes, that talking with members of the police department about the policing effort felt welcoming even though there were some reservations. Falcon Heights is looking for a long-term solution and is more than willing to share in their part of the cost. He explains both communities purposely made the process public to allow healing.

Councilmember Wassenberg thinks the process has been very informative. He thanks St. Anthony Council and the St. Anthony Police Department for being so welcoming. He also agrees with the comment of the partnership being a win for each party involved and believes there are ways to achieve this.

Councilmember Mielke echoes other comments and thanks everyone for providing feedback.

Councilmember Meyer appreciates everyone for participating and also believes the partnership should be a win for all parties involved.

Councilmember Leehy provides some of her history and notes to move forward with the partnership and get things right, everyone has to work together. She thanks everyone for their participation. She appreciates Councilmember Randle's comments and also believes the opinion of the SAPD is very important. There is an opportunity to renew an agreement and rebuild a relationship. The SAPD is now involved in the conversation and developments.

Mayor Webster appreciates the thoughtful approach that was created to ensure all voices are heard in this process. An important thing to her is how do we allow both communities to heal. Additionally, she also appreciates the level of engagement and care for the SAPD from community members.

Councilmember Stephens motions to adjourn;  
Approved 9-0

D. ADJOURNMENT: 8:02 PM

Dated this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of May, 2024

  
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Jack Linehan, City Administrator

  
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Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor