



City Council Meeting

February 10, 2025

7:00 PM

Fridley City Hall, 7071 University Avenue NE

Minutes

Call to Order

Mayor Ostwald called the City Council Meeting of February 10, 2025, to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present

Mayor Dave Ostwald
Councilmember Patrick Vescio
Councilmember Tom Tillberry
Councilmember Ryan Evanson
Councilmember Ann Bolcom

Absent

Others Present

Walter Wysopal, City Manager
Scott Hickok, Community Development Director
Police Chief, Ryan George
Sarah Sonsalla, City Attorney

Pledge Of Allegiance

Proclamations/Presentations

1. Fridley Public Schools

Brenda Lewis, Superintendent of Fridley Public Schools, provided an update on recent threats made toward Fridley district schools. She expressed thanks for the wonderful partnership with the Fridley Police, who assisted with this incident. Ryan George, Police Chief, commented on the valued partnership with Fridley Public Schools. He provided a general overview of the situation that occurred in January. Ms. Lewis provided additional input on the assistance provided by the Fridley Police and other agencies. Chief George provided more detail on the collaborative actions taken.

Lori Andler, Fridley Public Schools, provided additional details on the communications that were released during this time in cooperation with the Fridley Police. Rochelle Cox, Fridley Public Schools, provided additional information on the support for students and staff that has been provided and is available. She also highlighted key outcomes and lessons learned. Ms. Lewis expressed additional thanks to the Fridley Police Department. Chief George also expressed thanks to his staff and other agencies that assisted.

Mayor Ostwald expressed pride in City staff and the Police Department. He also thanked Fridley Public Schools for their communication and transparency.

Councilmember Tillberry recognized the review that will be done of this incident. He referenced the use of "deans" and hoped that they are licensed school counselors as he believed that would assist in this type of situation. Ms. Lewis replied that they are not, although they do have one licensed school counselor. She explained that Fridley does not follow the school counselor model and instead uses deans and social workers. Councilmember Tillberry commented that he believes that is a large missing piece. He commented that this situation demonstrates the great partnership between Fridley Public Schools and the Police Department.

Approval of Proposed Consent Agenda

Motion made by Councilmember Evanson to adopt the proposed Consent Agenda. Seconded by Councilmember Tillberry.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Mayor Ostwald declared the motion carried unanimously.

Approval/Receipt of Minutes

2. Approve the Minutes from the City Council Meeting of January 27, 2025.
3. Receive the Minutes from the Council Conference Meeting of January 27, 2025.

New Business

4. Ordinance No. 1428, Amending the Fridley City Code Chapter 209, Fees, to Update Fees Related to Rental Housing Licensure (Second Reading)
5. Resolution No 2025-14, Accepting the 2025 Law Enforcement and Fire Department Therapy Dog Grant Program
6. Resolution No. 2025-16, Approving Appointment to the Fridley Environmental Quality and Energy Commission

Claims

7. Resolution No. 2025-15, Approving Claims for the Period Ending February 5, 2025.

Open Forum, Visitors: (Consideration of Items not on Agenda – 15 minutes.)

Julie Houle, Columbia Heights School Board, stated that an organizational meeting was held on January 7th, at which time she was elected Board Treasurer and Liaison to the City of Fridley. She provided an update on the actions that took place at the organizational meeting, including the election of officers and the addition of a new member. She stated that an audit was completed and a clean, or unmodified, opinion was received. She noted that a few findings were provided related to the lack of segregation of

duties due to the small size of the staff. She commented on the growth that is occurring and the related potential addition of a third-grade class at North Park Elementary. She also provided details about the sustainability program at North Park and offered tours to those interested.

Councilmember Vescio stated that as a former student of North Park, he is excited to see the changes that have been made and would like to accept the offer for a tour.

Mayor Ostwald commented that he and Wally Wysopal, City Manager, have taken the tour, and it is great to see the things they are doing for sustainability. He thanked Ms. Houle for her update.

Emily Robinson, Rum River Arts Center in Anoka, provided details on the expansion of their programming into Fridley at the former fire station building. She highlighted some of the different program offerings that will be held at the Fridley location. She invited members of the community to attend, volunteer, or help sponsor the upcoming fundraising event to be held in Anoka on March 7th.

Mayor Ostwald commented that as a former Board member of the North Suburban Center for the Arts, along with Councilmember Bolkcom, they are excited to have the organization come to Fridley.

Councilmember Bolkcom recognized the funds provided through Anoka County to make the new location fully accessible. She noted that Ms. Robinson also attended the recent meeting of the Public Arts Commission. Ms. Robinson noted that she was able to make some connections with local artists who were willing to assist with some of the program offerings at the new location.

Adoption of Regular Agenda

Councilmember Tillberry requested to amend the agenda to address a vacancy in Ward One. Mayor Ostwald noted that item would be considered under New Business as Item 8.

Motion made by Councilmember Tillberry to adopt the regular agenda with the addition. Seconded by Councilmember Evanson.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Mayor Ostwald declared the motion carried unanimously.

Regular Agenda

New Business

8. Resolution No. 2025-17, Accepting the Resignation of Councilmember Tillberry, Declaring a Vacancy on the City Council and Calling for Appointment of a Qualified Person

Councilmember Tillberry stated that he is planning to resign from the Council this evening because he is moving outside of Fridley. He stated that he has lived in Fridley for 26 years, and while he will miss the community, he is excited for the next chapter. He stated that he has served on the City Council for six years and also served on the State Legislature for three terms. He recognized the change that has occurred in the community during that time and the work they have accomplished to do what is right for

the citizens. He was thankful for the people that he has had the opportunity to work with and the different points of view they have brought to discussions.

Mayor Ostwald and the Council thanked Councilmember Tillberry for his service and wished him the best.

Mr. Wysopal thanked Councilmember Tillberry on behalf of the City employees, noting the experience that Councilmember Tillberry brought as a former member of the Legislature and the courtesy that he always extended to staff. Councilmember Tillberry commented that City staff have been great to work with, and what they do for the City is not always mentioned.

Mayor Ostwald explained the action that would be taken tonight and the process that would be followed to fill the vacancy. He stated that applications will be open for two weeks, on March 4th the Council will complete interviews and make a decision for appointment. Mr. Wysopal noted that the resignation will be effective tomorrow.

Motion made by Councilmember Bolkcom to adopt Resolution No. 2025-17, Accepting the Resignation of Councilmember Tillberry, Declaring a Vacancy on the City Council, and Calling for Appointment of a Qualified Person. Seconded by Councilmember Evanson.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Mayor Ostwald declared the motion carried unanimously. (Tillberry recused himself from the vote)

Informal Status Reports

Councilmember Bolkcom advised of the upcoming celebration in recognition of former Mayor Scott Lund, which will be held on February 20th at Springbrook.

Mayor Ostwald noted the Lions Winter Warm-Up event, which will take place on February 21st.

Councilmember Evanson stated that MnDOT is still soliciting feedback on an upcoming road project for Highway 65/Central Avenue and encouraged residents to participate. He noted that a link is available on the City website.

Adjourn

Motion made by Councilmember Tillberry to adjourn. Seconded by Councilmember Bolkcom.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Mayor Ostwald declared the motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Moore
City Clerk

Dave Ostwald
Mayor