



City Council Meeting

June 8, 2026

7:00 PM

Fridley City Hall, 7071 University Avenue NE

Minutes

Call to Order

Mayor Ostwald called the City Council Meeting of June 8, 2026, to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present

Mayor Dave Ostwald
Councilmember Patrick Vescio
Councilmember Ryan Evanson
Councilmember Luke Cardona
Councilmember Ann Bolkcom

Absent

Others Present

Walter Wysopal, City Manager
Jim Kosluchar, Public Works Director
Joe Starks, Finance Director

Pledge Of Allegiance

Proclamations/Presentations

Approval of Proposed Consent Agenda

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

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

Approval/Receipt of Minutes

1. Approve the Minutes from the City Council Meeting of May 26, 2026.
2. Receive the Minutes from the City Council Conference Meeting of May 26, 2026.
3. Receive the Minutes of the March 10, 2026, Environmental Quality and Energy Commission Meeting.
4. Receive the Minutes of the May 20, 2026, Planning Commission Meeting.

New Business

5. Resolution No. 2026-62, Authorizing an Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety for the Dedicated Auto Theft Investigator Grant.
6. Resolution No 2026-63, Awarding Street Rehabilitation Project No. ST2026-02.
7. Resolution No. 2026-64, Awarding Summit Square Park Improvements Project.
8. Resolution No. 2026-65, Authorizing a ReLeaf Grant Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for the Income-Qualified Ash Tree Removal Program.
9. Resolution No. 2026-67, Ordering Preparation of Report, Plans, and Specifications for Street Rehabilitation Project No. ST2027-01.
10. Resolution No. 2026-70, Approving Conditional Use Permit, CUP #26-01 to Allow a 125 Foot Telecommunications Tower at 1241 72nd Avenue NE.

Claims

11. Resolution No. 2026-69, Approving Claims for the Period Ending June 3, 2026.

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

Julie Houle, Columbia Heights School Board member, commented that it has been an unusually impactful year, commenting on the impact of Operation Metro Surge and the expansion of the online school offerings that were done to ensure students who could not attend in person could still get their education. She commented that a special election was held to fill a vacancy on the Board. She commented that graduating students received almost \$300,000 in community scholarships. She provided a financial update on the School District, recognizing the work the District has done to improve its financial position over the past few years and how the decisions at the State level have impacted the District. She commented on the bonding the District will be doing to make necessary improvements to buildings.

Dana Carlson commented on a personal situation he has previously commented on, and individuals in the community that he believes are involved in his children being removed. He spoke about the retaliation he has experienced since speaking up.

Adoption of Regular Agenda

Motion made by Councilmember Cardona to adopt the regular agenda. Seconded by Councilmember Vescio.

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

Regular Agenda

Public Hearing(s)

12. Resolution No. 2026-66, Approving Municipal Consent to the Minnesota Department of Transportation Final Layout for Trunk Highway 65 Improvement Project.

Motion made by Councilmember Evanson to open the public hearing. Seconded by Councilmember Bolckcom.

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

Chris Bauer, MnDOT, presented a project overview and the specific segment being discussed tonight. He reviewed the project purpose, crash history over the past ten years, planned safety improvements, infrastructure conditions, and the municipal consent process. He provided additional information on the anticipated project schedule, noting that the project would be split into phases over three years. He presented the proposed design and alternatives considered for the intersections at 52nd, 53rd, and the land reduction considered near the 694 interchange. He provided additional information about stormwater treatment, project budget and maintenance, visual quality, and input received thus far. He welcomed additional comments on the proposed design.

Councilmember Evanson referenced the intersection at 52nd Avenue and asked for clarification on the signal. Mr. Bauer provided additional input on the function of the intersection and how it would help pedestrians. Councilmember Evanson asked for clarification on how the intersections with roundabouts would function. Mr. Bauer stated that there would be roundabouts at 51st and 53rd and provided information on how traffic would flow to go in different directions. Councilmember Evanson asked if the modeling suggests the timing difference between the existing conditions and the proposed roundabouts. Mr. Bauer replied that traffic modeling suggests that the roundabouts would be faster than the traffic signal timing that exists on 52nd.

Councilmember Vescio asked about the number of pedestrians who cross at 52nd. Mr. Bauer replied that they do not have that count. He recognized that Central Avenue is not accommodating for pedestrians, and the hope is that the project will provide a safer environment for pedestrians. He stated that some people may not like crossing a roundabout and would have the option to go down one block to use the traffic signal if that is what they prefer.

Wally Wysopal, City Manager, asked if the modeling for 53rd took into account the development proposed in Columbia Heights for the Medtronic site. Mr. Bauer stated that MnDOT uses the projections of the Metropolitan Council.

Councilmember Evanson commented on the massive development being considered and asked what would happen if the roundabout is found to be insufficient. Mr. Bauer provided additional information on the roundabout proposed for 53rd and the room that would be available for that roadway to grow if needed in the future. He stated that they will work on the final design over the next year, and during that time, they can speak and work with the developer.

Mayor Ostwald invited comments from the public.

Ms. Houle stated that 53rd is a big intersection that she travels every day, and she believes the lights work. She stated that perhaps they should just build a pedestrian bridge. Mr. Bauer recognized that there is a lot of traffic at that intersection, and they had considered a bridge, but that option was not chosen. He stated that they began the study of the road in 2019 and even considered converting the roadway to a freeway, but spoke about the property impacts and costs that would come along with that. He stated that Columbia Heights tried a pedestrian bridge at 49th, and it has been found that only 50 percent of people use that bridge because it is not terribly convenient. He spoke about making direct and convenient options for pedestrians. He also spoke about the reduction in fatal accidents that roundabouts provide.

Councilmember Evanson asked if a do-nothing model had also been reviewed. Mr. Bauer commented that Highway 65 is often not the fastest option, so operationally, 65 does not need to change operationally for vehicle flow. He stated that there is an extremely important safety issue that needs to be addressed, as two people are critically injured or killed in Columbia Heights each year because of accidents on the roadway.

Mayor Ostwald stated that one option previously considered was roundabouts all the way down and asked why this option was chosen. Mr. Bauer commented that the option had more property impacts, so roundabouts were chosen in locations where they would fit without significant property impacts.

Jim Kosluchar, Public Works Director, thanked Mr. Bauer and the others who have worked on this project, recognizing that this project and its proposed solutions were not easy to develop. He stated that they need drivers to understand and yield to pedestrians in a greater fashion. He commented that they have been working with Mr. Bauer and his team to enhance the crosswalks and make them more visible to drivers.

Councilmember Evanson asked if changes are necessary on the northern side of the project to ensure that things function correctly in Columbia Heights, specifically if nothing were done at the 53rd intersection. Mr. Bauer stated that all of these things have been engineered to work as a system. He stated that this entire section of the project is engineered to work efficiently together. He stated that the intersection of 53rd is a giant sea of pavement, as those elements are needed to make the intersection work. He stated that under the proposed design, the road is reduced in size to help slow the speed of traffic and increase pedestrian safety.

Mr. Kosluchar stated that another element is that the roundabouts will provide better access for side streets, especially during off-peak times.

Jared Finkleson, a resident of Columbia Heights, expressed his support for the project as he believes that this will be a benefit to both communities. He commented that he has seen a lot of pedestrians crossing Central at 52nd and has witnessed accidents. He stated that Central is not welcoming to pedestrians, so it makes it difficult to estimate the number of people who could/would cross.

Councilmember Vescio stated that he was hit by a car when he was younger, attempting to cross Central at 52nd. He commented on similar changes that were made to Lyndale, which function well now for vehicles and pedestrians.

Councilmember Cardona stated that he would like to see education as a large part of the project campaign, relating to roundabouts and pedestrian crossings. Mr. Bauer committed to making that a big part of the project.

Mayor Ostwald asked how many cities would need to approve this. Mr. Bauer commented that Fridley, Columbia Heights, and Hilltop are included in the Anoka County section of the project.

Motion made by Councilmember Cardona to close the public hearing, Seconded by Councilmember Evanson.

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

Councilmember Evanson commented on the reduction in vehicle speeds he has seen after the construction of a roundabout near his home. He stated that it does provide peace of mind that vehicles are slowing down for that. He commented that the safety component of the project is meaningful, and it also sounds like the flow of traffic from side streets will be improved.

Motion made by Councilmember Vescio to adopt Resolution No. 2026-66, Approving Municipal Consent to the Minnesota Department of Transportation Final Layout for Trunk Highway 65 Improvement Project. Seconded by Councilmember Evanson.

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

New Business

13. Resolution No. 2026-68, Approving and Accepting the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2025.

Rebecca Peterson, Redpath, stated that the City's 2024 financial statements were submitted and received the GFOA Award for Excellence in Financial Reporting. She presented the results of the 2025 Audit, reporting a clean, or unmodified opinion. She stated that there was one internal control finding related to audit adjustments and provided additional explanation. She stated that one instance of legal noncompliance was identified related to prompt payment. She reviewed the communication to those charged with governance and provided a review of the financial highlights and City funds.

Councilmember Evanson asked how Fridley compares to other peer communities. Ms. Peterson replied that many cities are similarly in the upper-level percentages of their fund balance policy. She commented that Fridley has one of the higher property tax collection rates of the communities she has seen.

Councilmember Cardona acknowledged the great work of City staff.

Mayor Ostwald stated that Chapter 7 of the City Charter mentions taxation and City finances, explaining why the Council takes these matters seriously, as the Council is tasked with governance of finances. He also commended City staff for the great job they do.

Councilmember Evanson asked if there is anything coming through in the future that the City should be aware of. Ms. Peterson stated that the finance team is doing everything they should be doing. She commented that the biggest risk to local governments is fraud and provided some examples.

Mayor Ostwald recognized the work of the IT staff who stay alert to the current risks.

Joe Starks, Finance Director, acknowledged the City accounting staff for their efforts, as there is a lot of behind-the-scenes work that goes into the audit process.

Motion made by Councilmember Evanson to adopt Resolution No. 2026-68, Approving and Accepting the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2025. Seconded by Councilmember Cardona.

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

Informal Status Reports

Councilmember Evanson commented on the garage sales he went to over the weekend.

Councilmember Cardona commented on the streets for all open houses taking place the following night at City Hall from 5 to 7 p.m.

Councilmember Evanson stated that the 2025 water quality report is available on the City website, noting that the City has begun construction on the new filtration system.

Councilmember Vescio stated that his family hosted a garage sale this past weekend, which was successful. He commented that it was great to speak with residents coming through.

Mayor Ostwald invited residents to join in on America's 250th celebration, which Fridley will be hosting on June 22nd at City Hall beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Adjourn

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

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Mayor Ostwald declared the motion carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Moore
City Clerk

Dave Ostwald
Mayor