



City Council Meeting

July 13, 2026

7:00 PM

Fridley City Hall, 7071 University Avenue NE

Minutes

Call to Order

Mayor Ostwald called the City Council Meeting of July 13, 2026, to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present

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

Absent

Others Present

Walter Wysopal, City Manager
Melissa Moore, Assistant City Manager
Nick Steiger, Police Lieutenant
Sarah Sonsalla, City Attorney

Pledge Of Allegiance

Approval of Proposed Consent Agenda

Motion made by Councilmember Bolcom 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 June 22, 2026.
2. Receive the Minutes from the City Council Conference Meeting of June 22, 2026.

New Business

3. Resolution No. 2026-80, Approving Three Separate Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Grant Applications to MnDOT for Citywide Safety Improvements.

4. Resolution No 2026-83, Abating a Voluntary Assessment for 2025 Tree Removals.

Claims

5. Resolution No. 2026-82, Approving Claims for the Period Ending July 8, 2026.

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

No one from the audience spoke.

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

New Business

6. Resolution No. 2026-79, Appointing Election Judges for the 2026 Election Year.

Melissa Moore, Assistant City Manager, presented a resolution to appoint Election Judges for this year's election activities in August and November. She provided background information and recommended approval as presented. She noted that Mayor Ostwald will be volunteering as an Election Judge and therefore should recuse himself from this item.

Mayor Ostwald recused himself from this vote.

Motion made by Councilmember Evanson to adopt Resolution No. 2026-79, Appointing Election Judges for the 2026 Election Year. Seconded by Councilmember Cardona.

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

7. Resolution No. 2026-81, Affirming the Hearing Examiner's Declaring the Dog Known as Astra as a Potentially Dangerous Dog (Fridley Police Division Case No. 26-113965).

Nick Steiger, Police Lieutenant, explained the narrow role of the Council tonight to determine if the process worked and whether the record supports the decision. He stated that the decision to declare the dog as a potentially dangerous dog was already made by an independent Hearing Examiner. He stated that the Council may affirm, repeal, or modify the Hearing Examiner's decision based on the existing record. He provided background information on the May 21st incident, the Hearing Examiner's determination, and due process.

Councilmember Bolkcom asked for more information about the actions that would deem the dog to be dangerous. Lieutenant Steiger provided examples of those actions.

Councilmember Cardona asked about the experience of the Hearing Examiner. Lieutenant Steiger reviewed his experience in the position and as a contractor for the City.

Ms. Moore provided additional information on the appeal submitted by the dog owner and the purpose of the hearing.

Mayor Ostwald asked legal counsel for additional input. Sarah Sonsolla, City Attorney, stated that the City did follow the process identified through City Code. She stated that the Hearing Examiner is well-regarded in this field, and he has provided his findings of fact. She stated that the dog owner could continue to appeal to the District Court, if desired, or could come back after six months to request another determination if the situation has changed.

Susan Churchill commented that she and her dog were the victims of the incident. She commented on the lack of connection or mediation from the City, noting that she connected with the other dog owner on her own. She stated that dog one was the sole perpetrator in the incident and dog two was not involved.

Mayor Ostwald clarified that a bite is not needed to declare the dog, and running along is enough to receive that classification. Lieutenant Steiger stated that a reclassification can be requested in the future and described that process.

Ashley Wrath, dog owner, stated that Astra was not charging but was running after her sister as they were codependent dogs. She commented that Astra has been attacked and has not bitten back. She commented on the other experiences the dog has had with no issues. She did not believe her case was appropriately reviewed.

Councilmember Bolkcom asked if there were any other witnesses. Lieutenant Steiger replied that there were no other witnesses. He explained that in the review of body-worn camera footage, Ms. Wrath did state that her dogs are reactive, reactive to other dogs, and that Nova had attacked twice before. He stated that there has been a pattern of behavior, and the classification of potentially dangerous is an incentive for the owner to assist in changing the behavior of the dog.

Ms. Wrath commented that because the dogs had jumped a four-foot fence, they built a six-foot fence, but the gate was ajar that day. She noted that even though the dogs were sisters, they were raised in different homes before she got them. She did not believe her dog should be deemed dangerous when she was not trying to attack or run at the other resident or her dog, but was chasing after her sister.

Lieutenant Steiger explained the classification of a potentially dangerous dog. Councilmember Evanson explained the role of the Council in this process and did not believe there were grounds to say that something was wrong with the process.

Ms. Wrath commented that when she was served the potentially dangerous dog paperwork, it had both dogs' names on it, and Nova had already been euthanized at that time. She commented that the incident occurred on May 21st, and she was served the paperwork on June 6th. She attempted to clarify the facts, but no one from the City would speak with her. She commented that she was only in contact with Ms. Moore and did not speak with Lieutenant Steiger or the Hearing Examiner prior to the hearing.

Councilmember Evanson asked if that is the typical process. Lieutenant Steiger commented that the resident was served the designation on June 9th, and Nova was included as she was also being deemed with that designation, which is the normal process. He stated that a quarantine notice was served on the date of the incident.

Councilmember Evanson asked about the primary concern with the designation being placed on the dog. Ms. Wrath did not believe her dog should be included on that list. She commented that they have enrolled the dog in training and did not believe that she requires being muzzled.

Mayor Ostwald asked and received confirmation that Ms. Wrath did not witness the incident herself.

Councilmember Cardona asked if the Hearing Examiner meets with the dog himself. Lieutenant Steiger replied that the Hearing Examiner does not meet with the dog and described the hearing process.

Councilmember Cardona was glad to see the residents had made amends. He commented that although he does completely agree with the process, as he believes the dog should be involved in the review at some point, that would not be the typical process, and therefore, the correct process was followed. He commented that it seems that the owner is taking the right steps to lift the classification in the future, and hopefully, that can be done after six months.

Councilmember Vescio asked if the classification could be removed after six months if the owner and the dog followed all the instructions and recommendations. Lieutenant Steiger confirmed that the classification could be reviewed, and perhaps removed, after that review.

Wally Wyspopal, City Manager, asked about the number of potentially dangerous dogs in Fridley currently. Lieutenant Steiger replied that there are five declared dogs at this time.

Motion made by Councilmember Evanson to adopt Resolution No. 2026-81, Affirming the Hearing Examiner's Declaring the Dog Known as Astra as a Potentially Dangerous Dog (Fridley Police Division Case No. 26-113965). Seconded by Councilmember Bolcom.

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

Informal Status Reports

Councilmember Bolcom commented on the upcoming 49er Days activities, which begin with a parade on Thursday.

Adjourn

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

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Mayor Ostwald declared the motion carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Moore
City Clerk

Dave Ostwald
Mayor