

**City of Farmington
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 18, 2024**

The City Council met in regular session on Monday, March 18, 2024, at Farmington City Hall, 430 3rd Street, Farmington, Minnesota.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hoyt called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Hoyt led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Joshua Hoyt
Councilmembers Holly Bernatz, Nick Lien, and Steve Wilson

Members Absent: Councilmember Katie Porter (excused absence)

Staff Present: Lynn Gorski, City Administrator
Julie Flaten, Asst City Administrator/HR Director
Leah Koch, City Attorney
Deanna Kuennen, Community & Economic Development Director
Kim Sommerland, Finance Director
Matt Price, Interim Fire Chief
Kellee Omlid, Parks & Recreation Director
Jeremy Pire, Parks & Facilities Supervisor
Emilee Shearer, Parks & Recreation Supervisor
Missie Kohlbeck, Recreation Supervisor
Gary Rutherford, Police Chief
Nate Siem, Police Sergeant
John Powell, Public Works Director
Shirley Buecksler, City Clerk

Also Present: Members of Corinthian Lodge No. 67:
Jason LaVoi, Jason Breunig, and Ross Johnson

4. APPROVE AGENDA

Administrator Gorski requested that Item 7.8 Fire Service Agreements with Castle Rock Township and the City of Empire be added to the agenda.

Motion was made by Councilmember Wilson and seconded by Councilmember Bernatz to approve the agenda, as amended to include Item 7.8 Fire Service Agreements with Castle Rock Township and the City of Empire.

Motion carried: 4 ayes / 0 nays

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS / COMMENDATIONS

5.1 Donation of Five (5) Fire Suppression Tools to the Farmington Police Department

Motion was made by Councilmember Bernatz and seconded by Councilmember Wilson to adopt Resolution 2024-28 Accepting the Donation of Five (5) Fire Suppression Tools to the Farmington Police Department.

Motion carried: 4 ayes / 0 nays.

6. CITIZENS COMMENTS / RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

None.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

- 7.1 Resolution 2024-27 Appointing Additional Election Judges for the March 5, 2024 Presidential Nomination Primary, the August 13, 2024 State Primary, and the November 5, 2024 General Election
- 7.2 Minutes of the March 4, 2024 Council Work Session
- 7.3 Minutes of the March 4, 2024 Regular City Council meeting
- 7.4 Professional Services Agreement with WSB LLC for the review and distribution of two alternative urban areawide reviews
- 7.5 Ordinance 2024-04 Amending Title 10, Chapters 2 And 6 of the Farmington City Code as it Relates to Performance Standards for Recreational Vehicle Parking and Fences
- 7.6 2023 Investment Portfolio overview
- 7.7 Payment of claims in the amount of \$982,826.34 for the period February 29 through March 12, 2024
- 7.8 Fire Service Agreements with Castle Rock Township and the City of Empire
- 7.9 Addition of Fire Marshal position
- 7.10 Interim Fire Chief
- 7.11 Personnel policy update
- 7.12 Staff changes and recommendations, including the appointments of:
 - Melissa Geis as a Building Permit Technician
 - Carter Hoff, Mason Conrad, Drew Conrad, Carson Spelman, and Nathan Bartell as seasonal parks maintenance employees
 - Connor Lavigne as seasonal arena supervisor
- 7.13 Purchase of a Dump Truck
- 7.14 Purchase of a Salt Storage Facility
- 7.15 Purchase of a Tandem Roller

Motion was made by Councilmember Lien and seconded by Councilmember Bernatz to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented.

Motion carried: 4 ayes / 0 nays.

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

9. AWARD OF CONTRACT

None.

10. PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

None.

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

12. NEW BUSINESS

12.1 Parks and Recreation Department's 2023 Annual Report and 2024 Goals

The Parks and Recreation Department, including Parks and Recreation Director Kellee Omlid, Parks and Facilities Supervisor Jeremy Pire, Recreation Supervisor Emilee Shearer, and Recreation Supervisor Missie Kohlbeck, presented their 2024 goals and 2023 accomplishments.

13. CITY COUNCIL ROUNDTABLE

City Attorney Koch:

Congratulations to the Farmington Boys Basketball Team on entering the State tournament, and best of luck.

Councilmember Lien:

Thank you to the Mayor for continuing Minnesota's long tradition of elected officials with a wrestling career.

Councilmember Bernatz:

On the Consent Agenda, we appointed Matt Price as Interim Fire Chief. Congratulations, Sir, and thank you very much. Also, there is an opening for Fire Marshal position.

Councilmember Wilson:

Congratulations to the high school Robotics Team going to nationals for the success that they've had.

We approved some new equipment for the Public Works Department, and if you're starting to get in the habit of parking on the street, they may start ticketing in the next few days with snow coming.

As Councilmembers, we get a publication from the League of Minnesota Cities. In this March/April edition, there is an article about Mayor for a Day essays for 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students. Nowhere in there is "I want to be a pro wrestler for a day." I want to congratulate our Mayor. I was at the event, and I know he would be the first to say that he stepped out of his comfort zone for the benefit of the law enforcement community and the terrible tragedy in Burnsville. I know the Mayor and many other folks were quick to point out that this event even needed to occur. But

the one thing out of this horrendous tragedy is you're seeing a rise in support and enthusiasm for the First Responders. Which, after four or five years of negativity towards the profession, is shifting back to where it should be. Respect and appreciation for First Responders, Police, and Fire. It was a neat event to be at, but I worried that the Mayor was injured.

Good luck to our Farmington Tigers Boys Basketball Team – they will be playing at Target Center on Wednesday.

Administrator Gorski:

I am excited to announce that in the next couple weeks, you're going to see more activity at City Hall with increased employees from the USDA, where we lease some space out to them. That's been long in the works for this project. In a couple of weeks, they'll be done and moved in. We're excited to complete that project.

Clerk Buecksler:

A big shout to our Election Judges, as well as Staff, for all their help making the March election such a success. Also, of our six polling sites, three are City-owned facilities. Three are community churches, so a special thanks to Bible Baptist Church, the Church of St. Michael, and Farmington Lutheran Church for hosting us.

Our Election Judges are the face of Farmington on Election Day, and I couldn't be more impressed with the judges we have. I thank them for working. County-wide, there were 16.1% voters and Farmington had 11.2% vote in this election.

Director Flaten:

On the Consent Agenda, we appointed Melissa Geis as our new Building Permit Technician. We are really excited about that because Melissa was serving in a temporary role and she is our third full time employee who served with us either temporarily or as a consultant who decided to stay with us full time, so we're really excited about that.

Director Kuennen:

Tonight, we had our EDA meeting and there were quite a few items on the agenda, so thank you for working with Staff on that. One of the action items was to approve our joint powers agreement with Dakota County CDA to continue to offer the Open to Business, small business one on one counseling services to all of the businesses here in town. If anyone is interested, please reach out to our Staff and we will be happy to connect.

Director Powell:

Dakota County is currently working on a scope, and they plan to issue a Request for Proposals to do a corridor study along Denmark Avenue from County Road 50 down to 220th Street. A big part of that will be replacement of the bridge and providing a pedestrian/bike crossing to provide continued greenway connectivity to the river going under the bridge. They're not sure how that might happen, which is

the purpose of the study, but they will also look at intersections, traffic, and the roadway sections.

In our neighborhoods where we are doing mill and overlay projects, we are going into those areas to prune trees and remove ash trees. With the paving trucks, they'll be raising their beds, and we don't want to be knocking branches off. We have Staff out distributing flyers for that work.

Director Omlid:

The Open Door Pop-Up Food Pantry is tomorrow at the Rambling River Center from 3 – 4 p.m.

Director Sommerland:

Included in tonight's Consent Agenda was the annual overview of the City's investment portfolio. As of December 31st, the City had a market value of \$56.8 million with an average yield of about 3.3%. Pleased to announce that the City earned over \$1 million dollars in investment income from 2023.

With the donation tonight for the fire suppression tool, there is a video on the City of St. Paul Park's Facebook page for the fire that they referenced in Newport. It has the body camera from the Police Officer if anyone is interested.

Interim Chief Price:

If you're interested in becoming a Paid-on-Call Firefighter, our application process closes on March 23rd. The interview process will be in April with a potential offer after that.

Chief Rutherford:

I was also at the event on Saturday and will throw a little bit of shade to Councilmember Wilson's comment that the Mayor was stepping outside his comfort zone. He was totally living his best life.

Mayor Hoyt:

The Iron Heart Pro Wrestling Match event was planned months in advance for this past Saturday. In light of what happened in Burnsville, they pivoted. The fundraisers in the past two weeks have been phenomenal, and that's what we want. But sometimes that stuff gets lost in the masses and so, like typical Hoyt fashion, we throw ourselves in the middle of the thing – literally. Net result, I ended up in the ring, had some fun, we had 300 people in attendance, we raised \$22,000, and got covered by a bunch of news and radio outlets. Any opportunity we get to talk about the community of Farmington, we're going to take it. We can continue to do that and raise awareness and while we have an opportunity to do it, also fundraising and supporting the families during this tragedy.

We talked about this Saturday night and the term we used is "the inconvenience of gratitude." It sucks that it takes a tragedy to create awareness to the appreciation

of our First Responders. You saw it with 9-11. Within months, every store you went to, every store had a flag on it. You went to the end of every aisle and being patriotic was the new thing and everyone was proud. And it was trendy. And with enough time, it slowly dissolves, it just fades away because the crowd isn't there, the events aren't happening, and it just kind of withers away over time. And every time a tragedy strikes, there's this big push for awareness for the 'thing,' whether it's death, whether it's an accident, or whatever it is, there's a push for awareness. We have it wrong as a society. It should never take tragedy to have a certain level of appreciation for the things that exist under our nose every single day. We blow that opportunity every day to just say "thank you," "I appreciate you," "I see you." We miss that. And so, we need to wake up. We need to do better as human beings and extend more appreciation to our neighbors, our friends, our family, our co-workers, our First Responders, our Veterans, everybody. Don't wait for tragedy and the trend to do the thing. Do it every day because you have that opportunity. If I could ask anything, just go out of your way to say thank you, to show appreciation, do the thing every day because it's what's good and it's, ultimately, what makes this an amazing country to live in, and it makes it an amazing life to live. Don't squander that opportunity. It's awesome that we can do it when the thing happens, but we shouldn't have the thing happen, to do the work. So just do the work.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Wilson and seconded by Councilmember Lien to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 p.m.

Motion carried: 4 ayes / 0 nays.

Respectfully submitted,


Shirley R. Buecksler
City Clerk