



Newsletter

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS | SPRING 2025 | VOL. 10, NO. 1



Message from your Mayor

Hello, my name is Mark Vogel, and I am the recently elected Mayor of St. Francis. Thank you for your support. I promise to listen to and solicit your feedback as we constantly strive to maintain and improve

our City. I would also like to thank the previous City Council for allowing me to fill a vacant council seat for approximately five months, allowing me to begin to learn and understand how the City functions before being elected mayor. I have been very impressed with the hard-working and dedicated staff and look forward to continuing the collaborative effort.

Thank you to everyone who toured our new City Hall/Fire Station on February 1, the open house. We were overwhelmed by the estimated 800 people who visited. It was a pleasure meeting many of you. It is a positive response to see so many of our citizens interested and willing to see their new building first-hand and learn a little more about government.

One of the most common questions I have heard over the last couple of months is regarding the role of the mayor. The media and Hollywood have done a great disservice in portraying how the mayoral system works in most cities. All cities are loosely identified as “strong” or “weak” mayoral systems. The vast majority of cities (including St. Francis) operate under the “weak” mayor system. Only a handful of cities in Minnesota operate under the “strong” mayoral model,

including major cities such as Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth and St. Cloud. The “strong” mayoral system (commonly portrayed in Hollywood and the day-to-day media) typically grants authority to the mayor to create budgets, hire and fire staff, and veto power. The “weak” mayoral system, such as in St. Francis, does not grant the mayor any additional “powers,” but instead just one vote per all council members. In a “weak” system, the mayor runs the council meetings, signs official documents/contracts on behalf of the City and is the official ambassador for the City. On a quick side note of transparency, the mayor receives a \$500 per month stipend, and council members receive a \$400 stipend. Personally, I prefer this “weak” mayoral system as it tends to require a more collaborative effort to get business done.

I look forward to continuing to work with you and seeking input from citizens, staff, and fellow council members.

Some of the most asked questions revolve around various development projects around the City, so the following are three brief updates. Jessica Rieland, our Community Development Director in St. Francis, shared these updates with me.

First is 3503 Bridge Street (across the street from Casey’s). This was a privately owned parcel that sold in 2024. The existing buildings were demolished in December, and the new owner/developer plans to

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WALK IN THE PARK

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BIKE RODEO

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Visit us on social media!



It's Spring, Take a Walk in the Park

To stay healthy, our bodies need to be active. Even if it's as simple as going for a walk around the block. The list below are trail loops in St. Francis, where you can get outside today and walk! Be sure to stay hydrated and dress appropriately for the weather, as it can still be chilly this time of year. Take advantage of the mild temperatures and fewer mosquitoes.

Community Park—This is a one-mile paved loop with a trail in the heart of Community Park that connects to the shops in St. Francis.

Dellwood Park—Has a one-mile loop that runs along the Rum River, with a section that goes through a neighborhood. The trail is paved and offers views of the river, prairie and woods. In summer, you can bring a fishing pole and fish along the river banks.

Hidden Ponds Park—This trail loop is .4 miles long with a playground and ball field.

Deer Creek Park—The trail loop is one mile long and connects neighborhoods and local shopping areas.

Siwek Park—This loop is .62 miles and takes you around the neighborhood. Then, it brings you back to a smaller loop inside the park with a playground and a half basketball court.

Smith Lake Park—You can enjoy .5 miles of trails. This park is managed as a nature park, so the trails are not paved, so please walk carefully. There are views of the local flora and small ponds that offer an abundance of wildlife.

You can find the complete list of parks and directions on the City website under Parks and Recreation!



Message from your Mayor

break ground in the spring of 2025. It is a Planned Unit Development (PUD) developed in four phases, including two commercial and two apartment buildings. For some drawings/sketches and further details, go to the City website and look at the packet for the November 18, 2024, regular City council meeting and find item 8 (Old Business), Letter B, Page 6 of 6.

The second is 3631 Bridge Street (Rum River Inn). This was purchased in 2024, and the new owners are searching for a development partner. Originally built around 1860 as a residence, it was expanded into a hotel beginning in 1891. The property was listed in 1979 on the National Registry of Historic Places. It was nominated for being the only surviving commercial building dating to St. Francis's settlement as a lumber boomtown and its association with the Woodbury family that helped found St. Francis and Anoka, Minnesota.

The last update is 3731 Bridge Street (behind Subway). This is an Economic Development Authority (EDA) -owned infill housing site being considered for an apartment building by North Shore Development Partners. The City accepted a Letter of Intent (LOI) for Purchase of Property in 2024. The legal department is finalizing the property boundaries so the City can move forward with a purchase agreement.

Continued from page 1

2025 Recycling Dates to Remember!

April 26 | 8 a.m.-Noon

July 19 | 8 a.m.-Noon

September 20 | 8 a.m.-Noon

October 11 | Anoka County Hazardous Waste Event - details coming soon!

November 22 | 8 a.m.-Noon

All events are on a Saturday at St. Francis Public Works 4020 St Francis Blvd NW Check the City's website www.stfrancismn.gov for more details.





Now Accepting Applications for the 2025-2026 program year!

The Anoka/Washington County Head Start-Early

Head Start program is accepting applications for the 2025-2026 program year. Programs are free for eligible families with children from birth to age five and pregnant women. The Head Start center-based preschool option offers students a six and a half-hour day, four days per week.

Anoka/Washington County's Head Start-Early Head Start program provides education, nutrition, mental health, school readiness and parent engagement services to children and families from income-eligible households. Our approach is to provide a high-quality educational curriculum while connecting families with growth and learning opportunities. To learn more or apply, visit our website at www.accap.org/head-start/enrollment-4/ or call our enrollment hotline at 763-783-4314.



**CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
CHARTER COMMISSION MEMBERS**

The City of St. Francis is looking for residents who are interested in participating in the governance of their community by serving on the Charter Commission. The City of St. Francis operates as a Home Rule Charter City. A Home Rule Charter is similar to a local constitution, which studies the local charter and government in order to propose amendments to the City Charter.

Terms of the Charter Commission are four years in length as established by Minnesota Statutes 410.05 subd.2. Meetings are held on an as-needed basis; however, state law requires at least one meeting per year. If you are interested in participating on the Charter Commission, visit our website at www.stfrancismn.gov/bc-cc for an application.

**PLANNING AND ZONING
COMMISSION VACANCY**

Are you interested in helping guide the growth of the City? Join the Planning Commission!

Commission Members are involved with City planning, guiding the City Code, and making recommendations on land use and projects to the City Council.

You must be a resident of the City to be appointed. The Planning Commission meets on the 3rd Wednesday of every month starting at 7:00 pm. Terms are for three years, and Commissioners are paid for their time as outlined in the City Fee Schedule. Attendance is extremely important.

For more information or to apply, contact Jessica Rieland, Community Development Director, at 763-235-2301 or jrieland@stfrancismn.gov.

ST. FRANCIS, MN

Bottle Shop

Since 1964

23307 St. Francis Blvd. NW
St Francis, MN 55070
763-753-2660

15% Off

All regularly priced wine,
during the entire month of
March 2025.

Construction Sites and Stormwater

When stormwater drains off a construction site, it carries sediment and other pollutants that can harm lakes, streams, and wetlands. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 20 to 150 tons of soil per acre are lost yearly to stormwater runoff from construction sites.

To protect Minnesota waters, the MS4 permit required by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) sets regulations for construction site owners and operators to prevent stormwater pollution during and after construction. As part of the City's building permit application, site owners/operators must create a stormwater pollution prevention plan that explains how they will control stormwater. Our City engineers must also review and approve this plan.

Current Stormwater Challenges in Construction

The top five construction stormwater permit violations:

- **Missing or inadequate soil stabilization**—mats, mulches, blankets, and other strategies keep disturbed soils in place during construction.
- **Missing silt fence or other perimeter controls**—perimeter controls, such as silt fences and biorolls, prevent runoff and allow water to pass while sediment settles out.
- **Missing or inadequate inlet protection**—inlet protection captures sediment before it enters storm sewers.
- **Vehicle tracking**—vehicles driving off the site can track sediment onto paved surfaces. Rock pads/driveways and similar practices knock dirt off tires before they can be carried off the construction site.
- **Stormwater protection practices not maintained**—for instance, installing a silt fence is not enough. It must be checked to ensure it hasn't been breached or knocked down.



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Citizen's Guide to Stormwater. Retrieved from www.pca.state.mn.us/water/citizens-guide-stormwater

Please call the City of St. Francis at 763-233-5200 if you see any of the above violations in construction areas.

High Water Bill?

A key feature of the St. Francis Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system is that it alerts the City if a resident or business continuously uses water through its water meter. This alert is generated by water flowing through a meter 24 hours a day. If you see higher water bills (with no change in usage), you most likely have a continuous leak.

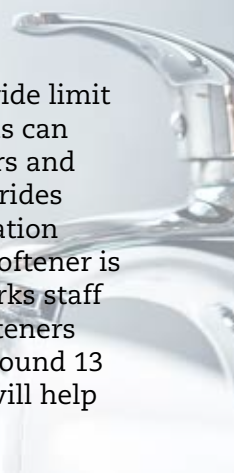
A few items may generate a Continuous Water Usage Alert. Some of those items could be a failed toilet flushing mechanism, a water softener that is regenerating too often, a plumbing leak after the meter, or normal usage. (We recommend you inspect one of the items mentioned if this is not typical usage.)

Typically, these issues can be located and resolved by the resident. If you would like Public Works to assist with checking your water meter and system to see if there is a leak, please call Public Works at 763-233-5200 to set up an appointment for us to check your residence. Appointments are available Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. No appointments are taken from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The City is currently sending letters to residents to inform them of a potential issue. Residents benefit by saving money, and the City conserves water.

Chlorides in Wastewater

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency sets our chloride limit for the wastewater treatment facility. High chloride levels can have a negative effect on the ecosystem of streams, rivers and lakes. Water softeners are the leading cause of high chlorides in wastewater. When a water softener goes into regeneration mode, the salt water (chlorides) used to regenerate the softener is discharged into the City's wastewater system. Public Works staff would like to remind residents to ensure their water softeners operate efficiently. The drinking water in St. Francis is around 13 grains per gallon. Adjusting your softeners accordingly will help in keeping chloride levels down.



Minnesota Homeowners and Renters May be Eligible for Property Tax Refunds

Homeowners may qualify for the Regular Property Tax Refund and/or the Special Property Tax Refund.

Homeowner's Regular Property Tax Refund is based on income and property taxes. The basic qualifications for the Regular Property Tax Refund are as follows:

- 2024 total household income less than \$139,320
- Must be a Minnesota resident or part-year resident
- Must have owned and occupied your home on January 2, 2025
- Your property must be classified as your homestead
- Have no delinquent property taxes on your homestead

Homeowners Special Property Tax Refund may be available if the net property taxes of your homestead property increase by more than 12% from 2024 to 2025.

The basic qualifications for the Special Property Tax Refund are as follows:

- No income limit
- Must have owned and occupied your home on January 2, 2024, and January 2, 2025
- The increase was at least \$100
- The increase was not because of improvements you made to the property

Use the 2025 Property Tax Statement you receive from your county in March or April (mid-July for mobile homeowners). Do not use the Notice of Proposed Taxes received in late 2024.

The 2024 Homeowner Property Tax Refund return should be electronically filed, postmarked, or dropped off by August 15, 2025. Ask your tax professional for more information or go online to the Dept of Revenue website at www.revenue.state.mn.us/property-tax-refund



The basic qualifications for the Renters Refund are as follows:

- 2024 total household income less than \$75,390
- Must have a valid Social Security Number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number
- Cannot be claimed as a dependent on someone else's tax return
- Must have lived in a building where either:
 - Property taxes were payable in 2024, or
 - Payments in lieu of property taxes (such as special assessments) were payable in 2024

You will need the Certificate of Rent Paid (CRP) provided by the property owner or managing agent.

Important Note: Starting with 2024 taxes, renters will claim the Renter's Credit as part of the Minnesota Individual Income Tax return (Form M1). You will no longer file a Renter's Property Tax Refund return (Form M1PR). The Renter's Credit is a refundable credit on an income tax return. It will be part of the amount owed or refunded.

Information source for this article at www.revenue.state.mn.us/property-tax-refund

Additional information and forms can be found on this site, or you can check with your tax professional.

Property Tax Statements

In mid-to-late March, Anoka County will mail statements for 2025 Property Taxes Payable and Valuation Notices (2025 Value that taxes will be based on in 2026). For general questions regarding these statements, Anoka County has an online resource at www.anokacounty.us/281.

If you have specific questions about the valuation or classification of a property in St. Francis, call Erik Skogquist at 763-412-1966 ext. 0 or email him at mnessorerik@gmail.com. In early May, in-person appeal meetings will be held at the Anoka County Assessor's office, 2100 3rd Avenue, Room 160, Government Center, Anoka. Dates will be listed on the Valuation Notice. If you plan to come to the meetings in May, you are encouraged to call 763-324-1175 to make an appointment so that your wait time is minimal when you arrive.

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

Gopher State One Call

Local: 651-454-0002

Toll Free: 1-800-252-1166

www.gopherstateonecall.org





2024 Fire Department Statistics

Emergency Responses:

- Total Calls: 839
- Fire-Related Incidents: 302
- Medical Emergencies: 537

Fire Prevention & Education:

- Inspections Conducted: 83
- Community Education Events: 32

Response Times:

- Average Response Time: 9 minutes 10 seconds

Personnel & Training:

- Total Firefighters: 27
- Training Hours Completed: 1,974

Equipment & Resources:

- Total Fleet: 11 vehicles
- Stations Operated: 2

Station 1

3750 Bridge Street NW
St. Francis

Station 2

139 Broadway Street NW
Bethel

Thank you

for supporting the St. Francis Fire Department. We remain committed to serving and protecting our community!

Spring Safety Tips from the St. Francis Fire Department

As the days grow longer and the weather warms up, spring is the perfect time to refresh your home and yard. The fire department wants to ensure you enjoy the season safely with these important fire prevention tips:

Outdoor Burning Safety

Spring cleaning often means yard work. If burning yard debris is permitted in your area, always follow local regulations. Keep fires at least 25 feet from any structures, never burn on windy days, and always have a water source nearby.

Grill with Caution

Warmer weather means grilling season! Always grill in a well-ventilated outdoor space, at least 10 feet from your home, fences, and overhanging branches. Keep a fire extinguisher nearby, and never leave the grill unattended.

Check Smoke Alarms & Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Spring is a great time to test and replace the batteries in all your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. These devices save lives, so make sure they are in good working order.



Yard & Home Fire Prevention

Clear leaves and debris from gutters and around your property to reduce fire hazards. Store gasoline and propane in proper containers away from your home, and dispose of oily rags properly to prevent spontaneous combustion.

Plan & Practice Your Escape Route

Every household should have a fire escape plan with at least two exits from every room. Practice your plan with your family so everyone knows what to do in a fire emergency.

Your safety is our priority! Don't hesitate to contact the fire department if you have any questions or need more fire safety information. Stay safe and enjoy the season!



St. Francis Police Department 2025 Spring Events

St. Francis Police Department 5th Annual Citizens Academy



This six-week program will offer citizens an inside look at the St. Francis Police Department's operations. It will cover a broad spectrum of topics. The program will start on April 9 and continue every Wednesday until May 14. For more information, please visit the Police Department's Facebook page.



Bike Rodeo

**Thursday, June 5
5:00-7:00 p.m.**

The St. Francis Police Department's 9th Annual Bike Rodeo will be held in the east parking lot of the Police/Public Works building. The event highlights safety skills and bicycle inspections. Check the Police Department's Facebook page for more details.

Got Drugs?

Turn in your unused
or expired medication
for safe disposal
here



DEA Nation Take Back

National Take Back Day is a safe, convenient and responsible way to dispose of unused or expired prescription drugs.

The St. Francis Police Department has a drop box in the lobby for the safe disposal of prescription drugs during regular lobby hours: Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

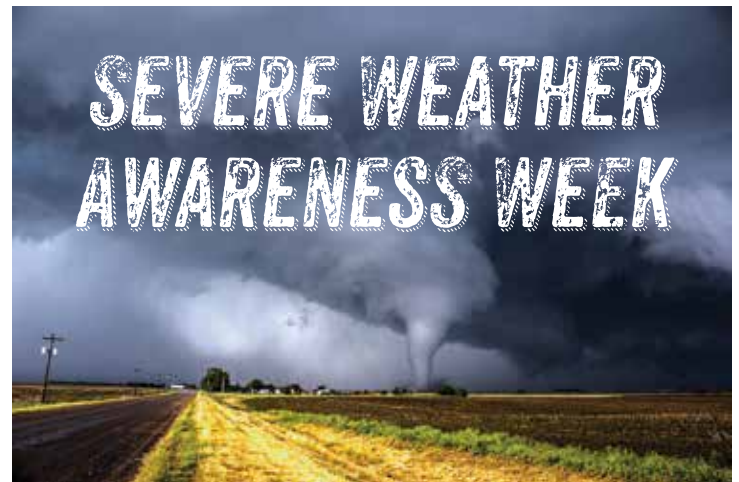
St. Francis Residents the DOG CLINIC Returns!

**Saturday, May 3
9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.**

The event will be held at the St. Francis Police Department, 4058 St. Francis Boulevard NW.

Please call for full details regarding the services 763-753-1264.

FREE dog license proof of rabies vaccination!



Severe Weather Awareness Week | April 7-11

The Severe Weather Awareness Week campaign helps teach Minnesotans about weather hazards and provides resources to minimize the risks associated with severe weather. Using this site as a guide, everyone is encouraged to plan, build an emergency kit, and practice drills. The campaign and the scheduled statewide tornado drills are conducted in collaboration with the State of Wisconsin and the National Weather Service.

During Severe Weather Awareness Week, a statewide tornado drill will occur on Thursday, April 11. The sirens will sound at 1:45 p.m. and 6:45 p.m.



3750 Bridge Street NW
St. Francis, MN 55070


PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 8
St. Francis, MN
55070

ECRWSS POSTAL PATRON



FARMERS MARKET COMMITTEE

The City of St. Francis is looking for community members to join the Farmers Market Committee. For more information, please contact Community Development Director, Jessica Rieland at the email below.

 jrieland@stfrancismn.gov



Events Calendar

Visit the City's website www.stfrancismn.gov for calendar updates.



City Council Meetings

First and third Monday each month at 6:00 p.m.
(If a holiday, the meeting will be Tuesday.)

Planning Commission Meetings

Third Wednesday each month at 7:00 p.m.

Meetings are held at St. Francis City Hall
3750 Bridge Street NW

Agendas and minutes online:
www.stfrancismn.gov/meetings

St. Francis City Hall

3750 Bridge Street NW
St. Francis, MN 55070

Hours Monday-Thursday 7:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Friday 7:00-11:00 a.m.

Contact Us city@stfrancismn.gov 763-753-2630
Website www.stfrancismn.gov

City Council

Mayor Mark Vogel	763-235-2312
Councilmember Amy Faanes	763-235-2310
Councilmember Joe Muehlbauer	763-235-2314
Councilmember Kevin Robinson	763-235-2313
Councilmember Sarah Udvig	763-235-2311

St. Francis Area Chamber of Commerce

SAVE THE DATE!

St. Francis Pioneer Days 2025

**MAY 30 -
JUNE 1,
2025**