



City of  
**St. Francis**

# NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2022 | VOL. 7, NO. 4

## Minnesota Drought Conditions

Drought conditions have continued to expand in the state. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) encourages all Minnesotans to conserve water, not only during drought but on an ongoing basis. You may recall that the drought in 2021 was the most severe in Minnesota since at least 1988, with more than half the state experiencing extreme drought and eight percent experiencing exceptional drought. During drought, water resources are particularly stressed, affecting ecosystems, groundwater, fish, and wildlife habitats.

Precipitation deficits and drought can persist over several years, and everyone should be mindful of water conservation now and on an ongoing basis. Precipitation deficits in fall and leading through the winter can often dictate drought conditions leading into the spring. That was the case for the 2021 drought, and it is possible that deficits in late 2022 will persist into 2023. From July 1 through early October 2022, precipitation deficits of three to seven inches were observed not only in southern Minnesota but also in central and northwestern portions of the state. This is in addition to the 2021 deficits, which generally ranged from three to six inches in the northern half of the state and between six and nine inches in the east-central and southeastern portions of the state.

The City monitors drought data provided by the DNR and will continue to review water levels and the potential need for watering restrictions for the spring.

## Message from your Mayor

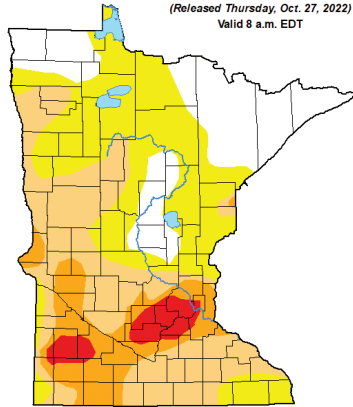
The months just keep flying by, and here we are back in winter. At least there will be no more bugs flying into your windshield or your eyes and ears. But with winter comes the holidays, and that's always a nice time of the year.

In case you didn't know, the

city has a new park in the Rivers Edge development. Thanks to the developer and grant dollars the city received, Siwek Park is now a place for kids to play and have fun. The city has been working on funding for our existing parks and  
*Continued on page 3*

### U.S. Drought Monitor Minnesota

October 25, 2022  
(Released Thursday, Oct. 27, 2022)  
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



#### Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

#### Author:

Adam Hartman  
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC



[droughtmonitor.unl.edu](http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)

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Visit us on social media!



## Assessor's Corner

2022 Property Review update: The City Assessors have finished visits to residential properties that were due for a five-year review. During the next few months, they will be out finishing up reviews of commercial, industrial, and apartment properties, as well as work done on permits issued.

2023 Proposed Property Taxes Statements were mailed out from Anoka County in November. This is a notice showing the preliminary estimate of the property tax amount for 2023. The proposed tax estimate amount is based on preliminary levies submitted by Anoka County, the City of St. Francis, school districts, and other taxing authorities. Dates and times are given for upcoming public meetings for each of the taxing authorities, where objections to the levy amounts may be expressed. This notice does not include amounts for waste management fees, special assessments, or school district referenda approved in the fall. More information about these statements can be found online at [www.anokacountymn.gov/273/Records-Taxation-Assessment](http://www.anokacountymn.gov/273/Records-Taxation-Assessment)

Other Resources: For more information about Minnesota Property Taxes, visit the MN Department of Revenue online page at: [www.revenue.state.mn.us/understanding-property-tax](http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/understanding-property-tax)

## Park Commission Members Needed!

Over the past year, the City has worked towards improving its park system and the amenities provided. This process started by laying the groundwork through a park plan. This plan was completed with input from residents on what amenities were missing and desired in the City. Additional information was pulled from comparisons in neighboring cities, state and national statistics, and trends that current and future generations are leaning towards. With this data, we are looking to pull together a new Park Commission. This group will be a five-member resident group that meets throughout the year to discuss and plan park needs. If you are interested, please visit the City website at [www.stfrancismn.org](http://www.stfrancismn.org) or email [kthunstrom@stfrancismn.org](mailto:kthunstrom@stfrancismn.org) for an application.

## A Message from the Building Department

As lumber prices start to go down and winter comes upon us, we anticipate residents will consider starting basement remodels and basement finishes in the coming months. Basement finishes can be an excellent way to increase the value and livability of your home.

Please remember to pull a permit for this work and use the basement finish handout to help plan your project. If you add any sleeping/bedrooms to your basement, the occupancy of your home changes, and it will need to be inspected for egress, smoke, and carbon monoxide alarms. Additionally, if you have a septic tank, adding a sleeping/bedroom may make your septic non-compliant.

Pulling a permit for your work will help limit personal liability for the work if you ever sell your home. It also helps ensure that the work is completed up to the building code to help protect the safety of you, your family, and future residents. If you have any questions on basement permits or permits in general, don't hesitate to contact the City of St. Francis Building Department in person at City Hall, via phone at 763-753-2630, or via email at [bldginsp@stfrancismn.org](mailto:bldginsp@stfrancismn.org).



Basement Finish Handout

## Getting Outside this Winter

Don't feel like you're stuck inside this winter. Head on out to the sledding hill right here in St. Francis. Seelye Brook Park is located at 4540 229th Avenue NW. There is a port-a-potty in the front and a parking lot in the back. Please park in the back parking lot and not on the roads. To access the parking lot, travel east on 229th Avenue NW and take the first right. The parking is in the back, surrounded by pine trees.

St. Francis maintains a full-size hockey rink along with a smaller recreational rink. When the weather cooperates, Public Works staff will create and maintain the ice for the residents to enjoy. The ice rinks are located at 3948 229th Avenue, across from St. Francis Elementary School. The goal every year is to have the warming house open and staffed by Christmas break. Warming House hours, weather and schedule permitting, are Monday-Friday, 3:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, 9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.

Please help keep our city safe and clean. Report any vandalism or trash dumping to Public Works. To report a problem, call 763-233-5200 or submit a request online.





## Mayor

*Continued from page 1*

putting together a Parks Commission to keep on top of maintenance as well as innovations to our parks. Parks are important as they give parents and children a safe place to get out and enjoy the outdoors.

The city has been planning and saving for a new City Hall/Fire Station facility. The current City Hall was never designed for what we use it for. The Fire Station has sections of it going back to the 1960s. This administration implemented a program to maintain the existing buildings back in 2017. Before that, there was no program. The longer we keep the existing City Hall and Fire Station, the more expensive they will become. There will be roof replacements, mechanical system replacements, and asphalt overlays to the parking lots that are very costly. These types of expenses would be a waste of tax dollars because of the age and general condition of the buildings. In the coming months, the City will notify you of the building plans/financing, etc. As always, we will be completely open and transparent while going through this process. Every question deserves an answer, and staff, along with the City Council, will do our best to give you the answers to your questions.

The development known as Vista Prairie at Eagle Pointe, a senior living project north of the Bottle Shop on Highway 47, is moving forward with construction planning, and they have requested a grading agreement to begin preparing the site as weather allows. Other projects are working through the process of planning and permitting. When they are approved by the City Council and ready for construction, I will share them with you.

I hope all of you have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year, enjoying time with family and friends. Please be safe and careful when traveling to your destinations.

Regards,  
Mayor Feldman

## City Facility

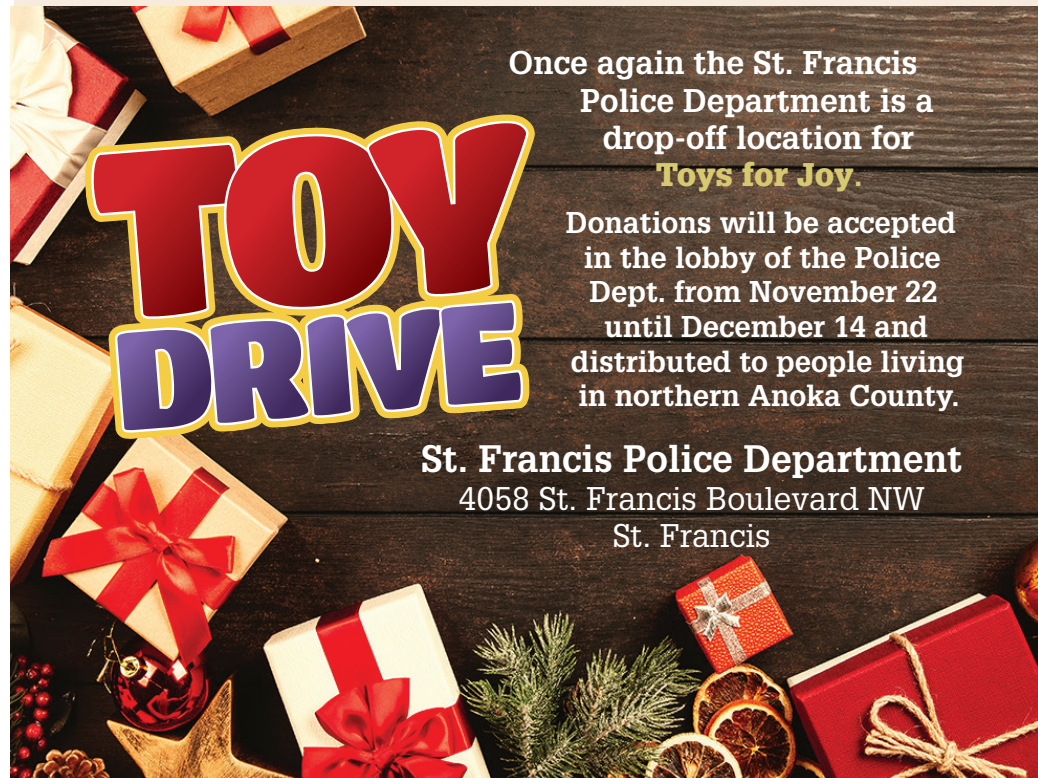
The city has taken steps forward with a project to create a joint City Hall and Fire Station Facility. Work began on this project back in 2018 by completing a space needs study. During the last three years, the need for facility updates has continued to increase with changes due to COVID-19, safety, elections, and to address the needs of our Fire Fighters. There are several components of our existing buildings that are no longer adequate for their use, safety, and efficiency for the staff or resident services. As a path forward, Council is working with Staff and an Architect to design a building to accommodate the needs of residents today and the future needs of the City. The path we have followed over the past twelve months includes:

- Identifying if the proposed combined facility would fit on the existing fire department site
- Public Hearing on the project financing
- Public engagement at the Fire Department French toast breakfast
- Council approval of a design contract to create building plans

The City Council has taken each step seriously and spent time thoroughly reviewing the intent and scope of the project. To learn more about this project, visit the city website at [www.stfrancismn.org/administration](http://www.stfrancismn.org/administration).

## Utility Rate Increase

Like many, the City is faced with high inflation on costs to maintain the water and sewer facilities. With increases in expenses related to gas and electric utilities, repairs and maintenance, treatment aids, and increased costs of labor, material, and transportation, Council had to make the tough decision to increase rates. In 2018, the City had an opportunity to reduce the rates by 20 percent to provide a bit of relief from the increased costs. To act on the strains of inflation, beginning in 2023, the water rate will increase by five percent, and the sewer rate will increase by two percent. For a household that uses 4,000 gallons a month, this will roughly add three dollars a month to the utility bill. This averages out to a three percent increase overall.



**TOY DRIVE**

Once again the St. Francis Police Department is a drop-off location for **Toys for Joy**.

Donations will be accepted in the lobby of the Police Dept. from November 22 until December 14 and distributed to people living in northern Anoka County.

**St. Francis Police Department**  
4058 St. Francis Boulevard NW  
St. Francis



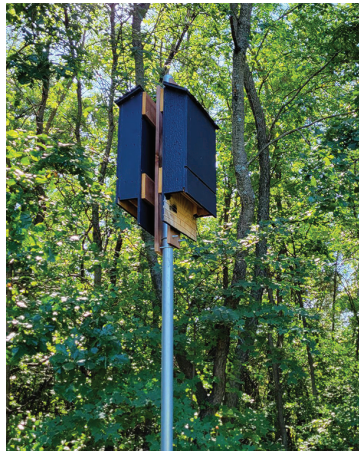


## Siwek Park is Open

Some great news, Northland Recreation finished up the playground equipment installation at the beginning of November! The playground is officially open. Come visit our newest park and see the excellent walking/ biking trails, playground equipment, basketball court, gaga pit, pavilion, and what will be our green space area! The park was funded in part by a grant from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The park is located at 3550 237th Avenue NW, St. Francis.

## Something to see!

This summer, two Boy Scouts approach the City with ideas for their Eagle Scout projects. One of them was Nathan Zandlo. His idea was to complete ten bat houses and install them throughout City parks. The other Boy Scout was Jonah Deschenes. His project was assembling five Wood Duck houses and then distribute



One of Nathan Zandlo's bat houses.



One of Jonah Deschenes's wood duck houses.

them throughout City parks. Both Scouts did a fantastic job. They showed leadership skills and saw the projects through to completion. You can see the houses installed in various parks, including Community, Rum River Woods, Dellwood, Highland Woods, and DeGardner Park. Remember, these houses are designed to house wild animals. Don't get too close, or you could go batty.

For maps of City parks, visit the City website at [www.stfrancismn.org/parksrec](http://www.stfrancismn.org/parksrec). You may also pick up a map at kiosks located at Community, Deer Creek, Woodbury, and Highland Woods Parks. If you would like to pick up a waterproof hard copy of the parks' map or have one mailed to you, please call 763-233-5200.

## Why Should We Care About Stormwater?

Rain and snow melt run over the many hard surfaces in urbanized areas such as roads, sidewalks, driveways, parking lots, rooftops, etc., and pick up pesticides, fertilizers, oils, metals, road salt, sediment, trash, and other pollutants and carry them into storm drains. Storm drains discharge directly into lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands (the water is not treated first), so stormwater runoff is a leading source of water pollution.

In addition, stormwater runoff from hard urban surfaces travels quickly and in large quantities, which results in damage to rivers, streams, and wetlands; destruction of aquatic habitats; and elevated pollutant levels reaching surface waters. Pavement and other hard surfaces prevent stormwater from soaking into the ground and recharging groundwater. Local entities that own or operate municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4) play a crucial role in preventing stormwater runoff from harming Minnesota's valuable water resources.







Did you know we have a bike fix-it station? It is located at Community Park near the port-a-potty. It includes tools to perform basic repairs and maintenance. You can change a flat tire or make adjustments to your brakes. You can also hang the bike to allow the wheels to spin freely while working on your bike. It is free to use any time the parks are open!



Enjoy a faster,  
more convenient,  
more reliable  
payment process

**Conveniently view and pay your bill online, anytime from the device of your choice. Set up automatic payments, go paperless and more with our electronic billing and payment service.**

- Set it and forget it with AutoPay - save time and avoid late payment fees
- Access and pay your bills electronically at your convenience
- Go paperless - receive bills, reminders, and receipts via email
- Fully certified with highest-level of data security

WE ACCEPT:



## Winter Salt Alternatives

### Ways to Reduce Chloride Pollution

As the snow season draws near, consider this: sodium chloride (NaCl) is the most common salt used for de-icing roads and walkways. It is used so much that it has become a water pollutant. Here are ways to reduce chloride pollution, have safer walking areas, and maybe save some money.

- Remove snow during a snowstorm instead of waiting until the end. Start with the very first snow and keep up the rest of the winter, especially in shaded walkways.
- Think “anti-icing.” The goal is to break the bond between ice and pavement where you need it so it can be shoveled or plowed (as opposed to melting everything).
- Treat before a storm to help prevent ice buildup, so less de-icer is needed.
  - Alternatives: Sand for traction ONLY it safe and effective, but sweep up excess and re-use
    - Liquid magnesium chloride, calcium chloride, potassium chloride (all three work better than regular salt in colder temps), calcium magnesium acetate, and potassium acetate.
      - > Do NOT apply if ice has already formed, in rainy, sleety, blowing conditions, or if the snowfall is more than one inch per hour.
      - > Concrete may require specialized use or product. Salt, chlorides, and urea-based “pet-friendly” options can cause pitting or spalling of concrete surfaces. Check the product label for concrete use.
- After Storms; use as little de-icer as possible:
  - The closest salt substitute is potassium acetate, but it is hard to find- ask for it to create consumer demand.
  - Sand is safe for pets and children (sweep up excess).

*Remember, regular salt is ineffective at temperatures below 15 degrees (F). For colder temps, try sand... or pre-treat with liquid magnesium, calcium, or potassium chlorides.*

City of  
**St. Francis**

SCAN THE QR CODE  
TO PAY ONLINE



*Beginning 1/1/2023, credit card payments will not be taken over the phone at City Hall. Please access the on-line system to pay your bill.*

POWERED BY: **InvoiceCloud**

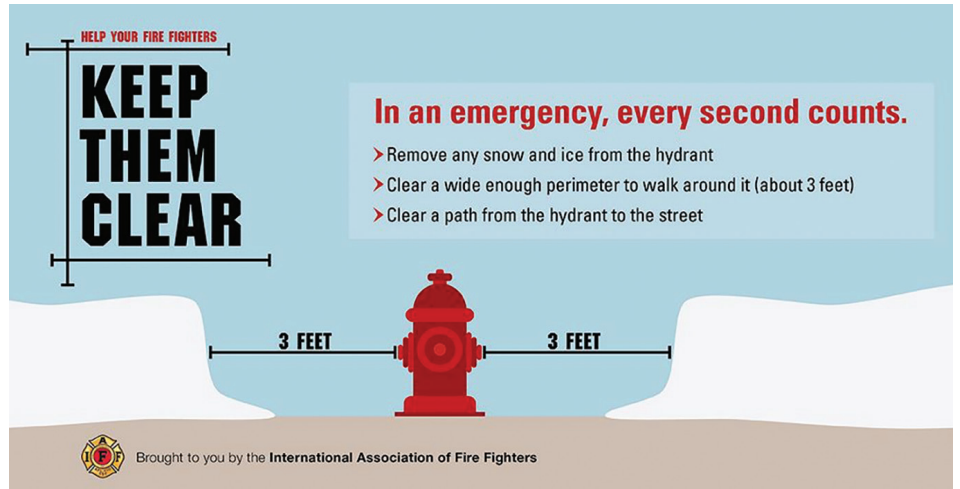


# Fire Department News

The St. Francis Fire Department wishes all of you a very happy holiday season this year. With the change of the season comes the busy season for your firefighters. The cold weather in Minnesota creates opportunities for increased risk of fire. Some of these risks include:

- utilizing auxiliary heating sources such as space heaters
- increased use of candles during the holidays
- holiday lights and extension cords

A few reminders, please be sure that you keep a safe clearance of combustibles away from space heaters. The recommendation of 36 inches or three feet is considered a safe distance. Ensure your candles are extinguished before bed or leaving the house and try not to overload your electrical service with holiday lights



If we have a winter like last year, please keep fire hydrants free and clear of snow. Our ability to not only quickly access the fire hydrant in case of a fire but to locate a fire hydrant in close proximity to a fire plays a large part in our ability to extinguish fires quickly.

Please, if you have a fire hydrant on your property, keep it free and clear of snow.

**SANTA + FIRE TRUCK**

- Thursday, December 15, 5-9 p.m.
- Collecting food shelf donations
- St. Francis Fire Dept. + Family + Volunteers

## RECYCLING Holiday Lights and Cell Phones

Every year St. Francis Public Works collects your old, used, broken, or worn-out cell phones and holiday lights for proper recycling. These items are not recycled through your curbside recycling carts. Instead, they are usually thrown in the trash. Public Works will collect your used lights and cell phones and properly recycle them at a local recycling facility. You can drop off your holiday lights and cell phones at the Police and Public Works Facility during our regular hours, Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. If you have any recycling questions or concerns, please call Public Works at 763-233-5200.

While dropping off your holiday lights and cell phones, you can also pick up a *free* organics bin!





## Winter Parking Restrictions

The City of St. Francis has winter parking restrictions beginning November 1 until May 1. During this time, there is no parking on city streets from 1:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. If there are more than two inches of snow, there is no street parking until the roads have been plowed from curb to curb.

St. Francis police officers will issue citations for winter parking violations. The most common complaint when someone receives a ticket is, "I didn't know." Please, help spread the word to your friends, family, and neighbors. Also, make sure any overnight guests are informed.

Below is a link to the city ordinance for more information. If you have any questions, contact an on-duty officer through Anoka County Dispatch at 763-427-1212.

<https://library.municode.com, 7-4-3. - Winter parking>



## Snowmobile Safety Tips

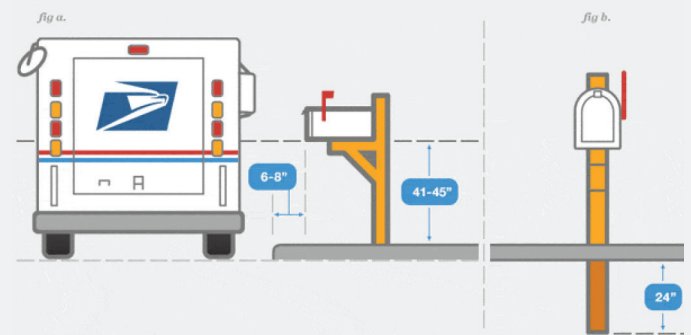
- Don't drink alcohol and ride.
- Don't ride alone.
- Stay to the right on trails.
- Pay attention to the weather and check trail conditions.
- Slow down, obey all trail signs and cross roadways with extreme caution.
- Stay on designated snowmobile trails to avoid violating trespassing laws.
- **Obtain a permit from the police department if riding in a permit zone.**
- Obey all state laws and local ordinances.

Snowmobile ordinances can be viewed on the City's website, <https://library.municode.com> Chapter 7

## Snow Removal Reminders!



- Do NOT blow, shovel, or push snow from your driveway into the street. It is illegal, and the City will be issuing code enforcement violations on residents who violate this law (Minnesota Statute 160.2715). Violations are misdemeanors, but civil penalties would also apply if the placement of snow creates a hazard such as a slippery area, frozen rut, or bump that contributes to a motor vehicle or pedestrian crash. The civil liability can extend to both the property owner and the person who placed the snow.
- When shoveling your driveway apron, shovel the snow to the right of your driveway. If you are looking at the street, it will reduce the amount of snow in your driveway when the plow comes by.
- Please help keep fire hydrants clear next to your home.
- Do not place your garbage cans in the street. Make sure there is a spot for them at the edge of your driveway.
- Keep the area around and behind your mailbox clear of snow. It allows room for more snow without it piling up. The image below indicates the United States Postal Service requirements for your mailbox. Using these requirements can help reduce the chances of your mailbox being damaged.



## CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

Gopher State One Call  
Local: 651-454-0002  
Toll Free: 1-800-252-1166  
[www.gopherstateonecall.org](http://www.gopherstateonecall.org)



# Happy Holidays

The St. Francis City Hall Offices will be closed on December 26 and January 2.



## ECRWSS POSTAL PATRON

## Events Calendar

Visit the City's website [www.stfrancismn.org](http://www.stfrancismn.org) for calendar updates.

Visit with



**SANTA**

**Thursday, December 8  
5:00-7:00 p.m.**

**St. Francis Police Department**  
4058 St. Francis Boulevard NW

**St. Francis Police Department**  
will be a drop-off location for gifts  
for children in need.

**Donations will be accepted until  
Monday, December 14.**

**The Police Christmas Committee  
and Toys for Joy, helping people  
living in all of northern  
Anoka County.**

Kids can  
tell Santa what  
the perfect gift  
would be!  
Parents, bring your  
camera.

### 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 Area Schools District Office  
4115 Ambassador Boulevard NW

Agendas and minutes online: [www.stfrancismn.org](http://www.stfrancismn.org)

### City Hall Location

23340 Cree Street NW  
St. Francis, MN 55070

Hours	Monday-Thursday	7:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Contact Us	<a href="mailto:city@stfrancismn.org">city@stfrancismn.org</a>	763-753-2630
Website	<a href="http://www.stfrancismn.org">www.stfrancismn.org</a>	

### City Council

Mayor Steve Feldman	763-235-2310
Councilmember Sarah Udvig	763-235-2311
Councilmember Robert Bauer	763-235-2312
Councilmember Kevin Robinson	763-235-2313
Councilmember Joe Muehlbauer	763-235-2314