



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Farmington Hills Seats New and Reelected Council Members and Mayor in Ceremony Before Council Meeting

Mayor Theresa Rich, reelected Council Members Michael Bridges and Valerie Knol, and new Council Member Charlie Starkman join three existing council members

FARMINGTON HILLS, Mich. (Nov. 24, 2025) – The City of Farmington Hills officially seated its reelected mayor, as well as new and reelected council members in a ceremony during the Monday, Nov. 24 City Council meeting. As decided by City voters in the Nov. 4 general election, Theresa Rich was seated for a second term as mayor, Michael Bridges and Valerie Knol were reelected to City Council, and Charlie Starkman was added as a council member. Judge Marla Parker of the 47th District Court administered the oath of office to the electees at the start of Monday's council meeting.

"I'm excited to get to work with our newly elected and returning council members and mayor," said Farmington Hills City Manager Gary Mekjian. "Together, we will continue working to improve the Farmington Hills community for residents, business owners and visitors."

Mayor Theresa Rich was elected to her first term as mayor in 2023. She previously served on Farmington Hills City Council from 2015 to 2019 and is a past member of the Oakland Schools Board of Education. She is an attorney by trade, working with families on probate matters. Prior to starting her private practice, she retired from General Motors after a 30-year career. She is also a faculty member at the Wayne State University Mike Ilitch School of Business. Theresa and her husband, Brian, raised their two children in Farmington Hills, where they have lived for over 30 years. Her term expires in 2027.

Council Member Michael Bridges was first elected to Farmington Hills City Council in 2008 and has been serving ever since. During his time on Council he has served three years as mayor pro tem. He is a board member for the Heritage Hills Homeowners Association and previously served on the Zoning Board of Appeals and boards for the Farmington Family YMCA and Farmington Public Schools PTA Council. Michael and his wife, Deborah, have lived in Farmington Hills for 27 years and raised their two adult sons here.

Council Member Valerie Knol has been a Farmington Hills City Council member since 2013 and has served twice as mayor pro tem. Prior to her election in Farmington Hills, Valerie was a Farmington City Council member for eight years, also serving as mayor. She has served on boards for several organizations, including The Farmington Players, Farmington Family YMCA, Greater Farmington Area Chamber of Commerce, American Association of University Women, and the Oakland County Zoological Authority. Valerie works in the auto industry as a manager at Stellantis and previously as a senior staff member for the Michigan House of Representatives.

Council Member Charlie Starkman is the newest Farmington Hills City Council member, elected for his first term in the November 2025 election. He previously served as the vice chair of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Commission on Community Health. He is also the vice chair of the Michigan Psychological Association's Early Career Psychologists Committee and a member of the Association's Advocacy Committee. Professionally, he is a clinical psychologist, working as the assistant director of the University of Michigan-Dearborn Counseling and Psychological Services Office, as well as the assistant director of Disability and Accessibility Services. Charlie has lived in Farmington Hills since 2018.

The new and reelected members join seated Council Members Jon Aldred, Jackie Boleware and Bill Dwyer, whose terms end in 2027. The Farmington Hills City Council is made up of seven members, including the mayor, who are elected by the voters. Council members serve staggered four-year terms, while the mayor serves a two-year term and is limited by City Charter to two consecutive two-year terms. A new mayor pro tem, who serves in the mayor's absence, is chosen by council members each year. Bill Dwyer is the current mayor pro tem and another council member will be appointed to serve the role in 2026. The mayor and council members serve part-time.

Under the City council/City manager form of government, the City Council is responsible for policymaking, while the City Manager, who is appointed by City Council, is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the City. When the City Council makes a decision on an ordinance or policy, the City Manager is responsible for implementing it.

The public is invited to attend all City Council meetings, which are generally held on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at Farmington Hills City Hall, located at 31555 W. Eleven Mile Road, at the southwest corner of Orchard Lake Road. Regular meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. and are broadcast live on Spectrum channel 203 and AT&T Channel 99, in addition to the [City's YouTube channel](#). Regular meetings may be preceded by a 6 p.m. study session. Agendas for all sessions can be found [here](#) the Friday prior to the meeting date.

For more information, please call the City Manager's Office at 248-871-2500.

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About the City of Farmington Hills

The City of Farmington Hills is a place where everyone is welcome. Founded in 1973, it is one of the largest communities in Oakland County. Farmington Hills is home to more than 83,000 residents who speak more than 60 languages, and more than 75 Fortune 500 businesses, including multinational corporations like Nissan and Bosch. The City is routinely recognized as one of the safest cities of its size and is known for its extensive amenities, including over 600 acres of parks, 90 athletic fields, six miles of hiking and walking trails, the Farmington Hills Golf Club, and an Ice Arena. Farmington Hills is also home to The Hawk, an award-winning, approximately 270,000-square-foot recreation and arts venue, which includes The Hawk Theatre and The Hawk Makerspace. For more information, visit www.fhgov.com.

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Note for reporters: Although the Cities of Farmington Hills and Farmington share similar names and are both communities in Oakland County, they are two distinct and separate cities. Farmington Hills is the larger of the two, both in population and size. Farmington is a historic city with its own unique governance and community. Please be sure to differentiate between the two cities in your reporting to avoid confusion.