

**MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
AUGUST 12, 2026 – 5:30 PM**

The special meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Rich at 5:30pm.

Councilmembers Present: Aldred, Boleware, Bridges, Dwyer, Knol, Rich and Starkman

Councilmembers Absent: None

Others Present: City Clerk Lindahl, Director Brown, City Attorney Joppich and Anne Lewis, Senior Manager – Raftelis

APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

MOTION by Bridges, support by Dwyer, to approve the special meeting agenda as published.

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL TO ENTER INTO A CLOSED SESSION UNDER SECTION 8(1)(F) OF THE MICHIGAN OPEN MEETINGS ACT TO REVIEW AND CONSIDER THE CONTENTS OF THE APPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT OR APPOINTMENT TO THE CITY MANAGER POSITION SUBMITTED BY CANDIDATES WHO HAVE REQUESTED THAT THEIR APPLICATION REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL. (NOTE: COUNCIL WILL RETURN TO OPEN SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CLOSED SESSION).

MOTION by Starkman, support by Knol, that the City of Farmington Hills City Council approves entering into a closed session under Section 8(1)(f) of the Michigan Open Meetings Act to review and consider the contents of the applications for employment or appointment to the City Manager position submitted by candidates who have requested that their application remain confidential.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, DWYER, KNOL, RICH AND STARKMAN

Nays: NONE

Absent: NONE

Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Council returned to open session immediately following the closed session, at 7:34pm.

SELECTION OF CANDIDATES TO BE INTERVIEWED FOR THE CITY MANAGER POSITION

City Attorney Steve Joppich confirmed that Council had discussed the candidates identified in the Raftelis Review Report, whose names have been assigned alphabetical letters, from which Council is to select finalists to be interviewed.

MOTION by Aldred, support by Starkman, that the City of Farmington Hills City Council selects candidates CC, EE, V, X, and KM as the candidates to be interviewed for the City Manager position.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas:	ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, DWYER, KNOL, RICH AND STARKMAN
Nays:	NONE
Absent:	NONE
Abstentions:	NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

DISCUSSION OF THE INTERVIEW DATES, PROCESS, AND LOGISTICS FOR THE CITY MANAGER POSITION

Anne Lewis, Senior Manager of Raftelis led the discussion on scheduling. Several dates were considered, Council settled on Saturday, September 26th, with interviews between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM to allow time for breaks and deliberation. The location was confirmed as Council Chambers at City Hall, as the interviews constitute an open meeting and the chambers were deemed more appropriate given the significance of the matter.

City Attorney Joppich raised the question of whether a backup date should be set in case a second round of interviews became necessary. After some discussion Council decided on Sunday, September 27th, beginning at 1:00 PM, as a backup date for a potential second round. Attorney Joppich noted that if a decision is reached on September 26th, a motion to cancel the September 27th meeting would be necessary, as it would need to be publicly noticed in advance.

MOTION by Knol, support by Dwyer, that the City of Farmington Hills City Council approves to hold candidate interviews on Saturday, September 26th, beginning at 9:00 AM in Council Chambers, with a contingent second round on Sunday, September 27th, beginning at 1:00 PM, in the Council Chambers.

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Travel Accommodations

City Attorney Joppich raised the matter of travel accommodations for out-of-state candidates among the five finalists. Ms. Lewis advised that, in standard practice, candidates arrange their own travel and submit receipts for reimbursement, though the city may wish to book hotel accommodations at a government rate. It was agreed that arrangements would follow existing City travel policies.

MOTION by Dwyer, support by Boleware, that the City of Farmington Hills City Council approves to provide travel accommodations and reimbursement for finalist candidates who are required to travel from out of state.

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Interview Questions and Format

Ms. Lewis was asked to draft a set of interview questions and share them with City Attorney Joppich and the Council for review prior to the interviews. City Attorney Joppich indicated he would forward the structured question list used during the previous City Manager recruitment as a reference.

Discussion ensued regarding the number and structure of questions. Councilmember Dwyer advocated for fourteen questions organized in two rounds, with each councilmember asking one question per round. Councilmember Knol supported the fourteen-question framework, emphasizing the importance of open-ended questions to elicit comprehensive answers and reduce the need for follow-up questioning. She also noted the legal necessity of consistency, that each candidate should be asked the same questions to avoid any perception of bias.

Councilmember Bridges expressed concern about feeling restricted in his ability to ask individualized follow-up questions. City Attorney Joppich cautioned Council that employment interviews carry legal and HR considerations, and that questions, particularly individualized ones, should be submitted for review in advance to ensure no lines are inadvertently crossed.

Councilmember Starkman reminded the body that the interview process is reciprocal — that while the Council is evaluating candidates, the candidates are simultaneously evaluating the Council and the city as a prospective employer. He emphasized the importance of presenting a hospitable and professional environment. Councilmember Boleware echoed this sentiment, stressing that legally permissible, respectful questioning is critical so that strong candidates are not deterred from accepting an offer.

The Council reached consensus on a format of up to fourteen open-ended questions, administered in a 50-60 minute interview window. Ms. Lewis offered to facilitate the interviews, including signaling when ten minutes remained and helping to move discussions along as needed. It was also agreed that each interview would include time for candidates to ask their own questions of the Council and to offer a brief closing statement.

Ms. Lewis further offered to develop a scoring rubric to assist the Council in evaluating candidates consistently. Council expressed support for this.

Regarding deliberation, City Attorney Joppich noted that no decision is required at the conclusion of either interview day, Council may take additional time to consider before making a final selection.

On the matter of broadcasting the interviews, City Attorney Joppich confirmed that the Open Meetings Act nor does the City Council Rules and Guidelines require the interviews to be broadcast. The consensus of Council was to not broadcast, so as to avoid later candidates gaining an unfair advantage by watching the broadcast and learning the questions ahead of time.

DISCUSSION OF THE CITY MANAGER EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

City Attorney Joppich explained that the employment agreement item was placed on the agenda proactively so the Council could address any concerns before a selection is made. He noted that some candidates had already inquired about the existence of an agreement, and that a prior City Manager agreement had been shared as a public reference document, though it was made clear that the prior agreement does not necessarily represent what the Council will approve for the new City Manager.

Attorney Joppich described the historical practice: upon selecting a candidate, City Council has directed the City Attorney to negotiate the terms of a contract in coordination with the Mayor, then bring the finalized agreement back for formal Council approval. The existing agreement format has been in use since the 1990s, though it has been updated from City Manager to City Manager to reflect evolving benefits, compensation norms, and professional development provisions.

Councilmember Bridges urged the Council and City Attorney to ensure the agreement is current and reflects today's market rather than outdated precedents.

Councilmember Dwyer specifically raised the question of caps on sick time and compensatory time accumulation, noting that in several Oakland County municipalities, the absence of such caps has led to significant financial exposure upon a City Manager's departure. Ms. Lewis confirmed that capped accrual is common in City Manager agreements, either mirroring city-wide employee policy or structured under an executive-level policy for exempt employees, and that caps are broadly recognized as a risk mitigation measure.

City Attorney Joppich acknowledged the Council's direction and confirmed that the agreement has been updated progressively over time. He noted that the prior agreement's severance structure was not outside the norm for the region, though he committed to ensuring any new agreement reflects current standards.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting adjourned at 8:24pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carly Lindahl, City Clerk