

**MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBER
JANUARY 26, 2026 – 7:30 PM**

The regular session of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Rich at 7:33PM.

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

Councilmembers Absent: Bridges

Others Present: Acting City Manager Mondora, City Clerk Lindahl; Directors Aranowski, Brown, Kettler-Schmult, Rushlow and Skrobola; Fire Chief Unruh; City Attorney Joppich

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Scout Nico Rushlow, member of Troup 854.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR SESSION MEETING AGENDA

MOTION by Knol, support by Boleware, to approve the agenda as published.

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY 2026 AS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The following proclamation was read by Councilmember Starkman and accepted by Ty Vass, owner of the Farmington Hills Brunch Factory.

**PROCLAMATION
Black History Month
February 2026**

WHEREAS, the City of Farmington Hills is proud to recognize February 2026 as Black History Month, celebrating the many notable contributions that African Americans have made to our community, our country and our world; and,

WHEREAS, we applaud the vast cultural, economic, political, and social contributions made by people of African ancestry who helped build this great nation and we honor their valuable contributions to professional fields, including education, law, government, science, business, sports, the arts and their brave service in the United States Armed Forces; and,

WHEREAS, studying our history and reflecting on the burdens of racial prejudice and stereotypes can open the door to innovative ideas and provide insight into building an environment in Farmington Hills that supports our continued efforts to combat racism, to strive toward racial equity, and to be a place of freedom, opportunity, and inclusiveness for everyone; and,

WHEREAS, we uplift our African American community leaders, business owners and professionals, and promote the Black community as part of the rich tapestry of our whole inclusive Farmington Hills community; and,

WHEREAS, we join others in recognizing and celebrating African Americans' contributions, sacrifices and bravery on their journey to justice in our nation and work together to identify, develop and implement solutions to further achieve equity in Farmington Hills, as well as promote unity across all individuals and communities throughout our City regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and any other expressions of identity.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Theresa Rich, Mayor of the City of Farmington Hills, on behalf of the City Council, do hereby proclaim February 2026 as **Black History Month** in Farmington Hills and call upon our community, public and private institutions, businesses and schools to honor the history and achievements of Black Americans, and reflect upon efforts needed to create a world that is more just, equitable and prosperous for all people.

Mr. Vass said he was honored to accept the proclamation in honor of Black History Month. He gave background and details regarding his restaurant, The Farmington Hills Brunch Factory, which was built with intention, and which provides fresh food, great service, and an experience that brings people together.

PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY 5, 2026 AS OPTIMIST DAY

The following proclamation was read by Councilmember Dwyer and accepted by Roxanne Fitzpatrick, Farmington Hills Optimist Club.

**PROCLAMATION
In Recognition of Optimist Day
Feb. 5, 2026**

WHEREAS, Optimist International is a worldwide organization of people committed to optimism and self-development for the improvement of youth and community; and,

WHEREAS, Optimist Day is recognized and celebrated annually on the first Thursday of February to recognize local Optimist organizations, celebrate their contributions to the community and encourage citizens to do something that brings out optimism in themselves or others; and,

WHEREAS, the Optimist Club of Farmington & Farmington Hills has been a vital part of the community for more than 40 years; and,

WHEREAS, this voluntary organization of civic-minded men and women is dedicated to community service, making a difference in the lives of others and working with young people to help them reach their potential to make their dreams come true; and,

WHEREAS, the membership of the Optimist Club of Farmington & Farmington Hills is composed of individuals from business, industry, government, and other professions, who share their enthusiasm, skills, and talent to help make tomorrow as vibrant and peaceful as it can be; and,

WHEREAS, there are more than 1,600 Optimist Clubs in Optimist International, with thousands of members worldwide who are contributing to their respective communities and encouraging a greater exchange of ideas between young people and adults.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Theresa Rich, Mayor of the City of Farmington Hills, on behalf of the City Council, do hereby recognize the **Optimist Club of Farmington & Farmington Hills** and call upon our community, public and private institutions, businesses, and schools to thank the local Optimist Club, and honor this vital organization that is committed to the improvement of youth and community.

Roxanne Fitzpatrick, Farmington Optimist Club, noted that Councilmember Dwyer has been a member of the Optimist Club for 30 years. Ms. Fitzpatrick thanked the City for the proclamation and described the variety of activities, opportunities, and service the Optimist Club offers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PRESENTATIONS FROM CITY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Angie Smith, Farmington Public School Board, thanked Roxanne Fitzpatrick for the work she and the Optimist Club do for the schools. She also thanked Council for participating in the recent joint meeting with the City of Farmington and the School Board, which was the second joint meeting that had been held, and which she felt was a great, collaborative meeting. She noted that the schools will be celebrating Black History Month in February, and National Reading Month in March, and she thanked all those Council Members who participate in those events.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION by Aldred, support by Starkman, to approve the consent agenda as published.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Nays: NONE

Absent: BRIDGES

Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

There were no consent agenda items for discussion.

COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem Boleware acknowledged February as Black History Month and invited everyone to attend the black history program to be held at the Hawk on February 22 at 7pm, featuring the Amen Ra dancers and drummers.

Councilmember Starkman noted that he and Mayor Rich attended India Fest at Farmington Hills Manor, an event hosted by the Michigan Chapter of the India League of America. The exceptional event was well attended by numerous local leaders. The celebration provided a meaningful opportunity to learn more about the many ways the Indian community contributes to the city, the state of Michigan, and the country as a whole.

Mayor Rich gave the following updates:

- The originally scheduled date of March 5 for the State of the Cities event conflicted with the State of the County address, to be held on the same date. As a result, the State of the Cities event will be rescheduled. State of the Cities is a free public event, featuring a business forum from 4:30pm to 6:30pm with food trucks available, and formal remarks from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. OCC, Farmington Public Schools, and the Cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills will participate.
- The next meeting of the Fueling Farmington Hills Task Force will be Monday, February 9, at 2:00pm, in the chapel at Nardin Park Church. The meeting will focus on emergency preparedness.
- Walk the Hawk continues to be held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm on the third floor of The Hawk.
- The annual Valentine's vow renewal ceremony is scheduled for February 13 at the Longacre House. Couples married for at least five years are invited to participate. Registration is required.

CITY MANAGER UPDATE

Acting City Manager Mondora provided the following information:

- The City's warming centers are currently open and available to any individuals in need. The centers will remain open through the duration of the National Weather Service's cold weather advisory, which is presently forecast to extend through the morning of Wednesday, January 28. Should the advisory be extended or reissued later in the week, the City will provide an updated communication regarding warming center availability.
- At its November 28 meeting, Council approved a motion authorizing the City Manager to procure engineering and architectural services for the development of preliminary site and architectural plans for the proposed new activity center. A comprehensive request for proposals was issued earlier today through the Michigan Intergovernmental Trade Network, with proposals due on February 18. An update will be provided to City Council once the proposals have been received and reviewed. Acting City Manager Mondora expressed appreciation to the directors of the Special Services, Public Services, Finance, and Purchasing departments for their collaborative efforts in developing the RFP.

PUBLIC HEARING

PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZING THE GRAVEL CONVERSION TO HARD SURFACE PAVEMENT FOR ROCKCASTLE STREET. CMR 1-26-08

City Engineer Mark Saksewski presented the proposed Rockcastle Street gravel conversion and paving project, explaining that the City adopted a policy in March 2019 establishing a formal process for converting gravel public roads to paved roads. In accordance with the policy, property owners on Rockcastle Street requested an informational meeting, which was held in May 2025. Following that meeting, the City received a petition indicating resident support for the project. Of the 11 property

owners on Rockcastle Street, seven submitted petitions in favor of the project, three did not respond by the deadline, and one property owner did not respond at all. Based on the adopted policy and the level of resident support, the project was brought before City Council for tonight's public hearing and consideration.

Mayor Rich opened the public hearing. No members of the public had submitted a blue card indicating they wished to speak on this agenda item, and the public hearing was closed.

MOTION by Aldred, support by Boleware, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the conversion of Rockcastle Street from gravel to hard surface; and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that City Council approves City Staff to identify a specific project schedule for this conversion consistent with Capital Improvement Program and within the City's Local Road budget and accounting for any specific issues presented by this conversion.

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZING THE GRAVEL CONVERSION TO HARD SURFACE PAVEMENT FOR THE OAKLANDS SUBDIVISION. CMR 1-26-09

City Engineer Mark Saksewski presented the Oaklands Subdivision gravel conversion project. He explained that, in accordance with the City's gravel road conversion policy adopted in March 2019, the Oaklands neighborhood requested an informational meeting, which was held in April 2025. Following the meeting, the City received a petition reflecting resident support for the project. Of the 68 properties within the subdivision, 45 property owners signed in favor of paving, 16 opposed the project, and nine property owners did not respond. Based on city policy and the level of resident support, the project was brought forward for tonight's public hearing and consideration.

In response to comments received prior to tonight's meeting, City Engineer Saksewski reviewed roadway design standards, noting that the City's standard local road width is 22 feet, consistent with guidance from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. He explained that for low-speed, low-volume residential areas such as the Oaklands Subdivision, there is some flexibility to reduce lane widths to a minimum of nine feet per lane, resulting in an 18-foot-wide paved roadway. However, even with an 18-foot paved roadway, additional width is required to support pavement edges and drainage infrastructure. A ditch drainage cross-section would require approximately 32 feet of total width to accommodate pavement, aggregate base, and drainage ditches. While a curb-and-gutter roadway could be narrower, additional space is required for storm sewer installation and construction access, resulting in an overall construction width of approximately 28 to 30 feet. Additionally, constructing curb and gutter throughout the project would significantly increase costs, with an estimated additional cost of approximately \$1 million.

Councilmember Aldred asked clarifying questions regarding minimum roadway widths, construction impacts, and whether curb-and-gutter construction was feasible. City Engineer Saksewski confirmed that curb and gutter construction was feasible but, again, substantially more expensive. He also stated that project impacts were discussed during the informational meeting, including potential effects on trees and vegetation, and that staff is sensitive to minimizing environmental impacts whenever possible.

Councilmember Starkman asked about differences between ditch drainage and curb-and-gutter designs. City Engineer Saksewski explained that curb-and-gutter designs require continuous storm sewer systems to collect and convey drainage, contributing to higher costs, while ditch drainage systems use open swales with varying slopes depending on ditch depth.

Councilmember Knol asked additional clarifying questions regarding total construction width for both ditch drainage and curb-and-gutter options. City Engineer Saksewski clarified that curb-and-gutter construction typically requires storm sewer installation on one side of the roadway and limited disturbance on the opposite side, resulting in a total construction width of approximately 28 feet.

Mayor Pro Tem Boleware stated that the majority of correspondence she received from residents focused on concerns about mature trees located close to the existing gravel road. Residents expressed concern that tree removal would be required regardless of whether a ditch drainage or curb-and-gutter design was used.

City Engineer Mark Saksewski confirmed that there would be impacts to trees under either design option, including with reduced lane widths, though the impacts could be somewhat less with narrower roadway designs.

Mayor Pro Tem Boleware sought clarification regarding roadway width and the extent of frontage impacts, noting that one resident indicated they would lose approximately 18 feet of frontage. City Engineer Saksewski stated that detailed design work has not yet been completed and that final impacts would depend on right-of-way conditions, drainage requirements, and final design decisions. Many details remain to be determined.

Councilmember Knol asked whether a hybrid approach could be considered, such as transitioning from curb-and-gutter construction to ditch drainage along different portions of the roadway. City Engineer Saksewski responded that transition points are commonly used, particularly at intersections, and that transitions could be considered for this project.

Mayor Rich asked staff to outline the process moving forward depending on Council action. City Engineer Saksewski confirmed that if Council does not approve the item, the project would not proceed at this time. If approved, the next step would be project design, with construction unlikely to occur until approximately 2028 due to current capital improvement scheduling and the project's size. The project could approach \$4.5 million with curb-and-gutter construction and may require phasing. Design would likely begin in 2027, followed by a public open house once the design is substantially complete, allowing residents to review plans and provide feedback.

Mayor Rich asked whether the project could still be stopped after the design phase. City Attorney Joppich advised that City Council would still need to approve a construction contract and could choose not to proceed at that stage. He explained that the gravel road conversion policy was intended to gauge neighborhood support before committing significant City resources, and clarified that petitions are advisory and not binding on Council.

Councilmember Knol discussed the unique nature of the Oaklands Subdivision due to its concentration of historic homes. She suggested the possibility of adding an additional step in which residents could

review the final design and potentially vote again before the project returns to Council for final approval. Many residents' opinions may depend on the final design.

Councilmember Aldred agreed that the project differs from typical gravel conversion projects, and noted that Council is being asked to approve moving forward without a finalized design.

Councilmember Knol read into the record the names of individuals and organizations who submitted correspondence: Samir and Caitlin Abbas, Bill Haas, Maureen Ireland, the Historic District Commission, Donna Varee, Joanne Zechar, Julia Bellamy, Dorel Blindu, and Andrea Rossman. Correspondence received after 5:00pm would also be reviewed.

Mayor Rich opened the public hearing.

Ken Klemmer, Bond Boulevard, Chair of the Historic District Commission and HOA President, said that the HOA Board began this process in 2024 based on the concerns of the residents. Mr. Klemmer was confident that the neighborhood could work collaboratively with city engineering staff to develop an appropriate solution that preserves the area's historic character and protects its old-growth trees, many of which date back to the subdivision's platting in 1925. He emphasized that the HOA board is largely unanimous in supporting the project and noted that the condition of the gravel road affects not only residents who live on it, but also others in the neighborhood who must use it for access.

Joe Derek, Farmington Hills resident, cautioned that paving gravel roads can lead to unintended consequences such as increased cut-through traffic, speeding, and safety issues. He advocated for the use of ditch drainage rather than storm sewers, stating that ditches are more effective for stormwater management and less prone to causing flooding. Mr. Derek strongly urged the city to preserve the area's mature trees, emphasizing their historic and environmental significance.

Bill Haas, Oaklands subdivision resident, expressed interest in working with city engineering staff and other residents on the project's design details. He supported delaying approval until the design is further defined. He raised concerns that standard roadway and ditching designs would require extensive use of the limited right-of-way, significantly altering the neighborhood's historic character, particularly given the shallow setbacks and lack of existing ditches along much of the subdivision. Mr. Haas requested that City Council direct engineering staff to incorporate "valley gutters" [curb and gutter] in portions of the project, citing their successful use in similar nearby subdivisions and their reduced impact on front yards and existing landscaping.

Julia Bellamy, Ardmore Street, stated that when her household supported the proposal, they did not understand that large drainage ditches were being considered. Due to her property's substantial frontage and limited lot size, the addition of wide ditches would significantly reduce usable yard space and negatively affect her family's ability to use their front yard, particularly for their young children. Ms. Bellamy requested that large ditches be avoided and asked that residents be given an opportunity to reconsider their support with a clearer understanding of the final design.

Rick Kaye, Greenboro Street, spoke regarding the written materials he co-authored with Bill Haas and submitted to Council outlining design concerns. Applying standard roadway and ditching designs would significantly reduce usable front yard space due to the subdivision's shorter setbacks and limited right-of-way, particularly where ditches are not currently present or needed. His position on the project

depended on the final design. He urged consideration of narrower roadway options, preservation of existing conditions, and alternatives to ditches to minimize neighborhood impact.

Susan Hearshen, Ardmore Street, supported paving the gravel road, citing decades of issues with mud, potholes, dust, and vehicle damage. She stated that she was among the majority who signed the petition in favor of the project and noted that many supportive residents did not attend the meeting because they believed the matter was already settled. Ms. Hearshen expressed preference for curb-and-gutter construction over ditches but emphasized her primary goal of seeing the road paved.

Andrea Rossman, Farmington Hills resident, expressed concern that some residents who signed the petition did not fully understand what they were approving. She noted a language barrier for at least one resident who voted for the petition, and a lack of access to detailed project information and policies. Important materials were only provided at the engineering meeting, which many residents did not attend, and she argued that informed consent was therefore lacking. Ms. Rossman urged City Council to vote against the proposal and restart the process with clearer communication, full distribution of information, and an opportunity for residents to reconsider their support, particularly given the potential permanent impacts on historic homes and mature trees.

John Budrys, Farmington Hills resident, stated that residents were not adequately informed about the full impacts of the project, particularly the potential loss of front yard space, trees, and landscaping, and suggested that support would have been lower had these details been disclosed. He questioned the necessity and urgency of paving the gravel roads, expressing concern about increased safety risks, significant neighborhood disruption, and the use of substantial public funds for a project he believes does not address a clear problem. Mr. Budrys urged City Council to vote against the proposal and restart the process with full transparency so residents can make an informed decision.

Eric Schmidt, Farmington Hills resident, said that while change and modernization are appropriate, development should not come at the expense of neighborhood character, natural features, or the lifestyle that attracted residents to the area. He urged City Council to proceed cautiously with thoughtful planning and transparency, and he encouraged continued public involvement, noting that future actions and votes can be influenced by resident participation.

Grace Wickham, Oaklands Subdivision resident, supported paving the road, citing safety and quality-of-life concerns for young families. The current gravel conditions prevent her from safely walking her infant in a stroller or allowing children to ride bicycles in front of their home. Paving the road would improve neighborhood safety, accessibility, and the ability for families to use the street as a shared community space.

Jody Mitchell, Oaklands Subdivision resident, stated that she chose to live in the neighborhood for its quiet, rural character and peaceful environment. She was concerned that road paving could increase traffic volume and speeding. Ms. Mitchell urged City Council to consider the expectations of residents who intentionally purchased homes in the area for its natural and low-traffic setting.

Dave Wickham, Oaklands Subdivision resident, supported paving the road, noting that many neighborhood entrances are already partially paved and that completing the paving would create consistency with surrounding areas. He believed public opposition could appear disproportionate

because many residents who favored paving did not attend meetings, as they are already supportive of the project regardless of the specific design details.

Joel Tomkinson, Oaklands Subdivision resident, stated that he attended all related meetings, found the information provided to be clear, and voted in favor of the project in both petition rounds. He expressed support for proceeding with the paving. He had felt well informed throughout the process and commended City staff and Council members for their communication and engagement.

Mayor Rich closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to Council.

Council discussion:

Councilmember Dwyer stated that based on public comment, many residents were not adequately informed about the full scope and impacts of the proposed project. City engineering should meet with residents to develop a revised design that would be acceptable to both the neighborhood and the City. As of now he would vote against the item.

Councilmember Knol stated that curb-and-gutter construction would reduce roadway width and better preserve the existing character of front yards, particularly in areas that currently do not have ditches. She supported this project but emphasized the need for flexibility in older neighborhoods, advocating for curb and gutter where feasible, limited use of ditches where appropriate, preservation of mature trees where possible, and collaboration with residents during the design process. She again advocated for adding an additional step in which residents could review the final design and potentially vote again before the project returns to Council for final approval.

Councilmember Aldred supported moving forward with paving provided that a narrower roadway design and curb-and-gutter construction are used to minimize neighborhood impacts. With approximately 66% resident approval and a sensitive design approach, he supported proceeding with the project. He asked whether storm sewer installation could affect septic fields near the roadway. City Engineer Saksewski responded that septic systems should not be located within the right-of-way. Staff would investigate site-specific conditions during detailed surveying.

Councilmember Starkman asked for clarification regarding the petitioning and resident notification process. Mr. Saksewski stated that city staff does not take sides when residents come forward asking for road improvements. Engineering provides transparent information, including a neighborhood presentation. He noted that residents who were not present at the meeting for this request were mailed the same information meeting attendees received.

Councilmember Starkman stated that, based on this explanation, he did not believe residents were intentionally misled and expressed support for paving, with consideration for valley gutters where feasible.

Acting City Manager Mondora requested clarification of the two-step petition process. Mr. Saksewski explained that the first petition gauges interest in receiving information, while the second petition authorizes moving forward with paving. No commitment is made until the second petition is approved.

Mayor Pro Tem Boleware summarized that over 60 percent of residents initially supported the project. However, some later expressed concerns after learning more details. She questioned what options

would be available if residents disagreed with design outcomes during the engineering phase and whether the project could be halted at that point.

Director of Public Services Jacob Rushlow advised Council and residents that, if approved, the Oaklands Subdivision gravel conversion project would not be scheduled for construction until approximately 2028 at the earliest. Design work would likely not begin until 2027 due to previously approved projects already included in the Capital Improvement Program. No physical work would occur in the near term.

Mayor Rich indicated she was ready for a motion. After discussion with City Attorney Joppich regarding adding a new step specific to this project due to the historic nature of the neighborhood, to allow residents another vote after the design process is 50%-60% complete, which preliminary design would substantially show drainage plans and what trees would be impacted, the following motion was offered:

MOTION by Knol, support by Aldred, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes preliminary approval of the conversion of the Oaklands Subdivision from gravel to hard surface, subject to the City preparing a preliminary design plan, holding an informational meeting for the residents, and the residents re-petitioning and having the opportunity to send in the petition.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that City Council approves City Staff to identify a specific project schedule for this conversion consistent with Capital Improvement Program and within the City's Local Road budget and accounting for any specific issues presented by this conversion once the preliminary design plan is done, the informational meeting is held, and the petition is re-issued.

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Mayor Rich called a break at 9:14pm and reconvened the meeting at 9:24pm.

NEW BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION OF APPEAL OF A FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST DATED DECEMBER 15, 2025.

City Attorney Joppich presented the appeal related to a Freedom of Information Act request submitted by Charles Blackwell seeking text messages and images involving the Police Chief and Assistant Police Chief. The request was not denied; however, a deposit was required due to the substantial staff time anticipated for review, redaction, and compliance with statutory exemptions. Mr. Blackwell requested a fee waiver under MCL 15.243(2), claiming the FOIA materials would provide a public benefit.

City council had previously denied two prior FOIA appeals submitted by Mr. Blackwell. Those appeals involved similar requests for text messages from city officials, and in both cases the council upheld the decisions made by city staff.

In this appeal, the FOIA request concerns text messages and photographs belonging to the police chief and assistant police chief, covering nearly two years of communications. Like the earlier cases, the city did not deny the request. Instead, the clerk's office issued a request for a deposit because of the anticipated cost of processing the request. Mr. Blackwell objected to the deposit request as he believes the amount charged was excessive and should be waived entirely. Based on that belief, he filed an appeal to city council. The written appeal is contained in the council packet and consists primarily of a short email dated January 8, 2026.

The basis of Mr. Blackwell's appeal is a provision of the Freedom of Information Act that allows a fee waiver or reduction when releasing records would primarily benefit the general public. Mr. Blackwell argued that his request meets this standard and therefore should be provided without charge.

Attorney Joppich explained that the Freedom of Information Act does not specifically provide for an appeal regarding a fee waiver denial. Despite this, the city allowed the appeal to proceed to council, giving Mr. Blackwell the benefit of the doubt. Attorney Joppich noted, however, that the city reserves the right to challenge the procedural appropriateness of such appeals, and that this procedural issue alone could justify denial of the appeal.

Attorney Joppich stated that the Freedom of Information Act permits municipalities to recover reasonable costs associated with responding to requests. The city has adopted formal, council-approved policies and formulas governing FOIA fees. These policies do not allow the city to recover all actual costs but are designed to be conservative and favorable to requesters.

In this case, the city believes the deposit request was reasonable, lawful, and calculated in compliance with those policies. The amount charged was not excessive and directly reflected the staff time anticipated to fulfill the request.

A major factor contributing to the cost is the nature of the records themselves. Communications between a police chief and assistant chief are likely to contain sensitive material requiring careful review and redaction. This can include attorney-client communications, information about witnesses, personal identifying information, details of open investigations, internal security information, and other protected law-enforcement material. Because of this, significant time would be required to review and redact the records before any disclosure. This anticipated workload supports the reasonableness of the deposit request.

Attorney Joppich also noted that Mr. Blackwell did not submit documentation qualifying him for the statutory \$20 indigent fee reduction and did not provide detailed factual support explaining why the fee waiver should apply beyond his general assertion of public benefit.

This appeal challenges an administrative decision by the clerk's office. The City's position is that the decision was appropriate and should be upheld. Ultimately, however, the matter is before city council for review and decision. If the council upholds the clerk's decision, Mr. Blackwell may still pursue a further appeal in circuit court.

Clerk Lindahl advised that processing the request would require approximately 7.5 hours.

MOTION by Starkman, support by Dwyer, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby upholds the City's deposit request, fee for cost reimbursement set forth in its Itemized Fee Schedule, and denial of fee waiver request, relating to Mr. Blackwell's December 15, 2025, FOIA request for the following reasons:

1. The fee amount and deposit request comply with the City's publicly available procedures and guidelines and section 4 of the Freedom of Information Act;
2. FOIA Section 4 (1)(a) permits the City to seek the costs associated with preparing and

- responding to a FOIA Request;
3. FOIA Section 4 (3) permits the City to seek reimbursement for FOIA responses that would pose an “unreasonably high costs” to the City.
 4. FOIA Section 4 (2)(a) does not apply as the requestor has not provided the necessary documentation required for a cost reduction of \$20.00;
 5. The fee waiver request under FOIA Section 4(2) is permissive, no basis has been provided supporting approval of a waiver in this instance, and the decision on a fee waiver request is not listed under FOIA Section 10a as being subject to appeal or challenge; and
 6. FOIA Section 13 1(a), (b), (c), (d), (g), (m), (n), (s), (y) and (z) allows the City to redact information that would infringe upon an individual’s privacy rights, the Police Department’s operational/security plans, a Police Officer’s personal information and/or disclosed privileged material. Finally, disclosure of the exempt material would not provide any beneficial information to the public should it be disclosed.

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF A CONTRACT FOR PLANNING AND ZONING SERVICES TO CARLISLE WORTMAN ASSOCIATES FOR ONE YEAR, WITH POSSIBLE EXTENSIONS. CMR 1-26-10

Director of Planning and Community Development Kettler-Schmult explained that the request for proposals process was conducted in coordination with the Central Services Department. The RFP was advertised on the Michigan Intergovernmental Trade Network and distributed to 830 vendors, including minority-, woman-, veteran-, disabled-, disadvantaged-, and service-disabled-owned businesses. Four proposals were received and a cross-departmental panel evaluated the two highest ranked firms on topics of staffing and oversight, professional responsibility, progressive and technology expertise, and expertise in innovative planning processes and solutions. The top candidate was Carlisle Wortman Associates.

Ben Carlisle, Principal of Carlisle Wortman Associates, provided an overview of the firm’s experience. Carlisle Wortman has over 40 years of municipal planning service and represents approximately 80 communities in Southeast Michigan. The firm provides both planning services and building department services exclusively to public-sector clients, and does not represent private developers.

Council members asked questions regarding the firm’s scope of services and current municipal clients. Mr. Carlisle overviewed his own professional background including that he is the principal planning consultant for Troy as well as other communities, and noted that Carlisle Wortman has 16 professional planners on staff. They serve communities as small as 250 residents, to as large as Oakland County, which has 3 million people. Mr. Carlisle will be the planning consultant for Farmington Hills.

MOTION by Dwyer, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the Acting City Manager to execute a one-year contract with Carlisle Wortman Associates for Planning and Zoning Services, with the option to renew for four (4) additional one-year terms under the same terms and conditions, subject to mutual agreement of the City and the firm.

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF 3RD MODIFICATION TO CONSENT JUDGMENT #56 – HALSTED VILLAGE LLC; NORTHWEST CORNER OF TWELVE MILE AND HALSTED ROADS, PARCEL NO. 23-07-400-028.

CMR 1-26-11

Director of Planning and Community Development Kettler-Schmult presented the request to modify Consent Judgment #56 for the Halsted Village Shopping Center located at the northwest corner of Twelve Mile and Halsted Roads. The original consent judgment was recorded in 1983 and subsequently amended in 2014 for an accessory gas station and in 2019 for a drive-through restaurant.

The Planning Office received a request to allow a 6,500 square foot children's indoor recreation use within an existing vacant space in the shopping center. Indoor recreation is a permitted use under the B-2 Commercial Business District; however, the 1983 consent judgment restricted indoor recreation uses to locations no closer than 100 feet from a residential district. The primary building is approximately 80 to 83 feet from the adjacent residential condominium complex. The requested modification would reduce the separation requirement to 75 feet, consistent with current zoning standards for indoor recreation uses in the B-2 district.

The applicant worked with the City Attorney's Office to finalize the proposed consent judgment language.

Stuart Frankel, property owner, explained that the retail market has changed significantly. Indoor recreation uses are increasingly sought after and this children's indoor recreation use would help attract tenants, increase activity, and improve the overall viability of the development.

MOTION by Aldred, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the 3rd modification to Consent Judgment #56 – Halsted Village LLC; Northwest corner of Twelve Mile and Halsted Roads, Parcel No. 23-07-400-028 and authorize the City Manager and City Attorney to execute the necessary court documents.

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

CONSIDERATION OF SELECTION OF THE VOTING DELEGATE AND ALTERNATE VOTING DELEGATE FOR SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS.

Mayor Pro Tem Boleware noted that she had been the delegate to SEMCOG for four years, with two of those years on the Executive Committee, and was at the point where she was making a difference and was also able to bring back valuable information to the city.

MOTION by Boleware, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby appoints Jackie Boleware as voting delegate to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Mayor Rich said that she had previously served as the Oakland Schools Board of Education delegate to SEMCOG, and that she was happy to support Mayor Pro Tem Boleware as needed.

MOTION by Rich, support by Aldred, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby appoints Theresa Rich as alternate voting delegate to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Mayor Pro Tem Boleware noted that all council members are eligible to attend SEMCOG meetings, and Acting City Manager Mondora added that SEMCOG General Assembly invitations can be included in the weekly council memos.

CONSENT AGENDA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SECOND QUARTER FINANCIAL SUMMARY AND QUARTERLY INVESTMENT REPORTS.

MOTION by Aldred, support by Starkman, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby acknowledges the second quarter financial summary and quarterly investment reports.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF A WAGE REOPENER TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH THE MICHIGAN FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE LABOR COUNCIL - DISPATCH. CMR 1-26-12

MOTION by Aldred, support by Starkman, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the Acting City Manager to execute a new agreement with the Michigan Fraternal Order of Police Labor Council (MIFOPLC) Dispatcher, in accordance with the terms and conditions in the Tentative Settlement Agreement ratified by the parties and outlined herein, being City Manager's Report dated January 26, 2026.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF EXTENSION OF THE AGREEMENT WITH CRIMBOLI NURSERY INC. FOR THE 2026 SPRING/SUMMER CITYWIDE TREE PLANTING PROGRAM. CMR 1-26-13

MOTION by Aldred, support by Starkman, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the extension of the agreement with Crimboli Nursery Inc., for the 2026 Spring/Summer Citywide Planting Program; and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council authorizes the Acting City Manager and City Clerk to prepare and execute the extension of the agreement on behalf of the City of Farmington Hills and issue a purchase order for the same.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF AWARD OF BID FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT TO BOUND TREE MEDICAL FOR A TWO YEAR TERM, WITH POSSIBLE EXTENSIONS. CMR 1-26-14

MOTION by Aldred, support by Starkman, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the Acting City Manager to sign a contract with Bound Tree Medical and issue budgeted purchase orders for a two (2) year term for emergency medical supplies and equipment and for four (4) additional one (1) year terms under the same terms and conditions upon mutual consent of the City and vendor.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF AWARD OF BID TO REMOVE AND REPLACE CARPET AT THE FARMINGTON HILLS GOLF CLUB TO BECKWITH FLOORS OF FARMINGTON HILLS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$29,669.20. CMR 1-26-15

MOTION by Aldred, support by Starkman, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the City Manager to execute a purchase order to Beckwith Floors of Farmington Hills for the installation of carpet at the Farmington Hills Golf Club in the amount of \$29,669.20 (\$26,972.00 plus a 10% contingency cost of \$2,697.20 for unforeseen and anticipated costs once the old carpeting is removed).

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF A REQUEST FOR EMPLOYMENT UNDER SECTION 10.01A OF THE CITY CHARTER FOR AN AQUATICS ATTENDANT. CMR 1-26-16

MOTION by Aldred, support by Starkman, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves an employment request per Section 10.01A of the City Charter for Aarav Sheth, who is related to an employee of the City, Diya Sheth, who is a Swim Instructor for Special Services.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF RESCHEDULING THE CITY COUNCIL ANNUAL GOALS SESSION DATE TO FEBRUARY 11, 2026.

MOTION by Aldred, support by Starkman, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby reschedules the annual goals session meeting to Wednesday, February 11, 2026, beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room at City Hall.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 7, 2026.

MOTION by Aldred, support by Starkman, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the City Council Special Meeting Minutes of January 7, 2026.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MINUTES OF JANUARY 12, 2026.

MOTION by Aldred support by Starkman, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the City Council study session minutes of January 12, 2026.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION MINUTES OF JANUARY 12, 2026.

MOTION by Knol support by Aldred, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves

the regular session minutes of January 12, 2026.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Nays: NONE

Absent: BRIDGES

Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Eric Schmidt, Farmington Hills resident, expressed concern about perceived conflicts of interest, campaign financing influences, and governance practices at the local level, drawing parallels to broader political issues while emphasizing their relevance to city leadership accountability. He urged City Council to ensure decisions are made in the best interest of Farmington Hills rather than personal or political gain.

Elena Mityaeva, Holly Hill Farms subdivision, raised a procedural concern regarding the January 12, 2026 City Council meeting, noting that while the agenda listed only a motion to reconsider a prior denial of the 13 Mile Road PUD, additional unlisted motions and a new developer presentation seeking final approval also occurred. She questioned whether the public received sufficient notice under the Open Meetings Act to understand the full scope of actions to be considered, and whether the public was able to meaningfully participate as a result. Ms. Mitiaeva requested the city clarify how the public was given sufficient notice for that meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The regular session of City Council meeting adjourned at 9:53pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carly Lindahl, City Clerk