

**MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY COUNCIL
STUDY SESSION
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
JUNE 8, 2026 – 5:30PM**

The study session of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Rich at 5:31pm.

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

Councilmembers Absent: None

Others Present: City Clerk Lindahl, Directors Brockway, Brown and Skrobola, Deputy Clerk Hopper, Fire Chief Unruh and City Attorneys Joppich and Romer

The closed session started at 5:31pm

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL TO ENTER INTO A CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING NEGOTIATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIREFIGHTERS UNDER SECTION 8(1)(C) OF THE MICHIGAN OPEN MEETINGS ACT. (NOTE: COUNCIL WILL RETURN TO OPEN SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CLOSED SESSION).

MOTION by Knol, support by Starkman, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves entering into a closed session to discuss collective bargaining negotiations with International Association of Firefighters under Section 8(1)(c) of the Michigan Open Meetings Act. (Note: Council will return to open session immediately following the closed session).

Roll Call Vote:

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

Nays: NONE

Absent: NONE

Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

The open session resumed at 6:00pm

OAKLAND COUNTY WATER RESOURCES BUILDING UPDATE

Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner Jim Nash presented an overview of the proposed new consolidated operations facility for Oakland County Water Resources (OCWR). Commissioner Nash noted that OCWR currently operates out of six aging buildings, approximately 80% of its vehicle and equipment fleet is stored outdoors, and that these conditions contribute significantly to elevated overhead costs for all served communities, including Farmington Hills.

The proposed facility would be located on approximately 38 acres of county-owned property south of the main campus off Telegraph Road near Pontiac, provided at no cost by Oakland

County Parks. The total projected project cost is approximately \$154 million, inclusive of a \$14 million contingency. Annual bond payments are estimated at approximately \$3.5 million. Key projected annual savings include approximately \$840,000 from on-site bulk fueling, approximately \$1.5 million from extended equipment life through indoor storage, and additional savings from reduced utility costs and avoided building maintenance. Commissioner Nash indicated the net rate impact to Farmington Hills ratepayers is estimated at approximately \$1 per month per household, with bond payments not commencing until project completion, anticipated in 2029.

Council discussed the site selection process, with questions raised regarding whether the 1200 Telegraph campus had been evaluated. Commissioner Nash explained that the county executive and board had not wished for OCWR to be sited on the main campus, that the timeline of OCWR's planning significantly predated the county's recent campus planning efforts, and that the campus would not have provided the requisite acreage or operational separation from residential areas.

Councilmember Knol noted the city is currently undertaking a water rate restructuring study and expressed concern about the timing of concurrent rate increases. Commissioner Nash confirmed that ratepayer impacts from the bond would not begin until spring 2029, providing adequate separation from the city's anticipated rate changes.

Councilmember Bridges requested confirmation that the \$1 per month estimate was a firm ceiling, and Commissioner Nash affirmed the figure represents the maximum projected impact based on the \$154 million total cost. He further noted that additional service contracts with communities such as Beverly Hills and Southfield, made possible by expanded capacity in the new facility, would further distribute overhead costs and reduce per-community impacts over time.

Councilmember cited the preliminary nature of the budget and specific line items such as \$5 million for furniture and \$10 million for owner's professional services that appeared potentially high. Commissioner Nash confirmed that a fully detailed budget and financing plan will be presented to the Oakland County Board of Commissioners in August, after which a copy will be forwarded to Council.

UPDATE FROM RAFTELIS FINANCIAL CONSULTANTS, INC. REGARDING THE CITY MANAGER SEARCH

Catherine Tuck Parrish, representing Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc. (Raftelis), presented the recruitment plan and draft brochure text for the City Manager search.

Ms. Tuck Parrish outlined the proposed recruitment schedule: brochure finalization and posting by mid-June, a target application deadline of July 21 (with the position remaining open until filled), a candidate review packet to be transmitted to Council in advance of the August 5 meeting, semifinalist virtual interviews scheduled for August 24 through September 4, and

finalist in-person interviews thereafter. Council was reminded not to contact candidates directly during the process.

Council confirmed consensus on the minimum qualifications as presented: a bachelor's degree and a minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible municipal government experience, including at least 5 years as a city manager, assistant manager, or department head in a comparably sized community. No objections were raised to the candidate profile or priorities outlined in the draft brochure text.

Regarding the salary range, Ms. Tuck Parrish recommended a published expected hiring range of \$200,000 to \$225,000, which Council accepted without objection.

Council agreed that candidate materials presented for review should be masked (candidate names and identifying information withheld) to support an equitable evaluation process. A scoring rubric and candidate worksheet will be provided by Raftelis. The interview structure will include a virtual semifinalist round (approximately 5–6 candidates) and an in-person finalist round (2–3 candidates) before the full Council.

Regarding residency, City Attorney Steve Joppich clarified that the city charter contains no residency requirement and that Michigan law does not permit a within-city residency mandate. Council discussed the matter and reached informal consensus that residency would not be listed as a requirement or formal preference in the brochure, but that Raftelis would communicate to prospective candidates that the position is fully in-person and requires availability for emergencies. Raftelis will discuss residency intentions with candidates in the top group as part of its screening process.

Mayor Rich requested that the city's strategic plan graphic, including vision, mission, goals, and objectives, be incorporated into the final color brochure.

DISCUSSION ON THE CITY INITIATED MURAL POLICY AND PROGRAM

Director of Economic Development Cristia Brockway presented the proposed City Initiated Mural Policy and Program. The program would authorize the city to lease exterior walls from willing property owners on a five-year, \$1 lease, commission murals through a competitive RFP process, and maintain ownership and responsibility for the artwork during the lease term. At the end of the lease, the mural may be removed, renewed with new artwork, or retained by the property owner.

The Grand River Corridor was identified as the pilot area due to the availability of an existing Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) TIF budget allocation of \$100,000 designated for murals. Approximately 50 potential wall locations have been preselected along the Grand River corridor between Orchard Lake Road and Inkster at 8 Mile. The program policy, however, is written as a citywide policy applicable beyond the Grand River Corridor. Director Brockway noted that outside the TIF district, the city's existing public art fund (funded by developer in-lieu contributions) could serve as a funding mechanism, as confirmed by City Attorney Joppich.

Artist selection will be guided by criteria within the policy emphasizing qualifications, experience with outdoor murals, and material durability, and is not subject to a traditional lowest-bid purchasing process. A review committee would include the Economic Development Department, the Planning Department, and members of the Arts Commission. Murals within the Grand River Corridor will also require approval by the CIA. Director Brockway estimated 5 to 8 murals could be completed in the first year, with the first installations potentially occurring in fall 2026 or spring 2027 at the latest.

Council expressed support for the initiative. Councilmember Starkman encouraged a focus on local and regional artists. Mayor Rich asked about opportunities to engage Farmington Public Schools students and was informed that certain wall locations had been specifically identified for community-based projects. Councilmember Knol noted the program's alignment with ongoing streetscape improvements and its potential to spur redevelopment and community activation in the southeast corridor. Councilmember Bridges expressed support for the program's integration with the broader Grand River streetscape and linear park planning.

Director Brockway confirmed that the streetscape RFP is not yet issued, as MDOT comments are being incorporated into the concept plan, and that the streetscape and mural programs are anticipated to move forward in close proximity.

There was consensus of council to bring the City Initiated Mural Policy forward for adoption at the next City Council meeting of July 13, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Rich closed discussion and adjourned the meeting at 7:11pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carly Lindahl, City Clerk