

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 5, 2024

Contact:

Allison Winters

allison@goffpublic.com

507-370-2167

Cities of Falcon Heights and St. Anthony Village considering police services partnership

Feb. 8 joint city council workshop will explore a possible partnership starting in 2025

Falcon Heights, Minn. – The Falcon Heights City Council will join the St. Anthony Village City Council for a joint workshop on Thursday, Feb. 8, at 7 p.m. in the St. Anthony Village Council Chambers to discuss the potential for St. Anthony Village to provide police services within the city of Falcon Heights.

Falcon Heights has contracted with the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office for police services since January 2018. The city and the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office mutually agreed in March 2023 that the city should explore law enforcement options that are a better long-term fit. The city and Sheriff's Office are in the process of finalizing a one-year contract through Dec. 31, 2024.

St. Anthony Village previously provided contract law enforcement services for Falcon Heights from 1994 to 2017. The St. Anthony Village City Council voted to terminate the contract in 2017 as both cities evaluated the partnership following the killing of Philando Castile by a St. Anthony Village police officer during a July 2016 traffic stop. The Falcon Heights City Council agreed to the termination.

In 2022 and 2023, Falcon Heights [conducted a study through the Center for Values-Based Initiatives](#) to analyze the city's law enforcement services contract and needs. A series of three focus groups and a randomized resident survey were conducted to gather input on residents' priorities, building upon the extensive community feedback that informed Falcon Heights' [Inclusion and Policing Task Force](#) recommendations in 2017.

"After carefully analyzing our needs and the available options, a potential renewed relationship with St. Anthony Village is a good fit for several reasons: level of service, physical proximity, logistics, financial considerations and – most importantly – the clear commitment the St. Anthony Village Police Department has to practices that align with the values of Falcon Heights residents," said Falcon Heights City Administrator Jack Linehan. "Understandably, the thought of a partnership will raise concerns and painful memories of the killing of Philando Castile in our city. As we discuss a potential relationship, it's imperative that we recognize Philando and the impact his killing had on all of us — including his loved ones, the communities of Falcon Heights and St. Anthony Village, our leaders and our staff, along with the members of the St. Anthony Police Department and their families."

The [St. Anthony Village Police Department has evolved](#) since the termination of the previous agreement, completing extensive work with the United States Department of Justice's Collaborative Reform for Technical Assistance team in 2016 through 2018. From this process, the department developed an overall strategic plan following input from the community. This plan is a guiding document that defines every action the department takes as individual officers and as an agency, including implementing

significant policy changes and [body-worn cameras](#) along with an internal auditing process to ensure officer compliance and accountability. In 2023, the department completed more than 1,600 training hours. The department also conducts an [annual use of force analysis](#) and shares the reports publicly on the city's website.

“Our police department is focused on a 21st Century Policing philosophy after completing a comprehensive review of our policy manual in 2019 and expanding ongoing training programs on implicit bias, de-escalation, crisis intervention and communication,” said St. Anthony Village City Manager Charlie Yunker. “Our officers were proud to previously serve the Falcon Heights community for more than 20 years, and given the size and location of our two communities, it makes sense to explore a renewed partnership with Falcon Heights. This week’s conversation between the two city councils is an opportunity to discuss how our current policing approach can meet the needs and priorities of Falcon Heights.”

No formal action will be taken Thursday. During the workshop, staff from both cities will seek direction from their respective councils on next steps for exploring a potential relationship. Both cities will seek resident feedback on the potential partnership.

###