Advisory Panel
Jerry Auge
Mike Bigelbach Sr.
Art Carlson
Rin Eimer
Doug Gerlach
Peter Helgeson
Trevor Kinnard
Larrie Pittelko - Chair
Bob Running
Mike Scott
Steve Shapira
Erik Simonson

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Regular Meeting of the
Vadnais Heights Fire Station Advisory Panel

Monday October 26, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers – City Hall

A G E N D A

1. **Open Meeting**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Approval of Agenda**
4. **Approval of Minutes**
5. **Questions or Comments from Fire Operations Presentation or Tours**
6. **Presentations**
   A. **Fire Station Renovation/Addition and New Building Design Concepts – BKV: Michael Healy and Terra Construction: Kory Reiners**
7. **Station Tour (3535 Pine Tree Drive, Arden Hills) – Lake Johanna Fire Command Staff**

Panel members only will travel to tour site.

8. **Next Meeting: November 9, 2026**
9. **Adjourn Meeting**

Have a question for the city? Submit it anytime at SaferFasterReadyVH.com/advisory-panel. All panel meetings are recorded and posted on the city's website

Meeting of the
Fire Station Advisory Panel
Monday, October 12, 2026, 5:30 p.m.

1. Open Meeting

Watson opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Members present: Jerry Auge, Mike Bigelbach Sr., Art Carlson, Rin Eimer, Doug Gerlach, Peter Helgeson, Trevor Kinnard, Larrie Pittelko, Bob Running, Mike Scott, Steve Shapira, Erik Simonson

Members absent: none.

Others present: City Administrator Kevin Watson, Assistant Administrator Kaylin Clement, Fire Chief Kurt Frison, Council Members Erik Goebel and Jerry Moynagh, BKV Architects Michael Healy.

2. Welcome by City Administrator

Watson provided information on the logistics of the rooms and microphone capabilities. Advisory Panel is to provide a recommendation to Council and help weigh options, take in information and ask questions, and provide insights to City Council. Recommendation is to help guide the final decision on the scope of work. Past work includes three years and many studies. Currently no timeline or project scope for the fire station as Council has paused the effort to work with the community and panel. Public is encouraged to work with members of the Advisory Panel including a reception after each subsequent meeting. Council member Goebel and Moynagh made some comments.

3. Introductions of Panelists and Presenters

Panel members introduced themselves.

4. Meeting Logistics

A. Selection of Chair

Motion by Gerlach, seconded by Auge, to appoint Pittelko as chair of the Fire Station Advisory Panel.

Ayes – 12 Nays – 0 Motion passed.

B. Meeting Times

Discussion by group formed consensus that future meetings will be at 6:00 p.m.

5. Presentations

A. Fire Operations – Chief Frison

Frison introduced himself and presented on the operations of the Fire Department, its evolution and community growth, with the goal of understanding by others. Fire Department was founded in 1971 with all volunteers with donated trucks and equipment. Fire fighters started to be paid in 1978 per incident. In 1985 Emergency Medical Services (EMS) was developed to include training and response. South station was constructed on location based on area hazards and timed response study in the 1990s. The building housed

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the transition to combination model of full-time staff and paid-on-call ~~part-time~~ staff in 1992 and is still used. Transition in 2014 to start duty shift program from paid-on-call to part-time staff. North Service Center was built on location of original fire station location. Staff and NSC committee concluded station should remain in the project with the knowledge it could be passed to Public Works depending on department operations. Frison gave list of current apparatus. Frison confirmed all trucks fit in a station, just not all the same station. No firefighters are housed at NSC. No operations have been based out of NSC since 2022. Fire Department uses Insurance Services Office and NFPA standards to guide operations. Current responses include fire/rescue, emergency management, EMS, hazardous material incidents (jointly with North Suburban HazMat Team), mass casualty incidents, and public services. Fire Department participates in Community Risk Reduction which includes car seats, Certificate of Occupancy, rental inspections, fire protection systems plan review and inspections, community education and events, liaising with Health and Public Safety Commission. Question from the panel about a rumor the Fire Department hadn't participated in Vadnais Heights Days Parade the past few years. Frison responded that the past two years they sent trucks in the parade but prior there had been years with difficulty trying to get staff to prepare booya sales and be able to staff a truck for the parade, so the number of trucks may have been fewer. Question from the panel about fees for plan review and inspections. Frison provided that the fire department follows the city's fee schedule for their services. Frison reviewed and defined the different operational models of the department, reiterating the department is combination model not exclusively full-time. Progression of the duty crew program including reorganization and current structure were highlighted.

B. **Firefighter Cancer Support Network - Steve Shapira**

Shapira, member of the panel and Vadnais resident, introduced himself and presented health and wellness in the fire service. Shapira spoke about firefighters risks for cancer, cardiovascular incidents, and mental health.

C. **Fire Operations – Chief Frison**

Frison continued presenting on evolution of the community that showed significant growth in the residential and commercial markets. Aid types were defined and shown to be a small percent of overall incidents. Annual call volume was presented with majority of call covered by shift crews and 67% medical types and 33% fire, rescue, or other call types, roughly 9-10% of calls overlap other incidents. All firefighters are medically trained to Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) or Paramedic certifications. Medical call types are majority of the departments work and is crucial aspect in protecting the community. Fire Department bridges the gap from 911 call to transport and definitive care, which is important because ambulances are not always in our city.

D. **Regions EMS – Wes Halvorsen**

Halvorsen introduced himself and presented how Regions provides medical direction to the Fire Department. Training and interventions the Fire Department utilizes, the importance of a quick response during medical emergencies, and how the EMS transport systems works.

E. **Fire Operations – Chief Frison**
Frison presented how the department was funded when it was established and how the department continues to look for grant opportunities. This concluded the presentations for the meeting.

6. **Station Tour (3595 Arcade Street N) – BKV: Michael Healy** Frison and Healy lead a tour of the south fire station. The panel toured the exterior and interior of the building. Frison spoke to the operational uses of each space and Healy spoke to the design. Panelists were instructed to meet at the north service center for the north station tour.

7. **North Service Center Tour (655 East County Road F) – Chief Frison**
Frison lead the tour of the south fire station that began in the apparatus bay then to the interior of the station. Operational uses and the limitations of spaces were discussed. Question from the panel about highway responses and the possibility of creating an access ramp to 35E from County Rd F. Frison responded that an additional access point would be difficult to obtain and that would have to be routed to MNDOT, joint response on the highway was described as well. The tour concluded.

8. **Next Meeting: October 26, 2026**

9. **Adjourn Meeting**

Meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kevin Watson, City Administrator

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