

Tragic First-Responder Incident in Burnsville, MN

February 18, 2024

Office of the Governor

Governor Tim Walz & Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan

130 State Capitol

75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd

St. Paul, MN 55155

(651) 201-3400

[Office of Governor / Office of Governor Tim Walz and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan \(mn.gov\)](#)

[Governor Tim Walz | Facebook](#)

[Governor Tim Walz \(@GovTimWalz\) / X \(twitter.com\)](#)

[Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan \(@LtGovFlanagan\) / X \(twitter.com\)](#)

“Governor Walz Statement on Death of Three First Responders in Burnsville

[ST. PAUL, MN] – Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan today released statements following news that two police officers and a firefighter lost their lives, and other officers were injured, responding to a call in Burnsville today.

Statement from Governor Walz:

“We received horrific news from Burnsville this morning. While responding to a call of a family in danger, two police officers and one firefighter lost their lives, and other officers were injured.”

“We must never take for granted the bravery and sacrifices our first responders make each and every day. Today, the families of these public servants received the call they knew was possible but hoped would never come. My heart is with those grieving families – the State of Minnesota stands ready to support in any way we can. This is a tragic loss for our state.”

“Our Department of Public Safety is coordinating with local law enforcement to conduct an investigation.”

Statement from Lieutenant Governor Flanagan:

“There are no words to describe a loss of this magnitude to our Burnsville and first responder community,”

“The tragedies that unfolded this morning are every family’s worst nightmare, yet our first responders stay selflessly committed to keeping Minnesotans safe every day. I am immensely grateful for the sacrifices and service of our police officers, firefighters, and medics, and my heart is heavy with grief for the three heroes we lost today.”

Governor Walz will order flags at half staff beginning tomorrow, Monday, February 19 at sunrise.”

Office of the Mayor

Elizabeth Kautz

100 Civic Center Parkway
Burnsville, MN 55337
(952) 895-4403

[About Mayor & Council | Burnsville, MN - Official Website \(burnsvillemn.gov\)](https://www.burnsvillemn.gov)

[Mayor Elizabeth B. Kautz, | Facebook](#)

[Elizabeth Kautz \(@MayorEBKautz\) / X \(twitter.com\)](#)

“BURNSVILLE COMMUNITY MOURNS THREE PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS

The Burnsville community is mourning the loss of Police Officers Paul Elmstrand and Matthew Ruge and Firefighter/Paramedic Adam Finseth. At 1:50 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 18, Burnsville Police were called to the 12600 block of 33rd Avenue South on a report of a domestic situation where a man reported to be armed was barricaded with family members. After arriving, the situation escalated into gunfire with responders. Elmstrand, Ruge and Finseth were killed by the gunman during the response. One other Police Officer, Sgt. Adam Medlicott, was injured and transported to a hospital where he is believed to have non-life-threatening injuries. At approximately 8 a.m., the suspect was reported to be dead. Later in the morning, the other family members left the home and are safe. There is no ongoing threat. Residents are asked to allow public safety personnel to perform their duties and stay away from the area until further notice. Elmstrand, 27, joined the Burnsville Police Department in August 2017 as a Community Service Officer. He was promoted to Officer in July 2019. He was part of the department’s mobile command staff, peer team, Honor Guard and field training unit. Ruge, 27, joined the Burnsville Police Department in April 2020. He was part of the department’s crisis negotiations team and was a physical evidence officer. Finseth, 40, has been a Burnsville Firefighter/Paramedic since February 2019. The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) is investigating the incident. Burnsville officials will brief the

media at 4 p.m. A vigil, organized by the community, is tentatively scheduled for 6:30 p.m. at Burnsville City Hall. Additional information will be posted online at [Community Updates | Burnsville, MN - Official Website \(burnsvillemn.gov\)](#) as it becomes available.”

Local Mental Health Crisis Line

Dakota County Crisis Response Unit

1590 Highway 55

Hastings, MN 55033

24-Hour Crisis Line: (952) 891-7171

[Get Immediate Help | Dakota County](#)

[Dakota County Government | Hastings MN | Facebook](#)

[Dakota County \(@dakota_county\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)

Local Police Department

Burnsville Police Department

100 Civic Center Parkway

Burnsville, MN 55337

Emergency: 911

Non-Emergency Police Response: (952) 322-2323

[Burnsville Police Department | Burnsville, MN - Official Website \(burnsvillemn.gov\)](#)

[Burnsville Police Department - Burnsville, MN - Police Station | Facebook](#)

United Way/211 Information and Referrals Lines

These information and referral lines may know of additional resources currently providing assistance, such as food pantries, clothing closets, emergency shelters, and agencies offering financial assistance. Please call and provide your zip code and demographic information in order to receive referrals.

Dakota County United Way

(800) 543-7709

[Home - United Way 211 \(211unitedway.org\)](#)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

(800) 273-8255

[988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline - Call. Text. Chat. \(988lifeline.org\)](#)

Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration Disaster Distress Helpline

(800) 985-5990

National mental health helpline that is available to those who have experienced a natural or human caused disaster. The helpline is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The counselors can provide support and referrals to local resources.

Suggestions for Meditation and Breathing Apps

- Able To (Self Care) - Available for iOS and Android
- Insight Timer - Available for iOS and Android
- UCLA Mindful - Available for iOS and Android
- Smiling Mind - Available for iOS and Android
- Stop, Think & Breathe - Available for iOS and Android
- Headspace - Available for iOS and Android
- Calm - Available for iOS and Android
- Simple Habit - Available for iOS and Android

Helpful Articles and Resources

- **National Institute of Mental Health**
Coping with Traumatic Events
[NIMH » Coping With Traumatic Events \(nih.gov\)](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/coping-with-traumatic-events/)
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
“Coping with a Traumatic Event”
[Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/trauma/2017/08/coping-with-a-disaster-or-traumatic-event/)
- **American Psychological Association**
“How to talk to children about difficult news”
[How to talk to children about difficult news \(apa.org\)](https://www.apa.org/press-releases/2017/08/22/how-to-talk-to-children-about-difficult-news)
- **American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry**
[Disaster and Trauma Resource Center \(aacap.org\)](https://www.aacap.org/trauma/)
- **Optum**
[Optum | Coping with Traumatic Events Webinar](https://www.optum.com/insights/trauma/)

Free Help Line

Optum, a leading health and behavioral health services company, is offering a free emotional-support help line.

The toll-free number, 866-447-3573, will be open Monday-Friday, 8am-8pm Central Time. The service is free of charge and open to anyone. Specially trained Optum mental health specialists help people manage their stress and anxiety so they can continue to address their everyday needs. Callers may also receive referrals to community resources to help them with specific concerns, including financial and legal matters.

Along with the toll-free help line, emotional-support resources and information are available online at: <https://www.liveandworkwell.com>.