

**TIM NELSON:** It's *Minnesota Now*. I'm Tim Nelson in for Cathy Wurzer. St. Paul voters passed historic rent control last fall and now the city council has pared that back with changes to the initial Rent Stabilization ordinance. We'll dig into what happened. Also, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey just nominated the city's new police chief. Could be a major turning point for the force. We'll talk with NPR reporter Matt Sepic about the selection.

And September is Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month. We'll talk to some Minnesotans about efforts to help the people that suffer from the disorder. And we'll also talk a little football-- the Gophers and Vikings they're looking pretty good for now-- with our sports commentators Wally Langfellow and Eric Nelson. All that and more right after the news.

**LAKSHMI SINGH:** Live from NPR News in Washington, I'm Lakshmi Singh. Rescue teams in Florida are wading through water if not using boats to get to residents who've been stranded in their homes since Hurricane Ian made landfall on the Southwestern coast yesterday afternoon.

Many communities from there to Central Florida are affected. As of this morning, millions were without power. Ian may have moved on from the peninsula, but its rains have not. Rainfall and surge from Tropical Storm Ian is triggering flash flood warnings in Northeastern Florida. Jacksonville resident Will Hillere lives near the Ribault River. And today, he and his family are busy sandbagging.

**RESIDENT:** We can broke it down like I was trying-- like we'll do-- we're going to be wind up in the center of the house anyway. So if anything go wrong, everybody is going to be in one spot and we're going to be safe. And only there, I can tell everybody else just to pray and give it to the good Lord.

**LAKSHMI SINGH:** In Orlando, Amy Green of member station WMFE reports Governor Ron DeSantis is describing rising waters in Central Florida as a 500-year flood event.

**AMY GREEN:** Flooding is reported across the region as slow-moving Hurricane Ian inundates the St. John's River and other waterways already swollen after a rainy summer. Governor DeSantis said dangerous conditions are widespread.

**RON DESANTIS:** This storm is having broad impacts across the state, and some of the flooding you're going to see in areas hundreds of miles from where this made landfall are going to set records.

**AMY GREEN:** Evacuations and rescues have been reported. In Volusia County, a man drowned after slipping into a canal while trying to drain his pool. Officials are urging residents to stay home. In Seminole County, officials issued an order banning motorized boats from roadways. For NPR News, I'm Amy Green in Orlando.

**LAKSHMI SINGH:** Forecasters project Ian, again, now at Tropical Storm, will return to Hurricane strength and head for South Carolina. The entire cosine of that state is under a hurricane warning. Emergency declarations are also in effect up through Virginia.

Mortgage rates continue their relentless rise with a average rate on a 30-year fixed loan at 6.7% this week. NPR's Chris Arnold reports that's making it much harder for many Americans to become homeowners.

**CHRIS ARNOLD:** You have to go back to 2007 to see mortgage rates this high. That's according to a weekly survey from the mortgage giant Freddie Mac. Worries about inflation and the Federal Reserve's fight against it are pushing rates higher from around 3% at the start of the year to up now near 7%. On a \$400,000 loan, that pushes the monthly payment up by \$900 a month. That's pricing many people out of homeownership.

The pace of home sales has dropped for the past seven months in a row. Prices are starting to fall a bit nationally, though we also have a severe shortage of homes for sale. So most economists say that should stop prices from falling very dramatically. Chris Arnold, NPR News.

**LAKSHMI** This is NPR.

**SINGH:**

**ANNOUNCER:** Support for NPR comes from NPR stations. Other contributors include National Geographic expeditions, trips with NatGeo experts to more than 80 worldwide destinations, including safaris, cruises, and train journeys. [natgeoexpeditions.com/explore](http://natgeoexpeditions.com/explore).

**JOHN WANAMAKER:** For MPR News in the Twin Cities, I'm John Wanamaker. Mayor Jacob Frey today named a Newark, New Jersey City official as the next Chief of the Minneapolis Police Department. Frey says, as Newark's Deputy Mayor, Brian O'Hara oversaw policing and a consent decree affecting the department.

Frey made the announcement with Public Safety Commissioner Cedric Alexander who will be O'Hara's boss in a restructured department. O'Hara says he is passionate about policing and police reform. He said he would rebuild and make the department a place for positive change that will keep the city safer. The city council will interview and vote on O'Hara's nomination at a later date.

The numbers size and distribution timeline of checks from Minnesota's Frontline Pandemic Worker Program are due to be announced next week. The state agency managing the \$500 million reward program says it is finishing its review of applications and appeals for inclusion.

The frontline bonuses will go to health care, retail, child care, first responders, and other workers who could not do their jobs from home during risky points of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are income limits and other eligibility criteria. 1 million or more people could qualify based on the number of applications. The checks will be equal in size, so the final number of recipients is key.

The Minnesota Supreme Court has ruled that a stream in Renville County warrants greater environmental protection. Kirsti Marohn has more.

**KIRSTI MAROHN:** The case centers on proposed improvements to a ditch that empties into the upper reaches of Limbo Creek, the last free-flowing stream in Renville County. The county did not require an environmental review of the project because the creek wasn't on a decades-old inventory of public waters.

But the DNR and environmental groups argued the creek meets the definition of a public water. The Supreme Court agreed. Kevin Reuther with the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy says farm drainage can have major water quality impacts, including erosion and nutrient pollution.

**KEVIN REUTHER:** Just being able to study it before you make the decision to go ahead is really important because we can make those projects better. We can reverse or eliminate some of the impacts that would otherwise happen.

**KIRSTI MAROHN:** An attorney for the County says the decision causes uncertainty over which streams are public. I'm Kirsti Marohn.

**JOHN WANAMAKER:** This is MPR News.

**TIM NELSON:** It's *Minnesota Now* and I'm Tim Nelson. One of the big stories we've been following at MPR News, St. Paul City Council has voted 5 to 2 to roll back parts of its rent control policy that was put in place less than five months ago. The details of the rent control policy made it one of the most stringent of its kind in the country. The changes to the policy, which were passed last week, mean that now many buildings are exempt from a limit on rent increases. Max Nesterak has been following this story closely. He's Deputy Editor of the *Minnesota Reformer* and he joins me now. Max, welcome back to *Minnesota Now*.

**MAX NESTERAK:** Thanks so much for having me on, Tim.

**TIM NELSON:** So let's start at the beginning here. When voters went to the polls last November, this passed with a 53% yes vote. What did they actually approve?

**MAX NESTERAK:** So voters in St. Paul approved. One of the most stringent rent control ordinances in the country as you said. They approved rent control at 3% annual increases for all units across the city no matter when the property was built, no matter how big the property is, and even when tenants move out.

So if a tenant moves out, a new tenant moves in, the 3% annual increase cap stayed. And so this universal approach without any other carve-outs was really-- was unique from other rent control policies across the city. Or across the country.

**TIM NELSON:** And I know that brought some criticism right away. Who was bringing that criticism and what did they say?

**MAX NESTERAK:** Well, there was a lot of criticism from developers and even many in the so-called YIMBY movement, the Yes In My Backyard who argued that you need to build more supply, and that's really the way you bring down rent prices or at least stabilize rent increases.

They say a policy like this that doesn't exempt new construction, which every other state or city with rent control does, it would just crater development and that developers just wouldn't come in, they wouldn't be able to find investors to back their projects, and so you would end up exacerbating an affordable housing shortage by cutting off new supply when demand is growing and supply is already so short.

**TIM NELSON:** And it looked like the city had some numbers on that, actually. Do you know what they were?

**MAX NESTERAK:** I do. Let me pull them up here. In the report-- it's difficult to say, everybody's trying to figure out what's going on because we haven't had-- not a lot of time has actually passed since this was approved in November. We have about a year. It didn't go into effect until May.

But what we do see is stark. City staff told the St. Paul City Council that rental construction permits were up about 30% across the Twin Cities Metro, but it was the reverse for St. Paul in 2022. It was down 30%. Right. So it seems like what everyone warned or what a lot of people warned going into this policy, that new construction would halt seemed to materialize.

**TIM NELSON:** Now St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter initially endorsed this, but almost immediately set up this advisory panel and then told them from the get-go that he wanted to see exemptions for new construction, including retroactive exemptions, and now the city has followed with their own changes. What do these mean for renters and landlords?

**MAX NESTERAK:** Right. So Mayor Melvin Carter came out with I would call it a pretty tepid endorsement of the policy. He made in his endorsement on Twitter less than a month before the election last October and said he's voting yes on rent stabilization.

But he said, quote, "Not because the policy is flawless as drafted. We can and must make it better quickly, but because it is a start." So even in his endorsement he said, I'm not endorsing the policy as it's written, I think it needs to change.

And about right out of the gate, as you mentioned, he said he needed to see-- he wanted to see an exemption for new construction because he was hearing so much feedback from developers that investors had pulled out.

Investors could be hedge funds, but they could also be pension funds, Union pension funds, teachers' pension funds, big investors, and they can take their money anywhere in the country. And if they see that there's just too much risk in St. Paul or there's less risk elsewhere, they're going to go there, and that's what developers say happened.

**TIM NELSON:** So what did they actually approve? What are these exemptions and what do they mean for people who live in rental housing?

**MAX NESTERAK:** Right. So as you alluded to at the top, the changes that the city council approved and that the mayor signed off on really changed this policy from being one of the most stringent in the country to something else entirely.

There is an exemption for new construction for up to 20 years. There's an exemption for affordable housing-- all affordable housing. There is some vacancy decontrol-- I hate to use that term, but that means when a tenant moves out, the landlord is able to raise rent 8% plus inflation.

Developers and landlords were calling for there to be no restriction on how much they can raise rent when a tenant moves out. The compromise was 8% plus inflation. And the city council is also explicitly stated that inflation is a reason to get an exemption.

I should say, this policy was written by activists and passed by citizens without the input from the council. Actually, a majority of the council members did not support this ordinance as written and approved by voters.

And the people who wrote the ordinance chose 3% because they were looking back at the past 20 years and they say, well, the average has been about 3%, so we think that's a reasonable cap on rent increases. Well, you know the story of what happened next was we've seen inflation reached the highest it's been in 40 years. And--

**TIM NELSON:** I've seen some renters actually appealing their rent increases already and being turned back, even before this change happened. What's happening there?

**MAX NESTERAK:** Right. So this process does give renters an avenue to appeal the rent hike, but I'm not aware of the city finding in any renter's favor yet. There's still a lot of appeals coming in. But for the most part, every landlord that has applied for an exemption to the 3% cap has had it approved.

**TIM NELSON:** Last question here. I imagine in Minneapolis where voters authorize but didn't really detail rent control, they're watching this pretty carefully. What's the status over there?

**MAX NESTERAK:** So a workgroup just started meeting, a workgroup made up of developers, landlords, and renters just started meeting, they'll meet through the end of the year and come up with a report to present to the city council and the mayor on what they think-- a kind of policy that city should pursue.

**TIM NELSON:** And what's the process there? How will that actually happen?

**MAX NESTERAK:** Right. So the workgroup will present its report to city leaders. I should note that it seems activists-- with all the turmoil and discussions that go on in St. Paul, they're holding fast, that they think they want a policy that applies to new construction, that doesn't exempt affordable housing, that holds down rents at about 3% increase a year.

The city council will have to vote and decide, and after that, it's likely that the policy will, again, go back before voters for ratification. And that's because the state of Minnesota, you're not allowed-- a city is now allowed to pass rent control unless approved by a majority of voters in a general election.

**TIM NELSON:** Very good. Thank you so much.

**MAX NESTERAK:** Thanks for having me on.

**TIM NELSON:** Max Nesterak is Deputy Editor of the *Minnesota Reformer*. Did you know that September is Sickle Cell Awareness Month? Sickle cell is a genetic trait affecting red blood cells and it causes intense pain and anemia.

Sickle cell disease occurs among 1 out of every 365 African-American births, but some health care providers miss sickle cell symptoms or don't take seriously people who have the condition. To learn more about why, I'm talking with Rae Blaylark and Dr. Stephen Nelson. Rae Blaylark is the President and CEO of the Sickle Cell Foundation of Minnesota, and Dr. Stephen Nelson is Chief Medical Officer at the foundation. Rae and Stephen, welcome to *Minnesota Now*.

**RAE BLAYLARK:** Thank you for having us.

**STEPHEN NELSON:** Yes, thank you for having us.

**TIM NELSON:** So I'd like to start with you, Rae. Why doesn't sickle cell disease get more attention?

**RAE BLAYLARK:** You know, I think sickle cell disease doesn't get the attention that it deserves because it's not talked about openly. It is-- there's still a stigma attached to it. It is still misunderstood as a Black disease rather than a blood disease. And so I think that both on the health care side and on the community side, we need to be having more conversations like this.

And Dr. Nelson, let's get into a little more of the detail here. What does sickle cell actually do to the body and how dangerous is it?

**STEPHEN NELSON:** Yeah. So as you said, it's an inherited disorder. And actually, 1 in 12 African Americans in the US is a carrier. They don't have the disease, they're a carrier. It's about 1 in 500 African Americans have the disease. And as you stated, it affects the red blood cell, which is what carries oxygen around to the body. Those cells typically are round and soft and squishy, and live 120 days, and life is good.

In sickle cell, they take a shape like a sickle that you cut wheat with or a banana, and those red blood cells plug up the blood vessels. And that happens anywhere in the body.

As you stated, when that happens in the bones, that's pain. It also happens in the brain, that's a stroke. It can happen in the eye, you lose vision. It can happen in the lungs and cause what's called acute chest syndrome, which can be life-threatening. So it's quite dangerous and leads to multi-organ complications and early death for many patients.

**TIM NELSON:** And Rae, you talked a little bit about stigma for an inherited condition. It seems hard to imagine that, but there seem to be some association-- some cultural associations with this disease. What's going on there?

**RAE BLAYLARK:** Well, I think first we have to acknowledge that sickle cell disease is actually the most common inherited blood disorder in the entire world. And so that means on basically every continent, you will find sickle cell trait or sickle cell disease.

So the burden of sickle cell disease rests in Africa because of the lower resources. Sickle cell disease is related to malaria in the fact that sickle cell trait is a natural mutation of the red blood cells that really lent itself to survival.

So now that sickle cell trait and sickle cell disease are ever-present, it's really important that there is a universal newborn screening program, it's important that there is education both in the health care setting with physicians, but also in the community as far as prevalence and transmission. And what's in your genes is important for all of us, but particularly if you carry sickle cell trait.

Because as Dr. Nelson said, it's a genetic disease, so it's inherited. So if both parents have this mutation of their red blood cells, whether it be sickle cell trait or sickle cell disease, they stand a chance of having a child with sickle cell disease.

**TIM NELSON:** Now you said it's the most common blood disorder in the world. Why isn't the medical community better at responding to it?

**STEPHEN NELSON:** I'll take that one. I think some of it may be the history of legacy of racism in this country and discrepancies in funding for diseases that affect the Black community versus other communities.

**TIM NELSON:** And I'd like to hear I guess from both of you about how you've been fighting that institutional racism and the lack of awareness about the disease.

**RAE BLAYLARK:** Yeah, I'll start with I think that one of the things that's important is giving individuals who have typically been voiceless a voice in this space. So if you're a person living with sickle cell disease, if you're a person who is a caregiver of a child or a loved one with sickle cell disease, it's important that you feel like that there is space for you to share your experiences and talk about what it's like living with the disease.

Having Sickle Cell Foundation of Minnesota and the fact that we are a patient advocacy organization provides this safe space to give individuals a voice who may have not felt like they had a voice previously. But we also find ourselves in many spaces of affluence where we can, through our advocacy efforts, impact decisions that are made that directly affect the outcomes of individuals living with sickle cell disease.

**TIM NELSON:** Dr. Nelson?

**STEPHEN NELSON:** Yes, thank you for that, Rae. And I will add to it, as a white male physician caring for patients and families affected by sickle cell disease for over 30 years, for the greater part of my career, I was going along thinking it was doing a great job with no awareness how the racial narratives that wash over all of us have been affecting my stereotyping and my implicit bias, which was affecting my cognition and decision-making at the bedside. And it really was impacting the care for my patients of color in a negative way.

So what I have been doing and partnering with Heather Hackman who is an educator who does social Justice work for educators in developing trainings for health care providers around this issue of how racial narratives and racism affect our stereotyping and implicit bias so that we can improve our patient outcomes.

**TIM NELSON:** Now Dr. Nelson, you talked about being at the bedside. How are people with sickle cell disease treated? Is there an effective treatment for them?

**STEPHEN NELSON:** I guess there's two ways to address it. There are some effective treatments. Sadly, because of some discrepancies in funding at the federal and philanthropic levels, there are only four FDA-approved drugs to treat sickle cell disease.

So there are some options. But even with that, and as you had mentioned, pain is the most common reason why a person with sickle cell disease will seek medical attention. And they are often not treated very well, their pain is not treated aggressively.

And some of that is because there is no physical exam finding or laboratory test to prove that the patient is having pain. We need to believe the patient. And now that we are struggling in an opioid epidemic and the racial narratives that affect our stereotyping, you can imagine that patients with sickle cell disease can have difficulty getting their pain managed effectively.

**TIM NELSON:** I can imagine. But is there research into longer-term approach to this? Are they looking at finding a cure or a cause for this?

**STEPHEN NELSON:** Yes--

**TIM NELSON:** A way to stop it from passing along genetically?

**STEPHEN NELSON:** Yeah, so there's two-- I'll address your second question first. So with awareness and understanding your status, if you're a carrier for sickle cell disease you can make some decisions with your eyes open. We would never counsel a couple to not have children. To me, that feels reminiscent of eugenics from decades ago. It is important for a couple to understand what their risk is for having a child with sickle cell disease.

And there are ongoing trials looking at gene therapy as a curative intervention for sickle cell disease. It is the first molecular disease that was described, and we are excited about the possibility of this cure. There is a cure available and that would be stem cell transplant or bone marrow transplant that's high-risk and quite toxic. Not everyone has a match. So the hope and beauty of gene therapy would be that it could be a curative option for every patient.

**RAE BLAYLARK:** I think it's also important to note that as we are on our way to a cure that we also have to think about what it means to improve treatment availability. One of those treatments is blood transfusions. Blood is always needed in the sickle cell community, but the matches need to be so close that it's often that they are looking for donors that are diverse.

So increasing education and awareness around the value and the importance of Black blood donors donating blood and participating in the blood donation process to ensure that we have the best matches available.

**TIM NELSON:** That was Rae Blaylock and Dr. Stephen Nelson. Rae Blaylock is the President and CEO of the Sickle Cell Foundation of Minnesota, and Dr. Stephen Nelson is a pediatric hematologist oncologist and is the Chief Medical Officer at the foundation.

And let's take a minute to check on the weather. It's 63 degrees in St. Paul, 61 in St. Cloud, 59 in Bemidji, 67 degrees in Marshall. High temperature should be in the 60s today for most of the day, so a little warmer than yesterday. We could get a few sprinkles in Northern Minnesota, but it'll be dry for most of the state.

And we're heading for a warm-up this weekend. We'll be in the 70s in southern and western parts of the state by tomorrow. Better get outside and enjoy it while you can. Cooler fall weather is on the way. In the meantime, keep listening to *Minnesota Now*.

Mayor Frey announced his nominee for Minneapolis Police Chief just minutes ago as you heard. We'll check in with MPR News reporter Matt Sepic shortly to hear more about the candidate. And 72 years after the first *Peanuts* comic strip, will be taking a look back at Charlie Brown's legacy. It's another edition of *Minnesota Now and Then*. But first, John Wanamaker standing by with the news headlines. Hey, John.

**JOHN WANAMAKER:** Hey, Tim. Rescue crews are using high-clearance vehicles and boats to rescue Florida residents stranded in the wake of Hurricane Ian. The Orange County Fire Department posted photos today of crews in a flooded neighborhood in the Orlando area. Governor Ron DeSantis said a US-- the US Coast Guard has begun rescue operations. They began around daybreak. At least one person in Florida was confirmed dead on the state's eastern coast.

Flooding rains continued falling even after Ian was downgraded to a tropical storm. The center has crossed the Florida Peninsula and entered the Atlantic Ocean where forecasters predict it will return to hurricane strength and turn north towards South Carolina.

Russia is planning to annex more of Ukraine on Friday. The move represents an escalation of the seven-month war that will further isolate the Kremlin and draw more international condemnation.

An annexation ceremony planned in the Kremlin, the annexation would come just days after voters supposedly approved Moscow-managed referendums that Ukrainian and Western officials have denounced as illegal, forced, and rigged. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called an emergency meeting Friday of his National Security and Defense Council.

Conservative activist Virginia Ginni Thomas, the wife of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, has appeared for a voluntary interview with the House panel investigating the January 6 insurrection.

The committee has for months sought an interview with Thomas in an effort to know more about her role in trying to help former President Donald Trump overturn his election defeat. She texted with White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows and contacted lawmakers in Arizona and Wisconsin after the election. Thomas' appearance on Capitol Hill today-- Capitol Hill, I should say-- was confirmed by two people familiar with the committee's work. However, they were not authorized to discuss it.

Stocks back to falling numbers on Wall Street as worries about a possible recession and rising bond yields put the squeeze back on markets. Right now, the Dow Jones off about 1.8%, the S&P down over 2 and 1/3%, and the NASDAQ tech stocks getting pounded right now, the NASDAQ down by about 3.2%. This is MPR News.

**ANNOUNCER:** Stay in touch with local news and weather with the MPR News app. Listen to live radio, read stories, access podcasts, get updates from our team of meteorologists, and enable alerts so you always know when there's breaking news. It's free, works for Apple or Android. Go to your App Store and search for MPR News.

**TIM NELSON:** It's *Minnesota Now*, I'm Tim Nelson. Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey just wrapped up a press conference where he announced his nomination for a new Chief of Police for the city. Here's what he said a few minutes ago.

**JACOB FREY:** I'm very pleased to inform you that I will be nominating Brian O'Hara, the Deputy Mayor of the City of Newark, New Jersey, as my nominee for the next Police Chief of the City of Minneapolis. Minneapolis has been asking for change, and Brian O'Hara, the Deputy Mayor is answering that call. He has this proven ability to work directly hand-in-hand with community to create systems of accountability and simultaneously drive down crime and specifically shootings.

Mr. O'Hara, since 2001, has moved through the ranks in the City of Newark, from a rank-and-file police officer to captain, to the Director of Public Safety, and then ultimately the Deputy Mayor of the City of New Jersey. As a Director of Public Safety, he has led a department that has consisted of some 1,960 employees, over 990 police officers, over 600 firefighters, approximately 300 civilians beyond that, and has been charged, working through a comprehensive approach in Newark.

I'll also note that he was the leader from the City of Newark, New Jersey in setting up a consent decree and working directly with the Department of Justice. He facilitated the implementation, the monitoring, and the compliance of all consent decree requirements that are included in development of policies and procedures that the City of Newark was rolling out to make sure that its police department itself was reformed and accountable.

**TIM NELSON:** And Minneapolis, in there, the police department has been subject of a lot of criticism. Here's what Brian O'Hara set to address that right away.

**BRIAN O'HARA:** To those who are critical of policing and of this agency, I ask that you give us a chance. I ask that-- if your goal is to truly have positive reform to make things better for the people of this city, please engage with us. I want your voice to be heard. I want the community's fingerprints, the community's values to be all over the policies and practices of this agency.

Under the leadership of Mayor Frey, we will have the best police department in the nation. We will take the MPD from the darkness and trauma that has been experienced in this city and create a beacon of light for policing across this country.

The foundation of policing is trust, and as the Minneapolis Chief of Police, I will work day and night to ensure that the residents of this city can trust, that they can feel safe, and all people in this city will know that the MPD has their backs.

**TIM NELSON:** MPR reporter Matt Sepic was at the announcement. It just ended a short time ago. He joins me now with details about the nominee. Matt, what do we know about Brian O'Hara?

**MATT SEPIC:** Well, the name leaked a little early ahead of the press conference, so we had some time to do some background research on Mr. O'Hara. According to our reporting, he joined the Newark Police Force back in 2001 21 years ago. He rose through the ranks, became the public safety director-- that's a position similar to our Police Chief here in Minneapolis-- in February of 2021-- so last year. He was moved out of that role just this past June.

So he was police chief in Newark, New Jersey for about 16 months. He then became deputy mayor of that city in charge of public safety initiatives.

**TIM NELSON:** Now we know that most Chiefs in Minneapolis have risen through the ranks. Why did the mayor choose someone outside the department this time?

**MATT SEPIC:** Well Tim, Newark is comparable in size to Minneapolis. There are around 300,000 residents there compared to 400,000 here in Minneapolis according to Census figures. But Newark is more diverse. Minneapolis is roughly 60% white, Newark's around 30% white. As we know, Chief Medaria Arradondo stepped down earlier this year, Amelia Huffman has been the interim chief. Arradondo was the first African-American police chief in Minneapolis history. The nominee for his replacement, John O'Hara, is white. But not really much mention of that or of race in this news conference.

**TIM NELSON:** So he spoke a little bit at the press conference. What did he have to say? What stood out to you?

**MATT SEPIC:** Well, he wants to rebuild the ranks of the police department, but that's certainly a tall order given the attrition. We're down around 300 officers. He also asked residents of the city who are critical of police and policing to give them a chance. When asked how he'd try to curb gun violence, he talked about data-driven solutions and community-driven solutions.

**TIM NELSON:** And is he moving to Minneapolis, I assume?

**MATT SEPIC:** Yeah, that was one of the questions a reporter asked and he said he will definitely live in the City of Minneapolis.

**TIM NELSON:** And did Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey have anything to say about how the department's going to look, how it may be different under O'Hara?

**MATT SEPIC:** Well, he said that it's really just a different management style. Of course, we have Cedric Alexander now who is the Public Safety Division Director, and O'Hara, if he is confirmed by the Minneapolis City Council, would be reporting to Cedric Alexander.

**TIM NELSON:** Now we know that the Justice Department is looking into whether Minneapolis Police have engaged in a pattern or practice of illegal conduct. We heard O'Hara talking a little bit about that-- or the mayor talking a little bit about that with the Justice-- the O'Hara's experience with the Justice Department. How will that play into his new job?

**MATT SEPIC:** O'Hara spoke on this directly. He said he was the point person in Newark and worked with DOJ, and as part of that process, he led dozens of community meetings around his city to help rebuild trust and build reforms in that department.

**TIM NELSON:** And how does this process go forward from here?

**MATT SEPIC:** Well, as we've mentioned, this is a nomination. So the Minneapolis City Council, it's up to them to approve or reject Mr. O'Hara as a nominee. We haven't heard from city council members yet, but our colleague John Collins his understanding from city officials is that this nomination will go before the city council next Thursday-- so a week from today, and the mayor hopes to have him confirmed by early November, so in about a month or so.

**TIM NELSON:** Thanks much. That was MPR reporter Matt Sepic. We'll be following up on this story with reactions from community and city council members and Brian O'Hara himself.

**ANNOUNCER:** Programming is supported by Best & Flanagan, a legal team dedicated to understanding where you want to go and helping you get there. Best & Flanagan, lawyers you know. Online at [bestlaw.com](http://bestlaw.com).

**TIM NELSON:** It's *Minnesota Now* and I'm Tim Nelson. Comics are a big business these days with Marvel and DC Comics raking in billions at the box office, but we're going to spend a few minutes talking about a different comic that also made it to the screen-- *Peanuts*.

This Sunday, the comic featuring Charlie Brown, his dog Snoopy, and the crew turns 72 years old. This trip was the creation of St. Paul cartoonist Charles Schulz. We know-- you know we love history on this show, so we're diving into the *Peanuts* comics for another edition of *Minnesota Now and Then*. Joining us to talk about the comic and its legacy is Benjamin Clark. He's the curator of the Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center in Santa Rosa, California. Hello, Benjamin. Welcome to *Minnesota Now*.

**BENJAMIN CLARK:** Thank you, good morning.

**TIM NELSON:** So all these years later, why are we still talking about Charles Schulz and Charlie Brown?

**BENJAMIN CLARK:** Oh, I mean, *Peanuts* reaches out and touches so many of us and has for a long, long time. So it's really become very deeply ingrained in American culture, and frankly, in world culture.

**TIM NELSON:** And how did that happen? Why did this become such a success?

**BENJAMIN CLARK:** Well, I think it's because of Charles Schulz. He was a person who could mine his own life and rummage around in his own mind for some of these big questions that come to all of us about what is the meaning of life? Does life even have a meaning?

And he's able to distill that down into these funny and often just really reflective moments. So it just-- we just get *Peanuts* for a couple seconds a day, but every single day, that really adds up.

**TIM NELSON:** And, I mean, there's-- you can feel the Midwestern roots there of *Peanuts*. How is St. Paul, his hometown, represented?

**BENJAMIN CLARK:** Oh, absolutely. Yeah, I'm a I'm a Midwesterner myself, and yes, absolutely. It snows in *Peanuts*, which it doesn't do very often at all ever here in Sonoma County, California where Schulz lived the last half of his life. And there's lots of things that are like that where it's in *Peanuts* and in his life and in him.

**TIM NELSON:** Well, let's talk a little bit more about him. Charles Schulz graduated from Central High School in St. Paul, served in World War II, and comes back and takes a job at art instruction schools in Minneapolis. What did he do there?

**BENJAMIN CLARK:** He was a-- he actually did the course as a student, and then when he came back after the war, as you said, yeah, he was hired as an instructor. So he was one of the instructors to check the correspondence courses that he himself had taken.

**TIM NELSON:** And I guess he drew some peanuts characters from people he met at the school, right?

**BENJAMIN CLARK:** Right, yeah. He borrowed some names, certainly, including good ol' Charlie Brown, who was a colleague of his there.

**TIM NELSON:** And the first *Peanuts* trip sort of started rather modestly, just, I think, seven newspapers. how did it catch on?

**BENJAMIN CLARK:** Well, it was slow. It built gradually. Of those first seven, a couple of them canceled within the first year, but it was originally sold by his syndicate as a space saver.

It was meant to be printed smaller than the typical comics of the day so that an editor could run it almost anywhere in the paper, it wouldn't have to be in the comic section. It could appear in the classifieds and it could run vertically or horizontally or in an a square.

It's why it's always four perfect square panels for the largest run of *Peanuts*. It doesn't break that format until 1988. So 1950 to 1988, it's four square equal panels every day. And that helped sell it to newspapers around the country.

**TIM NELSON:** And for decades. I mean, how did he turn this thing out just day after day? Plus a Sunday strip often in color all those years, must have been working weeks ahead.

**BENJAMIN CLARK:** Absolutely, yeah. He would run about six to eight weeks ahead for dailies, and he had to do eight to even 10 weeks for Sundays. So comic strip artists today do that. They have to work far-- pretty far ahead.

**TIM NELSON:** And as I mentioned in the intro, the comic was turned into television specials beloved by many of us. I remember the voice of the teacher was all this weird noise. Here's what it sounded like.

[MUTED TROMBONE NOISES]

**LINUS VAN PELT:** Yes, ma'am. We were playing Hangman.

[MUTED TROMBONE NOISES]

**CHARLIE BROWN:** Studying? Oh, yes, ma'am. You're absolutely right. We should have been studying. But you'd--

**LINUS VAN PELT:** May I say something, ma'am? You seem to forget that you haven't given us any assignments yet.

[MUTED TROMBONE NOISES]

**CHARLIE BROWN:** Now you've done it! Here comes a stupid assignment!

[MUTED TROMBONE NOISES]

**LINUS VAN PELT:** Write a 500-word theme on what we did this summer? How do you teachers keep coming up with these great new ideas?

**TIM NELSON:** Now we are more familiar these days with Marvel movies, but he was really a pioneer in multimedia.

**BENJAMIN CLARK:** Oh yeah, absolutely absolutely, yeah.

**TIM NELSON:** Now the last *Peanuts* strip appeared in February of 2000, a day after Charles Schulz died at the age of 77. Was there any talk of having someone take this over and keep it going?

**BENJAMIN CLARK:** It was something that was discussed, but far, far before. So by 1979, he actually had a contract in place that nobody would take it over. It was something that Schulz had thought about, but he consulted with his family and asked them, and his children all agreed, they're like, yeah, the strip should end whenever you retire or can no longer do it. And so that was the decision. So that was-- the decision was made long before.

**TIM NELSON:** I remember the day.

**BENJAMIN CLARK:** Yeah, me, too. Yeah.

**TIM NELSON:** Well, thanks so much, Benjamin. Benjamin Clark is curator of the Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center in Santa Rosa, California. You can find more information at [schulzmuseum.org](http://schulzmuseum.org).

While we're happily moving on from baseball season, the Twins are closing out their once-hopeful season with a sorry end, now on to football. Let's get the wrap-up and look-ahead from our favorite sports experts, Wally Langfellow and Eric Nelson. Wally is the founder of *Minnesota Score Magazine* and the co-host of *10,000 Takes Sports Talk Show*. Eric is the other host of *10,000 Takes* and the Minnesota Vikings reporter for CBS RadioEye on *Football*. Hi, guys. Welcome back to *Minnesota Now*.

**WALLY LANGFELLOW:** Thanks, Tim, how are you?

**ERIC NELSON:** Yeah, Tim, great to be on the airwaves with you.

**TIM NELSON:** That game Saturday against Michigan State, who would have think the Gophers could put on a show like that?

**WALLY** Boy, that's for sure. Again, they've played so well defensively. They dominated Michigan State at Michigan State,

**LANGFELLOW:** no less. Michigan State was a ranked team at the time. Now your Gophers are a ranked team. They're ranked 21st in the latest Coaches Poll, 23rd in the latest Writers' Poll, which is the AP poll. So they're in the top 25. They're 4 and 0 on the season.

They have been dominant against all four of their opponents. They host Purdue on Saturday, and it's homecoming, it's an 11:00 AM kickoff, which isn't exactly appetizing for particularly the college students who perhaps were out Friday night, but it is an 11:00 AM homecoming kickoff on Saturday. They'll be favored to win again.

And head coach PJ Fleck is getting recognized as well. He is among the favorites right now, if this season were to end today, for Coach of the Year honors in all of college football. So things are going the right way for the University of Minnesota. Obviously they hope to continue that on Saturday against the Purdue Boilermakers.

**ERIC NELSON:** For some Gophers hardcore fans, they are saying, yeah, this is too good to be true, there's going to be a hiccup or a slip-up down the road. But I believe this Gopher team is for real. Let's start with their outstanding running back, Mo Ibrahim who a year ago had a serious foot injury against Ohio State, missed the rest of the season.

Now he's back and better than ever. He's putting up cartoon-like numbers on the ground. He's got 567 yards already, averaging 6.4 yards per carry. He scored eight touchdowns. He's got 41 in his goal for career, that's the most of any running back in the history of U of M football. He just surpassed the great Darrell Thompson.

He's in the Heisman Trophy conversation. It's been a long time since a Gopher football player has even been mentioned with the Heisman, which is the premier college football trophy and award in the postseason.

As for the quarterback, Tanner Morgan, he's got seven touchdown passes, just one interception, and NFL scouts are taking notice of what he's doing, Tim.

**TIM NELSON:** And turning to the NFL, the Vikings finally end with a bang instead of a whimper. They got criticized for not being able to close out games last year. They did it last Sunday.

**WALLY** Yeah, they did, Tim. And impressively. With those two late touchdowns, the one to KJ Osborn, the game-winner

**LANGFELLOW:** late in the game.

And it put him at 2 and 1. And really, if you look at their schedule, these are almost must-wins for Minnesota, because once they get done in London this weekend, they come home to Chicago, then they will have played all NFC North opponents at home, which means that they've got to go to all of their NFC North opponents upcoming still in the season. They still have Miami on the schedule, Buffalo. So their schedule does not get any easier.

But this weekend, as I mentioned, they're in London, they play the New Orleans Saints. The last time that the Vikings were overseas in the UK was five years ago when they played Cleveland and they won that game. And then nine years ago, a game that Eric and I were both at, when they played the Pittsburgh Steelers at Wembley Stadium in London.

So it will be interesting. It's really-- it's a home game for the Saints technically on the schedule. However, it's a neutral site game. And so the Vikings should take advantage of a team-- the Saints, who have won just one of their first three games, and push to 3 and 1. I think from that standpoint, it should be a good day for the Minnesota Vikings.

Oh, by the way, if you want to watch it on television, it'll be locally on Channel 5, but you're going to have to set your alarm if you're a late sleeper. They start at 8:30 AM Minneapolis time on Sunday, so be sure to get up early if you want to watch the Minnesota Vikings this coming Sunday in the UK.

**TIM NELSON:** The whole Sunday of football there. So it sounds like there may be a game anyway in Minneapolis this weekend.

**ERIC NELSON:** There is a chance, Tim. We, of course, are following Hurricane Ian down there in Florida, and it's battering the Tampa Bay region. And Sunday Night Football on NBC, which is the highest-rated primetime show for the last 10-plus years on network television, that is supposed to be Kansas City and Tampa Bay. That would be a rematch of Super Bowl 55.

But there's a good chance, because of the hurricane, the NFL will move this game. And if the league does this, Minneapolis is ready to host the event at US Bank Stadium. And you hate to see Florida go through what the entire state is dealing with, the hurricane. It would be bad optics, though, for the NFL to play a game if Tampa Bay really does get slammed like we think it's going to with Hurricane Ian.

So, you might have the Chiefs and Patrick Mahomes, one of the top quarterbacks in the NFL, going against Tom Brady and the Buccaneers, who is the GOAT, Greatest of All Time, the legend. This would be a lot of fun for Minnesota sports fans. And I think Kansas City fans, the Chiefs Kingdom as they're known, they'll make that drive up I-35. It's not that far, six to seven hours, depending on what part of Kansas City you're in, and they will invade the Twin Cities this weekend.

And by the way, the NFL has moved games before because of weather whether it be hurricanes, wildfires, blizzards. The Vikings once had to play in Detroit because there was a snowstorm that collapsed the Metrodome roof. So this is not unprecedented, and it might happen.

**TIM NELSON:** I remember that so well, the dome-buster. But of course, we can't finish here without talking about the Twins. You know, Bailey Ober, Tuesday night, whoa. What kind of a season could this have been, huh?

**WALLY** Well yeah, and he's been on and off the injured list, Bailey Ober has, much like their entire roster for that matter.

**LANGFELLOW:** He pitched well. They let him pitch deep into the game, which has not been a habit of Rocco Baldelli this year, but he did let them pitch deep into the game, which is a good thing as well.

Maybe a good sign for things to come next year. They do have some young talent. It'll be a matter of how they handle things in the offseason, because really, Tim, it has been a disaster this year. I mean, this team was in first place for most of the season and they have just dropped off the edge of the cliff here in the month of September. And obviously they hope to be able to turn things around next year.

Right now, though, they're battling for second place, them in the Chicago White Sox. Which team will finish in second place? That's really the only question that remains in 2022.

**TIM NELSON:** So Eric, are you ready to head back to Target Field next spring?

**ERIC NELSON:** Oh, no question, Tim. It's still a fabulous venue and I love to go there, especially if you get there on one of those quintessential Minnesota summer nights and you have the skyline view. And it's a destination ballpark, but let's be blunt here, the Twins are going to have to get better to lure fans in.

As Wally said, they were in first place for a good chunk of this season, and they still struggled to draw fans for a number of reasons. They had some bad draws. Teams like the Dodgers and Yankees came in midweek, Houston. But that said, I thought there should have been more people flocking to the ballpark.

Now the Twins believe they're getting a new video board next season. It's going to be a monster. It's going to be-- it's going to need its own area code, it's going to be that big. And they're getting new uniforms. So I think the Twins are trying to get out in front of this, that hey, the 2023 brand will look different in 2022. But Twins fans are pretty savvy. They're going to still have to win ball games to get people back there on a consistent basis.

**TIM NELSON:** All right. Well thanks, guys, you have a great weekend.

**ERIC NELSON:** Thanks, Tim.

**WALLY** All right, thanks, Tim.

**LANGFELLOW:**

**TIM NELSON:** That's Wally Langfellow with Eric Nelson. Wally's the founder of *Minnesota Score Magazine* and the co-host of *10,000 Takes Sports Talk Show*. Eric is the other host of *10,000 Takes* and the Minnesota Vikings reporter for CBS Sports Radio *Eye on Football*.

And thank-- and thanks for listening to *Minnesota Now* this week. I'm Tim Nelson in for Cathy Wurzer. Our senior producer is Melissa Townsend. Our producers are Gretchen Brown, Ellen Finn, and Brit Aamodt. Our technical director today is Maureen Jensen. And special thanks to Julia Franz and Nak Bui for their help this week.

We love hearing from listeners. If you have ideas for the show or Minnesotans we should talk to or feedback for what you're hearing on the air, send us a note. We're at [MinnesotaNow@mpr.org](mailto:MinnesotaNow@mpr.org). You can tweet me, too. I'm at [TimNelsonMPR](https://twitter.com/TimNelsonMPR). Cathy Wurzer will be back next week.

By the way, I'm just seeing on Twitter that the Bucs say they won't be coming to Minneapolis, so no Tom Brady and Patrick Mahomes. Tomorrow at noon, another edition of Politics Friday. Mike Mulcahy will speak with another candidate for Congress, Democrat Jen Schultz. In the meantime, have a great day.

[MUSIC PLAYING]