

**CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND ROLL CALL (Meeting was held primarily by remote attendance)**

Mayor Hunter T. George called the regular meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilmembers David M. Viafore, Shannon Reynolds, Brett Wittner, Joe Barrentine, and Jamie Nixon were present. Councilmember Denny Waltier was absent and excused.

**PRESIDING OFFICER’S REPORT**

**A. Proclamation: Anti-Racism**

Mayor George introduced the anti-racism proclamation and read it into the records. **Viafore MOVED to authorize the Mayor’s signature on the proclamation proclaiming the City Council’s intention to listen, to learn, to be willing to experience discomfort, to collaborate with community partners, and to protect the Constitutional and human rights of every person who lives, works and visits the city; seconded by Nixon.** George invited Council comment; discussions included the importance of listening and making small steps along a long journey as well as learning from our mistakes in order to make progress. A brief discussion was held on the decision to display the Thin Blue Line flag in the breakroom at the police station. Council consensus was that Black Lives Matter and Council is committed to engaging in meaningful conversations, that may be uncomfortable but necessary to ensure equity among our citizens and those who visit our City. George invited public comment;

- Kathy Weber, 120 Farallone Ave, commented that we are ready to tackle the issue and asked about the steps moving forward.
- Jonathon Hart, A Tacoma resident, commented that he would like the verbiage to change on the proclamation under the last “WHEREAS” statement. He also asked that council sign the “8 Can’t-Wait” campaign.
- Kyle, an Auburn resident, commented that he attended the march on Friday and supports what the City is doing.
- Chris Sprinker, 109 Eldorado Ave, read his previously submitted comment aloud.
- Brian Rybolt, 1036 Daniels Drive, commented that he would like to see Council reconsider the latest Planning Commission appointments.

Mayor George read the following previously received comments into the record. They are attached.

- Jenny Stryker, 446 Buena Vista Ave.
- Kory Eggenberger, a Lakewood resident.
- Anthony Chelf, 813 Electron Way.

George again invited Council comment; discussions included diversity and equitable representation on our appointed commissions and elected positions as well as the Force Investigation Team that came from the passing of I-940. Comments also included the best practices to engage the community while in a pandemic and staff plans to bring a review of current police policies to the Council at the next study session. George again invited public comment; Danae Dotolo commented that she recommended using a consultant for guiding inclusion and equity policies. **Wittner MOVED to amend the proclamation to read, “to fight for an equitable future” in the last “WHEREAS” statement; seconded by Nixon. The Motion Carried (6-0).**

**The Motion Carried as Amended (6-0)**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

There were none.

**COMMITTEE, COMMISSION, AND LIAISON REPORTS**

**A. Administration**

Viafore reported that he and City Manager Pingel are back to meeting regularly and sales tax reports for March were better than expected. He reported that the garbage contract will be coming before Council soon and that Staff will be addressing the pool dedication options depending on what phase Pierce County is in. Viafore also reminded Council about the importance of getting voucher certifications signed.

**B. Environmental, Planning, and Building**

Waltier was absent. No report provided.

**C. Finance, IT, Facilities**

Barrentine reported that the finance department is starting cross-training and is also starting the 2021 budget. He also reports that the hardware transition with Right Systems has been pushed out creating hardship for staff. Reynolds asked if we will be following up at regular intervals with Right Systems. Barrentine reports that once the transition is complete, staff will review and update the Council.

**D. Other Liaison Reports**

No other reports provided

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

George requested the City Clerk read the Consent Calendar as follows: approval of Voucher No. 215086 through Voucher Check No. 215130 in the amount of \$84,859.86; approval of Payroll Check No. 13905 through Payroll Check No. 13908 in the amount of \$8,269.68; approval of Payroll Check No. 13909 through Payroll Check No. 13914 in the amount of \$85,879.78; approval of Payroll Check No. 13869 through Payroll Check No. 13874 in the amount of \$85,183.21; approval of Payroll Check No. 13915 through Payroll Check No. 13916 in the amount of \$107,817.30; approval of the May 26, 2020, Regular Meeting Minutes as corrected; **Reynolds MOVED to approve the Consent Calendar as read; seconded by Wittner. The Motion Carried (6-0).**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

No public hearing was scheduled.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

**CITY MANAGER COMMENTS**

City Manager Pingel reported that the upcoming study session will be discussions on police policies and summer events.

**DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS**

Planning & Building Administrator Stahlnecker addressed the Council with an update on the Form-Based Code timeline. Stahlnecker asked for feedback on how to proceed with the final presentation from Rangwala & Associates on Form-Based Code. Council consensus was to have

Mr. Rangwala present in person and to send notices to homeowners notifying them of the extension.

Police Chief Cheesman thanked Council for their passion and will work to ensure the Council gets the policies before them at the study session.

Public Works Director Wakefield updated the Council on the Alameda Overlay Project and the Emerson Sidewalk Extension Project. Wakefield reports that the Alameda Project is ready for bid and the curb issue can be addressed as a bid alternate; however, it is not authorized in the grant funding. The Emerson Sidewalk Extension Project is likely to be authorized for bid as well. A brief discussion was held on when and how communication with adjacent properties will be provided.

Parks and Recreation Director Grover reported that the tennis courts are now open. A brief discussion was held on how staff intends to inform the public that the courts are now open.

### **COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS**

- Viafore; expressed thanks to the public for joining the meeting and mentioned that there is a lot of work ahead of us. Viafore commented that he and City Manager Pingel have discussed the monument sign for the new community center and expressed concern with the policy of memorial benches and the price being higher for the Community Center benches. He wants to ensure the cost of the memorial benches, outside of the scope of the community center project, will remain affordable. Viafore read a statement from the law enforcement officers that have reached out to him asking to not lump all police officers together with the officer who murdered George Floyd. He also commented about the great work Facilities Maintenance Supervisor Bryce Wakefield has been doing around the City.
- Reynolds shared a website link: [coronavirus.jhu.edu/testing/individual-states/washington](https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/testing/individual-states/washington) and commented on her concern about the COVID-19 7-day rolling trend going up and the daily numbers steeply rising.
- Wittner; Thanked the public for joining the meeting and let the public know they are always welcome. Wittner is looking forward to having in-person meetings sometime in the future.
- Barrentine; commented that he and his family attended the march on Friday and thanked the Police Department for keeping the protesters safe and letting their voices be heard. He echoed Councilmember Reynold's concerns that safety is a priority.
- Waltier; absent; no report.
- Nixon: Thanked the public for their attendance and would like to continue online access to meetings after COVID-19. Nixon expressed concern with staff removing or hiding comments on the City's Facebook page. He hopes for training in the future to ensure that this does not happen again.
- George: Thanked those who attended and commented that the Facebook comments issue is being handled by City Manager Pingel. George recommended two books to open the discussion of race. He also mentioned that the pool dedication conversations are starting and to stay tuned for future updates.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

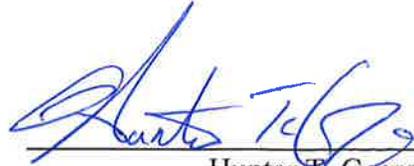
June 9, 2020

Fircrest City Council Meeting Minutes – Regular 4

No executive session was scheduled.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Viafore MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 P.M., seconded by Reynolds. The Motion Carried (6-0).**

  
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Hunter T. George, Mayor

  
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Jayne Westman, City Clerk

Good afternoon,

My name is Anthony Chelf and this is the public comment I would like read at the June 9th, 2020 council meeting. Thank you for your time.

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Thank you for the proclamation with regards to the ongoing protests. However, I think it is important to physically and overtly say the words you danced around. There is power in words. I want to hear you say, "BLACK LIVES MATTER."

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Sincerely,

Anthony C.  
813 Electron Way  
Fircrest, WA 98466

Hello,

Last Friday I participated in the peaceful protest March that was put together by Walk With Us 253. When we arrived in University Place, one of our advocates asked the Chief of Police to commit that more officers would take action and walk along side us moving forward. He committed to doing so, and I would just like to ask that the Fircrest community leaders will make sure that this indeed happens. The best way to show support for a community in need is to join the cause and follow through on promises.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kory Eggenberger  
9317 114<sup>th</sup> St Sw  
Lakewood, WA 98498

To the Fircrest Mayor and City Council:

First i would like to acknowledge your leadership during unprecedented times. Seeing you engage with a severely underrepresented part of the community and do so with humility was heartwarming and an example of what our community leaders should be doing.

Amongst many other things that you will be discussing, i would like to ask that you not limit your sights on just your own community of Fircrest. The change that needs to be happen must be holistic throughout all communities. Our leaders in neighboring Olympia could take a lesson or two from your book. Please consider reaching out to Mayor Selby and others like her to work together to make the impacts and changes you are doing here more widespread.

Thank you.

Jonathan Hart

111 97<sup>th</sup> St E Tacoma, WA 98445

To Mayor George, distinguished members of the council, and fellow members of the community, thank you for your presence and for tuning in today. To Mayor George and Police Chief Cheesman, I want to say, as a life time resident of Tacoma/Fircrest, your participation with the Walk With Us march on June 5th was much appreciated, and serves as an extraordinary example for other community leaders (local or otherwise), as well as my fellow members of the community. Your empathy and humility showed great strength.

My name is Chris Sprinker. I am a 32 year old black man, and I take great pride in living in this community. As a bit of reference, my Great Grandfather, Harry Sprinker, for whom Sprinker Recreation Center was named after, was a Pierce County Commissioner for 20 years, and helped create the Parks & Recreation Department, as well as direct the rebuilding of the now "old" Narrows Bridge after Galloping Gertie collapsed. My father, Command Sergeant Major Early Crosson Sr., fought with the U.S. Army in the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Following his military service, he served as a juvenile probation officer at Remann Hall for over 20 years. My mother, Patty Sprinker, worked as a court services assistant for 30 years at Remann Hall. I have continued in the public service tradition, working as a case coordinator with Pierce County Superior Court. My love for my community runs deep and is unconditional.

Mayor George, in your powerful and thoughtful statement, you indicated that talking about race is uncomfortable for white people. Well, me being a former collegiate and professional athlete, a large part of improving your skills is found when we make ourselves uncomfortable. For example, for one to get stronger and build muscle, it is paramount to gradually increase the amount of weight you lift during strength training. Or, in playing a musical instrument, you must practice, practice, practice if you want to make it to Carnegie Hall. Talking about race more often can serve to hone our skills in being more comfortable with having these types of conversations, and building a stronger relationship with our neighbors. It goes without saying, the brutal murder of George Floyd has left me feeling angry, afraid, and helpless. Lately, there have been too many sleepless nights, filled with thoughts of anguish and frustration. The issue of racism that the black community faces is more deep rooted than you may be aware of, or that some are willing to accept.

As a warning, things are about to get uncomfortable. Slave Patrols were organized groups or militias of white men, that were in some states, required community members to serve and police slaves and escaped slaves. These groups were given privileges, and given special discretion, to use means that included corporal punishment to discipline the slaves who disobeyed "slave codes". In 1865 and through Reconstruction, when these patrols were disbanded and would morph into groups, such as the KKK. These groups still felt it was their duty to keep the order that they were accustomed to. Old patrol practices would still be adopted by Southern Police forces, and would gradually move to the North. Fast forward to May 25, 2020, and we can draw a parallel to the situation involving Amy Cooper and Christian Cooper. When Amy Cooper and Christian Cooper encounter one another in Central Park, New York, Amy (white female), feeling that Christian (black male) was acting out of his place by asking her to follow park rules, and feeling that he should know where he stands in society, threatened to call the police and tell them that "...an African American man... is threatening me." The mere fact the she understands that Mr. Cooper is seen as holding a lower spot on societies rug, and believes that there is actual power behind those words, and knowing the fear and pain that her making that call could result in for Christian Cooper, scares me to death.

The roots of systemic racism run deep, and to dig them out, we all must agree to take aggressive and immediate actions to correct this path. I ask each member, if willing, to share their thoughts, reaction, and if they have any plan to address these issues in our community professionally and personally. Please also keep in mind, that your silence or unwillingness to face head on this uncomfortable topic, will not help strengthen your ability to assist in the making meaningful progress for our community. So, I urge you to step out of what may be your comfort zone, so that we may grow closer. I do feel encouraged after experiencing and seeing the outpouring of support from my community during the march. However, there were several instances where the language of hate was directed towards our group of peaceful protesters, who want nothing more than to have equality, liberty and justice for all. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you all for your time.

-Chris Sprinker

109 Eldorado Ave Fircrest, WA 98466

Chief Cheeseman,

This is a letter in response to the community bulletin posts on the City of Fircrest Facebook page, posted on your behalf.

My name is Jenny Stryker and I have been a resident here in Fircrest since 2008. I am a retired Air Force veteran, an MSW (Master Social Work) and an active member here in our community. My role as a Social Worker aligns with my person values and the way I live my daily life. The Social Work profession is similar to Law Enforcement in that it is guided by a Code of Ethics that defines the values and principles of how we conduct our practice in communities. Just as it is the mission of Law Enforcement to “protect and serve all individuals and to respect the inherent life, liberty dignity and worth of all individual”, the mission of the Social Worker is to act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against and person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, etc.....Just as you are always a Law Enforcement officer, I am always a Social Worker.

I was very proud to see so many community leaders participating in the recent protest against police brutality. I am sure that when you took a knee to show your solidarity to the black community and pay respect to the black lives lost at the hands of police, you were thinking of ways you could work toward making things right in your community and beyond. I say this because you followed your actions with a community post that detailed your thought process and how you “failed to register the problem” with regard to displaying the blue line flag within the police station. You also stated in this release that you would “remove this flag immediately” and 129 community comments followed applauding your decision to do so. But not so fast...One day later you reneged and released another “Message from the Chief”.

This post was much more detailed and much more problematic. Through your own basic internet search, you determined that your gut instinct to take down the flag and honor your position as an ally to the black community, was less important than keeping the flag up and supporting a divisive and racist material object. This is unacceptable and more than that, it is in direct opposition of your previous actions. This is not what a community leader does; a community leader leads with integrity.

Chief how do you take a knee in solidarity, pose for pictures with black men while protesting against police violence only to turn around and issue these statements to the community? What a slap in the face. What you did is called “whitesplaining and it is not ok. You can not try to out-explain the history of the blue line flag. Those of us fighting for black justice know that this flag is used to represent the “All Lives Matters” movement which was created as the antithesis to the Black Lives Matters movement. The mere fact that this flag has caused hurt and pain to the black community should be enough for you to say you will take it down. You cannot deny their history Chief. You cannot rewrite their history and you cannot take a passive stance when our black brothers and sisters are being murdered by the very people that wear your uniform.

This is not the radical transformation we are demanding of law enforcement; this is really the least action you could do to support the black community. I encourage you to reach out to those

of us committed to this cause for further education and ways you can make a positive change by using your place of privilege as Chief of Police in the City of Fircrest.

Jenny Stryker, MSW  
446 Buena Vista Ave Fircrest

Greetings, I wanted to offer a comment and question around the anti-racism proclamation.

I appreciate the council's willingness to work together to create an anti-racism proclamation. I appreciate the desires expressed in the statement. There are many in the community who are ready to engage in anti-racism work with you. What are the council's early thoughts and plans about next steps? How will you engage the black community, in particular, and the entire community, in general, in this work?

Thanks

Kathleen Weber

120 Farallone Ave Fircrest, WA 98466