

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Pro Tempore Nikki Bufford called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilmembers David M. Viafore, Brett L. Wittner, Hunter T. George, Jim Andrews, and Mayor Shannon Reynolds were present. Mayor Reynolds and Councilmember Viafore attended the meeting virtually. Councilmember Karen Mauer-Smith was absent and excused.

PRESIDING OFFICER'S REPORT**A. Proclamation – Veterans' Day**

Councilmember Andrews reported that less than one percent of the American public has served in the military or is a veteran and highlighted the pride felt among veteran families. Councilmember Andrews read the proclamation titled Veterans' Day into the record. **Councilmember Wittner MOVED to authorize the Mayor's signature on the proclamation proclaiming November 11, 2025, as Veterans Day in the City of Fircrest; seconded by Councilmember Andrews.** Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited Councilmember comments. Councilmember George thanked Councilmember Andrews for his service. Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford recognized all the veterans in Fircrest and Councilmember Andrews for their service. Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

The Motion Carried (6-0).

Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invoked Rule 20. (Order of Business) from the Fircrest City Council Rules and modified the Council agenda to add Item 4B. City Manager Salary Adjustment under the Presiding Officer's Report. There were no objections from the Council.

B. Motion: City Manager Salary Adjustment

Councilmember Wittner MOVED that the City Council approve an increase to the City Manager's salary by 3% in accordance with the terms and provisions outlined in the Letters of Understanding dated June 10, 2025, and September 9, 2025, and pursuant to the provisions of the City Manager's contract; seconded by Councilmember George. Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited Councilmember comments. Council discussion included appreciation for City Manager Masko's leadership, professionalism, and dedication over the past year, as well as acknowledgement of the delay in completing the annual performance review, and setting a goal to complete it earlier next year. Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

The Motion Carried (6-0).**CITY MANAGER COMMENTS**

City Manager Masko reported that the Public Defender Request for Proposals (RFP) was posted and will remain open for approximately three weeks. She also noted that the Pierce County District Court has placed a hold on its interlocal agreement with the City of Ruston for court services.

Acting City Manager Grover reported that the City experienced its first fall weather event and Public Works responded promptly with cleanup efforts. One tree fell overnight at Fircrest Park, and staff will assess the surrounding trees for any safety concerns.

DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS

- Police Chief Celis reported that a new Police Officer will start on November 3, 2025, and will attend a two-week equivalency academy at CJTC before starting field training. The Civil Service Commission conducted oral boards for the Police Records Technician, and the eligibility list will be certified at their next regularly scheduled meeting. Lastly, the Police Department is preparing for the upcoming Halloween event.
- Public Works Director Bemis reported two recent water main breaks on Regents Boulevard near Orchard Street and Daniels Drive, which have been addressed and repaired. The Public Works Department tested two different street sweeper models to evaluate their performance under heavy debris conditions as part of the equipment replacement plan. Director Bemis also reported on the upcoming interviews for the Utility Service Person II position. There was a brief discussion on affected water lines as a recurring issue, and Director Bemis stated they are not considered a major concern.
- Finance Director Deskins reported that the Investment Committee recently met to review Certificate of Deposit (CD) options and approved opening a new 12-month CD with Harborstone Credit Union at a rate of 4.15%. The City increased its investment from \$2 million to \$4.5 million, with an expected interest return of approximately \$186,750. Director Deskins thanked the Investment Committee for their quick coordination and Harborstone Credit Union for their continued partnership.

COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS

- Councilmember Wittner thanked the meeting attendees for their participation. Councilmember Viafore expressed appreciation for the Centennial Celebration.
- Councilmember George thanked attendees and wished everyone a safe Halloween. He expressed appreciation for the Police Department's presence during Halloween events. Lastly, he reported that his Brazilian exchange student was excited to experience the community's Halloween festivities.
- Councilmember Andrews commented on the heavy rain during Whittier Elementary's Trunk or Treat event and stated that the participants adapted. He expressed hope for better weather on Halloween.
- Councilmember Viafore stated that he will be missing the Fircrest Halloween for the first time in 45 years.
- Mayor Reynolds expressed appreciation for veterans and thanked them for their service.
- Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford; no comment.

PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited public comment. The following individuals provided comment:

- Brian Rybolt, Fircrest resident, expressed concern regarding the statement read before public comment about restrictions on campaign-related speech. He commented on the legal basis for the restriction and stated that the First Amendment protects political speech in public meetings.
- Vince Navarre, no address provided, commented on the upcoming Halloween event and stated that the holiday has religious origins. He expressed concern that the City's participation in Halloween activities, such as Haunted Trails and decorations, sets a precedent for recognizing religious celebrations.

City Attorney Eide responded that RCW 42.17A.555 prohibits the use of public facilities by state or local governments to support or oppose any ballot measure or candidate for elective office. She also reported that while there are limited exemptions allowing governing bodies to take official positions, such as through resolutions, these are narrowly defined. There was a brief discussion on the nuances between these restrictions and individuals' free speech rights during the public comment period.

COMMITTEE, COMMISSION, AND LIAISON REPORTS**A. Parks, Recreation, and Sustainability**

Councilmember Andrews reported that the Haunted Trails event was a success and that Youth Basketball program participation continues to increase. He reported that the Parks and Recreation Department is reviewing program fees to keep them affordable for residents. Lastly, he reported on the Masko Park vegetation maintenance and the Whittier Park volunteer clean-up event.

B. Police/Public Safety and Court

There was no report.

C. Public Works and Facilities

There was no report.

Public Works Director Bemis reported that October 28, 2025, is National First Responders Day and acknowledged the Public Works staff, Police, and Fire members.

D. Pierce County Regional Council

Mayor Reynolds reported that the Pierce County Regional Council's November meeting will focus on new officer elections.

E. Other Liaison Reports

SSHA³P – Councilmember George reported that the South Sound Housing Affordability Partnership approved their legislative agenda.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford requested that the City Clerk read the Consent Calendar.

- A. Approval of Check No. 223619 through 223678 in the amount of \$490,951.82
Approval of payroll electronic funds transfer in the amount of \$169,121.75
- B. Approval of the October 06, 2025, Special Meeting
Approval of the October 13, 2025, Special Meeting
Approval of the October 14, 2025, Regular Meeting
- C. Setting special budget meetings on November 3 and 10, 2025, at 6:00 P.M. for the sole purpose of reviewing the 2026 preliminary budget at Fircrest City Hall
- D. Setting a public hearing on November 12, 2025, at 7:15 P.M. or shortly thereafter to receive comments on the proposed Co-Living Amendments

- E. Setting a public hearing on November 12, 2025, at 7:15 P.M. or shortly thereafter to receive comments on the proposed water rate adjustment

Councilmember Wittner MOVED to approve the Consent Calendar; seconded by Councilmember George.

The Motion Carried (6-0).

PUBLIC HEARING

A. To receive comments on the 2026 Budget Revenue Sources

At 7:34 P.M., Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford opened the public hearing. Finance Director Deskins briefed the Council on the 2026 revenue sources, stating that the public hearing was to receive comments on the 2026 revenue sources. Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited Councilmember comments. Councilmember George expressed appreciation for including the University Place School District slide. Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited public testimony. There were none.

At 7:49 P.M., Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford closed the public hearing.

C. To receive comments on the 2026 Preliminary Budget

At 7:49 P.M., Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford opened the public hearing. Finance Director Deskins briefed the Council on the 2026 preliminary budget, stating that the public hearing was to receive comments on the 2026 preliminary budget.

Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited Councilmember comments. There were none.

Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited public testimony.

- Brian Rybolt, Fircrest resident, commented that City expenditures for sewer and water services exceed those for public safety. He thanked Councilmember George for voting against a recent Sound Transit Board decision to increase property taxes.

At 7:55 P.M., Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford closed the public hearing.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Fircrest Municipal Code Title 22 – Co-Living Code Amendments Discussion

Lindsey Sehmel, ETHOS PNW, presented the redlined FMC code sections pertinent to the HB 1998 for Co-Living Housing allowances in Multifamily Zoning Districts and discussed with Council the preparation of the processing timeline, and outlined the timeline for final Council adoption. Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited Councilmember comments. Councilmember Viafore requested clarification regarding state legislation limiting off-street parking requirements within one-half mile of major transit stops and expressed concern about increasing density without required parking. Ms. Sehmel reported that under the state-defined criteria for major transit, the only qualifying location within Fircrest is the area surrounding Tacoma Community College Transit Center.

B. Resolution No. 1990: Summit Law Group Amendment #19

City Manager Masko briefed the Council on the proposed resolution and highlighted that the amendment extends the agreement's term to December 31, 2026, and amends the hourly rate schedule. **Councilmember Wittner MOVED to adopt Resolution No. 1990, authorizing the City Manager to execute Amendment #19 to the Professional Services Agreement with Summit Law Group for personnel legal services; seconded by Councilmember George.** Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited Councilmember comments. Councilmember George commented on the contract's 19th amendment and suggested it may be time to issue a new Request for Proposals. Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited public comment; none was provided.

The Motion Carried (6-0).**C. Resolution No. 1991: Olbrechts & Associates Amendment #6**

City Manager Masko briefed the Council on the proposed resolution and highlighted that the amendment extends the agreement's term to December 31, 2026, and updates the fees for services. **Councilmember Wittner MOVED to adopt Resolution No. 1991, authorizing the City Manager to execute Amendment #6 to the Professional Services Agreement with Olbrechts & Associates, PLLC, for Hearing Examiner services; seconded by Councilmember George.** Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited Councilmember comments; none were provided. Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited public comment; none was provided.

The Motion Carried (6-0).**D. Resolution No. 1992: Regents Blvd. Traffic Signal Repair Project**

Public Works Director Bemis briefed the Council on the proposed resolution and highlighted that this project will restore proper traffic signal functionality at the intersection of Regents Boulevard and Electron/Golden Gate. **Councilmember Wittner MOVED to adopt Resolution No. 1992, authorizing the City Manager to execute a Public Works Contract with G&G Inc. and approve a Purchase Order with the City of Tacoma to replace the failed traffic signal controls at the intersection of Regents Boulevard and Electron/Golden Gate; seconded by Councilmember George.** Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited Councilmember comments. Councilmember Wittner requested that project timeline information be shared on the City's website or Facebook page to address public inquiries. Public Works Director Bemis stated that updates would be posted and noted that the contractor, G&G, expects to have a crew available by mid-November. Councilmember Viafore asked if the total project cost is \$73,195.10, inclusive of all components, with no additional sales tax expected. Public Works Director Bemis confirmed. Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited public comment.

- Brian Rybolt, Fircrest resident, expressed his support for keeping the intersection as a four-way stop.

The Motion Carried (6-0).**E. Resolution No. 1993: Casey Civil – Sewer Flow Analysis Contract**

Public Works Director Bemis briefed the Council on the proposed resolution and highlighted that the contract will provide for an independent third party with specialized expertise to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the City's wastewater flows. **Councilmember Wittner MOVED to adopt Resolution No. 1993, authorizing the City Manager to execute a Professional Services Agreement with Casey Civil for the Wastewater System Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Analysis Project; seconded by Councilmember George.** Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited

Councilmember comments. There was a brief discussion on the upcoming wastewater system analysis data and the City's ability to assess its own system's needs. Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited public comment; none was provided.

The Motion Carried (6-0).

F. Resolution No. 1994: Pasadena Sewer Repair Contract

Public Works Director Bemis briefed the Council on the proposed resolution and highlighted that the construction phase of this project is expected to be completed within 60 calendar days from contract approval. **Councilmember Wittner MOVED to adopt Resolution No. 1994, authorizing the City Manager to execute a Public Works Contract with Pacific Trenchless Inc./Budget Sewer for a pipe bursting project at the 700 block of Pasadena Drive; seconded by Councilmember George.** Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited Councilmember comments; none were provided. Mayor Pro Tempore Bufford invited public comment; none was provided.

The Motion Carried (6-0).

CALL FOR FINAL COMMENTS

Councilmember Viafore commented on the planned cleanup at Masko Park and asked for close oversight by staff and contractors. He requested an update on the recent public meeting on the new Whittier Elementary School project, and Councilmember George reported that the meeting primarily reviewed the site design and construction plans.

Councilmember George thanked staff and volunteers for the Haunted Trails event and encouraged residents to participate in the upcoming elections. He also thanked staff for providing porta-potties for the event.

There was a brief discussion on providing any safety incident reports during the construction of the new Whittier Elementary School to the City.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session scheduled.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Wittner MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 P.M., seconded by Councilmember George.

The Motion Carried (6-0).



Shannon Reynolds, Mayor



Arlette Burkhardt, City Clerk