

**CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND ROLL CALL**

Mayor 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, Karen Mauer-Smith, Hunter T. George, and Joe Barrentine were present.

Councilmember Shannon Reynolds attended the meeting virtually.

**PRESIDING OFFICER'S REPORT**

Mayor Bufford invoked Rule 20. Order of Business from the Fircrest City Council Rules and modified the Council agenda to discuss and take action on Agenda Item 5C. Motion to Approve City Council Travel before 5B. Motion to Appoint AWC Business Meeting Voting Delegates and remove Agenda Item 13B. Motion: Confirmation of Pedestrian Safety Committee Appointments. There were no objections from the Council.

**A. Proclamation: Women's History Month**

Councilmember Mauer-Smith read the proclamation titled Women's History Month into the record. **Councilmember George MOVED to authorize the Mayor's signature on the proclamation proclaiming the month of March is Women's History Month in the City of Fircrest; seconded by Councilmember Barrentine.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment. Councilmember George expressed appreciation for Women's History Month and their contributions. Mayor Bufford provided resources for the upcoming month to celebrate Women's History Month. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

**The Motion Carried (7-0).**

**CITY MANAGER COMMENTS**

City Manager Masko provided updates on several items including the City's 2026 WellCity designation, the Whittier Elementary School Replacement Project progress, the Hearing Examiner for requested variances, the School's Districts proposed interlocal agreement, tiny home regulations, and she will be out of the office the following week attending a conference and Parks and Recreation Director Jeff Grover will be acting City Manager during her absence.

**A. Confirmation of Civil Service Commissioner Bechtholt's Reappointment**

City Manager Masko briefed the Council on Civil Service Commissioner John Bechtholt's reappointment and stated that reappointing Mr. Bechtholt would provide continuity to the Commission. **Councilmember Mauer-Smith MOVED to confirm the City Manager's appointment of John Bechtholt to the City of Fircrest Civil Service Commission, effective April 5, 2026, through April 4, 2032; seconded by Councilmember Viafore.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment; none were provided. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

**The Motion Carried (7-0).**

**C. Motion to Appoint AWC Business Meeting Voting Delegates**

City Manager Masko briefed the Council on the approval for Councilmember travel to attend the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) Annual Conference. She highlighted that per Council rules, Council approval is required for travel expenses exceeding \$150. There was a brief

discussion of Council interest and attendance affecting the Council meeting scheduled for that week. **Councilmember George MOVED to approve travel for Councilmember George, Reynolds, Barrentine, and Mayor Bufford to attend the 2026 AWC Annual Conference in Spokane, Washington; seconded by Councilmember Barrentine.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment; none were provided. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

**The Motion Carried (7-0).****B. Motion to Approve City Council Travel**

City Manager Masko reported that the City may designate up to three voting delegates to represent the City of Fircrest at the AWC Annual Business Meeting. City Manager Masko highlighted that per the Council rules, voting delegates are typically selected on a rotating basis to provide all Councilmembers an opportunity to serve. **Councilmember Viafore MOVED to appoint Councilmember George, Barrentine, and Reynolds as the City of Fircrest voting delegates for the AWC Annual Business Meeting in Spokane, Washington, on June 25, 2026; seconded by Councilmember Mauer-Smith.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment; none were provided. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

**The Motion Carried (7-0).****DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS**

- Police Chief Celis provided a departmental update to include calls for service, response to recent incidents, staffing updates, and upcoming required training. Lastly, Chief Celis reported that Officer Lease received the Top Shot Award and Records Coordinator Truong received the Employee of the Year Award.
- Parks and Recreation Director Grover provided an update on the Robotics Expo held the previous Saturday and highlighted approximately 1,300 attendees, and expressed appreciation to Jim Gourley for helping bring the event to Fircrest.
- Finance Director Deskins provided an update on the City's exit conference with the Washington State Auditor's Office and highlighted that the City received a clean audit.

**COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS**

- Councilmember Barrentine commented on the Robotics Expo and thanked the Parks Department for their efforts.
- Councilmember Mauer-Smith; no comment.
- Councilmember George commented on the Robotics Expo and highlighted that it was a great event. There was a brief discussion on the Deputy City Clerk vacancy.
- Councilmember Wittner commented on the Robotics Expo event and hopes it comes back.
- Councilmember Viafore expressed concern regarding the timeline associated with the Whittier Elementary School Replacement Project and the proposed use agreement between the City of Fircrest and the Tacoma School District related to Whittier Park.
- Councilmember Reynolds; no comments.
- Mayor Bufford shared her appreciation for the Robotics Expo and thanked everyone involved. Mayor Bufford stated that the Columbia Bank representative who visited with the City is her

sister, who serves as a Vice President and Business Banking Relationship Manager for the region, and noted that she has no involvement in any City banking decisions.

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

Mayor Bufford invited public comment. The following individual provided comment.

- Jim Gourley, Fircrest resident, thanked the City, staff, and Council for their support of the Tacoma Robotics Expo. He highlighted that nearly \$20,000 was raised to support the IDEA High School robotics program. Mr. Gurley expressed appreciation for the City’s support and indicated interest in continuing the event in the future.

**COMMITTEE, COMMISSION, AND LIAISON REPORTS**

**A. Parks, Recreation, and Sustainability**

There was no report.

**B. Police/Public Safety and Court**

Councilmember George reported that the two surplus police vehicles are being transferred to the City of Oak Harbor and that the department is pursuing grant opportunities to replace equipment. He also reported that the Police Department has placed the speed trailer back into service as an additional tool to encourage drivers to reduce speeds.

**C. Public Works and Facilities**

Councilmember Reynolds reported that construction on the Alameda Avenue sidewalk project has begun, and the Electron Way-Regents Boulevard pedestrian push-button project is nearing completion. She also highlighted the refinishing of picnic tables and the surplus sale of the Bobcat skid steer.

**D. Pierce County Regional Council**

Councilmember Reynolds reported that Small Cities Day will be held next month, and this would be an opportunity to highlight a project or topic for discussion.

Councilmember Reynolds also reported that committee appointments for the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) have been finalized. She was appointed as the primary delegate to the Zoo and Trek Authority.

**E. Other Liaison Reports**

There were none.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

Mayor Bufford requested that the City Clerk read the Consent Calendar:

- A. Approval of Check No. 224143 through 224169 in the amount of \$98,758.85  
Approval of payroll electronic funds transfer in the amount of \$176,572.58
- B. Setting a Public Hearing on March 10, 2026, at 7:15 P.M. or shortly thereafter to receive comments on the 2026 Stormwater Management Program Plan
- C. Approval of the February 3, 2026, Joint Meeting minutes  
Approval of the February 10, 2026, Regular Meeting minutes

**Councilmember Wittner MOVED to approve the Consent Calendar as read; seconded by Councilmember Mauer-Smith.**

**The Motion Carried (7-0).**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

There was no public hearing scheduled.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Resolution No. 2015: Pedestrian Safety Committee Formation**

City Manager Masko briefed the Council on the proposed resolution and highlighted that developing a comprehensive pedestrian safety plan has been a City Council goal for several years. She also reported that Mayor Bufford proposed forming an ad hoc Council study committee, pursuant to Council Rule 23, consisting of three Councilmembers appointed by the Mayor. The committee will work with the City Manager, Public Works Director Bemis, and Police Chief Celis. **Councilmember George MOVED to adopt Resolution No. 2015, establishing the Pedestrian Safety Committee; seconded by Councilmember Mauer-Smith.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment. Councilmember George thanked the Mayor and expressed support for developing a comprehensive pedestrian safety plan. Mayor Bufford stated that if approved, she intends to appoint Councilmember George as Committee Chair, with Councilmember Barentine and Mauer-Smith serving on the committee. There was a brief discussion on the process for forming committees. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

**The Motion Carried (7-0).**

**B. Motion: Confirmation of Pedestrian Safety Committee Appointments**

This agenda item was removed.

**C. Resolution No. 2016: Planning & Building Fees and Charges Update**

City Manager Masko briefed the Council on the proposed resolution and highlighted that it corrects a calculation error. **Councilmember George MOVED to adopt Resolution No. 2016 authorizing updated Planning and Building fees and charges; seconded by Councilmember Barrentine.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment. There was a brief discussion on the effective date and the impact on any current applicants. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

**The Motion Carried (6-1), with Councilmember Viafore dissenting.**

**CALL FOR FINAL COMMENTS**

Councilmember George commented that AHAT (Associated Ministries Housing Assistance Team) recently held an open house at its facility near City Hall and expressed appreciation to the organization for its work.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was no executive session scheduled.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Councilmember Barrentine MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Mauer-Smith.**

**The Motion Carried (7-0).**



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Nikki Bufford, Mayor



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Arlette Burkhardt, City Clerk