

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, Shannon Reynolds, Brett L. Wittner, Karen Mauer-Smith, Hunter T. George, and Joe Barrentine were present.

PRESIDING OFFICER'S REPORT**A. Proclamation: Parks Appreciation Day**

Mayor Bufford read the proclamation titled Parks Appreciation Day into the record. **Councilmember Wittner MOVED to authorize the Mayor's signature on the proclamation proclaiming April 18, 2026, as Parks Appreciation Day in the City of Fircrest; seconded by Councilmember Mauer-Smith.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment; none were provided. Mayor Bufford commented on the upcoming Pierce Conservation District Whittier Park clean-up event. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

The Motion Carried (7-0).**B. Proclamation: Sexual Assault Awareness Month**

Councilmember Reynolds read the proclamation titled Sexual Assault Awareness Month into the record. **Councilmember Wittner MOVED to authorize the Mayor's signature on the proclamation proclaiming the month of April 2026 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in the City of Fircrest; seconded by Councilmember Reynolds.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment. Councilmember Reynolds expressed support for Rebuilding Hope Sexual Assault Center and commented on the importance of their services. Mayor Bufford invited public comment.

- Rebuilding Hope Sexual Assault Center Executive Director Carlyn Sampson thanked the City for the proclamation and partnership. She highlighted the prevalence of sexual violence and encouraged community awareness and education.

The Motion Carried (7-0).**CITY MANAGER COMMENTS**

City Manager Masko provided an update on the Whittier Elementary School Replacement Project and reported that the Hearing Examiner approved the conditional use permit and that the Interlocal Agreement with Tacoma Public Schools is being finalized. Ms. Masko reported on the upcoming Coffee with a Councilmember hosted by Pierce County Councilmember Rosie Ayala. Lastly, she reported on the employee wellness March Madness event.

DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS

- Police Chief Celis provided a departmental update to include calls for service, a recent incident involving a burglary arrest, and a report of possible gunfire at Thelma Gilmur Park. He reported on the receipt of grant-funded ballistic vests, discussions with AXON regarding body-worn camera services, and announced Officer Thompson's successful completion of probation. There was a brief discussion about the vandalized signage at Thelma Gilmur Park.
- Parks and Recreation Director Jeff Grover reported on the Easter Egg Hunt event, youth baseball season preparations, and upcoming dive training at the pool. There was a brief discussion on the University Place partnership with the YMCA and its impacts on Fircrest recreation

programming. There is no expected impact. Further discussions included proof of Fircrest residency for pool passes and exploring alternative identification methods.

- Public Works Director Bemis provided a departmental update to include the Alameda Avenue sidewalk paving and its asphalt transition concerns, and ongoing maintenance of the Emerson Street pervious sidewalks. There was a brief discussion on a moss-covered pathway at the end of Claremont Street.

COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS

- Councilmember Viafore commented on Blake Surina's upcoming retirement, the passing of community members, and recognizing their contributions to the Fircrest community.
- Councilmember Reynolds; no comment.
- Councilmember Wittner reported that April is Sarcoidosis Awareness Month and expressed appreciation for awareness and understanding as he continues treatment.
- Councilmember George expressed appreciation for comments shared by Councilmembers.
- Councilmember Mauer-Smith; no comment.
- Councilmember Barrentine; no comment.
- Mayor Bufford; no comment.

PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

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

- Cub Scout Troop 219 Jax Goodyear and Jace Goodger introduced themselves.

The Council welcomed the scouts.

COMMITTEE, COMMISSION, AND LIAISON REPORTS

A. Administration

There was no report.

B. Built Environmental, Planning, and Building

Councilmember Wittner provided a brief report on the Whittier Elementary School Replacement Project and the Hearing Examiner's decision to approve the conditional use permit.

C. Finance and Information Technology

Councilmember Barrentine reported that the 2025 State Auditor's Office audit is ongoing and ahead of schedule. He also reported on the City's password policy update.

D. Pierce Transit

Councilmember Reynolds reported that the Pierce Transit Board's meeting was canceled.

E. South Sound Housing Affordability Partners

Councilmember George reported on the South Sound Housing Affordability Partners appointed members to its advisory board and received presentations from Pierce County on affordable housing programs.

F. Other Liaison Reports

There were no other liaison reports.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Mayor Bufford requested the City Clerk read the Consent Calendar:

- A. Approval of Check No. 224211, 224312 through No. 224407 in the amount of \$336,135.66
Approval of Check No. 14593 through No. 14594 in the amount of \$9,569.97
Approval of Check No. 14595 through No. 14602 in the amount of \$84,970.64
Approval of payroll electronic funds transfer in the amount of \$175,747.22

- B. Registering no objections to the Stina's Cellars Liquor License Renewal Application

- C. Approval of March 16, 2026, Study Session minutes
Approval of March 24, 2026, Regular Meeting minutes

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

Councilmember Viafore requested the removal of the following vouchers:

- Accounts Payable No. 37465 – Windmill Gardens, LLC in the amount of \$3,725.98
- Accounts Payable No. 37568 – Michael Williams in the amount of \$2,350.00

The Council MOVED to approve the Consent Agenda as amended.

The Motion Carried (7-0).

Councilmember Viafore reported that Accounts Payable No. 37465 – Windmill Gardens is for the beautification hanging baskets, with a deposit paid at the time of order and the remaining balance due upon delivery. There was a consensus to hold Accounts Payable No. 37465 – Windmill Gardens until the hanging baskets are delivered.

Councilmember Viafore reported that Accounts Payable No. 37568 – Michael Williams is for a sewer backup claim for damages. There was a discussion regarding process concerns, City insurance procedures, and a negotiated settlement.

Councilmember George MOVED to authorize payment of Account Payable No. 37568 – Michael Williams in the amount of \$2,350.00; seconded by Councilmember Barrentine. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

The Motion Carried (7-0).

PUBLIC HEARING

There was no public hearing scheduled.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Motion: Letter of Support to Sound Transit for Tacoma Community College Extension

Councilmember George provided an overview of Sound Transit's financial situation and their need to prioritize projects. He encouraged the Council to review and discuss the importance of the Tacoma Community College (TCC) extension. **Councilmember George MOVED to support the letter to Sound Transit regarding the Tacoma Community College extension; seconded by Councilmember Mauer-Smith.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comments. Council discussions included the signatory authority on the proposed letter, the need for further review of the letter, potential impacts to Fircrest, and concerns regarding the use of eminent domain by Sound Transit. There was a consensus to incorporate language acknowledging general concerns related to future design and implementation. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

The Motion Carried (7-0).

B. Resolution No. 2022: Alameda Avenue Sidewalk Project Change Order No. 1

Public Works Director Bemis briefed the Council on the proposed resolution and highlighted that the change order completes pavement improvements along the east side of Alameda Avenue for the full project length. **Councilmember Mauer-Smith MOVED to adopt Resolution No. 2022, authorizing the City Manager to execute Change Order No. 1 to the Alameda Avenue West Sidewalk Project construction contract to include paving of the east side of Alameda Avenue; seconded by Councilmember Barrentine.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comments; none were provided. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

The Motion Carried (7-0).

C. Whittier Park Interlocal Agreement Discussion

City Manager Masko provided an overview of the proposed Interlocal Agreement with Tacoma Public Schools for the use of Whittier Park as a construction staging area for the Whittier Elementary School capital project. She reported that the agreement is almost finalized and will return to the Council for action at the next meeting.

City Attorney Eide highlighted elements of the agreement, including defined staging areas, restoration requirements, compensation for loss of use and revenue, coordination expectations, and ongoing discussions with the City and Tacoma Public Schools. She stated that the remaining items include final compensation amounts, scheduling details, and certain operational provisions.

Council discussions included restoration expectations, potential park improvements, compensation considerations, and addressing the impacts to City facilities and operations.

Councilmember Reynolds left the meeting at 8:54 P.M.

D. 2025 Year-End Financial Report

Finance Director Deskins presented the City's 2025 year-end report, highlighting stable revenue, controlled expenditures, and strong fund balances. The General Fund ended the year with a balance of approximately \$4.72 million, and the cumulative reserve remained fully funded. She highlighted revenue sources, including taxes and service charges. Major expenditures included police services, fire/EMS, and parks and recreation. Councilmember Barrentine requested a five-year trend analysis of sales tax revenue in Fircrest.

CALL FOR FINAL COMMENTS

Councilmember Barrentine expressed appreciation for City staff.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Barrentine MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Mauer-Smith.

The Motion Carried (6-0).



Nikki Bufford, Mayor



Arlette Burkhart, City Clerk