

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Nikki Bufford called the study session to order at 6:00 P.M. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilmembers David M. Viafore, Shannon Reynolds, Brett L. Wittner, Hunter T. George, and Joe Barrentine were present.

Councilmember Shannon Reynolds attended the meeting virtually.

Councilmember Karen Mauer-Smith was absent and excused.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

There were none.

CELL TOWER LEASE BUYOUT

Public Works Director Bemis introduced a presentation regarding a potential buyout of the City's existing cell tower leases at the High Tank and Golf Course Tank.

TowerPoint Vice President of Acquisitions Ryan Hoffman presented the proposed telecommunications easement agreement and explained that TowerPoint purchases the revenue rights associated with the existing cell tower leases in exchange for a one-time payment while assuming the risk with future lease renewals. He highlighted that the City would receive 50 percent of any additional revenue generated from new co-located tenants above the existing purchased lease revenue. He also reviewed the transaction process.

Council discussions included the effect of replacing or decommissioning the High Tank, existing and future lease revenue, and future tenants. City Attorney Eide commented on proposed revisions to the revenue-sharing provisions and confirmed her understanding that the City would share in future increases in revenue under the revised proposal.

There was a brief discussion on other municipalities that have entered into similar agreements and alternative purchase terms. The Council thanked Mr. Hoffman for the presentation and discussion.

HOLIDAY TREE DISCUSSION

Public Works Director Bemis provided an overview of the condition of the City's Holiday tree at Alice Peers Park and highlighted that a previous arborist report stated that the tree was declining and deteriorating from the top down.

Public Works Director Bemis and Parks and Recreation Director Grover presented three options for the Holiday Tree, which included replacing the existing tree with a new living tree, planting a new living tree near the Community Center while continuing to use the existing tree during the establishment period, and utilizing either an artificial tree or an annually installed live-cut tree. Discussions included maintenance requirements, costs, safety issues, and the need for an interim tree while a newly planted tree becomes established.

Council discussions included the importance of maintaining the City's holiday tree tradition, the preference for a permanent living tree, potential locations, and the size and species of a replacement tree.

There was a Council consensus to further explore replacing the existing tree at Alice Peers Park with a new living tree while identifying an interim holiday tree and planting a new living tree near the Community Center while continuing to use the existing Alice Peers Park tree until the replacement tree

is established. Council requested that staff bring back cost estimates and planning information along with their recommendations.

BUDGET/STAFFING UPDATE DISCUSSION

City Manager Masko provided an update on current staffing vacancies and reported that the City has three vacant positions: the Deputy City Clerk/Human Resources Specialist, the Associate Planner, and a Police Officer.

City Manager Masko stated that the Associate Planner position is intended to provide in-office planning services, support the Permit Coordinator, assist with code enforcement, and maintain customer service while the Planning consultants continue with special projects and policy work. She highlighted that the position is currently budgeted for and recommended proceeding with recruitment. There was a brief discussion on the City's code enforcement needs. There was Council support for moving forward with the position. City Manager Masko stated that a salary amendment would be brought forth for Council approval.

City Manager Masko reported that the Police Department currently has one officer vacancy and that a conditional job offer has been extended to another candidate moving through the background process. She also discussed Police Sergeant Villamor's upcoming retirement and the process for promoting eligible officers. Council discussions included overall police staffing levels and the impact of photo enforcement revenue on police staffing.

City Manager Masko reported that staff will evaluate future Municipal Court staffing needs in conjunction with the implementation of the City's photo enforcement program and the conclusion of the court services agreement with Ruston. She explained that Fircrest's court workload has continued to increase and that additional staffing may be necessary to support both existing court operations and the anticipated photo enforcement program. Council discussions included the importance of planning for the transition from the Ruston contract, evaluating long-term staffing needs, and reviewing court workload data during a future study session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. To Review the Performance of a Public Employee, pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(g)

At 7:19 P.M., Mayor Bufford reported that the Council would take a one-minute recess and convene into Executive Session, not to exceed thirty (30) minutes, to review the performance of a public employee, pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(g). City Attorney Eide was invited into the Executive Session.

At 7:49 P.M., Mayor Bufford extended the Executive Session for an additional six (6) minutes.

Councilmember Reynolds left the meeting at 7:55 P.M.

The Council reconvened at 7:56 P.M., and no action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Wittner MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Barrentine.

The Motion Carried (5-0).

JUNE 15, 2026

FIRCREST CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – STUDY SESSION 3



Nikki Bufford, Mayor



Arlette Burkhardt, City Clerk