

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, and Joe Barrentine were present.

Councilmember Shannon Reynolds attended the meeting virtually.

Councilmember Karen Mauer-Smith and Hunter T. George were absent and excused.

PRESIDING OFFICER'S REPORT

A. Legislative Update – Senator Nobles

There was a consensus to postpone the legislative update until Senator Nobles arrived in Chambers.

B. Proclamation: Public Service Recognition Week

Mayor Bufford read into the record the proclamation titled “Public Service Recognition Week” into the record. **Councilmember Wittner MOVED to authorize the Mayor’s signature on the proclamation proclaiming May 3rd – 9th, 2026, as Public Service Recognition Week in the City of Fircrest; seconded by Councilmember Viafore.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment. The Council thanked City employees for their service and contributions to the community. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

The Motion Carried (5-0).

Mayor Bufford invoked Fircrest City Council Rule 9. Regular Council Meeting to amend the agenda and add agenda item 4C. EMS Levy Renewal – Committee Appointments. There were no objections from the Council to amend the Council agenda.

C. EMS Levy Renewal – Committee Appointments

Mayor Bufford briefed the Council on the proposed appointments for the “For” Committee related to the EMS Levy Renewal ballot measure adopted under Resolution No. 1328 for the August 4, 2026, ballot. The appointments were for the following individuals: Alice McDaniel, Blake Surina, and Jerry Foss. There were no volunteers for an “Against” Committee. **Councilmember Wittner MOVED to appoint Alice McDaniel, Blake Surina, and Jerry Foss to the EMS Levy Renewal “For” Committee; seconded by Councilmember Viafore.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment. Council expressed appreciation for the volunteers. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

The Motion Carried (5-0).

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

City Manager Masko provided updates on several items, including the upcoming traffic studies for the City’s photo enforcement program, the Fircrest Municipal Court jury trial on April 23, 2026, the upcoming Coffee with a Councilmember event hosted by Pierce County Councilmember Rosie Ayala, and congratulated Court Administrator Samantha Olivarez’s on receiving the 2026 President’s Award from the Washington State District and Municipal Court Managers Association. The Council congratulated Ms. Olivarez on the recognition.

The Council returned to agenda item 4A. Legislative Update – Senator Nobles.

4A. Legislative Update – Senator Nobles

State Senator T’wina Nobles provided a legislative update regarding the 2026 legislative session, including the State budget, transportation investments, education funding, housing, public safety, and tax policy. There was a brief discussion on the Millionaire’s tax, housing requirements affecting smaller jurisdictions, consumer protections, future housing priorities, and the State’s credit rating. The Council thanked Senator Nobles for the update and her continued representation of the 28th Legislative District.

DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS

- Police Chief Celis provided a departmental update to include calls for service, response to recent incidents, Emergency Vehicle Operations Training, and personnel updates.
- Parks and Recreation Director Grover provided a brief departmental update to include ongoing staff training, youth baseball participation, pool staffing, and plans to offer adult swim lessons earlier in the season.
- Public Works Director Bemis provided updates regarding seasonal beautification efforts, including the maintenance of the Kwanzan cherry trees and hanging baskets preparations. He also highlighted the seasonal summer staff vacancies.

COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS

- Councilmember Barrentine reported on the upcoming Pierce County Hunger Walk.
- Councilmember Wittner; no comment.
- Councilmember Viafore requested an update regarding the Deputy City Clerk position, commented on the recent jury trial, and acknowledged a Fircrest resident celebrating their 100th birthday and thanked the Police Department for participating in the recognition.
- Councilmember Reynolds commented that she was attending remotely from Chicago for professional training.
- Councilmember Wittner congratulated former Councilmember Blake Surina on his retirement from Exercise Science Center.
- Councilmember Viafore requested an update on the police contract negotiations.
- Mayor Bufford thanked the Police Department for their participation in the 100th birthday recognition and acknowledged the third anniversary of Maggie McGee’s Bakery.

PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Mayor Bufford invited public comment. The following individuals provided comments.

- Jim Gourley, 429 Golden Gate Avenue, commented regarding housing legislation, comprehensive planning, and concerns related to detached accessory dwelling units, redevelopment, and preserving Fircrest character.
- Brian Rybolt, no address provided, commented on the State budget, proposed tax policies, potential bond rating concerns, and the legislative update presentation.

COMMITTEE, COMMISSION, AND LIAISON REPORTS

A. Parks, Recreation, and Sustainability

Councilmember Viafore commented on the importance of a long-term maintenance plan for the Community Center and suggested Community Center closure periods to complete major facility projects. He also expressed appreciation for the cleanliness and upkeep of City facilities and suggested additional janitorial support be considered.

B. Police/Public Safety and Court

There was no report.

C. Public Works and Facilities

Councilmember Reynolds reported on the pool preparations and recent graffiti vandalism near the Whittier Park bathrooms. She provided several project updates to include the Alameda Avenue Sidewalk Project and the Regents Boulevard Grind and Overlay Project. There was a brief discussion on the responsive bids for the Regents Boulevard Grind and Overlay Project.

D. Pierce County Regional Council

Councilmember Reynolds reported she was unable to attend due to a family emergency.

E. Other Liaison Reports

There were none.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Mayor Bufford requested the City Clerk read the Consent Calendar:

- A. Approval of Check No. 224408 through 224474 in the amount of \$333,733.60
Approval of payroll electronic funds transfer in the amount of \$179,334.21
- B. Approval of the April 14, 2026, Special Meeting minutes
Approval of the April 14, 2026, Regular Meeting minutes

Councilmember Wittner MOVED to approve the Consent Calendar as read; seconded by Councilmember Reynolds.

The Motion Carried (5-0).

PUBLIC HEARING

There was no public hearing scheduled.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution No. 2023: Interlocal Agreement with Tacoma Public Schools for Whittier Park Usage

City Manager Masko briefed the Council on the proposed resolution and highlighted the revisions to the agreement, which primarily involved modifications to construction parking and staging locations at Whittier Park.

Councilmember Reynolds left the meeting at 8:12 P.M.

Councilmember Wittner MOVED to adopt Resolution No. 2023, authorizing the City Manager to execute an Interlocal Agreement with Tacoma School District No. 10 for the use and restoration of Whittier Park in support of the Whittier Elementary School replacement project; seconded by Councilmember Barrentine. Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment. Council discussions included construction parking concerns at Whittier Park, potential impacts to the aquifer and water quality, environmental standards, project timelines, traffic congestion, and construction area restoration. Cornerstone Representatives provided additional information regarding construction staging, parking limitations, environmental standards, and project scheduling. Mayor Bufford invited public comment.

The following individuals commented on their concerns for environmental review and water quality protection:

- Jim Gourley
- Nancy Atwood

Councilmember Barrentine MOVED to table Resolution No. 2023 for further review and discussion; seconded by Councilmember Wittner.

The Motion to Table Carried (4-0).

Mayor Bufford requested that the Council provide the City Manager with their availability to set a special meeting to further discuss the Interlocal Agreement with Tacoma Public Schools for Whittier Park Usage.

B. Resolution No. 2024: Locke Systems Contract Amendment No. 1

Finance Director Deskins briefed the Council on the proposed resolution and highlighted that the increase reflects the City's technology growth and need for support services. **Councilmember Wittner MOVED to adopt Resolution No. 2024, authorizing the City Manager to execute Amendment #1 with Locke Systems Inc. for information technology services; seconded by Councilmember Barrentine.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment; none were provided. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

The Motion Carried (4-0).

CALL FOR FINAL COMMENTS

Councilmember Viafore requested Council consider adding an executive session regarding potential litigation.

Councilmember Barrentine commented on the Sound Transit Open House regarding future planning and funding priorities. He encouraged community members to provide comments to Sound Transit representatives.

Mayor Bufford invoked Fircrest City Council Rule 9. Regular Council Meeting Agenda and stated that the Council will add an executive session to the agenda to discuss potential litigation, pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)(iii). There were no noted objections from the Council.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. To Discuss Potential Litigation, pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)

At 8:58 P.M., Mayor Bufford reported that the Council would take a two-minute recess and convene into Executive Session, not to exceed five (5) minutes, to discuss potential litigation pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i). Mayor Bufford noted that City Manager Masko was invited to the Executive Session.

The Council reconvened at 9:05 P.M., and no action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Viafore MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Barrentine.

The Motion Carried (4-0).



Nikki Bufford, Mayor



Arlette Burkhardt, City Clerk