

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

Councilmember Viafore and Reynolds attended the meeting virtually.

Councilmember Brett L. Wittner was absent and excused. There was no objection from the Council.

PRESIDING OFFICER'S REPORT

A. Introduction and Pinning of New Police Officer Bounds

Police Chief Celis introduced Police Officer Mikael Bounds and provided an overview of his law enforcement background.

B. Proclamation: Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Councilmember Mauer-Smith read the proclamation titled "Domestic Violence Awareness Month" into the record. **Councilmember Reynolds MOVED to authorize the Mayor's signature on the proclamation proclaiming October 2026 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month; seconded by Councilmember Mauer-Smith.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment. Councilmember Reynolds expressed appreciation and highlighted resources including the YWCA, Crystal Judson Family Justice Center, Tacoma Pro Bono, and Rebuilding Hope. Councilmember George thanked Councilmember Reynolds for sharing her experience and stated that domestic violence occurs within Fircrest and is reflected in calls for service handled by the Police Department. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

The Motion Carried (6-0).

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

City Manager Masko provided an update on the traffic photo enforcement program, website migration project, fiber franchises, court transition costs, budget preparation, contract amendments, and personnel related issues. She reported on the upcoming Civil Service Commission interviews and announced that the Employee Benefits Fair would be held October 2 at the Community Center.

DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS

- Police Chief Celis provided a report on calls for service, a recent departmental review with Clear Risk Solutions. Chief Celis reported that the department is currently monitoring the Whittier Elementary School traffic.
- Parks and Recreation Director Grover reported on fall programming and highlighted that he was preparing a memo outlining options regarding the City's holiday tree.

COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS

- Councilmember Barrentine; no comment.
- Councilmember Mauer-Smith expressed appreciation for the recreational programming.

- Councilmember George; no comment.
- Councilmember Reynolds; no comment.
- Councilmember Viafore thanked staff for a great summer. Lastly, he requested a status report on the emphasis funds from the City Attorney.
- Mayor Bufford reported on the teen late night event and expressed appreciation for safe spaces for the community.

PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Mayor Bufford invited public comment.

- Cameron Johnson, San Juan Avenue, commented on the Fircrest Municipal Code prohibiting bicycle riding on sidewalks within a business district and suggested that he may be outdated.

COMMITTEE, COMMISSION, AND LIAISON REPORTS

A. Parks, Recreation, and Sustainability

There was no report.

B. Police/Public Safety and Court

Councilmember George stated that the Police Department is fully staffed and reported on the upcoming Police Sergeant recruitment.

C. Public Works and Facilities

Councilmember Reynolds provided an update on utility delinquency notices and reported that Ezee Fiber anticipates beginning work within the City's right-of-way in mid-October, pending completion of the necessary agreements and permitting requirements.

D. Pierce County Regional Council

Councilmember Reynolds reported that the Council received a presentation regarding homelessness in Pierce County.

E. Other Liaison Reports

Councilmember Reynolds reported that the Zoo and Trek Authority would consider its preliminary budget at its upcoming meeting. She also reported that Pierce Transit discussed operational expenditures associated with the ballot measure should it be approved.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Mayor Bufford requested the City Clerk read the Consent Calendar.

- A. Approval of Check No. 225121 through No. 225175 in the amount of \$209,126.32
Approval of payroll electronic funds transfer in the amount of \$196,534.09
- B. Registering no objections to the OMG Food Mart Liquor License Application
- C. Approval of the August 25, 2026, Regular Meeting minutes
Approval of September 08, 2026, Regular Meeting minutes

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

The Motion Carried (6-0).

PUBLIC HEARING

There was no public hearing scheduled.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Ordinance No. 1761: Critical Areas Update

City Attorney Eide briefed the Council on the proposed ordinance and highlighted that it updates the City's critical areas regulations to comply with the Growth Management Act. **Councilmember Mauer-Smith MOVED to adopt Ordinance No. 1761, relating to critical area regulations updates in Title 22 of the Fircrest Municipal Code as presented; seconded by Councilmember Barrentine.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment; none were provided. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

The Motion Carried (6-0).

B. Resolution No. 2038: Amending Resolution No. 2025

City Manager Masko briefed the Council on the proposed resolution and highlighted that the correction of the title is intended to reflect the project within the body of the original resolution. **Councilmember Mauer-Smith MOVED to adopt Resolution No. 2038, correcting the title of Resolution No. 2025 to match the substance of said Resolution; seconded by Councilmember Barrentine.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment; none were provided. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

The Motion Carried (6-0).

C. Resolution No. 2039: Ethos PNW Contract Amendment #3

City Manager Masko briefed the Council on the proposed resolution and highlighted that the amendment would increase the contract amount. **Councilmember George MOVED to adopt Resolution No. 2039, authorizing the City Manager to execute Amendment #3 to the Professional Services Agreement with Ethos PNW for on-call planning consulting services; seconded by Councilmember Barrentine.** Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment; none were provided. Mayor Bufford invited public comment; none were provided.

The Motion Carried (6-0).

D. Resolution No. 2040: AWC Workers' Compensation Retro Program

City Manager Masko briefed the Council on the proposed resolution and highlighted that the program provides specialized workers' compensation claims management, workplace safety, and training resources. **Councilmember Mauer-Smith MOVED to adopt Resolution No. 2040, authorizing the City Manager to execute a Participation Agreement with the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) for participation in the Workers' Compensation Retro Program**

Retro Pool; seconded by Councilmember Barrentine. Mayor Bufford invited Councilmember comment. Discussions included the program’s benefits and costs, benefits of specialized claims management, early claim intervention, and evaluating the program alongside other 2027 budget priorities.

Councilmember Mauer-Smith WITHDREW the motion with the consent of Councilmember Barrentine. There was no objection from the Council. No action was taken on Resolution No. 2040.

E. 2027 Preliminary Budget Presentation

Finance Director Deskins presented the preliminary 2027 budget and highlighted the upcoming budget meetings. She highlighted the voter-approved EMS levy rate of \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, the Ruston Court contract termination, a 3.8 percent COLA, an anticipated 10 percent increase in medical costs, and a 5 percent increase in dental costs. Council discussions included anticipated property tax revenues and requested additional detail regarding revenues and departmental variances.

CALL FOR FINAL COMMENTS

There were none.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:55 P.M., Mayor Bufford reported that the Council would take a five-minute recess and convene into Executive Session, not to exceed thirty (30) minutes, to discuss labor negotiations, pursuant to RCW 42.30.140(4)(b) and to review the performance of a public employee, pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(g). City Manager Masko, Labor Attorney John Lee and Police Chief Celis were invited to discuss labor negotiations executive session.

Councilmembers Viafore and Reynolds left the meeting at 8:30 P.M.

The Council reconvened at 8:30 P.M., and no action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Barrentine MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 P.M., seconded by Councilmember George.

The Motion Carried (4-0).



Nikki Bufford, Mayor



Arlette Burkhardt, City Clerk