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

Councilmember Brett L. Wittner was absent and excused.

PIERCE COUNTY UNIFIED REGIONAL HOMELESS SYSTEM

Pierce County Council Chair Hitchen and Policy Analyst Mary Connolly presented an overview of the proposed Unified Regional Approach (URA) to homelessness, including regional homelessness data, current resources, funding, and local opportunities for participation.

Ms. Connolly highlighted that the URA is intended to improve coordination with local jurisdictions, that participation is voluntary, and that Fircrest's estimated annual participation cost would be $3,000 to $4,000 beginning in 2028. Council discussion included homelessness within Fircrest, current resources, and similarities to the South Sound Housing Affordability Partners ($SSHA^3P$) model.

Council expressed support for staff to prepare a resolution of intent for future consideration. Additional discussion included providing homelessness resource materials at City Hall and the Community Center, as well as potential impacts on staff workload due to participation.

PUBLIC SAFETY SALES TAX DISCUSSION

City Manager Masko presented an overview of the ESHB 2015, which established a statewide law enforcement grant program and authorized a 0.1% local sales and use tax for criminal justice purposes. The proposed tax was estimated to generate approximately $90,000 to $100,000 annually.

Police Chief Celis reviewed the eligibility requirements, policies, and required training. Council discussions included eligible expenditures, budget impacts, financial priorities, and public outreach before implementing a new tax. Council consensus is to continue discussions of the tax with a potential implementation date in April 2027 to allow time for public outreach and administrative preparation.

AXON PROPOSAL (BODY CAMS & IN-CAR CAMERAS)

Police Chief Celis presented the proposed renewal of the City's AXON contract and stated that it expires in January 2027. Chief Celis requested Council consideration of body-worn camera replacements, TASER upgrades, and the addition of in-car video cameras.

AXON representative John Hunt reviewed the equipment options, contract terms, and a five-year proposal cost. Council discussions included officer safety, liability protection, evidence management, equipment replacement, potential insurance benefits, and funding sources. There was a consensus to consider this request alongside other funding requests during the upcoming budget workshop.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Barrentine MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Mauer-Smith.

The Motion Carried (6-0).

Nikki Bufford, Mayor

Arlette Burkhart, City Clerk