

City of Forks  
Council Meeting Minutes Regular Session  
City Council Chambers  
March 23, 2020 7:30 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND CALL TO ORDER**

Chief Rowley led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Fletcher then called the meeting to order.

**ROLL CALL**

Council members present: Gilstrap, Gingell, Soha, Hillcar, and Weissenfels via telephone and Mayor Fletcher. Staff present: Hampton, Public Works Director via telephone, Grafstrom, Clerk/Treasurer, Fleck, Attorney/Planner, and Rowley, Police Chief.

**MODIFICATIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion** to approve the agenda as presented by Weissenfels, second Hillcar, motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Lissy Andros, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director requested that the City reach out to the State and Olympic National Park to discourage visitors from coming during the next two weeks.

Attorney/Planner Fleck noted that the City contacted the governor's office earlier today to request that day facilities and river stretches be closed for commercial recreational purposes.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**1. Motion** to approve minutes of the Regular Meeting held March 9, 2020 by Hillcar, second Weissenfels, motion carried.

**2. Motion** to approve payroll checks numbered 38046 through 38060 for \$65,441.06 and claim checks numbered 38061 through 38086 for \$67,276.00 by Weissenfels, second Hillcar, motion carried.

**3. Motion** to approve the revised December 2019 Treasurer's Report by Gingell, second Weissenfels, motion carried. **Motion** to approve the January 2020 Treasurer's Report by Hillcar, second Soha, motion carried.

**4. Letter of Support for Olympic Discovery Trail (ODT) Calawah River Bridge**

Attorney/Planner Fleck introduced Steve Gray, Transportation Programs Manager for the Clallam County Roads Department attending via telephone. Mr. Gray had already drafted a letter of support in favor of including the Calawah River bridge in a grant application he is working on. He also provided a project summary and status report with objectives and accomplishments to date.

Council member Hillcar expressed his personal appreciation for the motorized portion of the trail. He has spoken with some residents upstream of the proposed crossing. They

are concerned about homeless encampments on both sides of the river and wonder if it would be possible to move the crossing farther downstream, which would make it less likely for people to populate timbered areas near the trail. Mr. Gray responded that anything is possible, but the current location was selected based on property ownership, topography issues, and the existence of easements and rights-of way. Council member Hillcar noted that this portion of the trail differs in that its proximity to town will likely mean more traffic than a typical stretch of the ODT.

Council member Hillcar then asked whether the portion of the ODT from the Calawah River to the Highway 110 junction would be lit. Mr. Gray responded that very little of the ODT is currently lighted, and it has not been discussed for the portion in question. However, lighting could be considered in the future assuming the funding is available.

**Motion** to authorize the Mayor and staff to send a letter of support for the Olympic Discovery Trail Calawah River bridge crossing by Gingell, second Weissenfels, motion carried.

#### **5. Gagnon/Soloman Annexation**

**Motion** to set tonight as a meeting date between parties regarding the Gagnon/Soloman Annexation by Hillcar, second Gilstrap, motion carried.

Attorney/Planner Fleck received a 10% petition requesting the commencement of annexation proceedings for parcel 132804110200 owned by Brent Gagnon, and parcels 132804110300 and 132803229050 owned by Lynell Soloman. There is no indebtedness associated with these parcels.

**Motion** to accept the proposed annexation and adopt the proposed zoning by Gilstrap, second Hillcar, motion carried.

#### **6. Lease Agreement between the City of Forks and ARINC, Inc.**

ARINC, Inc. would like to lease approximately 16 square feet of floor space in the Police Department processing room for aviation communications equipment, as well as associated space on either the City Hall rooftop or on the City's communications tower adjacent to City Hall for their antennae.

**Motion** to authorize the Mayor and staff to execute the lease agreement between the City of Forks and ARINC, Inc. by Soha, second Gilstrap, motion carried.

#### **7. Resolution #487 Declaring an Emergency to Address Issues with COVID-19**

Attorney/Planner Fleck introduced Resolution #487, which follows similar actions implemented by the State, County, and other cities within the county. It would allow us to be proactive with regard to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursements, and provide us with access to additional services.

Council Member Hillcar asked whether the resolution was the emergency declaration itself, or if it authorized the mayor to declare an emergency. Attorney/Planner Fleck said that Resolution #487 serves as the emergency declaration itself.

**Motion** to approve Resolution #487 Declaring an Emergency to Address Issues with COVID-19 by Gilstrap, second Gingell, motion carried.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

1. The 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2019 Budget vs. Actual Report was reviewed.

2. It was determined that July 27, 2020 would be the preferred date for a joint meeting with the Clallam County Board of Commissioners.

### **3. Council Member Reports**

**Council Member Gilstrap** stated that his work takes him throughout the entire county, and he is disgusted by the ignorance and stupidity people are exhibiting during this COVID-19 pandemic. He is seeing people from Seattle, Oregon, Idaho, and California on the Olympic Peninsula when they should be staying home.

**Council Member Gingell** spent a few days finding out what people are doing in town related to the pandemic. He is impressed with our local businesses. Forks Outfitters has implemented a special shopping time for seniors and Whiteheads Auto Parts has started a curbside service so that customers don't need to go into the store.

**Council Member Soha** thinks the whole COVID-19 matter has been a little blown out of proportion. The lack of any plan by our state government to deal with the situation is quite shocking, and the way it has been handled has been disappointing. He is afraid that many people in our community will be financially destroyed by the measures that have been adopted.

**Council Member Hillcar** thinks this is probably the first time such a large event has occurred at modern levels of connectivity. Information is current and being shared by everyone. The quick response we have shown is proof of just how connected our community is. However, we should all be cautious regarding information shared on social media. The creativity being exhibited by our community has also been good to see. The well-organized drive-in church services held at the Assembly of God church satisfied a definite need for many in the community.

**Council Member Weissenfels** attended the Clallam Transit board meeting this week. Ridership is down 50% overall. Paratransit ridership is down 60% and the Strait Shot has been suspended. Several new electric buses are in operation with more coming. Clallam Transit has also passed an emergency declaration. The upcoming audit will be done remotely.

### **4. Staff Reports**

**Clerk/Treasurer Grafstrom** has been participating in a number of webinars, including one presented by MRSC that reviewed emergency powers, impacts to employees, as well as requirements for open public meetings. We are currently looking at different platforms for holding council meetings. We are also working on updated content for the City's website, including a COVID-19 section offering pertinent information, health and financial resources, and information on assistance for small businesses. We are also developing a policy for utility billing relief for hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

She and Public Works Director Hampton participated in a webinar on the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) with an eye toward upgrading the wastewater treatment plant. At this time, however, we do not qualify for a CDBG grant because the rates charged to our sewer customers are too low.

**Public Works Director Hampton** said that his crew is working as usual with normal duties and leak repairs. They held a meeting to discuss how things would work if anyone on the crew became ill. We are still required to do the usual testing at the treatment plant. The water department can function with just one person to be sure the pumps are all working. We don't need to keep fluoridating the water, but it is a good idea to keep chlorinating it. Most of the crew know how to introduce the chloride and test to be sure it is at the appropriate level.

The vendor has received the asphalt trailer, but they are not delivering at this time. He had hoped to use it for some repairs while people were staying at home, but that won't be possible.

Council Member Hillcar asked if the emergency declaration would make it possible for him to utilize temporary replacements from other organizations should his staff become short-handed. Public Works Director Hampton said that he had contacted Clallam Bay Correctional Center and John Simpson with Quileute Public Works regarding possibilities for mutual aid. He could easily train people to do the necessary testing.

**Police Chief Rowley** reported that the Washington State Basic Law Enforcement Academy closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, sending all of the recruit officers home approximately four weeks early. Our two will begin field training here in Forks, and may finish their last four weeks with some online and on-the-job training with basic testing at a designated location. He has requested academy curriculum so that our police department can help to get them certified and working.

As a member of the local Emergency Operations Center (EOC) established in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, he has been very impressed by the work done by Rod Fleck, Audrey Grafstrom, Paul Hampton, Nerissa Davis, and Bill Paul. We are as prepared for an outbreak of COVID-19 in Forks as we can be.

**Attorney/Planner Fleck** stated that he and Nerissa Davis have spent at least half of every day for the last two weeks in meetings with the county and its EOC. The local EOC has developed a streamlined matrix of City, school, and fire department employees committed to helping with planning, operations, logistics, and finance. They have been working to get information out in both English and Spanish, and have covered a wide variety of topics including possible locations for an isolation ward and a shelter-in-place facility for the homeless population, child care for first responders and those in the medical field, and establishing lines of communication. The emergency resolution is a huge step in this process and the EOC's ability to respond to issues that arise.

He commended the hospital and Quillayute Valley School District for the amazing work they've done in preparing for the possibility of a local COVID-19 outbreak and ensuring

continuity in this difficult time. QVSD, for example, is providing 300 breakfast/lunch combo meals a day to students in need.

### **5. Mayor's Report**

Mayor Fletcher has seen a substantial influx of tourists to the West End. However, the options available to us in dealing with this are extremely limited. We are currently navigating uncharted waters, and is thankful for our local EOC. We are learning a lot from this experience. The overregulation of the timber industry has turned us into a community that relies heavily on service industries. At this time, however, we cannot rely on either for the income our community needs. He thanked the Forks Community Hospital for their efforts in responding to the needs of our community, as well as the businesses that have been able to keep their doors open. He hopes that everyone will continue to support these local businesses. We will survive.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion** to adjourn by Hillcar, second Weissenfels, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.



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Tim Fletcher, Mayor



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Audrey Grafstrom, Clerk/Treasurer