

City of Forks
Council Meeting Minutes Regular Session
City Council Chambers
November 8, 2021 7:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Soha led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Fletcher then called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

MODIFICATIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Fletcher stated that an executive session is needed to discuss current or potential litigation. Clerk/Treasurer Grafstrom noted that "Update Regarding Hampton Right-of-Way/Easement Vacation Request" currently under Action Items should be moved to Discussion Items.

Motion to approve the agenda as modified by Gingell, second Gilstrap, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chamber of Commerce Director Lissy Andros reported that 2021 has been the third highest year in terms of tourist numbers. 2010 was the highest with 73,000, 2009 was second with 69,000, and 2021 is third with an expected 45,000–46,000 by the end of the year. Several new businesses are adding to the City's vibrancy.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Motion to approve minutes of the Regular Meeting held October 25, 2021 by Gingell, second Soha, motion carried.

2. Motion to approve manual claim EFT 10262021 in the amount of \$72.00, payroll checks numbered 40005 through 40020 for \$111,005.50, and claim checks numbered 40021 through 40048 and EFTs as included in the total amount of \$85,046.26 by Soha, second Gingell, motion carried.

3. 2021 Budget Hearing

Mayor Fletcher opened the public hearing. There were no public comments. Mayor Fletcher closed the public hearing.

4. Revenue Sources/Property Taxes

a. Public Hearing

Mayor Fletcher opened the public hearing.

Clerk/Treasurer Grafstrom read the sources of revenue into the record. Lissy Andros gave a public comment asking the City Council *not* to raise property taxes in 2022.

Mayor Fletcher closed the public hearing.

b. Resolution #501 Regarding 2022 Property Tax Levy

Motion to approve Resolution #501 with a 0% increase in the 2022 regular property tax levy by Weissenfels, second Hillcar, motion carried.

5. Resolution #502 Regarding Constitutional Rights in the City of Forks

Motion to approve Resolution #502 setting forth the Council's respect for, and support of, constitutional rights in the City of Forks by Hillcar, second Gilstrap, motion carried 4–1 with Weissenfels against.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. 3rd Quarter YTD Reports: Jail Statistics

Clerk/Treasurer Grafstrom presented the third-quarter 2021 jail statistics. She noted that jail population has been severely impacted by COVID-19 with an average daily population of 10 inmates versus 12 in 2020 and 19 in 2019.

Police Chief Rowley explained that jails all over Washington are experiencing similar drops in population, and that he is actively encouraging law enforcement agencies to house their inmates in our jail.

2. Update Regarding Hampton Right-of-Way/easement Vacation Request

Attorney/Planner Fleck explained that as there has already been a public meeting regarding this issue, the Council could pass an ordinance vacating the City's right-of-way/easement. The City, as the property owner, would then be part of a plat amendment to remove the right-of-way/easement and join the two City lots into one lot with a zoning lot covenant. He said he will get started on that for either the next meeting or the first meeting in December.

Council Member Hillcar said he has strong reservations about vacating an easement, as proceeding with this request will set precedent for the future. Attorney/Planner Fleck said he understands the concern, but pointed out the fact that most of the other easements for which vacation requests might be expected have some sort of utility or public infrastructure or equipment in them or the potential for such. This easement on the Hampton's property has nothing, is not suitable for recreational purposes, and there is no access to it.

3. Council Member Reports

Council Member Gilstrap requested fairness in reporting. He said that when things get reported in a published document or online, there should be cooperation with the people involved to get both sides of the story.

Council Member Weissenfels reported having volunteered at the COVID-19 booster clinic on Saturday.

4. Staff Reports

Clerk/Treasurer Grafstrom said she has been busy working on the budget and she will be on vacation next week.

Public Works Director Hampton said the post office railing should be installed by the end of the week. He has called WSDOT about the broken stop sign at A Street and Forks Avenue, which belongs to them, not the City.

Police Chief Rowley reported having volunteered at the COVID-19 booster clinic with hopes that we'll soon be done with the masks and be able to go back to a normal life.

Attorney/Planner Fleck said he is still discussing litigation issues with the DNR, and will be giving a presentation to the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) as a rebuttal to a proposal to extend DNR rotations from 40–45 years to 70+ years. He was also heavily involved in the COVID-19 booster clinic, in which the hospital, the City and County EOC, Hoh Tribe Health, Olympic Medical Center, and others participated, and served an estimated 250–280 people, as well as the fireworks that were held after the District football game played here at home. He will be on vacation next week.

Council Member Hillcar asked about a trend in DNR talks toward financial reimbursement to offset lower timber harvests. Attorney/Planner Fleck said that the issue is one of value and volume with value representing the sale price and volume representing jobs. He said that both aspects need to be considered by timber county commissioners. Also needed are people who have solid experience working with the DNR participating in these meetings.

4. Mayor's Report

Mayor Fletcher reminded everyone that Veterans Day is coming up, and suggested that people reach out to any vets they know and thank them for their service.

5. Executive Session was called from 8:10 p.m. to 8:20 p.m. regarding current or proposed litigation with no action taken.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Soha, second Gilstrap, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.



Tim Fletcher, Mayor



Audrey Grafstrom, Clerk/Treasurer