

City of Forks  
Council Meeting Minutes Regular Session  
City Council Chambers  
November 14, 2022 7:30 p.m.

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

Mayor Fletcher led the Pledge of Allegiance and then called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Council members present: Weissenfels, Wood, Soha, Gingell [arrived via Zoom at 7:37], 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 asked that the agenda be modified to include a twenty-minute executive session to discuss current litigation. Action is expected afterward. Clerk/Treasurer Grafstrom noted that agenda item 4 should state "2023 Budget Hearing" instead of "2023 Budget Workshop".

**Motion** to approve the agenda as modified by Weissenfels, second Wood, motion carried 3-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Lissy Andros, Director, Forks Chamber of Commerce said County Prosecutor Mark Nichols will offer a presentation at the November 16 11:30 a.m. Chamber of Commerce meeting, and anyone with questions or concerns for him is welcome to attend and speak with him directly.

She also shared with all present a new winter event for children sponsored by the Congregational Church, the Chamber of Commerce, West End Business & Professional Association, Sully's, and other local businesses. On December 10 starting at 1:00 p.m. at the Forks Congregational Church, there will be train rides for children followed by a showing of The Polar Express. The event is open to the public and free to all who attend.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**1. Motion** to approve minutes of the Regular Meeting held October 24, 2022 by Wood, second Weissenfels, motion carried.

**2. Motion** to approve payroll checks numbered 41166 through 41181 in the amount of \$122,210.00, claim checks numbered 41182 through 41220 and EFTs as included in the total amount of \$163,088.20, and travel checks 3618 through 3620 in the amount of \$476.00 by Wood, second Soha, motion carried.

**3. September 2022 Treasurer's Report**

**Motion** to approve the September 2022 Treasurer's Report by Weissenfels, second Wood, motion carried.

#### 4. 2023 Budget Public Hearing

Mayor Fletcher opened the public hearing.

There were no comments.

Mayor Fletcher closed the public hearing.

#### 5. Council Position Appointment

There were three letters of interest for the vacant Council position. Two of those interested were present at the meeting.

Josef Echeita spoke of his love of, and involvement in, the community. He admitted he doesn't have any experience in local government, but said he feels participation in City government is the next logical step for him. He went on to say he understands the responsibility the position holds and feels he is ready to take on that responsibility.

Vilkesh Patel introduced himself to the Council. He spoke of the welcome he and his family received upon moving to Forks in 2011, and the ways in which he and his family have contributed to the local economy by purchasing and improving two hotels and building an RV park. He said his interest in the vacant Council position stems from a desire to move the City forward in a positive manner. He also said his successful business experience here in Forks would be of benefit to the City.

Council Member Soha said that time and availability is an important consideration, and that anyone not sure they can attend two meetings a month should reconsider. Council Member Weissenfels added that there are other committees that should have City representation but currently do not. Clerk/Treasurer Grafstrom noted that 2022 was the first year since she's worked at the City in which a meeting had to be cancelled due to lack of a quorum. Attorney/Planner Fleck reported it had only happened one other time and there were extenuating circumstances involved.

Council Member Wood asked each applicant to share a goal they would have in assuming the position. Echeita said he doesn't know the extent of the Council's purview, but he would like to see improvements to our internet infrastructure and increased efforts to bring tourists to Forks so our community might benefit from the money they spend. He said he understands, however, that the City's budget is very limited.

Patel said he agrees that there is great need for reliable and affordable Internet access. He then said he would like to see the playground at Tillicum Park rejuvenated and improved with more activities for children, and that he is very aware, as a motel owner, that there is a lack of events to draw visitors to town in the winter. He said he thinks a BMX park or guided ATV tours might attract people.

Motion to appoint Josef Echeita to vacant Council position 5 by Weissenfels, second Soha, motion carried 3-1 with Gingell against.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **1. Quillayute Airport Master Plan Update**

Attorney/Planner Fleck said a virtual public meeting on the progress of the Quillayute Airport Master Plan Update will be held on December 8 at 5:00 p.m. Meeting details and a link to the meeting are available on the project website. When the marine sanctuary and a minimum flight altitude were established, the State said the approach for the Quillayute Airport would have to be below that minimum. FAA's response was that they would address that issue when it arose. That time has come, and a memo has been prepared for the FAA asking how that issue should be addressed. In addition, topography seems to be an issue so an instrument approach from Tatoosh has been formulated.

### **2. Council Member Reports**

**Council Member Weissenfels** reported having manned a table at Outfitters for Friends of Forks Animals. She said donations were accepted, raffle tickets were sold, and several new members were signed up. She also said the group has people going to the shelter three times a day to care for dogs currently staying there.

**Council Member Wood** said he had attended the first day of a North Olympic Development Council's (NODC's) Energy Futures tour at Seven Cedars where representatives from Clallam and Jefferson Counties and their communities shared their greatest energy needs and provided input regarding potential spending of federal infrastructure monies. He said there were several very interesting presentations, including one comparing a Cascadia Rising event on the Olympic Peninsula with Puerto Rico's Hurricane Maria.

**Council Member Soha** reported that he helped to lower the garrison flag on Veteran's Day.

### **3. Staff Reports**

**Public Works Director Hampton** said he and Danny Wahlgren had had a meeting with Parametrix. They looked at the wastewater treatment plant, and he thinks they have a good understanding of the City's needs and goals. He reported that public works have begun work on detecting leaks along City water lines as part of efforts to reduce water loss. So far, there has been noise at two hydrants and one valve, but the consultant believes, based on the amount of water loss, the City has a major leak somewhere.

Council Member Weissenfels asked whether switching over to reading only the main meter at trailer parks had helped to reduce water loss. He said it had.

**Police Chief Rowley** reminded Council and the community that calling a police officer directly is not the way to report something. If anyone sees something suspicious, dangerous, or criminal in nature, they should call 911. If there is no emergency, callers should say the call is non-emergent. Officers should not be called, and posts to Facebook are completely ineffective. He said he knows PenCom can be frustrating, but the

questions they ask are those the responding officers will ask. He also reminded everyone to be careful on the icy roads.

**Attorney/Planner Fleck** said the Elks Lodge had asked him to let everyone know they will have an award-winning drug-awareness speaker giving a presentation on Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. City staff and Council are invited. Chief Rowley said he would attend. He then reported having attended an open house on the DNR carbon project, and the last day of the NODC's Energy Futures tour at the Rainforest Arts Center. He said they discussed efforts that have been made with regard to alternative energy sources from wood-fired boilers to discussions regarding ways to generate electricity during high water-flow events to reduce our dependence on Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

#### **4. Mayor's Report**

Mayor Fletcher reported also having attended the NODC's Energy Futures tour, and was pleased to see approximately 15 representatives from the Battel National Lab participating. He said the brainstorming sessions and discussions were very interesting, and that he felt he and Council Member Wood had effectively expressed the needs of our community, which seemed to have been heard. He said he is particularly concerned about increasing rights-of-way along BPA transmission lines to 200 ft. on both sides and keeping the West Twin Forest Service road open for emergency access. He said a wide variety of possibilities for alternative energy sources were discussed, including wind power, nuclear power, the creation of a power loop that would tie the West End into the Grays Harbor power grid, and the use of micro grids to increase our energy independence.

He then reported having attended the Veteran's Day ceremony at the Gold Star Memorial. He said it was well attended, and thanked veterans for their service.

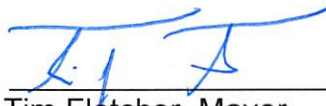
**5. Executive Session** was called from 8:30 to 8:50 to discuss current litigation.

**Motion** to accept and enter into a settlement agreement with the Estate of Kimberly Bender to resolve all pending claims filed in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington at Tacoma Cause No. 3:21-cv-05778-DGE by Wood, second Soha, motion carried.

**Motion** to authorize the Mayor and staff to complete all necessary documents required by the parties to said settlement, including the AWC Risk Management Services Association, to conclude this matter by Wood, second Soha, motion carried.

#### **6. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion** to adjourn by Soha, second Wood, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

  
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Tim Fletcher, Mayor

  
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Audrey Graffstrom, Clerk/Treasurer