

City of Forks
Council Meeting Minutes Regular Session
City Council Chambers
November 22, 2021 7:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Council members present: Hillcar [arrived at 7:40 p.m.], Gingell, Gilstrap, and Mayor Fletcher, Weissenfels and Soha present via Zoom. Staff present: Grafstrom, Clerk/Treasurer, Fleck, Attorney/Planner, Rowley, Police Chief, and Hampton, Public Works Director.

MODIFICATIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda as presented by Weissenfels, second Gingell, motion carried 4-0.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Motion to approve minutes of the Regular Meeting and Special Meeting held November 8, 2021 by Gilstrap, second Gingell, motion carried 4-0.

2. Motion to approve payroll checks numbered 40049 through 40062 for \$69,933.59, and claim checks numbered 40063 through 40088 and EFTs as included in the total amount of \$44,504.86 by Soha, second Gingell, motion carried 4-0.

3. Motion to approve the October 2021 Treasurer's Report by Gingell, second Gilstrap, motion carried 4-0.

4. 2021 Budget Hearing

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

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Council Member Reports

Council Member Weissenfels reported having attended the ceremony held at the Gold Star Memorial at the Transit Center on Veterans Day, and a Clallam Transit Board meeting on Wednesday, November 17. She said there was a very interesting presentation by Ballard Power, a company that develops fuel cells and does short- and long-term cost comparisons, on the long-term cost effectiveness of hydrogen fuel cells. She also said that she had recently learned about a new type of fuel cell that uses a reaction between aluminum and oxygen, the use of which has no negative impact on the environment.

Council Member Soha said he attended the Veterans Day flag raising at Tillicum Park, as well as the ceremony held at the Gold Star Memorial at the Transit Center.

Council Member Gingell asked whether there was any way to offer suggestions and be heard in regard to the bipartisan infrastructure bill that passed recently. Attorney/Planner

Fleck said that requests had been made to Congress, but that he has yet to see any details of how funds will be allocated.

Council Member Gilstrap said that a former unnamed person in the area had diverted a creek off Sportsman Club Road, causing water from the flood event that began on November 11 to stream down G Street. He said this contributed to a significant amount of flooding on his property.

Council Member Hillcar talked about research he's done for a letter the Mayor asked him to draft for delivery to Representative Kilmer, our county commissioners, and other lawmakers regarding the lack of action taken by the State and the Department of Transportation (WSDOT) in particular in dealing with the removal of debris and repairs needed on the West End after the flood event. He said he found that 21% of all State employee firings due to non-compliance with the vaccination mandate were at WSDOT, which leaves an insufficient workforce to deal with the problems we are facing. He also said that he has been in contact with the owners of Bruch & Bruch, the Superintendent at Interwest Construction, as well as representatives from Delhur and Quigg Brothers, all of whom say they are already staged and ready to go from one side or the other, or both sides, of damage along Highways 101 and 112, but there has been no contact or interest from WSDOT or Olympic National Park. He went on to suggest that a separate letter might be sent to Representative Kilmer asking for work on existing Forest Service roads to ensure at least one viable bypass for use in emergencies. He suggested the West Twin Road (FS 30) that connects Highways 101 and 112, and/or even the Sitkum Soleduck Road (FS 2900000) that bypasses the stretch of Highway 101 between the A Road and Cooper Ranch Road.

2. Staff Reports

Public Works Director Hampton said he was surprised by the fact that no command center was established for the November flood event, despite them having been established in response to other predictions of weather events that never materialized. He was unaware of the flooding until he received an urgent call from a police officer informing him of it. He and his crew immediately began preparing sandbags for public and private use around town, and he made the City's water pumps available to those who needed it most. He recorded video of most of the heavily flooded areas, which he will use to identify places that need work to prevent or minimize future flooding. He reported that a number of people diverted water off their own property, and told his crew not to help with the placement of sandbags on private property themselves to prevent any such action by, and liability on, the City. He then wondered why the Olympic Discovery Trail (ODT) wasn't opened for emergency access. While it is unclear whether or not such use was a requirement of funding, he said the ODT is certainly wide enough for use by emergency vehicles and dump trucks. He ended his report with the news that the railing was finally in place at the post office.

Police Chief Rowley said there had been discussions about establishing a command center, but weather reports indicated we were to get just four inches of rain with the majority of the storm bypassing us. He and the police department fielded calls so the public works crew could focus on sandbagging. Local law enforcement spent the majority of the storm driving around, identifying problems, and helping where they could. He

reported one officer candidate currently at the academy had passed his first test. In response to a question from Council Member Hillcar, he said that the recruiting of candidates and new officers by other agencies is highly discouraged, and that when it does happen during the probationary stage, the agency that put the candidate through the academy is usually reimbursed for academy costs by the new employer. He then reported that law enforcement agencies around the state are working with skeleton crews as a result of the vaccination mandate. The State Patrol alone lost 91 commissioned troopers, and 911 response time in Seattle currently averages one hour. He said that with new laws and the inability of many to pass a background check, it is very difficult to attract new recruits despite the significant sign-on bonuses offered by many.

3. Mayor's Report

Mayor Fletcher said he and Fire Chief Paul began driving city streets to identify problem areas early on the morning of November 11. Shortly thereafter, he declared a State of Emergency in the City. By daylight Chief Paul and his swift water rescue team had been called away to respond to flooded homes and vehicles with occupants requiring rescue. He and Chief Rowley then drove around identifying areas requiring sandbags, which they also helped to fill, along with many volunteers from the community. Sandbags were delivered to some residences, but for the most part people came to the City compound to pick them up. He reiterated Public Works Director Hampton's statement that City employees did not place sandbags on private property. Team Rubicon took an interest in our situation early on, and had arrived by Sunday, November 21. He and Commissioner Peach showed them the hardest hit areas, including Ford Park and Whitcomb Diimmel Road. They were also given a list compiled by Nerissa Davis of people requiring assistance. Team Rubicon is scheduled to set up their base on Monday, November 29, and then begin their work completing FEMA-approved clean-ups at no cost to the property owner.

He then said he'd been working at the slide on Highway 112 and that the WSDOT crew was doing the best they could with what they had, and added that Commissioner Peach had been very helpful, and every time he'd sent a request to Representative Kilmer's office, he received a response within 5–10 minutes. He commended unnamed individuals and the community in general for the positive and helpful response to the emergency, and hopes that information acquired with this event can be effectively used in emergencies like this in the future.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Gingell, second Gilstrap, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.



Tim Fletcher, Mayor



Audrey Grafstrom, Clerk/Treasurer