City of Forks
Council Meeting Minutes Special Session
City Council Chambers
November 2, 2026

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND CALL TO ORDER

0:01 Mayor Fletcher led the Pledge of Allegiance and then called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

0:26 **ROLL CALL**

Council members present: Patel, Kimball [present via Zoom], Soha, Gingell, Pearson, and Mayor Fletcher. Staff present: DePew, Clerk/Treasurer, Fleck, Attorney/Planner, Rowley, Police Chief, and Hampton, Public Works Director.

MODIFICATIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

0:14 Clerk/Treasurer DePew asked that Action item 6 be removed from the agenda.

1:04 **Motion** to approve the agenda as modified by Patel, second Kimball, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1:41 Deborah Gaydeski said she was unhappy to hear the Council was attacked about the way they dealt with the State regarding closures to the Hoh River Bridge.

2:29 Lissy Andros, Forks Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, said 9,734 visitors—2,000 more than in the same month last year—signed the guest book at the Visitor Information Center in October. She then reported several additional statistics showing increased tourism.

ACTION ITEMS

3:44 **1. Council Meeting Minutes**

Motion to approve minutes of the Regular Meeting held October 12, 2026 by Soha, second Gingell, motion carried.

2. Expenditures

4:09 **Motion** to approve payroll checks 46305 through 46321 in the amount of $94,177.67, and claim checks 46322 through 46352 and EFTs as included in the total amount of $138,122.50 by Gingell, second Patel, motion carried.

3. Ordinance No. 698: Sewer Rate Increase

5:03 Clerk/Treasurer DePew reminded Council of the previous discussion of sewer rate increases and presented data for two rate-increase scenarios. Discussion ensued.

6:54 **Motion** to increase sewer rates by 13.85%, effective with December 2026 billing, by Gingell, second Pearson, motion carried.

4. Ordinance No. 699: Water Rate Increase

7:30 Clerk/Treasurer DePew presented data representing a 5% increase in water rates.

7:42 **Motion** to increase water rates by 5%, effective with December 2026 billing, by Soha, second Patel, motion carried.

5. August 2026 Treasurer's Report

8:13 **Motion** to approve the August 2026 Treasurer's Report by Soha, second Patel, motion carried.

~~6. Patrol Car Purchase Approval from Quileute Tribe~~

9:00 Council Member Soha asked why Action item 6 was removed from the Agenda. Clerk/Treasurer DePew and Police Chief Rowley said they decided against the purchase.

7. Opportunity Fund Board Appointment

9:32 Clerk/Treasurer DePew discussed the requirements of the position with Council.

10:23 Council Member Pearson said she would like to volunteer for the position.

10:33 **Motion** to appoint Pearson to the Opportunity Fund Board by Gingell, second Soha, motion carried.

8. Albert Haller Foundation Donation Acceptance

11:24 **Motion** to accept the $100,000 dollar donation from the Albert Haller Foundation for improvements to the Tillicum Park playground by Soha, second Patel, motion carried.

9. Set Norstrom Annexation Meeting

11:47 Attorney/Planner Fleck recommended the public hearing be set for November 23.

12:02 **Motion** to set the public hearing on the Norstrom Annexation for the November 23, 2026 Regular Meeting by Gingell, second Patel, motion carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. 3rd Quarter 2026 Reports

12:21 Council reviewed 3rd Quarter 2026 Sales & Lodging Tax, Building Permit, Jail Statistics, and Visitor Information Statistics Reports with some discussion of sales and lodging tax.

2. Jacoby Late Comers' Agreement

13:38 Attorney/Planner Fleck explained the late comers' agreement and said a resolution approving the agreement would be presented at the next Regular Meeting. Some discussion ensued.

3. DNR Ballfield Lease

16:24 Attorney/Planner Fleck explained an inquiry from DNR asking if the City would be interested in purchasing the land on which the north portion of the Tillicum Park ballfields sits and is currently leased by the City from the DNR. Discussion ensued.

4. USDA Application

10:10 Attorney/Planner Fleck introduced notice of the City's intent to file an application for federal financial assistance with the USDA for wastewater treatment plant improvements, which will be published and may require a public hearing.

5. Forks Police Department Recognition

21:00 Mayor Fletcher introduced letters received from Sheriff's Deputy Hoban commending Police Chief Rowley's bravery and rapid problem solving during a complicated domestic violence incident and Officer Verplank's exceptional bravery and outstanding tactical control during an interaction with an armed suspect.

6. Reports

- Council Member Reports

22:06 **Council Member Patel** reported having attended a hotel/motel conference where new legislation regarding service animals was discussed; it was reported travelers are now using AI apps rather than search engines to find lodgings, and that there is a new service that offers suggestions on local restaurants, activities, etc.

26:43 **Council Member Gingell** said he has been asked about RVs on industrial City lots and has himself noticed an increase recently.

27:56 **Council Member Pearson** reported having attended the County's budget town hall held October 28 and said she is worried about the police department and jail after Police Chief Rowley retires. She also said she would like to see more efforts at traffic safety in the downtown area.

- Staff Reports

34:05 **Clerk/Treasurer DePew** directed Council to the Reports section of their notebooks and said the City did not receive the second RCA grant, and reminded everyone that budget workshops begin on November 9.

34:53 **Public Works Director Hampton** said the E Street project should be completed tomorrow [November 3, 2026].

35:07 **Police Chief Rowley** reported having attended Truck or Treat and a critical incident stress management course, an area in which he is now certified. He then said the City has looked into additional funding through a portion of sales tax and will continue to do so, and that the Sheriff's Department cannot afford

to provide the necessary coverage to all of Clallam County. He also said he is aware of the financial issues facing the police department and jail.

41:38 **Attorney/Planner Fleck** said he is working on the new Critical Areas ordinance, and that a meeting he had with Senator Murray and Representative Randall staffers focused on the wastewater treatment system. He then reported WSDOT has assigned someone to work with the City on reducing the speed limits on either end of town; that he is getting ready to begin work on the USDA grant application; that the current license with the FAA for racing on the Forks Airport expires in 2027 and will have to be renewed; and that the major work to the Quillayute Airport runway is complete, but that striping and numbers painting will probably be pushed out to next year due to weather conditions.

- Mayor's Report

44:13 Mayor Fletcher said part of the discussion with WSDOT was for additional signage, and that crosswalk maintenance, improvement, and signage has been the topic of internal discussions. He then said the loss of the police department would have a cascading effect that also eliminates the jail and District Court II, which must be a consideration as well. He reported several things from the County's budget town hall, including the fact that the County will be doing some work on a Sol Duc River bridge next spring or summer that will result in closures and detours to Three Rivers for up to two months; filling gaps in the Olympic Discovery Trail at Sappho and between Forks and La Push and have secured the necessary right-of-way at the Calawah boat launch; and will be benefitting from several tax increases.

3. ADJOURNMENT

46:48 **Motion** to adjourn by Soha, second Gingell, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Tim Fletcher, Mayor

Caryn DePew, Clerk/Treasurer