

MINUTES
Foxfire Village Council
Regular Business Meeting
March 10, 2026 ~ 5:30 PM
Village Hall Meeting Room

Call to Order: Mayor Gregorich called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. Members present included Mayor Pro Temp Chris Kragel, Councilmembers Mary Gilroy, and Kevin Robbins. Councilmember Stephen Gunn was absent. Others in attendance were Police Chief Michael Amezquita, Fire Chief Eric Stromberg, and several Village residents.

Opening Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance: Councilmember Mary Gilroy led those in attendance in the prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Approval of the March 10, 2026, Regular Business Meeting Agenda

Councilmember Gilroy removed her *Financial Report* because she is awaiting additional data from the Village CPA, and she removed the *Audit Report*, which will be presented in April. Gilroy added a *Budget Amendment for the Fire Department* and an *Update on the Moore County Budget Meeting* she attended. Mayor Gregorich added *Litter Sweep* to the agenda.

Councilmember Robbins moved to approve the March 10, 2026 agenda as amended, seconded by Councilmember Gilroy and unanimously carried.

2. Public Comment Period

None

3. Department Reports:

A. Finance – Mary Gilroy

- Budget Amendment

Councilmember Gilroy requested approval of a budget amendment to increase the fire department contract by \$45,000. The original budget allocated \$250,000, but the final contract amount approved after budget adoption was \$295,000. The additional funds will come from contingency fund.

Councilmember Kragel moved to adopt the Budget Amendment for the Fire Department in the amount off \$45,000, seconded by Mayor Gregorich and unanimously carried.

- Moore County Budget Meeting

Councilmember Gilroy reported on the Moore County budget meeting she attended earlier in the day. The county plans to maintain the current property tax rate of 0.29 due to anticipated capital expenditures, with the possibility of revisiting a reduction next year.

She also noted a proposed increase in the fire tax from 8.75 to 9.25, which would directly impact the Village.

Councilmember Gilroy will continue to monitor the matter and added that Moore County offered assistance with future contract renewals if needed.

B. Streets and Park – Kevin Robbins

- Pool Estimate

Councilmember Robbins updated the council on efforts to complete the pool project, noting that one contractor has submitted a quote while another declined to bid. He emphasized the importance of completing the project properly and avoiding a rushed decision that could lead to future problems.

The discussion focused heavily on the pool's financial impact. Historical data showed that the pool has operated at a loss for many years, requiring annual taxpayer subsidies of roughly \$50,000–\$60,000.

Projections indicate that the pool would continue to require financial support even with increased attendance and higher fees.

Council members acknowledged the financial realities but also noted that residents have historically supported maintaining the pool. Surveys and public feedback over the years have shown strong community approval for having a public pool, even among residents who do not personally use it. They agreed that the decision should consider multiple options rather than simply choosing between keeping or closing the facility.

Council agreed to seek at least one additional quote, review all available options, and gather further public input before making a final decision on the pool's future.

C. Public Safety

- Police Department Update - Chief Amezcuita

Chief Amezcuita reported that officers responded to approximately 1,500 calls for service during the past month.

One of the patrol vehicles was totaled during the recent snow event. This matter is being handled through the Village insurance carrier.

Sergeant Kivett recently completed an extensive Crime Scene Investigation training course, which provided updated techniques for evidence processing. The department anticipates future equipment upgrades related to the training.

An upcoming community blood drive scheduled for March 21st from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. was announced. Online registration is available; walk-ins will also be accepted. Those who complete online registration may qualify for a \$40 incentive gift card through the Blood Connection program.

- Fire Department Update - Chief Stromberg

Fire Chief Stromberg reported the department responded to 84 calls in the past month, averaging approximately three calls per day. Of those calls, 16 were overlapping incidents, representing about 19% of total calls. The busiest days during the month were Thursdays and Fridays, with the busiest hours occurring at approximately 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Approximately 28% of the calls were located within Foxfire.

The Foxfire station repairs are nearing completion. Plumbing, drywall, painting, and flooring are complete, with ceiling tiles and lighting fixtures expected soon. Final completion is anticipated by next Friday.

Department staff plan to move back into the station by the end of the month, with a reopening and possible public open house planned for April. Additional details will be announced once finalized.

Residents were reminded that spring burning season is currently in effect. Burning within village limits is prohibited without the proper permits. Burning outside village limits is permitted with appropriate authorization. A recent controlled burn on Hoffman Road generated questions from residents; however, the burn was legal and properly coordinated.

The department participated in a countywide ISO training burn in Cameron alongside all other county fire departments. Following the exercise, personnel already gathered for training responded to a three-alarm fire in Southern Pines, with West End providing multiple crews while maintaining district coverage. The fire required a large response due to location, water supply, and manpower needs.

West End Fire Department will host an aerial operations class beginning next week. Approximately 14 department members, along with personnel from neighboring departments, will participate in the 60-hour course.

The department was recently gifted a 50-foot aerial truck from the Village of Bald Head Island. The truck was acquired at minimal cost, with approximately \$4,500 spent primarily on replacing tires after transport from the island. The truck is approximately 22 years old and is expected to remain in service for

at least another 10 years given its intended use and overall condition. The aerial truck will serve as an important resource for the western part of the county, particularly for larger residential structures.

As part of annual maintenance procedures, department staff have begun testing all fire hoses. 5,000–8,000 feet of hose will be pressure tested to ensure operational safety and reliability. Residents may notice hoses laid out near the main station during testing.

- Litter Sweep

Mayor Gregorich reported that a proposed Litter Sweep event is planned for the Foxfire area, tentatively scheduled for April. Resident Karen Bornhorst is expected to organize and coordinate the event. Additional details and dates will be provided once finalized.

D. Water Department – Chris Kragel

- Well #13 Construction Update

Councilmember Kragel announced that well #13 is complete and operational. He credited Water Operator, Jesse Southard and past council members Warren Morgan and Gary Samuels for their work in bringing the project online. The well is currently operating manually while awaiting installation of the SCADA control panel, which is delayed due to the installer's health issues.

Kragel noted this added well should help reduce strain on the existing system, though production data is still being collected to determine its overall impact and efficiency. Current estimated capacity is approximately 50 gallons per minute.

Residents were also reminded to conserve water as warmer weather approaches, including limiting unnecessary outdoor water use and utilizing rain barrels when possible.

E. Mayors Report – Janice Gregorich

- Mayor & Managers Meeting Update

Mayor Gregorich provided an update the Moore County Mayor & Managers meeting that she and Village Administrator, Lisa Kivett attended in February.

There was discussion on proposed changes to state zoning laws related to non-conforming properties. Municipalities are exploring ways to address the law, including grandfathering existing properties while requiring future development to follow updated standards. Some communities are also considering pursuing local legislation to clarify or modify the law's intent.

Discussion also included Aberdeen's planned Route 5 corridor overlay, which would impose landscaping and aesthetic requirements on future development along the redesigned roadway corridor. Additional discussion touched on growth management, green space preservation, and roadway development concerns in surrounding communities.

4. Unfinished Business and Legislative Actions

- Approval of For2FI Emergency Phone Contract

Council discussed a contract for the emergency phone located at the park. The service will include an initial shipping charge of \$85 and an ongoing monthly cost of approximately \$55.

It was explained that the current provider, NCDIT, is discontinuing the service, requiring the village to transition the emergency phone line to a new provider. The emergency phone is considered essential, particularly because the park does not have Wi-Fi service.

Councilmember Robbins moved to authorize Mayor Gregorich to sign the For2FI Emergency Phone Contract, seconded by Councilmember Gilroy and unanimously carried.

- Appointment of P&Z Board Member

Council discussed the appointment process for the vacant Planning and Zoning Board position, expressing interest in receiving recommendations from the Planning and Zoning Board before making an appointment decision.

Mayor Gregorich provided three recently submitted applications to Planning and Zoning Board Chair, Tashe Jarusinski for the board to review. Once reviewed, they will provide a recommendation to the council.

The council agreed to include a Planning and Zoning representative on future meeting agendas whenever possible to provide updates and improve communication between the boards.

- Police Vehicle Claim

An update was provided regarding the police vehicle insurance claim. No action was taken, as the final settlement amount from the insurance company has not yet been received.

- MC Economic Development Funding Request

Council discussed participation in the Moore County Economic Development Partnership and concluded that it was not a good fit for Foxfire Village, citing limited opportunities for business and industrial growth within the village.

Councilmember Gilroy moved to decline participation, seconded by Councilmember Robbins. The motion passed unanimously.

5. New Discussion Items

- WEFD Contract

Council also discussed beginning negotiations for the upcoming West End Fire Department contract considering anticipated county fire tax rate changes. They agreed to schedule a meeting with the fire chief prior to the next work session to begin reviewing contract terms and budget considerations.

- Schedule Date for Fire Department Re-opening

Discussion continued regarding scheduling a reopening event for the fire department following completion of station renovations. Final planning and scheduling will occur once construction is complete and approved.

- Planning & Zoning Board Recommendation

Council reviewed proposed UDO amendments related to greenhouses, accessory buildings, and authorized uses. Questions were raised regarding the absence of a formal definition for “greenhouse” within the ordinance. The matter was referred to the upcoming work session for further review and discussion.

- Foxfire Asset Management Proposal and Analysis

Councilmember Robbins presented a proposed asset management program to proactively maintain village facilities, parks, trails, and other public assets through routine maintenance, inspections, and asset reporting. The program would provide flexible support for village infrastructure and is estimated to cost approximately \$75,000 annually. Council agreed that the proposal warrants further review and discussion during an upcoming work session and budget planning process.

- IT Services

Council discussed the need for an IT contractor to support and modernize village systems, including cybersecurity, records management, communication, and ADA compliance. The proposal also includes improving public transparency and integrating systems such as billing and payments.

Council agreed the work should be approached in phases, prioritizing immediate needs while planning longer-term improvements, with an emphasis on improving efficiency and avoiding unnecessary cost increases.

6. Public Comment Period - Comments on items listed on this agenda.

Laura Bunch - 1 Birdie Court supported continued village efforts and encouraged continued transparency and resident involvement. She noted that many residents expected amenities such as a pool when moving to the community and suggested re-surveying residents with updated cost information to assess current support. She also recommended stronger oversight and the possible use of an independent committee for major projects like the pool.

Bruce Smith - Meadow Court raised concerns about historical pool expenditure, oversight, and accountability in past decisions. He suggested an external review or investigation may be warranted, calling for stronger leadership accountability on the project.

Adam Cornell - Cardinal Drive that the pool is a valued community amenity funded through taxes and urged the village to proceed with repairs and move forward with maintaining it.

Dan Leary – 73 North Shamrock supports staff efforts on the pool, suggested exploring possible recovery from past contractors, and emphasized that any survey should include clear tax impact information. He also supported the service contract proposal with proper insurance safeguards.

Gerard Frederique -27 Eagle Drive had questions regarding pool operations, including the purpose of Wi-Fi access at the pool and clarification on household count estimates used in financial discussions. He also inquired about plans for maintenance and upgrades to additional well infrastructure.

7. Adjourn

Councilmember Robbins moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilmember Kragel and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 PM.



Lisa A. Kivett, MMC, NCCMC, CZO
Village Administrator/Clerk



Janice Gregorich
Mayor