

**MINUTES
FOXFIRE VILLAGE COUNCIL
SPECIAL WORK SESSION
May 12, 2026 ~ 8:00 AM ~ Village Hall Meeting Room**

1. Call to Order: Mayor Gregorich called the Special Work Session to order at 8:00 AM.
2. Members Present: Mayor Pro Temp Chris Kragel, and Councilmembers Mary Gilroy, and Stephen Gunn
3. Members Absent: Councilmember Kevin Robbins
4. Others Present: Police Chief Amezquita and member of the community
5. Review of Auditor Selection

Councilmember Gilroy reported receiving seven responses from the Auditor RFP. One proposal was eliminated due to cost, and three firms were unable to perform the work due to capacity constraints, leaving three qualified firms for consideration.

All three remaining firms met the required evaluation criteria, including experience, peer review standards, timely completion, on-site fieldwork, assigned personnel, face-to-face communication, post-audit review meetings, and dedicated staff contacts. All firms were willing to accept documentation via flash drive.

The three finalists were:

Belinda Johnson (Charlotte) – \$15,220 for a three-year engagement.

Thompson, Price, Scott & Adams (Whiteville) – \$13,800, with future years subject to inflationary adjustments.

Strickland Hardy (Lexington) – \$22,000 initially, increasing in subsequent years.

Based on cost and the scope of services offered, Strickland Hardy was eliminated from consideration.

Gilroy held follow-up discussions with Belinda Johnson and Alan Thompson regarding personnel continuity and document procedures. Thompson stated that his discounted proposal was intended to expand his firm's presence in Moore County. Gilroy noted that the primary difference between the firms was staffing structure, with Thompson's firm utilizing a large, experienced in-house team, while Johnson's firm relies on contracted professionals dedicated to each engagement. Both firms were deemed capable, and the selection will be forwarded to Council for a vote.

6. FY 2026-2027 Budget – Departmental Review

Councilmembers in attendance continued reviewing and discussing their proposed departmental operating budgets in preparation for the Fiscal Year 2026–2027 budget public hearing. Police Chief Amezquita was asked to participate in discussions about the public safety budget. Gilroy reported she is meeting with Councilmember Robbins in the coming week to finalize his numbers.

7. Public Comments

Donna Morgan – 14 Pine Tree Terrace asked for clarification on the status of the budget, and whether another budget meeting would be held. Council responded that no additional meetings are planned and that the budget review will proceed as scheduled for May 28th.

Warren Morgan – 14 Pine Tree Terrace inquired about the termination of a contract for trail maintenance, noting prior council approval of the contractor and recent cancellation of the agreement. He asked whether the contract termination resulted in penalties or prepayments and whether damages were being sought. He also questioned whether the contractor or the Village initiated the termination. Council responded there were no prepayments, payments were made quarterly, and the contract was terminated by the Village.

Mr. Morgan commented on fire department funding, noting prior contract delays and expressing support for continued fire protection services. He referenced the Village's current approach of

funding the fire department at the county tax rate and acknowledged differences from prior funding structures.

He urged prioritization of essential services in the budget, emphasizing the need for long-term planning and reserves for major future infrastructure costs, particularly water system needs. He cautioned against allocating funds to non-essential recreational projects and stressed maintaining fiscal discipline. He further noted that the water fund operates as a separate enterprise fund and should remain financially independent, with adequate reserves for future capital needs.

David Stoval – 1 Elliot Court asked how the Village makes decisions regarding awarding contracts and selecting vendors, including the role of the Council versus staff and department heads. He sought clarification on procurement and oversight processes for major projects.

He expressed concern about accountability in past and future contracting, referencing prior Village projects and emphasizing the importance of due diligence, financial safeguards, selecting qualified, and stronger payment controls contractors tied to project completion.

Mr. Stoval suggested stronger payment controls tied to project completion and milestone-based payments to reduce risk. He encouraged the Village to ensure transparency and protect public funds, noting the importance of careful contractor selection and oversight in small communities.

Councilmember Gilroy **moved to adjourn the special work session**, seconded by Councilmember Gunn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:36 AM.



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



Janice Gregorich
Mayor