



MINUTES

RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, February 6, 2024

**Richland City Hall ~ Council Chambers
625 Swift Boulevard**

City Council Regular Meeting - 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Richardson called the Council meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Welcome and Roll Call

Mayor Richardson welcomed those in the audience and expressed appreciation for their attendance.

Attendance: Mayor Richardson	Present
Mayor Pro Tem Kent	Present
Councilmember Jones	Present
Councilmember Lukson	Present
Councilmember Maier	Present
Councilmember VanDyke	Present
Councilmember Whitten	Present

Also present were City Manager Amundson, Deputy City Manager Schiessl, Assistant City Manager Florence, City Attorney Kintzley, Interim Chief of Police Neher, Fire Chief Huntington, Development Services Director Jensen, Public Works Director Rogalsky, Finance Director Allen, Human Resources Director Paulsen, and City Clerk Rogers.

Pledge of Allegiance

Councilmember Whitten led the Council and audience in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

COUNCILMEMBER VANDYKE MOVED AND MAYOR PRO TEM KENT SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PUBLISHED. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Presentations

1. New Hires and Retirements

A video featuring the new hires for January 2024 was played for the audience. There were no retirements to recognize.

Public Hearing

City Clerk Rogers read the Public Hearing and Public Comments procedures.

2. Proposed Amendment to RMC 3.24.930 Regarding the Assessments for the Uptown Business Improvement District, Ordinance No. 2024-01

Mayor Richardson opened the public hearing for testimony at 6:06 p.m.

Gus Sako - 2638 Harris Avenue, Richland, WA: Representing as Chairman of the Uptown Business Improvement District, Mr. Sako offered testimony in support of Ordinance No. 2024-01 and the increase to UBID assessments it would provide.

No other testimony was offered. Mayor Richardson closed the public hearing at 6:07 p.m.

Public Comments

None.

Consent Calendar

City Clerk Rogers read the Consent Calendar.

COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER VANDYKE SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS AMENDED. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Minutes

3. Approval of the following Richland City Council Meeting Minutes:
 - January 12, 2024 City Council Retreat Meeting Minutes
 - January 16, 2024 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes
 - January 23, 2024 City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes

Ordinances - First Reading

See Ordinance No. 2024-01 under **Items of Business**

Ordinances - Second Reading & Passage

None.

Resolutions – Adoption

4. Resolution No. 2024-12, Establishing Council Assignments for Calendar Years 2024-2025
5. Resolution No. 2024-13, Authorizing a Consultant Agreement with SAFEbuilt Washington, LLC for Building Permit Plan Review and Inspection Services

6. Resolution No. 2024-14, Authorizing a Second Amendment to the Consultant Agreement with Obsidian Forensics
7. Resolution No. 2024-15, Segregating an Assessment from the Original Assessment Roll of Local Improvement District No. 197
8. Resolution No. 2024-16, Updating the Authorized Individual for the Local Government Investment Pool
9. Resolution No. 2024-17, Authorizing a Loan Agreement with the Washington State Public Works Board for Solid Waste Planning
10. Resolution No. 2024-18, Authorizing a Loan Agreement with the Washington State Public Works Board for the Tapteal 1 Booster Pump Station Project
11. Resolution No. 2024-19, Authorizing an Agreement with the Washington Department of Corrections for Inmate Labor Services **(PULLED BY COUNCILMEMBER MAIER AND RELOCATED TO ITEMS OF BUSINESS AS ITEM NO. 16)**

Items - Approval

12. Appointment to the Utility Advisory Committee: Monica Hofstetter
13. Travel for Mayor Richardson
14. Travel for Councilmember VanDyke

Expenditures – Approval

None.

Items of Business

15. Ordinance No. 2024-01, Amending the RMC 3.24.930 Regarding Assessments for the Uptown Business Improvement District (First Reading)

Lynne Follett, the City's Economic Development Specialist and Liaison to the Uptown Business Improvement District (UBID), explained that business improvement districts formed under Washington law fund common expenses through a self-imposed assessment. The City's authority to levy assessments on businesses within BID boundaries is granted by Chapter 35.87A RCW. Since 2003, the City has collected UBID assessments and remitted them back to the District after deducting an administrative fee pursuant to Ordinance No. 29-03.

The revenue collected from the assessments is used for beautification, security, marketing, and administrative costs in the common areas of the UBID. While the buildings

are individually owned, the City owns parking lots, alleys and sidewalks in the Uptown. The UBID works in partnership with the City to provide services for the UBID. Staff presented a summary of the revenue and expenses over the past three (3) years.

In 2023, the UBID experienced unanticipated expenses for neon sign repairs. Expenses are beginning to outpace revenues, and the UBID is becoming increasingly reliant on business license reserves to meet basic expenses.

The current assessment rates are \$10 per month for businesses operating on the second story, and \$15 per month for businesses operating on the ground floor. These rates were imposed under Ordinance No. 29-03 in 2003 and have never increased. At the annual UBID meeting held on November 29, 2023, the proposed rate increase of \$50 per month for each business located within the UBID was discussed and subsequently approved. However, under state law, assessment increases in a business improvement district can occur only through legislative action.

Detailed information can be found in the PowerPoint Presentation included in the agenda packet.

At the request of Councilmember Jones and Mayor Pro Tem Kent, Economic Development Specialist Follett provided an overview of how the UBID funds are utilized, and her role as liaison to the UBID.

COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER VANDYKE SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE ORDINANCE NO. 2024-01, AMENDING RICHLAND MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 3.24.930 RELATED TO ADMINISTRATION OF THE UPTOWN BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT, AUTHORIZING AN INCREASE IN THE UBID MONTHLY ASSESSMENT, AND AMENDING SECTION 1.03 OF ORDINANCE NO. 29-03, FOR FIRST READING, BY TITLE ONLY. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7- 0.

16. Resolution No. 2024-19, Authorizing an Agreement with the Washington Department of Corrections for Inmate Labor Services (FORMERLY ITEM NO. 11 ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR)

Councilmember Maier raised a question regarding the potential need for additional staff to facilitate the scope of work outlined in the agreement as the City looks to expand the landfill, or if the contracted labor services are intended to be long-term. Councilmember Maier also expressed concern regarding the voluntary or coerced nature of the work to be performed under the agreement and whether inmates had any choice in whether to perform labor on behalf of the Department of Corrections.

Public Works Director Rogalsky responded that the terms of the contract have remained consistent with the original and subsequent renewal agreements. The contracted services

are carried out by a small crew once weekly and the current scope of services would not necessitate additional staffing as the tasks outlined in the agreement require a limited level of skill and scope.

Council engaged in an in-depth discussion regarding their understanding of the agreement, including their belief that the work is performed on a voluntary basis by inmates of the Department of Corrections and is in no way coerced or pressed.

Councilmember Maier elaborated on the purpose of his comments, emphasizing a need for a comprehensive understanding of the contract details before Council's approval. However, Councilmember Maier acknowledged that the terms of agreements with state agencies are typically standardized and not subject to amendment, and would therefore support approval of the resolution, even if clarifying information were presented at a later date.

Councilmember Lukson and Mayor Pro Tem Kent expressed support for adopting the proposed agreement. However, they requested that staff offer clarifying information regarding the details of the contract, particularly the voluntary or coercive nature of the work performed by inmates pursuant to the agreement, to assist them in making an informed decision about whether to support or oppose a renewal in the future.

COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER JONES SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 2024-19, AUTHORIZING AN AGREEMENT WITH THE WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS FOR INMATE LABOR SERVICES. MOTION CARRIED 7- 0.

17. Polco - National Community Survey 2024 (Discussion Only)

With the aid of a PowerPoint Presentation, Assistant City Manager Florence introduced the agenda item, provided an overview of the Strategic Planning timeline, then presented the 2022 National Community Survey (NCS) results facilitated by Polco in 2022. The National Community Research Center (NRC) at Polco is comprised of data and survey science experts who analyze community assessments to provide an accurate representation of the community, nationwide comparison reports, and professional data analysis.

It was noted that in the 2022 NCS survey, there was a 17% response rate from 2,800 randomly selected households. Assistant City Manager Florence provided a detailed overview of the survey results, examining ten facets of community life, including the economy, mobility, community design, utilities, natural environment, and inclusivity.

Assistant City Manager Florence stated the objectives of the 2024 NCS is to provide data for comparison with participating communities, to benchmark against the 2022 survey to analyze trends, and to continue the biennial survey as part of future results presentation to Council.

City Manager Amundson shared that during a recent presentation with Polco, he learned that statistically, in multi-family housing and younger demographics, there tends to be less of a propensity to participate in surveys. To address this, these demographics are over-sampled to ensure a more accurate and reflective response.

Discussion on the 2024 survey initiation included insights on the benefits and drawbacks of adding supplemental questions, custom benchmark comparisons with similarly sized communities, and other considerations for the survey. Data from the NCS will be used over the next couple of years to determine the progress of the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan.

Assistant City Manager Florence noted that the 2022 NCS survey was conducted during the COVID pandemic, which may have affected the responses received.

Councilmember VanDyke thanked City Manager Amundson and Assistant City Manager Florence for integrating the Strategic Plan and NCS and offered recommendations for the 2024 NCS.

Council thanked City Manager Amundson and Assistant City Manager Florence for their work on the NCS and provided feedback, suggestions, and posed additional inquiries.

Reports and Comments

City Manager

City Manager Amundson announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is presently conducting a two-day mock exercise for first responders in the Tri-Cities area. The purpose of the exercise is to foster collaborative emergency preparedness and response among various first responder groups in the region.

City Manager Amundson emphasized the importance of such exercises, stating they bring together participants from multiple governmental levels, as well as representatives from the private sector and non-profit organizations. These exercises are crucial for community preparedness, allowing these diverse groups to anticipate potential risks and to streamline their readiness efforts for actual emergency situations.

The exercise that occurred today focused on immediate response strategies while the second day of the exercise, scheduled for the next day, will shift the focus to long-term recovery response. City Manager Amundson shared that the exercise went well. The official outcome and performance report from FEMA is anticipated to be released in April.

City Council

Councilmember Maier had no comments.

Councilmember Whitten reported that the Arts Commission approved the removal and storage of the art installation located at the Queensgate roundabout. There is no

replacement planned, but the public will be encouraged to offer suggestions for future art installations at the same location.

Next, Councilmember Whitten shared that the Arts Commission has completed its review and deliberation process for the Supporting The Arts in Richland (STAR) Award nominations. The recipients have been selected and will be recognized at an upcoming City Council meeting.

Councilmember Jones inquired about the measures the City is implementing to safeguard against cybersecurity threats. In response, City Manager Amundson stated the City was successful in securing two (2) grants totaling \$190,000 at the end of 2023. The grants will be specifically allocated for conducting a comprehensive cybersecurity assessment aimed at identifying vulnerabilities and enhancing the City's cyber defenses.

Councilmember VanDyke provided the following comments and reports:

- Thanked Public Works Director Rogalsky for posting the Richland Crash Map Geographical Information System (GIS) Interface on the City's website and offered suggestions for a future revision.
- Reported that the Planning Commission is reviewing language for the development of Tracts D & E.
- Thanked Interim Chief of Police Neher and the Traffic Safety Unit for contributing to the reduction in the number of auto break-ins in Richland.
- Conveyed to City Manager Amundson his wish for flaws in the mock FEMA exercise to derive lessons ahead of an actual emergency situation.

Councilmember Lukson had no comments.

Mayor Pro Tem Kent made the following announcements:

- Introduced and welcomed newly appointed Utility Advisory Committee member, Monica Hofstetter, who was present at the meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Kent stated that Ms. Hofstetter will be a valuable addition to the UAC.
- Announced that she attended her first Visit Tri-Cities meeting and reported on the meeting experience and topics discussed.
- Reported that the Parks & Recreation Commission members have been actively engaged in gathering information and exploring possible actions the City can take to address the algal bloom/toxic algae issue in the Columbia River.

Mayor

Mayor Richardson announced that the regional mayors met to discuss the region's future energy needs following a presentation by Energy Services Director Whitney. Discussions regarding the topic will be ongoing.

Adjournment

Mayor Richardson adjourned the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

APPROVED:



Theresa Richardson, Mayor

ATTEST:



Jennifer Rogers, City Clerk

DATE APPROVED: February 20, 2024

DATE PUBLISHED: February 21, 2024