



MINUTES
RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING
Tuesday, June 25, 2024
Richland City Hall ~ Council Chambers
625 Swift Boulevard

City Council Workshop - 6:00 p.m.

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

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

Also present were City Manager Amundson, Deputy City Manager Schiessl, City Attorney Kintzley, Fire Chief Huntington, Energy Services Director Whitney, Finance Director Allen, Parks & Public Facilities Director Waite, Interim Chief of Police Meidl, and City Clerk Rogers.

Agenda Items

1. 2025 Budget Process Review

With the aid of a PowerPoint Presentation, Finance Director Allen presented the 2025 budget process to Council, including the timeline for approval and key financial strategies for the upcoming fiscal year.

Finance Director Allen stated the balanced budget will maintain a General Fund reserve within the recommended range of 16.7% to 25%. Notably, a planned increase in the electric utility rate for 2024 has been canceled, with further analysis pending on potential increases or fees for 2025. The city has seen steady growth in its assessed value and utility occupation taxes, alongside a positive trend in sales tax revenue, which has shown an increase of 7.5% over the past decade.

Regarding economic trends and external impacts, Finance Director Allen discussed the moderate growth in sales tax, the flat trend in permit fees and Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) revenues, and ongoing community growth demanding more services. The presentation also touched on challenges such as supply chain issues affecting large vehicle purchases and slight fluctuations in inflation rates.

On the local, state and federal levels, there will be continued adjustments to the minimum wage based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), reductions in city contributions to state retirement systems, and potential new funding opportunities with the help of a new federal lobbyist. Detailed information can be found in the PowerPoint Presentation.

City Manager Amundson reminded Council that each year, no new programs are automatically included in the budget. Instead, the proposed programs undergo a process where they are vetted at the city manager level before possible inclusion in the proposed budget. This process applies to all programs, including personnel requests and Information Technology (IT) projects, whether the projects are a one-time expansion or ongoing extended programs.

Additionally, City Manager Amundson explained the Pavement Preservation Program depends on expenditures, revenue, and the overall budget to determine if the recommended funding can be fully met to maintain the pavement condition index. Last year was the first year the full funding was achieved according to the Pavement Conditions Index (PCI) recommendations.

City Manager Amundson then stated that despite supply chain issues with kennels, the animal shelter, which is expected to open by the end of the year. He then mentioned ongoing projects actively supported by Senator Murray, Senator Cantwell, and Representative Newhouse.

Following the presentation, Council offered comments and engaged in a question-and-answer session with Finance Director Allen.

2. Richland Police Department Annual Report

Interim Chief of Police Meidl, Commander Mason, and Commander Jansen jointly presented the 2023 Annual Richland Police Department (RPD) Report.

Interim Chief Meidl provided a high-level overview of the department's composition and staffing changes, recruitment/retention incentives, community relations. National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) offense summary calls for service, and use of force.

Commander Mason highlighted activities of the Patrol Operations, Tri-City Regional SWAT Team, and the Bomb Squad. Commander Mason also discussed the reintroduction of the Traffic Unit in August 2023, which focused on traffic safety, leading to 5,804 traffic stops and a significant rise in infractions and arrests compared to the previous year. The Small Unmanned Aerial Systems (sUAS) Team, in its second year, played a vital role in various incidents, including search and rescue operations and crime scene documentation.

Commander Jansen provided an overview of the Investigations Division's activities, including the work of the Street Crimes Unit and the Metro Drug Task Force, Richland Police Foundation, and the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force.

Additionally, on behalf of Professional Staff Supervisor Carper, Commander Jansen reported on the Professional Staff's role, responsibilities, and contributions relating to police records, police public records, code enforcement, crime analysis, quartermaster, evidence, and community relations.

The Community Relations Unit, comprised of the Community Relations Specialist and Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS) utilizes several approaches to the safety of the community through outreach, education, and support. Commander Jansen highlighted 2023 community engagement opportunities along with the 2024 planned community events.

Commander Jansen concluded the annual report by providing an overview of RPD's goals pertaining to recruitment, retention, and ways the department can leverage best practices in 2024.

Detailed information can be found in the PowerPoint Presentation. Following the presentation, Council thanked staff for the presentation, provided comments, and engaged in a question-and-answer session with staff.

3. Richland Fire & Emergency Services Annual Report

With the aid of a PowerPoint Presentation, Fire Chief Huntington and Deputy Fire Chief Aust provided a high-level year-end review of the Fire & Emergency Services (RFES) Report.

The annual report included a comprehensive overview of the department's activities and achievements over the past year. The presentation began with Chief Huntington providing an incident breakdown by type, noting an increase in call volume increases over the past decade, specific types of fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) incidents, trauma incidents by cause of injury, and the concentration of incidents by location with the city.

Deputy Fire Chief Aust reported that the team welcomed six (6) new staff members in 2023. Notable achievements included receiving the Mission: Lifeline Silver Award in Cardiac Care, initiating a Standards of Cover Study, breaking ground for Station 76, continued investment in the Heart Safe Richland program, completing the Radio Infrastructure Engineering Study, being awarded a Community Wildfire Protection Plan Grant, and ongoing efforts in the Medical Utility Strategic Plan.

Training and development efforts focused on recruitment, development, and training opportunities for the staff. Fire Chief Huntington provided a high-level overview of community outcomes, emphasizing lives saved, quality of life improvements, and the protection of life and property.

The quality of life was enhanced through the Resource Navigator Program, which helps direct vulnerable populations to appropriate social services, reducing misaligned 911 calls and ensuring patients receive the necessary assistance.

Looking forward, the department anticipates the opening of Station 76 in late summer 2024, further developments in the Heart Safe Richland program, updates to the Medical Utility Strategic Plan and strategic planning, a regional Standards of Cover Assessment, and the buildout of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Detailed information can be found in the PowerPoint Presentation included in the agenda packet. Following the presentation, Council engaged in a question-and-answer session with staff.

Closing Comments

City Manager Amundson noted recent engagement from Council regarding eligibility for service on the Richland Public Facilities District Board and inquired whether Council desired to change any of the existing eligibility criteria. Mayor Pro Tem Kent responded that any changes to the eligibility criteria should apply going forward. She pointed out that current candidates applied under the published requirements, and it would be unfair to change the criteria mid-process. Council offered no opposing comments to Mayor Pro Tem Kent's statements.

Councilmember VanDyke provided an overview of the sessions he attended during the recently held Association of Washington Cities (AWC) Annual Conference. Councilmember VanDyke expressed appreciation for the professionalism of city administration and the effectiveness of the mayoral system.

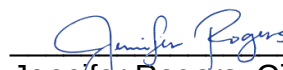
Adjournment

Mayor Richardson adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

APPROVED:


Theresa Richardson, Mayor

ATTEST:


Jennifer Rogers, City Clerk

DATE APPROVED: July 2, 2024

DATE PUBLISHED: July 3, 2024