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MINUTES
RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, November 5, 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, Chief of Police Pilcher, Fire Chief Huntington, Development Services Director Jensen, Energy Services Director Whitney, Finance Director Allen, Human Resources Director Paulsen, Parks & Public Facilities Director Waite, Public Works Director D'Alessandro, and City Clerk Rogers.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Approval of Agenda

COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER JONES SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PUBLISHED. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Presentations

1. 2025 Tri-City Regional Hotel-Motel Commission Budget and Marketing Plan Presentation

Kevin Lewis, Visit Tri-Cities President & CEO, explained that the annual presentation pertains to the Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) covered under an interlocal agreement

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between Visit Tri-Cities and the cities of Richland, Kennewick, and Pasco. Funds collected are directed back to the community through tourism operations on behalf of the entire region. The annual presentation serves as an opportunity to review the past year's activities, present a detailed overview of the TPA fund usage, and outline plans for the year ahead. Mr. Lewis began his presentation by playing a video from the recent Ironman 70.3 Washington Tri-Cities event held in September.

Mr. Lewis then presented the economic impacts of the Ironman event, reviewed the 2025 TPA revenue projections, the 2025 tourism forecast, and upcoming projects. He also provided details on the current TPA Reserve Fund balance. Following the presentation, Council offered comments and engaged in a question-and-answer session with Mr. Lewis.

2. Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program

Public Works Director D'Alessandro provided an update on the Neighborhood Traffic Safety (NTS) Program, the City's traffic calming program. The program has been a significant priority for residents and a key deliverable for the City Council. Historically, the City has received numerous requests and complaints regarding traffic calming measures, focusing on slowing speeds in neighborhood streets and reducing traffic volumes. However, due to competing priorities and other safety needs, the requests were often deferred, leaving the City without a structured program to address the concerns.

Previously, a traffic calming resolution established stringent criteria to receive traffic calming measures, making it challenging, if not impossible, for any street to qualify. Recognizing this barrier, the restrictive resolution was repealed, and a NTS Program was instituted. This new approach provides neighborhoods with a more accessible process for achieving traffic calming and slowing traffic on residential streets.

Public Works Director D'Alessandro provided an overview of the foundational elements of the NTS Program, detailing its funding sources and explaining the annual application and program development process. The City received thirteen (13) valid petitions by the February 28, 2024 deadline which were scored and ranked by staff. In conclusion, Public Works Director D'Alessandro reviewed next steps for the proposed 2024 projects planned to occur in 2025.

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.

3. Status of Wye Park Closure

With the aid of a PowerPoint Presentation, Parks & Public Facilities Director Waite presented on the closures of Wye Park and Columbia Park West. He outlined the scope of the issues faced in these parks, including a historical overview of challenges and a discussion on the closure locations and reopening plan. He emphasized that the Parks &

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Public Facilities Department approached the closure decision with a focus on providing safe recreational amenities and protecting natural and constructed resources within the parks, such as vegetation, wildlife habitat, and park assets.

Key issues identified with the closures of Wye Park and Columbia Park West included destruction of natural resources, human-caused fires, vandalism, littering, and illicit drug use. The park closures were a last resort as multiple steps were taken before the closure decision was made.

Parks & Public Facilities Director Waite provided context regarding the areas impacted by the park closures, noting that while the closures specifically affect portions of Wye Park and Columbia Park West, related issues, such as fires and vandalism, extended slightly beyond these parks. He then outlined the steps taken toward reopening the parks, emphasizing that the closure decision was made with input from community partners, the City of Kennewick, Benton County, and the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Since most of the park property is leased from the USACE, their awareness and preliminary support were essential.

Following the closures, an on-site meeting with USACE was held, focusing on vegetation management along the shoreline. An extensive shoreline cleanup was conducted by Parks staff. The reopening process involves securing a permit for vegetation management and completing additional maintenance to improve structures and other amenities. The parks will reopen gradually in phases, starting with less impacted areas. The City will communicate the phased reopening to the community partners and the public through various channels.

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

Public Hearing

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

4. Proposed 2025 Budget and 2025-2030 Capital Improvement Plan, Ordinance No. 2024-37

Mayor Richardson opened and closed the public hearing at 7:19 p.m. No testimony was offered.

Public Comments

The following individuals provided public comments:

- Tim Taylor, a resident of Richland, WA, and a volunteer member of the *A Better Richland* petition group, reported on his efforts to gather signatures in support of transitioning to a district-based city council in Richland. Mr. Taylor urged Council

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to place the initiative on the February 2025 ballot, asserting that doing so would align with the expressed desire of constituents.

- Carrie Hallquist, a resident of Richland, WA, provided comments supporting the creation of district-based council seats as outlined in the *A Better Richland* petition recently circulated within the city, and urged Council to place this matter on the ballot for a February 2025 special election vote.

- Laila Krowiak, a resident of Richland, WA, expressed appreciation and gratitude for the Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program. She extended her thanks to those who suggested and supported the program's progress. She noted that residents on Haines Avenue have been voicing concerns for years and were pleased to see their neighborhood ranked high on the program list. She encouraged the City to seek funding to support additional projects.

- Edward Muñoz, a resident of Richland, WA, expressed appreciation to Council and all city staff responsible for taking action to close Wye Park and Columbia Park West. Mr. Muñoz highlighted the importance of preventing the area from returning to its previous state once current barriers are removed.

- Charles Swearingen, a resident of Richland, WA, expressed his gratitude to city staff, especially the Public Works Department, for recent street improvements, specifically the addition of bike lanes on Wellsian Way. He also referenced recent bump-out installations on Thayer Drive and Williams Street as part of the NTS Program. Mr. Swearingen suggested the possibility of involving neighborhood residents to lessen the City's workload and to enhance community engagement.

- Jeff Evert, a resident of Richland, WA, and Commander of Legion Post 115 in Benton City, inquired about the progress of establishing a Veterans Cemetery.

  At Mayor Richardson's request, City Manager Amundson responded that following Council's instruction, staff initiated a property appraisal expected to be completed within three (3) weeks. He noted that the City is in regular communication with Mr. Puente, Jr., Director of Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs.

- Randy Slovic, a resident of Richland, WA, commended the sixty (60) volunteers who canvassed the city to collect signatures on the petition recently circulated to create five (5) district-based council seats. Ms. Slovic expressed hope that Council would formally acknowledge and thank the volunteers for their time and dedication.

- Joel Barker, a resident of Richland, WA, raised concerns regarding the purchase or lease and development of property located at 24 Lawless Drive. Mr. Barker stated that he and his wife only recently became aware of the City's interest in selling or leasing the land. Though Mr. Barker spoke to city staff and received information, he requested additional information on the project and inquired when the public might have an opportunity to provide input. In conclusion, he requested

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a written response from Economic Development staff about the matter.

- Lucy Barker, a resident of Richland, WA, expressed concerns regarding the purchase or lease and development of property located at 24 Lawless Drive. Mrs. Barker highlighted issues with traffic speeds along Lawless Drive and the congestion near Fred Meyer. She questioned the feasibility of the proposed development at the location and proposed that the land be repurposed as a dog park.

- Connie Muñoz, a resident of Richland, WA, thanked Council and staff for their efforts in closing Wye Park and Columbia Park West. Mrs. Muñoz noted that the camping issue is confined to the Richland side of the Columbia River, and suggested collaborating with the City of Kennewick to learn about their approach, as the camping issue does not appear on Kennewick's side. She expressed concern that reopening the park could lead to a recurrence of the problem if additional steps are not taken.

Consent Calendar

City Clerk Rogers read the Consent Calendar.

Minutes

5. Approval of the October 15, 2024 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes and the October 22, 2024 City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes

Ordinances - First Reading

See Ordinance No. 2024-37 under Items of Business

Ordinances - Second Reading & Passage

6. Ordinance No. 2024-32, Establishing and Dedicating the Right-of-Way for Segments of Kingsgate Way and Queensgate Drive

7. Ordinance No. 2024-33, Amending Richland Municipal Code Section 5.04.386 related to Use of Business License Reserves

8. Ordinance No. 2024-34, Amending Richland Municipal Code Sections 14.24.060, 15.03.060, 16.08.035, 17.56.028 and 18.24.020 related to Utility Rates

Resolutions - Adoption

9. Resolution No. 2024-124, Authorizing a Stormwater Facility Grant for the Downtown Connectivity Improvements Project

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10. Resolution No. 2024-139, Setting a Public Hearing Date for Vacation of a Portion of Robertson Drive

11. Resolution No. 2024-140, Authorizing Award of Bid to Tapani, Inc. for the Truman Ave Tapteal 2 Booster Pump Station

12. Resolution No. 2024-141, Authorizing an Interlocal Agreement with the City of West Richland for Engineering Support Services for the Horn Rapids Water Intertie

13. Resolution No. 2024-142, Authorizing Award of Bid to Sharpe & Preszler Construction Co. Inc. for the Meadows Drive South Water Service Replacement Project

14. Resolution No. 2024-143, Authorizing a Revocable Right-of-Way License Agreement with the Bonneville Power Administration

15. Resolution No. 2024-144, Authorizing Amendment No. 1 to the Local Agency Haul Road/Detour Agreement with the Washington State Department of Transportation

16. Resolution No. 2024-145, Authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Benton Conservation District for Shrubsteppe Mitigation

17. Resolution No. 2024-146, Awarding Commercial Facade Improvement Grant Funds to Joe & Mon Enterprises, LLC for 702 George Washington Way

18. Resolution No. 2024-147, Ratifying a Memorandum of Understanding with the Benton-Franklin Council of Governments for Climate Change Planning

19. Resolution 2024-148, Authorizing an Interlocal Agreement for the 2024 Byrne Justice Assistance Grant

20. Resolution No. 2024-149, Authorizing a Grant Agreement with the Washington State Traffic Safety Commission for High Visibility Enforcement Actions

21. Resolution No. 2024-150, Approving the 2025 Tri-City Regional Hotel-Motel Commission Budget and Marketing Plan

22. Resolution No. 2024-151, Establishing Richland City Council Meeting Dates for Calendar Year 2025

23. Resolution No. 2024-152, Authorizing an Agreement with Eric J. Van Alstine d/b/a Tradewinds Heating and Cooling for Weatherwise Program Participation

Items - Approval

24. Appointment to the Utility Advisory Committee: Colton Wallin

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

Items of Business

25. Ordinance No. 2024-35, Approving a Change to the 2025 Ad Valorem Tax over the Prior Year

Finance Director Allen explained that Ordinance Nos. 2024-35 and 2024-36 are presented for second reading and passage, and referred to his previous presentation given on October 15, 2024. Having no additional information to present, he welcomed questions from Council.

COUNCILMEMBER LUKSON MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER MAIER SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE ORDINANCE NO. 2024- 35, APPROVING A CHANGE TO THE 2025 AD VALOREM TAX OVER THE PRIOR YEAR. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON AND COUNCILMEMBERS LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: MAYOR PRO TEM KENT AND COUNCILMEMBER JONES. MOTION CARRIED 5-2.

26. Ordinance No. 2024-36, Approving the 2025 Ad Valorem Tax and Property Tax Levies

COUNCILMEMBER LUKSON MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER MAIER SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE ORDINANCE NO. 2024- 36, APPROVING THE 2025 AD VALOREM TAX AND PROPERTY TAX LEVIES. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON AND COUNCILMEMBERS LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: MAYOR PRO TEM KENT AND COUNCILMEMBER JONES. MOTION CARRIED 5-2.

27. Ordinance No. 2024-37, Approving the 2025 Budget and the 2025-2030 Capital Improvement Plan

With the aid of a PowerPoint Presentation, Finance Director Allen provided a high-level overview of the 2025 Budget and the 2025-2030 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Total appropriations for 2025 All Funds are set at $358,329.864, which represents an approximately $2,700,000 decrease from the preliminary budget, and a 14.5% increase from the adopted 2024 Budget. Total estimated revenues are set at $324,361,062. Finance Director Allen reviewed the 2025 appropriations by category, along with the 2025 estimated revenues and expenditures. The 2025 CIP includes fifty-six (56) projects totaling $82.9 million.

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Finance Director Allen then provided an overview of the upcoming steps in the budget process. Council had no comments or questions.

COUNCILMEMBER VANDYKE MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE ORDINANCE NO. 2024- 37, APPROVING THE 2025 BUDGET AND THE 2025-2030 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR FIRST READING. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Reports and Comments

City Manager

City Manager Amundson had no comments.

City Council

Councilmember Lukson had no comments.

Mayor Pro Tem Kent thanked staff for their efforts in maintaining compliance with budget-related regulatory and statutory requirements. Next, she acknowledged the Public Works and Parks & Public Facilities staff for their efforts regarding the Ironman event. Lastly, Mayor Pro Tem Kent thanked city staff who organized the volunteer appreciation event for board, commission, and committee members, noting that the event was well-organized, positively received, and provided an excellent opportunity to recognize the contributions of community volunteers.

Councilmember VanDyke concurred with Mayor Pro Tem Kent's comments and had no additional comments.

Councilmember Jones concurred with Mayor Pro Tem Kent's comments and had no additional comments.

Councilmember Whitten thanked Parks & Public Facilities Director Waite for his efforts regarding the situation at Wye Park and Columbia Park West, and extended his thanks to Parks staff and law enforcement for their work. Councilmember Whitten acknowledged the unfortunate situation at the parks, but noted the positive steps taken and expressed hope for continued preservation of the area. While empathetic towards individuals experiencing homelessness, he stressed the importance of respecting the environment and public property. Councilmember Whitten also welcomed Colton Wallin to the Utility Advisory Committee and Chief of Police Marty Pilcher to the City of Richland.

Councilmember Maier shared that he has received feedback regarding the charter amendment petition effort, with many expressing a desire to expedite the process rather than waiting for the November 2025 General Election. Councilmember Maier encouraged

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Council to collaborate on advancing the charter amendment question to a vote in February 2025, regardless of individual support for or opposition to transitioning from an all at-large election system to a district and at-large model. He emphasized a proactive approach rather than waiting for procedural requirements.

Councilmember Maier further suggested that adding the charter amendment question to the February 2025 ballot could be cost-effective given that there are other items are already planned for that ballot. Councilmember Maier concluded by expressing interest in exploring options for moving forward and proposed this as a future council meeting business item.

Mayor Richardson opined that councilmembers were elected for a defined term and that a structured process exists to guide any potential changes. She noted that no other councilmembers expressed interest in discussing an advanced schedule for the charter amendment question. Finally, Mayor Richardson indicated that Council is currently effectively handling its responsibilities.

Mayor

Mayor Richardson thanked staff for organizing the BCC Volunteer Appreciation dinner.

Adjournment

Mayor Richardson adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

APPROVED:

Theresa A Richardson
Theresa Richardson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Jennifer Rogers
Jennifer Rogers, City Clerk

DATE APPROVED: November 19, 2024

DATE PUBLISHED: November 20, 2024