



MINUTES

RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, December 17, 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	Absent
Councilmember Maier	Present
Councilmember VanDyke	Present (remote via Zoom)
Councilmember Whitten	Present

MAYOR PRO TEM KENT MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN SECONDED THE MOTION TO EXCUSE COUNCILMEMBER LUKSON. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Also present were City Manager Amundson, Deputy City Manager Schiessl, City Attorney Kintzley, Fire Chief Huntington, Chief of Police Pilcher, 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 Maier led the Council and audience in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

MAYOR PRO TEM KENT MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER JONES SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PUBLISHED. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Presentations

1. Introduction of Basic Law Enforcement Academy Class No. 899 Graduates: Camryn Andersen, Ian Bergevin, Tayler Jackson, Michael Minarik, and Travis Schouviller

Chief of Police Pilcher introduced each graduating member and reported that the officers will begin the field training process, which will last approximately four (4) months.

Next, Monica Malhan, Richland Police Department Foundation Board President introduced herself and recognized several board members in attendance. Mrs. Malhan then presented each graduate a gift basket on behalf of the Foundation and welcomed them to the community.

Public Hearing

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

2. Proposed Amendment to Chapters 23.22 and 23.26 of the Richland Municipal Code to Establish the Horn Rapids Employment Center and Prohibit Mini- Warehouses Therein, Ordinance No. 2024-48

Mayor Richardson opened the public hearing at 6:08 p.m. Mayor Richardson closed the public hearing at 6:10 p.m. No testimony was offered.

3. Proposed Surplus and Authorizing Relinquishment of an Easement Lying within 341 Gleneagles Court, Resolution No. 2024-163

Mayor Richardson opened and closed the public hearing at 6:10 p.m. No testimony was offered.

Public Comments

The following individuals provided public comments:

- Christopher Hager of Richland, WA voiced concerns regarding a neighbor who is constructing a shed near his property line which is separated by a cement block wall. He expressed concerns that runoff from the shed could potentially undermine the wall's foundation and cause structural damage. Mr. Hager contacted the Code Enforcement Board for assistance on the matter but was informed that there was nothing they could do since the matter did not involve an easement.

City Manager Amundson confirmed that staff had been in contact with Mr. Hager and that Deputy City Manager Schiessl will continue to follow-up with him.

- Diahann Howard, Executive Director of the Port of Benton, expressed gratitude to city staff for organizing a successful winter lighted parade during the Winter Wonderland event held on Friday, December 6, 2024. She shared that she and her team enjoyed participating in the community event. Ms. Howard extended holiday greetings and thanked the City for its continued collaboration and partnership.

- Edward Muñuz of Richland, WA expressed his support for the adoption of Resolution No. 2024-172 on the Consent Calendar regarding the 800MHz Land Mobile Radio System, and encouraged Council to vote in favor of its adoption.

Consent Calendar

City Clerk Rogers read the Consent Calendar.

Minutes

4. Approval of the December 3, 2024 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes and the December 9, 2024 City Council Special Workshop Meeting Minutes

Ordinances - First Reading

5. Ordinance No. 2024-39, Establishing and Dedicating the Right-of-Way for a Segment of Gateway Avenue
6. Ordinance No. 2024-40, Establishing and Dedicating the Right-of-Way for a Segment of Hanford Street
7. Ordinance No. 2024-45, Approving the 2028 Council Compensation Plan

Ordinances - Second Reading & Passage

8. Ordinance No. 2024-41, Adopting the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Amendments into the existing 2017 Comprehensive Plan
9. Ordinance No. 2024-42, Amending Richland Municipal Code Title 23: Zoning Regulations and the City's Official Zoning Map to Conform to the Updated 2017 Comprehensive Plan
10. Ordinance No. 2024-43, Vacating a Portion of Robertson Drive Right-of-Way
11. Ordinance No. 2024-44, Amending the 2024 Budget in the General Fund, Streets Maintenance Fund, Special Lodging Assessment Fund, Equipment Replacement Fund, Medical Services Fund, Parks Project Construction Fund and Community Development Block Grant Fund

Resolutions - Adoption

12. Resolution No. 2024-165, Authorizing a Consultant Agreement with J-U-B Engineers, Inc. for the Extension of Battelle Boulevard and Utilities Project
13. Resolution No. 2024-166, Awarding 2025 Business License Reserve Fund Grants

14. Resolution No. 2024-167, Increasing the Change Order Threshold for Contract No. 223-23 with Virginia Transformer Corporation for the Purchase of Two Power Transformers
15. Resolution No. 2024-168, Authorizing a Reimbursable Agreement with the Bonneville Power Administration for Expansion of the Stevens Drive and Thayer Drive Substations
16. Resolution No. 2024-169, Authorizing a Letter Amendment to the Port of Benton Land Exchange Agreement Authorizing Phase I Closing and Extending the Phase II Feasibility Study Period
17. Resolution No. 2024-170, Authorizing a Reimbursement Agreement with BNSF Railway Company in support of the Steptoe Street and Tapteal Drive Intersection Improvements Project
18. Resolution No. 2024-171, Authorizing an Application for an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
19. Resolution No. 2024-172, Authorizing a Finance Agreement with Motorola Solutions, Inc. for Expansion of the 800MHz Land Mobile Radio System on behalf of Benton County Emergency Services
20. Resolution No. 2024-173, Authorizing a Grant Application to the Washington State Department of Ecology for Aquatic Invasive Plant Funding

Expenditures - Approval

21. Expenditures from November 1, 2024 to November 30, 2024 for \$38,804,505.09 including Travel Checks Nos. 20671-20677, Accounts Payable Check Nos. 328862-329728, Accounts Payable Wire Nos. 10322-10365, Payroll Wires & ACH Nos. 14358-14414, Payroll Direct Deposit & Check Nos. 231258-232417, and Pension Check Nos. 6880-6900

MAYOR PRO TEM KENT MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PUBLISHED. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Items of Business

22. Ordinance No. 2024-46, Amending Chapters 23.22 and 23.26 of the Richland Municipal Code to Establish the Horn Rapids Employment Center and Prohibit Mini-Warehouses Therein

Mike Stevens, Planning Manager for the City of Richland, presented the proposed text amendment to the zoning code establishing the Horn Rapids Employment Center as an overlay district. The amendment would restrict future development of mini-warehouses or mini-storage facilities within the designated area. The Richland Planning Commission conducted an open-record public hearing on the proposal at its October 23, 2024 meeting and recommend approval.

The City's Economic Development staff supports the amendment, citing its alignment with the original purpose of the land intended for job-generating economic development.

After the presentation, Council engaged in a question-and-answer session with staff. Councilmember Maier emphasized the importance of respecting the Planning Commission's recommendations, noting the land's original designation for economic development purposes. Councilmember Jones requested staff provide a list of storage facilities and their distances for further context.

MAYOR PRO TEM KENT MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER MAIER SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE ORDINANCE NO. 2024-46, AMENDING CHAPTERS 23.22 AND 23.26 OF THE RICHLAND MUNICIPAL CODE TO ESTABLISH THE HORN RAPIDS EMPLOYMENT CENTER AND PROHIBIT MINI-WAREHOUSES, FOR FIRST READING. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

23. Resolution No. 2024-163, Declaring Surplus and Authorizing Relinquishment of an Easement Lying within 341 Gleneagles Court

Public Works Director D'Alessandro explained that a previous easement relinquishment occurred at Gleneagles Court for the specified address, and the property owner later expressed interest in relinquishing additional easements on the property. Staff reviewed the request, confirmed there are no existing utilities or development plans within the easements, and recommend approval of the relinquishment.

COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN MOVED AND MAYOR PRO TEM KENT SECONDED THE MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2024- 163, DECLARING SURPLUS AND AUTHORIZING RELINQUISHMENT OF AN EASEMENT LYING WITHIN 341 GLENEAGLES COURT. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

24. Resolution No. 2024-174, Authorizing an Interlocal Agreement to Initiate a Reciprocal Borrowing Relationship with Area Libraries

With the use of a PowerPoint Presentation, Parks & Public Facilities Director Waite presented on the proposed interlocal agreement to initiate a short-term, one-year pilot period to participate in a reciprocal borrowing relationship with the following five (5)

libraries: Richland Public Library, Mid-Columbia Libraries, Walla Walla County Rural Library, Walla Walla Public Library, and Columbia County Rural Library District.

The proposal emerged from a year-long collaborative study involving the participating libraries. The study examined similar agreements statewide, assessed available resources, and gathered stakeholder input. The process resulted in a recommendation to launch the pilot reciprocal borrowing program.

Under the agreement, patrons will be eligible for free reciprocal cards from participating libraries and will allow access to physical materials and online databases, excluding digital services. Expected program benefits include expanded resource access, strengthened regional partnerships, reduced interlibrary loan costs, and improved customer service.

All five (5) libraries will track usage data to evaluate the program's success after one year. On November 12, 2024, the Richland Library Board of Trustees unanimously recommended the agreement's approval.

MAYOR PRO TEM KENT MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER MAIER SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 2024-174, AUTHORIZING AN INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT TO INITIATE A RECIPROCAL BORROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH AREA LIBRARIES. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

25. Medical Utility Rate Setting for 2025 (Discussion Only)

Fire Chief Huntington's presentation on the 2025 Medical Utility Rate Setting focused on proposed rate adjustments to the City of Richland's medical utility rates to support long-term funding needs, particularly for Fire Station No. 76, and addressed underbilling concerns identified by staff and contracted vendors.

Current rates include a monthly utility fee of \$11.47, a mileage rate of \$14 per mile, and transportation rates of \$1,042 for residents and \$1,563 for non-residents.

After a detailed review by Finance staff and the Utility Advisory Committee (UAC) during its September and November meetings, proposed rate charges for 2025 were introduced. These include increasing the monthly utility rate from \$11.47 to \$12.58 and raising the mileage rate from \$14 to \$24 per mile. The transportation rates will remain unchanged in 2025 but are slated for evaluation in 2026.

The proposed adjustments are guided by a managed-growth strategy involving incremental rate increases, reflecting the preferences of both City Council and the UAC. The proposal also includes leveraging unallocated reserves to cushion anticipated staffing expenses projected for the 2028-2030 timeframe.

Staff will review transport rates for consideration in 2026, alongside developing a monthly utility rate recommendation. An update cycle for each funding component will be established beginning in 2025. To comply with the annual October 1st submission deadline to the State Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC), staff will engage with City Council and the UAC each August/September starting in 2025. This process will ensure timely reviews and recommendations for necessary rate adjustments.

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

At City Manager Amundson's invitation, Fire Chief Huntington explained that the City received its first-ever vendor application for fireworks sales during the New Year's Eve holiday. After a thorough review of relevant sections in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and the Richland Municipal Code (RMC) regarding fireworks sales and discharge, staff determined there was no basis to deny the application. The RCW allows for fireworks sales beginning December 27th from noon to 11:00 p.m. Discharge of fireworks is legally permitted from 6:00 p.m. on New Year's Eve until 1:00 a.m. on New Year's Day. Fire Chief Huntington also reminded Council that state law mandates a one-year lead time for implementing any new fireworks-related regulations.

Reports and Comments

City Manager

City Manager Amundson expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work with City Council this past year and noted progress made on the City's Strategic Plan. He then highlighted the accomplishments achieved through productive discussions and expressed enthusiasm for continuing collaboration with City Council in 2025. In closing, City Manager Amundson extended warm wishes for a safe and happy holiday season to both City Council and those in the audience.

City Council

Councilmember VanDyke wished Council and City administration a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. He thanked staff for their dedicated service throughout the year, specifically recognized Deputy City Manager Schiessl and Economic Development Manager Wallner for their hard work and efforts over the past several weeks.

Councilmember Jones extended wishes for a happy holiday season. She then expressed gratitude to the City's Finance Department, emphasizing their skill and dedication. Councilmember Jones stated Richland is fortunate to have maintained a strong budget and healthy reserves, to which she credited the City's leadership and staff for their hard work and commitment, noting their efforts set Richland apart from other cities struggling with management turnover and financial instability. Councilmember Jones specifically acknowledged City Manager Amundson for his leadership and contributions.

Councilmember Whitten extended holiday greetings, wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. He expressed appreciation to staff for organizing the lighting ceremony at John Dam Plaza during the Winter Wonderland Event on Friday, December 6, 2024, noting it was an enjoyable event featuring creatively lit trucks and impressive costumes. Additionally, he welcomed the recent police graduates to the City.

Councilmember Maier extended congratulations to both city staff and fellow councilmembers for completing their first year together. He then stated an intention to focus more actively on parking and zoning matters in the coming year. Councilmember Maier concluded by wishing everyone a restful and enjoyable holiday season.

Mayor Pro Tem Kent thanked Councilmember Maier for the perspectives he brought to the Richland City Council in 2024, noting they inspired her to read more articles on innovations and planning. She then thanked City Manager Amundson, the Executive Leadership Team, and staff for exceptional work during a challenging year. She highlighted staff's success in balancing fiscal responsibility while delivering high quality core services and well-received community events such as Ironman 70.3 and Winter Wonderland.

Mayor Pro Tem Kent also thanked community member Randy Slovic for her engagement with the City, and encouraged others to participate and provide feedback on city services and decisions. She then reflected on the issuance of winter fireworks permits and expressed an interest in receiving feedback from the community on the matter. In closing, Mayor Pro Tem Kent wished everyone a safe and joyous holiday season and encouraged everyone to support those in need during the holidays.

Mayor

Mayor Richardson acknowledged recent growth among the city's small business community and acknowledged the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the following: The Banks on Bradley Apartments, Ben Franklin Transit Operations Building, Salud, and Habitat for Humanity.

Shen then acknowledged the scarf she wore was from the Kennewick Chapter *Daughters of the American Revolution* and was worn in connection to the *Wreaths Across America* event, which honors veterans by placing wreaths on graves at over four thousand (4,000) cemeteries nationwide, including Sunset Gardens in Richland.

Mayor Richardson then shared the City's success in the national Ironman 70.3 event, with Richland placing second in its inaugural year, as published in the recent edition of *Triathlon* magazine. Mayor Richardson concluded by thanking City Manager Amundson and staff for their leadership and dedication and extended a happy holiday season to everyone.

Executive Session

26. Executive Session Per RCW 42.30.110(1)(c): Determine Minimum Offering Price For Sale or Lease if Disclosure Would Decrease Price (45 minutes)

At 7: 24 p.m., Richland City Council convened in executive session for forty-five (45) minutes to discuss minimum offering price for sale or lease if disclosure would decrease price. A five (5) minute transition from dais to executive session occurred, with the executive session getting underway at 7:30 p.m.

Individuals present for the executive session included Mayor Richardson, and Councilmembers Jones, Maier, VanDyke and Whitten. Also present were City Manager Amundson and Deputy City Manager Schiessl.

At 8:30 p.m. Mayor Richardson returned to the meeting to extend the executive session by fifteen (15) minutes.

Council exited the executive session at 8:45 p.m.

Adjournment

Mayor Richardson adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

APPROVED:


Theresa Richardson, Mayor

ATTEST:


Jennifer Rogers, City Clerk

DATE APPROVED: January 7, 2025

DATE PUBLISHED: January 8, 2025