MINUTES
RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, February 18, 2025
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	Absent
	Councilmember Jones	Present
	Councilmember Lukson	Present
	Councilmember Maier	Present
	Councilmember VanDyke	Present
	Councilmember Whitten	Present

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

Also present were City Manager Amundson, Assistant City Manager Florence, 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 VanDyke led the Council and audience in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

COUNCILMEMBER VANDYKE MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PUBLISHED. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Presentations
None.

Public Hearing

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

1. Declaring Surplus and Authorizing Relinquishment of a Certain Portion of an Easement Lying within 2103 Putnam Street, Resolution No. 2025-30

Mayor Richardson opened and closed the public hearing at 6:04 p.m. No testimony was offered.

2. Declaring Surplus and Authorizing Relinquishment of an Easement Lying within the Vicinity of the Horn Rapids Rail Loop, Resolution No. 2025-31

Mayor Richardson opened and closed the public hearing at 6:05 p.m. No testimony as offered.

Public Comments

None.

Consent Calendar

City Clerk Rogers read the Consent Calendar.

Minutes

3. Approval of the February 4, 2025 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Ordinances - First Reading

None.

Ordinances - Second Reading & Passage

4. Ordinance No. 2025-06, Vacating a Portion of Gay Road Right-of-Way

Resolutions - Adoption

5. Resolution No. 2025-23, Authorizing a Purchase and Sale Agreement with Cody Hall for Property located at 2605 Robertson Drive

6. Resolution No. 2025-24, Authorizing a Purchase and Sale Agreement with Rowe Holdings LLC for the Property located at 1531 Tapteal Drive

7. Resolution No. 2025-25, Authorizing Amendment No. 2 to the Consultant Agreement with Tripepi Smith and Associates, Inc.

8. Resolution No. 2025-26, Authorizing a Construction Agreement with the Washington State Department of Transportation for the South George Washington Way Intersection Improvements Project

9. Resolution No. 2025-27, Authorizing a Rural County Capital Funds Disbursement Agreement for the Duportail Street Improvements Project

10. Resolution No. 2025-28, Authorizing Award of Bid to Ellison Earthworks LLC for the 2024 Stevens Drive Reconstruction Project

11. Resolution No. 2025-29, Authorizing Award of Bid to Ellison Earthworks LLC for the South George Washington Way Intersection Improvement Project

Items - Approval

None.

Expenditures - Approval

12. Expenditures from January 1, 2025 to January 31, 2025 for $45,641,215.97 including Travel Checks Nos. 20679-20693, Accounts Payable Check Nos. 331204-332059, Accounts Payable Wire Nos. 10405-10443, Payroll Wires & ACH Nos. 14464-14529, Payroll Direct Deposit & Check Nos. 233560-235278, and Pension Check Nos. 6926-6946.

MAYOR RICHARDSON PULLED RESOLUTION NO. 2025-06, VACATING A PORTION OF GAY ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY (ITEM NO. 4.). ITEM NO. 4 WAS RELOCATED TO ITEM NO. 16 UNDER ITEMS OF BUSINESS.

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

Items of Business

13. Resolution No. 2025-30, Declaring Surplus and Authorizing Relinquishment of a Certain Portion of an Easement Lying within 2103 Putnam Street

Public Works Director D'Alessandro explained that property owners at 2103 Putnam Street requested the relinquishment of a portion of a utility easement encumbering their property. The water line previously occupying the area has been relocated to Putnam Street, so the entire width of the easement is no longer needed. However, a portion of the easement does need to be retained to support an existing electrical line crossing the property. Staff recommended relinquishment of the portion of the easement no longer needed for municipal purposes as depicted in the exhibit accompanying Resolution No. 2025-30.

COUNCILMEMBER VANDYKE MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER MAIER SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 2025-30, DECLARING SURPLUS AND AUTHORIZING RELINQUISHMENT OF A CERTAIN PORTION OF AN EASEMENT LYING WITHIN 2103 PUTNAM STREET. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

14. Resolution No. 2025-31, Declaring Surplus and Authorizing Relinquishment of an Easement Lying within the Vicinity of the Horn Rapids Rail Loop

Public Works Director D'Alessandro explained that the property encumbered by the utility easement originally belong to the City but has since been transferred to the Port of Benton. The easement was originally placed in anticipation of economic development in the area, but the City no longer has need for the utility easement. The Port of Benton has requested its relinquishment, and staff is supportive of this action.

COUNCILMEMBER MAIER MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER LUKSON SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 2025-31, DECLARING SURPLUS AND AUTHORIZING RELINQUISHMENT OF AN EASEMENT LYING WITHIN THE VICINITY OF THE HORN RAPIDS RAIL LOOP. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

15. Small Modular Reactor Power Option (Discussion Only)

With the aid of a PowerPoint Presentation, Energy Services Director Whitney provided an overview of potential opportunities related to Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and the financial considerations for possible participation. He clarified that the City has not been formally asked to participate in an SMR project or any partnership with Amazon but may have future opportunities to do so.

Energy Services Director Whitney explained that public power utilities and investor-owned utilities would have the first right of refusal for a pro-rata cost share in Amazon's initial four (4) 80MW units. Participation in this phase would require a funding contribution of approximately $2.5 million per megawatt based on 20% of a projected total cost of $4B for 320MW. The United States Department of Energy's loan program is expected to loan 80% of the project's costs, with the balance to be funded by the various participating power purchasers.

A commitment decision would be required by May 1, 2026, and the projected commercial operation date for the four (4) SMR units is 2032. A second phase, involving up to eight (8) additional 80MW units, could follow, with operation anticipated after 2034.

As of third quarter 2024, the City's Energy Service Fund had 167 days of cash on hand. To maintain an investment-grade bond rating, the City needs to maintain at least 120 days of cash on hand in 2025. If $5 million were allocated for potential SMR participation, it would reduce cash reserves by approximately 29 days but would still leave the City in a stable financial position.

Additionally, Energy Services Director Whitney provided an overview of the anticipated Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) wholesale rate increase, which could impact liquidity. He explained that BPA rates change every two to three years, whereas an SMR investment could provide price stability for up to sixty (60) years. Given the City's current energy needs and potential future demand growth, he suggested that early participation could provide long-term benefits.

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

16. Ordinance No. 2025-06, Vacating a Portion of Gay Road Right-of-Way **(FORMERLY ITEM NO. 4 ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR)**

Mayor Richardson explained that she pulled this item to allow for additional discussions between staff and the property owner.

COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN MOVED AND MAYOR RICHARDSON SECONDED THE MOTION TO TABLE ORDINANCE NO. 2025-06 TO ALLOW ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITY STAFF AND THE PROPERTY OWNER. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON AND COUNCILMEMBERS LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: COUNCILMEMBER JONES. MOTION CARRIED 5-1.

Reports and Comments

City Manager

City Manager Amundson previewed the agenda for the September 25, 2025 City Council workshop.

City Council

Councilmember Lukson expressed enthusiasm about the City's discussions regarding future power sources and thanked Energy Services Director Whitney for his proactive approach in presenting the SMR topic.

Councilmember Maier provided an update from the recent Ben Franklin Transit meeting, highlighting ridership service metrics and upcoming changes. He noted that over 3.5 million rides were taken on the fixed-route network last year, setting a new record. Additionally, he reported on plans to establish a new express route designed to improve travel efficiency between cities by reducing the number of stops.

Councilmember Whitten congratulated the Energy Services Department for securing the property located at 1531 Tapteal Drive for future electrical substation construction as outlined in Resolution No. 2025-24. Next, Councilmember Whitten encouraged any youth member interested in the arts to apply for the vacant position on the Arts Commission.

Councilmember Jones stated she would like to receive a status update on the proposed Tri-Cities Veterans Cemetery. She then thanked Energy Services Director Whitney for his efforts in planning for future cost reductions in power for residents and attracting businesses, then emphasized the importance of incorporating community input into the discussion.

Councilmember VanDyke thanked staff for bringing forward Resolution No. 2025-25, the second amendment to the contract with Tripepi Smith and Associates, Inc., related to the Downtown Connectivity Improvements Project Communications Strategy.

Mayor

Mayor Richardson thanked everyone for their engagement and commitment to the City.

Adjournment

Mayor Richardson adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

APPROVED: ATTEST:

Theresa A Richardson

Theresa Richardson, Mayor

Jennifer Rogers

Jennifer Rogers, City Clerk

DATE APPROVED: March 4, 2025

DATE PUBLISHED: March 5, 2025