



MINUTES

RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, March 4, 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	Present
Councilmember Jones	Present (Remote via Zoom)
Councilmember Lukson	Present
Councilmember Maier	Present
Councilmember VanDyke	Present
Councilmember Whitten	Present (Remote via Zoom)

Also present were City Manager Amundson, Deputy City Manager Schiessl, Assistant City Manager Florence, City Attorney Kintzley, Fire Chief Huntington, Energy Services Director Whitney, Finance Director Allen, Human Resources Director Paulsen, Public Works Director D'Alessandro, Police Commander Jansen, 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 LUKSON MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER VANDYKE SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PUBLISHED. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Presentations

1. New Hires and Retirements

A video featuring four (4) new hires for the month of February was played for the audience.

- Christopher Raabe - Utility Craftworker, Water Maintenance Division
- Janelle Foster - Emergency Communications Dispatcher, SECOMM Operations
- Logan Piper - Parks & Recreation Aid, Recreation Division
- Cheyanna Wilson - Communications Graphic Designer, Communications & Marketing Division

There were no service retirements to recognize.

Public Hearing

None.

Public Comments

City Clerk Rogers read the Public Comments procedures.

The following individuals provided comments:

- Connie Muñoz, a resident of Richland, commended the Parks & Public Facilities Department for their clean-up efforts in Wye Park, but expressed concern that clean-up expenses paid by the City were the direct result of the City's decision to allow certain activities to occur in the park in the first place. She warned that allowing certain food services provided by private citizens to return will cause recurring challenges and additional costs for taxpayers.
- Edward Muñoz, a resident of Richland, expressed disagreement with a recent statement made during a City Council workshop that homelessness is primarily caused by a lack of affordable housing. He stated that while some individuals are homeless due to high rent costs, the majority struggle with drug addiction, alcoholism and mental illness, and are often unwilling to change their lifestyle to change their homeless circumstance. Mr. Muñoz suggested that resources should be directed toward expanding jail capacity to address these issues.

Consent Calendar

City Clerk Rogers read the Consent Calendar.

Minutes

2. Approval of the February 18, 2025 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes and the February 25, 2025 City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes

Ordinances - First Reading

None.

Ordinances - Second Reading & Passage

3. Ordinance No. 2025-04, Adopting the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Amendments into the Existing 2017 Comprehensive Plan
4. Ordinance No. 2025-05, Amending Richland Municipal Code Title 23: Zoning Regulations and the City's Official Zoning Map to Conform to the Updated 2017 Comprehensive Plan

Resolutions – Adoption

5. Resolution No. 2025-19, Authorizing an Amended and Restated Southeast Regional Internet Crimes Against Children (SERICAC) Task Force Interlocal Agreement
6. Resolution No. 2025-32, Authorizing 2025 Grant Applications to the Ben Franklin Transit for Bus Passes
7. Resolution No. 2025-34, Authorizing Updated Land Use Development Regulations for Badger Mountain South and a Third Amendment to the BMS Master Agreement

Items - Approval

None.

Expenditures

None.

COUNCILMEMBER MAIER PULLED ORDINANCE NO. 2025-05, AMENDING RICHLAND MUNICIPAL CODE TITLE 23: ZONING REGULATIONS AND THE CITY'S OFFICIAL ZONING MAP TO CONFORM TO THE UPDATED 2017 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (ITEM NO. 4). ITEM NO. 4 WAS RELOCATED TO ITEM NO. 10 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, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Items of Business

8. Resolution No. 2025-33, Authorizing a Consultant Agreement with Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. for the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Comprehensive Plan

Deputy City Manager Schiessl explained that Resolution No. 2025-33 authorizes execution of a consultant agreement with Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. (MIG), for the

development of a five (5) year plan for the City's park system, referred to as the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan. The City's current PROS plan is in its final year.

The PROS Plan provides grant eligibility through Washington State's Resource and Conservation Office. Without an updated plan, the City would not qualify for grants, while having one ensures eligibility. The PROS Plan connects to the City's Comprehensive Plan, making this an ideal time for an update, as 2025 is a comprehensive planning year.

Deputy City Manager Schiessl noted that this item was brought forward for discussion because Council can expect two (2) additional consultant engagements in the near future. One will assist in updating the current Comprehensive Plan, a process expected to take a year-and-a-half, and the other will support an update of the City-wide Transportation Plan.

All three planning efforts are considered key community outreach opportunities and will be branded as "*The Year of the Plan*." This initiative will provide significant opportunities for public engagement, including input from boards, commissions, and community members interested in parks, land use planning, and transportation. In conclusion, Deputy City Manager Schiessl noted that City Council can expect to see additional consultant agreements on future agendas, and encouraged the public to actively participate in shaping the City's future.

COUNCILMEMBER LUKSON MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER VANDYKE SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 2025-33, AUTHORIZING A CONSULTANT AGREEMENT WITH MOORE IACOFANO GOLTSMAN, INC. FOR THE PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

9. Fire & Emergency Services - Annual Report

Fire Chief Huntington presented on RFD's 2024 Annual Report, summarizing key performance metrics, budget allocations, and program accomplishments. He noted that the Department operated on a \$22 million budget in 2024, funded through a 60% allocation from the General Fund and 40% from the Medical Utility Fund. A significant milestone was the opening of Station 76 in the Badger Mountain South community, which improved geographic coverage.

The Department responded to over 9,700 calls for service, with 70% being EMS-related, 27% classified as low-acuity incidents, and 3% involving active fires. Response times remain a priority, with median performance aligning closely with benchmarks but 90th percentile response times need improvement. Chief Huntington also highlighted the stabilization of call volumes after a period of significant increases between 2020 and 2022.

Additionally, Chief Huntington discussed the RFD's ongoing investment in community programs, including Heart Safe Richland, which has provided hands-only CPR training to 55,000 residents since 2019, and a new regional food truck inspection program in coordination with the Washington State Association of Fire Marshals.

The Department's priorities for 2025 were outlined, which include updating Benton County's Hazard Mitigation Plan, implementing a new fire radio system, and focusing on officer development in response to upcoming retirements. He emphasized the importance of the recently hired Resource Navigator, whose role is to connect community members with appropriate services, thereby reducing reliance on emergency medical services for non-urgent needs. The Department also received the American Heart Association's Mission Lifeline Gold Award, making Richland one of only four agencies in Washington to achieve honor roll distinction for heart attack care. Additionally, the coordination of emergency services for Ironman was highlighted as a successful regional collaboration effort.

The Department's 2024 Annual Report is available on RFD's webpage for public review.

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

10. Ordinance No. 2025-05, Amending Richland Municipal Code Title 23: Zoning Regulations and the City's Official Zoning Map to Conform to the Updated 2017 Comprehensive Plan **(FORMERLY ITEM NO. 4 ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR)**

Councilmember Maier noted that Ordinance No. 2025-05 is a companion to Ordinance No. 2025-04 previously approved on the Consent Calendar. Ordinance No. 2025-04 updates the Comprehensive Plan while Ordinance No. 2025-05 updates the zoning map to align accordingly. While maintaining support for both ordinances, Councilmember Maier also noted that the staff report referenced a Planning Commission meeting from December 2022.

Councilmember Maier noted that, in addition to the recommendations made concerning the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Docket, the Planning Commission also made a recommendation in December 2022 to ask City staff to modify the existing zoning for Commercial Limited Business (C-LB) to allow for more mixed-use development options. He concluded by emphasizing that as far back as December 2022, the Planning Commission has recognized issues with C-LB zoning, and that he presented this to City Council as an example of ongoing zoning issues with C-LB zoning during the December 2024 workshop meeting.

Councilmember Jones stated that she previously voted against Ordinance No. 2025-05 because she believes the zone changes prioritize adding housing over building a true community. While she acknowledged the need for more housing, she voiced concerns that the affected areas lack essential services such as grocery stores and other necessities.

COUNCILMEMBER MAIER MOVED AND MAYOR PRO TEM KENT SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE ORDINANCE NO. 2025-05, AMENDING RICHLAND MUNICIPAL CODE TITLE 23: ZONING REGULATIONS AND THE CITY'S OFFICIAL ZONING MAP TO CONFORM TO THE UPDATED 2017 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN. 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 reported that as part of the City's ongoing effort to develop a City-wide Communication Plan, the City's consultants hosted a virtual Town Hall meeting on February 27, 2025. The meeting provided an opportunity for residents, business owners, and community members to share feedback on the City's communication efforts, including areas of strength, areas for improvement, and overall expectations. He noted that an internal staff meeting was held earlier in the day to review the feedback. Moving forward, the City will continue working through a prioritization process based on Council discussion at a recent workshop meeting.

Additionally, City Manager Amundson shared that all City facilities will open at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 7, 2025 to accommodate the City's Annual Employee Appreciation event. During this event, employees are recognized for their service milestones, ranging from 5 years to 35 years, with an occasional recognition for forty years of service. Chief Huntington will be recognized for 30 years of service. Employees will also be honored for demonstrating the City's core values of teamwork, integrity and excellence, with additional awards for going the extra mile and embodying the City's culture statement. City Manager Amundson invited councilmembers to attend the event.

In closing, City Manager Amundson reminded Council of the executive session scheduled on tonight's agenda.

City Council

Councilmember Jones had no comments.

Councilmember Whitten congratulated Fire Chief Huntington on his years of service with the City and commended the positive developments in the Richland Fire Department. He also congratulated the retirees and extended well wishes in their retirement years. Councilmember Whitten also shared that he is warming to the idea of speed enforcement cameras in light of ongoing issues with street racing and reckless driving on the SR-240 Bypass and George Washington Way.

Councilmember Maier provided an update on the ongoing interview process to fill upcoming vacancies on the Code Enforcement Board, stating it has been a positive

experience to meet candidates and discuss their perspectives on the Board's role.

Councilmember VanDyke reported changes in Planning Commission membership and noted upcoming interviews to fill current and upcoming vacancies. He also shared his recent speaking engagement with the Cub Scouts and promoted the upcoming Chamber of Commerce awards luncheon on March 26, 2025.

Councilmember Lukson addressed concerns regarding park issues and emphasized the need to prevent similar situations that lead to park closures. He urged staff to share information regarding legal constraints and challenges with the public to help citizens develop an appreciation for what cities can and cannot do related to homelessness. He also suggested the City take a more assertive approach in holding community partners accountable for fulfilling their legal obligations. In conclusion, he stressed the importance of exploring all possible solutions to ensure the parks can be safely reopened.

Mayor Pro Tem Kent stated that it might be worth revisiting the possible use of speed cameras, reflecting that they may be more affordable now than they were when first considered several years ago.

She then announced that the Parks & Recreation Commission has several upcoming vacancies and interviews will be held the following week to select new commissioners. In conclusion, she encouraged those interested in volunteering to consider attending the Tri-Cities Chaplaincy's volunteer open house later in the month at the Church of Latter-day Saints in Richland. Additional information about this volunteer opportunity is available on the Tri-Cities Chaplaincy website.

Mayor

Mayor Richardson acknowledged that the Richland Police Department's resources were spread thin on Saturday night due to multiple incidents in the community. She expressed appreciation for their daily efforts in keeping the community safe, noting that much of their work goes unnoticed. Mayor Richardson also mentioned receiving several calls about noise from street racing and was pleased to hear about RPD's follow-up and plans to address the issue. She encouraged residents to stay informed as additional resources and strategies are being considered.

Executive Session

11. Executive Session Per RCW 42.30.110(1)(i): Discuss Current or Potential Litigation with Legal Counsel (45 minutes)

At 6:55 p.m., Richland City Council convened in executive session for forty-five (45) minutes to discuss current or potential litigation with legal counsel. A brief transition from the dais to the executive session room occurred, with the executive session getting underway at 7:00 p.m.

Individuals present for the executive session included Mayor Richardson, Mayor Pro Tem Kent, and Councilmembers Jones, Lukson, Maier, VanDyke and Whitten. Also present were City Manager Amundson, Deputy City Manager Schiessl, Assistant City Manager Florence, and City Attorney Kintzley.

Council exited the executive session at 7:44 p.m. No action was taken.

Adjournment

Mayor Richardson adjourned the meeting at 7:44 p.m.

APPROVED:



Theresa Richardson, Mayor

ATTEST:



Jennifer Rogers, City Clerk

DATE APPROVED: March 18, 2025

DATE PUBLISHED: March 20, 2025