



MINUTES
Richland City Council Regular Meeting
Tuesday, July 15, 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 (Remote via Zoom)
Councilmember Whitten	Present

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, Development Services Director Rizzitiello, Police Commander Mason, and City Clerk Rogers.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Pro Tem Kent led the Council and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

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

Presentations

None.

Public Hearing

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

1. Approving the 2025-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement with the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local No. 280, Resolution No. 2025-104

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

Public Comments

The following individuals provided comments:

- David Le Count, a resident of Richland, expressed concerns over the increasing use of illegal fireworks in Richland and Tri-Cities and noted its impact on pets and residents. Mr. Le Count urged Council to consider a complete ban on fireworks.
- Ken Peterson, a resident of Richland, requested the City place a “No Parking” sign in front of his home on Haines Avenue to prevent a neighbor from parking large vehicles on his side of the street. He also raised safety concerns about poor visibility around a nearby curve due to overgrown vegetation. He then shared recent incidents involving children riding motorized scooters in traffic on Haines Avenue and George Washington Way. Mr. Peterson thanked staff for their work along the dike.
- Colleen Spadoni, a resident of Richland, commended the City’s beautification efforts, particularly around Leslie Groves Park, including lawn maintenance and repaved parking lots. She then requested the City implement ADA-compliant playground equipment for children with visual and physical limitations. Next, Ms. Spadoni raised concerns about maintenance needs near the ADA fishing dock and submitted photographs depicting these concerns. In conclusion, Ms. Spadoni expressed concerns over the unsafe speeds of motorized scooters on the City’s bike paths.
- Bonnie Allen, a resident of Richland, expressed frustration over illegal fireworks that have been discharged nearly every night for the past month. She emphasized the distress it causes both residents and pets. Ms. Allen called for effective enforcement solutions.
- Randy Slovic, a resident of Richland, informed Council that there was no audio available for the current meeting on Channel 192 or the online stream. City staff responded that they are actively working to resolve the issue.
- Marie Noorani, a resident of Richland, expressed agreement with previous speakers regarding the ongoing issues with fireworks. She stated that, in her view, the City is not managing the situation effectively and described the situation as both hazardous and a nuisance, which places an undue burden on firefighters.

- Connie Nuñez, a resident of Richland, reiterated her previous request for public comment time to be extended from two (2) minutes to three (3) minutes per speaker. She then raised concerns about pedestrian safety at the Duportail Street and Thayer Drive crosswalk, noting that drivers routinely fail to stop. She requested a signal light be installed to enhance pedestrian safety.
- Martin Brown, a resident of Richland, expressed concerns about the overpopulation of feral cats in his neighborhood. He cited specific sections of the Richland Municipal Code and proposed amendments to enhance animal control enforcement. Mr. Brown also questioned the cost-effectiveness of the current Trap, Neuter, Return (TNR) program. In closing, he questioned the City's decision to prioritize the construction of a children's park over a pickleball court at Howard Amon Park and advocated for the addition of pickleball courts next to the tennis courts.

Consent Calendar

City Clerk Rogers read the Consent Calendar.

Minutes

2. Approval of the July 1, 2025 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Ordinances - First Reading

3. Ordinance No. 2025-09, Establishing Chapter 20.10 of the Richland Municipal Code related to Alarm Systems for Law Enforcement Response

Ordinances - Second Reading & Passage

None.

Resolutions – Adoption

4. Resolution No. 2025-55, Authorizing an Amendment to the Purchase and Sale Agreement with Beef Expansion, LLC
5. Resolution No. 2025-101, Authorizing an Interagency Agreement with Washington State Department of Transportation for SR-240/Aaron Drive Complete Streets Improvements Project
6. Resolution No. 2025-102, Authorizing a Letter of Intent with Energy Northwest to Purchase 5-15MW from the Ruby Flats Solar Project **(PULLED BY COUNCILMEMBER LUKSON)**
7. Resolution No. 2025-103, Authorizing a Consultant Agreement with BPM LLP for Virtual Chief Information Security Officer Services

Items – Approval

None.

Expenditures – Approval

8. Expenditures from June 1, 2025 to June 30, 2025 for \$27,357,587.09 including Travel Checks Nos. 20793-20812, Accounts Payable Check Nos. 336779-337603, Accounts Payable Wire Nos. 10590-10629, Payroll Wires & ACH Nos. 14772-14836, Payroll Check Nos. 237606-237614, and Payroll Direct Deposits Nos. 251550003877-251810004672

COUNCILMEMBER LUKSON PULLED RESOLUTION NO. 2025-102, AUTHORIZING A LETTER OF INTENT WITH ENERGY NORTHWEST TO PURCHASE 5-15 MW FROM THE RUBY FLATS SOLAR PROJECT (ITEM NO. 6). ITEM NO 6 WAS RELOCATED TO ITEM NO. 11 UNDER ITEMS OF BUSINESS.

COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER MAIER SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR 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

9. Resolution No. 2025-104, Approving the 2025-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement with the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local No. 280

Human Resources Director Paulsen provided an overview of the key terms included in the proposed three (3) year Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with the International Union of Operating Engineers, (IUOE) Local No. 280. Approximately 110 City employees in the Public Works, Parks & Public Facilities, and Administrative Services departments are represented by the IUOE.

Human Resources Director Paulsen summarized the key terms of the proposed CBA.

Following the presentation, Human Resources Director Paulsen responded to questions from Council.

COUNCILMEMBER LUKSON MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER MAIER SECONDED THE MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2025-104, APPROVING THE 2025-2027 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT WITH THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS, LOCAL NO. 280. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

10. Downtown Connectivity Project Status Update (discussion only)

Deputy City Manager Schiessl introduced the Downtown Connectivity Improvements Project (the “Project”) by outlining its core objectives: investing in the Central Business District (CBD) to promote neighborhood vitality, connecting the waterfront to the downtown area, improving mobility for all modes of transportation, enhancing Richland’s overall quality of life, and supporting the local business community.

Deputy City Manager Schiessl emphasized that these improvements are intended not only to improve transportation, but also to create conditions that encourage business growth and expand customer access. He concluded by stating that these high-level goals provide essential context for understanding the purpose and potential impact of the Project. Concluding his remarks, he transitioned the presentation to Public Works Director D’Alessandro.

Public Works Director D’Alessandro stated that the Project has been in development for several years and is intended to revitalize Richland’s CBD by enhancing pedestrian and bicycle access, linking the waterfront to downtown, and supporting future economic development.

The 2019 Downtown Connectivity Study, which included significant public engagement, led to the selection of a one-way couplet design from the intersection of George Washington Way and Jadwin Avenue to the intersection of Symons Street and George Washington Way, and includes a road diet concept. This road diet reduces ten (10) lanes total between Jadwin Avenue and George Washington Way to six (6) lanes.

In addition to adding protected bike lanes, wider sidewalks, on-street parking, and stormwater infrastructure, the design also incorporates lighting, landscaping, art, and wayfinding to enhance safety and provide downtown character.

Public Works Director D’Alessandro reported that the environmental review is complete and the project is at 60% design. Right-of-way acquisition has begun, and public outreach efforts are underway with affected property owners. The Project received more than \$24 million in funding from federal, state, and local sources. Branded as the *Downtown Loop*, the Project has a dedicated website, www.TheDowntownLoop.com, with detailed updates and resources. A public open house is scheduled for fall 2025, with construction set to begin in spring 2026 and conclude in late 2027.

Public Works staff will host a booth at the National Night Out (NNO) event to share project information. 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.

11. Resolution No. 2025-102, Authorizing a Letter of Intent with Energy Northwest to Purchase 5-15MW from the Ruby Flats Solar Project (**FORMERLY ITEM NO. 6 ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR**)

Councilmember Lukson stated that he pulled this item from the Consent Calendar to disclose a conflict of interest. Councilmember Lukson, as an attorney for Energy Northwest, provides legal advice to Energy Northwest on the Ruby Flats Solar Project. Councilmember Lukson recused himself and exited the council chambers until the matter was concluded.

Councilmember Whitten also disclosed that he is employed by Energy Northwest, but clarified that his role does not involve access to any information related to the proposed agreement. He affirmed that he has no direct involvement with or professional knowledge of the Ruby Flats Solar project.

Energy Services Director Whitney explained that the proposed letter of intent would reserve the City's ability to purchase between five (5) and fifteen (15) megawatts (MW) of solar power from the Ruby Flats Solar Project, located within Richland city limits on the north side of Horn Rapids Road. He noted that the City's Integrated Resource Plan, originally developed in 2020 and updated in 2024, identifies a need for renewable solar energy to meet Washington State's renewable energy standards. Participating in the Ruby Flats project would help fulfill those requirements. Energy Services Director Whitney further advised that the letter of intent would be followed by a formal power purchase agreement to be presented to Council at a later date.

Energy Services Director Whitney concluded by noting that the Utility Advisory Committee (UAC) reviewed the proposal and expressed support for the proposed letter of intent with Energy Northwest.

MAYOR PRO TEM KENT MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER MAIER SECONDED THE MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2025-102, AUTHORIZING A LETTER OF INTENT WITH ENERGY NORTHWEST TO PURCHASE 5-15MW FROM THE RUBY FLATS SOLAR PROJECT. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. COUNCILMEMBER LUKSON RECUSED. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Councilmember Lukson rejoined the meeting.

Reports and Comments

City Manager

City Manager Amundson announced that a special City Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 22, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the City Shops Building, located at 2700 Duportail Street. During this special meeting, City Council will appoint members to serve on the Pro and Con Committees for the proposed charter amendment to establish five (5) district-based council seats in the City of Richland. Applications for both committees are available on the City's website.

The regularly scheduled workshop will immediately follow the special meeting and will also be held at the City Shops facility. This location was selected to provide Council with a tour of the facility and to provide a better understanding of the City's operations based at the facility, which is timely as the City approaches budget discussions and considers related capital requests.

City Manager Amundson then reviewed the three (3) workshop agenda items.

Additionally, he announced that the August 5, 2025 City Council regular meeting has been canceled to accommodate the annual National Night Out (NNO) event held the same day. Instead, a special Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 6, 2025. He encouraged councilmembers and residents to attend the NNO event held at Howard Amon Park, which will include booths from various City departments, including a Public Works booth providing information on the Downtown Loop Project.

City Council

Councilmembers Jones and VanDyke had no comments.

Councilmember Lukson noted that councilmember comments take place at the end meetings, by which time many engaged community members have already left. He suggested that Council consider moving comments earlier on the agenda to ensure the public has an opportunity to hear their remarks.

On the topic of fireworks, Councilmember Lukson emphasized the importance of evaluating enforcement efforts, particularly in response to repeated complaints from residents about fireworks being discharged outside the permitted days surrounding the 4th of July. While acknowledging the challenges of enforcement on July 4th due to limited police resources and competing priorities, he emphasized the need for a more proactive response, especially in areas with habitual violations that significantly affect residents. Councilmember Lukson suggested that RPD consider exploring whether more active enforcement could be applied in those areas to help deter future violations and demonstrate responsiveness to community concerns.

Mayor Pro Tem Kent stated that while not known to the audience, City Manager Amundson actively takes notes during the public comment section of the meeting and often directs staff to engage directly with speakers, demonstrating that public input is being heard and addressed.

Next, Mayor Pro Tem Kent referenced public comments regarding the use of electric scooters, stating that while she appreciated that more people are choosing scooters over vehicles, she expressed concern about unsafe behavior, such as not using crosswalks or yielding properly. She expressed interest in exploring ways to improve education and communication around the safe use of scooters and other motorized devices on trails to prevent potential accidents.

Councilmember Whitten echoed Councilmember Lukson's concerns regarding fireworks, sharing that he has heard them in his neighborhood well beyond the timeframe permitted by city ordinance. He acknowledged the challenges of enforcement against those setting off illegal fireworks and expressed openness to any practical enforcement solutions. Councilmember Whitten reflected on the broader issue as a symptom of declining community courtesy and urged citizens to be more mindful and courteous toward one another.

Councilmember Whitten then highlighted the approval of first reading of Ordinance No. 2025-09 regarding Alarm Systems for Law Enforcement Response, and expressed appreciation for the prior discussions that led to its development. He voiced support for the ordinance moving forward and is hopeful it will reduce unnecessary demands on police resources and allow law enforcement to focus on higher priority matters.

Councilmember Maier stated that rather than suggesting how law enforcement should respond to fireworks violations, he suggested that Council reframe the conversation by asking what tools or policy changes Council could implement to better support their efforts. He emphasized that while there is strong community interest in addressing the issue of illegal fireworks, he welcomed further information on effective, practical options.

Councilmember Maier then referenced Ordinance No. 2025-09, and expressed hope that the new legislation would help reduce false alarms and ensure associated costs are no longer a drain on city resources. He concluded by thanking staff, particularly City Attorney Kintzley, for their efforts in developing the ordinance and expressed appreciation that the Council reached consensus to move the measure forward.

Mayor

Mayor Richardson also addressed the ongoing concerns regarding fireworks, sharing that from her home, she can see displays across multiple jurisdictions, including Richland and West Richland. She suggested a more regional approach may be necessary to effectively address the issue.

She then recognized the 60th anniversary of the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) and noted its substantial impact on the Richland community. She praised PNNL's culture of volunteerism and community engagement, as well as its recent \$3 million donation to Columbia Basin College in support of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education.

Executive Session

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

At 7:31 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 council chambers to the executive session room occurred, with the executive session beginning at 7:36 p.m.

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

Council exited the executive session at 8:17 p.m. No action was taken.

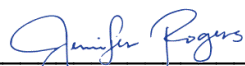
Adjournment

Mayor Richardson adjourned the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

APPROVED:


Theresa Richardson, Mayor

ATTEST:


Jennifer Rogers, City Clerk

DATE APPROVED: August 6, 2025

DATE PUBLISHED: August 7, 2025