



MINUTES
Richland City Council Regular Meeting
Tuesday, September 16, 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
	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, Fire Chief Huntington, Chief of Police Pilcher, Energy Services Director Whitney, Finance Director Allen, Development Services Director Rizzitiello, 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 MAIER SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PUBLISHED. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Presentations

1. Attendance Awareness Month Proclamation

Mayor Richardson introduced Dr. LoAnn Ayers of the United Way of Benton & Franklin Counties, read aloud the Attendance Awareness Month proclamation, then presented it to Dr. Ayers.

2. Constitution Week Proclamation

Mayor Richardson read aloud the Constitution Week proclamation.

3. 2025 Cool Desert Nights Event Summary

Recreation Manager Piper introduced Jarrod Miller, President of the Richland Chamber of Commerce, who provided an overview of the 2025 Cool Desert Nights event held June 27-28. He noted that this was the Chamber's second year organizing the event and credited the City's partnership and support as being essential to its success. He thanked Recreation Manager Piper for her collaborative efforts.

Attendance was estimated at approximately 10,000-12,000, with about 600 vehicle registrants participating in the cruise and car show. Mr. Miller reported an estimate of \$1-\$1.1 million in direct spending and a total economic impact of nearly \$1.8 million from lodging, dining, retail, and vendors. He added that community feedback led to improved parking and traffic flow in the Uptown Shopping Center area, and that organizers are considering expanding food options, a barbecue contest, and a swap meet for the 2026 event.

Mr. Miller also highlighted the Chamber's new Business Boost Grant Program, which reinvests event proceeds and membership fees back into small business support. He concluded by emphasizing the multigenerational community impact of the event, noting that families traveled from across the region to participate. Executive Director Chandra Christenson joined Mr. Miller in presenting a framed event poster to the City in appreciation of its support.

Detailed information can be found in the PowerPoint presentation included in the agenda packet.

Mayor Richardson and Councilmembers Whitten and Maier thanked Mr. Miller for his leadership and the entire Chamber of Commerce for preserving and revitalizing the long-standing community event, stressing its importance to local businesses, tourism, and community engagement.

4. 2025 IRONMAN 70.3 Washington Tri-Cities

Recreation Manager Piper introduced and thanked members of the IRONMAN staff and recognized the contributions of Richland Police Commander Mason, Lieutenant Hupf, and Public Works Civil Engineer Whittier for their assistance with traffic planning.

Recreation Manager Piper then presented an overview of the upcoming 2025 IRONMAN 70.3 Washington Tri-Cities event, scheduled for Sunday, September 21, 2025. She outlined anticipated community impacts, including temporary closures at Columbia Point Marina Park, several boat launches, and sections of George Washington Way.

Recreation Manager Piper reviewed lessons learned from the 2024 inaugural event, such as the importance of broader stakeholder engagement, clear communication, and improved volunteer coordination.

For this year's event, the City and its partners are refining communications, enhancing shuttle access for Columbia Point businesses, and revising course routes to reduce traffic issues. She noted that all rolling closures will be supported by an interactive map and hotline. The event is expected to attract thousands of athletes and visitors, generate substantial economic benefits, and showcase Richland as an outdoor recreation destination. In conclusion, a volunteer appreciation video was played for the audience.

Detailed information can be found in the PowerPoint presentation included in the agenda packet.

Councilmembers thanked Recreation Manager Piper for her work on the event.

5. New Hires and Retirements

A video featuring the City's new hires and retirements for August was played for the audience.

New Hires:

- Nick Sherry, Truck Driver – Heavy – Solid Waste Division
- Delaney Tucker, Human Resources Generalist – Human Resources Division
- Sarah ValAlstine, Parks & Recreation Aide – Recreation Division

There were no retirements to recognize.

Public Hearing

None.

Public Comments

City Clerk Rogers read the Public Comments procedure.

The following individuals provided public comments:

- Luke Erikson, a Richland resident, returned to address Council regarding speeding in the Tanglewood neighborhood. He emphasized that Riverstone Drive and Tanglewood Drive are the only access points to the community, with minimal traffic control. Mr. Erikson thanked Councilmembers who had previously visited the neighborhood and provided guidance on the petition process. He reported collecting 40 resident signatures in support of implementing traffic calming measures and formally submitted the petition to City Clerk Rogers for referral to the Public Works Department under the City's Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program.

- Colleen Spadoni, a Richland resident, expressed concerns about pit bull packs spotted along Harris Avenue and the River Park Trail System area. She noted a recent attack on a neighbor and a separate incident in which her husband was charged by three (3) pit bulls along the triathlon trail near Harris and Spangler.

Mrs. Spadoni reported that dispatch was unable to contact Tri-Cities Animal Control and that no patrol officers responded. She urged the City to improve animal control coordination with police to protect residents. At the conclusion of her comments, Mrs. Spadoni submitted pictures of pit bulls for Council review.

- Scott Brewing, a Richland resident and Communications Director for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, thanked the City for the quality of Richland's parks, noting that his family makes frequent use of them. He then announced that the church will be hosting a Giving Machine at Fairchild Cinemas. He explained that the Giving Machine functions like a vending machine, but instead of purchasing snacks, users can select donations that directly benefit individuals and organizations. Five (5) local organizations will participate, including the Safe Harbor Support Center, Grace Clinic, and the Boys & Girls Club. The Giving Machine will be available from November 20, 2025 through December 10, 2025, with an opening ceremony scheduled for November 21, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. Mr. Brewing invited councilmembers and the community to attend the event.
- Ken Peterson, a Richland resident, expressed appreciation for the footpath between Howard Amon and Leslie Groves Park, but raised concerns regarding homeless encampments, tree root damage on newly paved sections, and invasive Russian Olive trees. He stated that the US Army Corps of Engineers advised that the City is responsible for tree maintenance. He also raised safety concerns about bicycle and scooter users on both streets and pathways, citing a lack of helmet use, excessive speeds beyond the posted speed limit, and unsafe riding practices. He emphasized the need for greater enforcement and rider education.
- Martin Brown, a Richland resident, reiterated his ongoing concern regarding the growing population of feral cats near his home by Columbia Center Mall and Bateman Island. Mr. Brown expressed opposition to the City's Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) policy.

Consent Calendar

City Clerk Rogers read the Consent Calendar.

Minutes

6. Approval of the August 19, 2025 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes and the August 26, 2025 City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes

Ordinances - First Reading

7. Ordinance No. 2025-24, Amending Chapter 2.04 of the Richland Municipal Code related to City Manager Delegation of Authority

Ordinances - Second Reading & Passage

8. Ordinance No. 2025-21, Amending Chapter 13.06 of the Richland Municipal Code related to Medical and Ambulance Service Utility Fees
9. Ordinance No. 2025-22, Establishing and Dedicating the Right-of-Way for a Segment of Gage Boulevard

Resolutions - Adoption

10. Resolution No. 2025-113, Ratifying the Tri-Cities HOME Consortium Interlocal Agreement for Program Years 2026, 2027 and 2028
11. Resolution No. 2025-114, Authorizing Change Order No. 6 with Apollo, Inc. for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Waste Gas Burner and Boiler Replacement Project
12. Resolution No. 2025-115, Authorizing a Grant Agreement with the U.S. Department of Transportation for Funding from the Safe Streets and Roads for All Program
13. Resolution No. 2025-116, Authorizing Change Order No. 3 with Ellison Earthworks, LLC for the Stevens Drive Reconstruction Project
14. Resolution No. 2025-117, Authorizing Amendment No. 1 to the Consultant Agreement with Great West Engineering, Inc. for the Horn Rapids Landfill - Phase 2 Expansion Project
15. Resolution No. 2025-118, Authorizing a Consultant Agreement with Morrison-Maierle, Inc. for the Water Facilities Energy Resiliency Improvements Project
16. Resolution No. 2025-119, Authorizing a Purchase Agreement with Virginia Transformer Corporation for the Purchase of Two Transformers for the Sandhill Crane Substation
17. Resolution No. 2025-120, Authorizing a Repurchase of Property Owned by Matson Holdings, LLC located at 2621 Robertson Drive

Items – Approval

18. Appointment to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Citizens Review Committee: Brenda Bradley and Deborah Titus

19. Appointment to the Richland Public Library Board of Trustees: Darci Fisher
20. Appointment to the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee: Todd Nelson
21. Appointment to the Utility Advisory Committee: Dave Larkin and Bill Richmond

Expenditures - Approval

22. Expenditures from August 1, 2025 to August 31, 2025 for \$34,002,643.71, including Travel Checks Nos. 20842-20852, Accounts Payable Check Nos. 338529-339542, Accounts Payable Wire Nos. 10669-10698, Payroll Wires & ACH Nos. 14912-14976, Payroll Check Nos. 237628-237633, and Payroll Direct Deposits Nos. 252250007730-252400008685.

COUNCILMEMBER MAIER MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER JONES 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

23. Term Limit Waiver Request and Reappointment for Lodging Tax Advisory Committee Member: Gus Sako

Development Services Director Rizzitiello presented a request for a term limit waiver and reappointment for Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) member Gus Sako. Mr. Sako has served on the LTAC since July 2013, completing 12 consecutive years of service. His current term is set to expire on September 30, 2025, and he has applied to continue serving. Under RMC 2.04.100, members of advisory boards and commissions are limited to 12 consecutive years of service, unless waived by City Council.

Director Rizzitiello highlighted Mr. Sako's extensive knowledge, longstanding service, and involvement with the Uptown Business Improvements District. Both LTAC Council Liaison Lukson and Staff Liaison Wallner recommend approval of the waiver. Councilmember Lukson and Mayor Pro Tem Kent provided comments supporting the term limit waiver request and reappointment.

MAYOR PRO TEM KENT MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER LUKSON SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE TERM LIMIT WAIVER REQUEST AND REAPPOINT GUS SAKO TO THE LODGING TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR AN ADDITIONAL TERM. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

24. Term Limit Waiver Request and Reappointment for Utility Advisory Committee Member: Daniel Porter

Energy Services Director Whitney presented a request for a term limit waiver and reappointment for Daniel Porter, Chair of the Utility Advisory Committee (UAC). Mr. Porter was first appointed to the UAC in April 2008 and has served in various roles within the UAC for the past 12 years. Director Whitney noted Mr. Porter's extensive knowledge and the valuable continuity he has provided to the Committee. He reported that, together with Council Liaison Whitten and UAC Vice-Chair Staven, he recommends that Council approve the term limit waiver and reappointment of Mr. Porter.

Councilmembers expressed appreciation for Mr. Porter's long-standing commitment to the community and emphasized the importance of maintaining continuity in the UAC as new members join.

COUNCILMEMBER MAIER MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER VANDYKE SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE TERM LIMIT WAIVER REQUEST AND REAPPOINT DANIEL PORTER TO THE UTILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR AN ADDITIONAL TERM. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

25. Recommendation to Eliminate Car Tab Fee and Transition to 0.1% Sales Tax for Transportation Benefit District Funding (Discussion Only)

City Manager Amundson presented an overview of Richland's Transportation Benefit District (TBD) and recommended eliminating the current \$20 per vehicle tab fee with a 0.1% local sales tax.

He explained that the TBD, established in 2017, funds transportation improvements consistent with state, regional, and local plans, with a primary focus on pavement preservation. Richland maintains approximately 650 miles of streets, and Council's adopted goal is to sustain pavement in the "Good" range of the Pavement Condition Index (PCI 70-75). Maintaining this standard requires an estimated \$4 million annually.

Currently, the \$20 vehicle tab fee generates about \$1 million of the annual need. The remaining balance is covered by the General Fund, Real Estate Excise Tax (REET), and reserves, which places continued strain on flexible funds needed for other services. Even with a change, contributions from these funds will still be required, but at reduced levels.

City Manager Amundson recommended replacing the flat vehicle tab fee with a 0.1% sales tax, which is projected to generate approximately \$2.25 million annually. Unlike the car tab fee, which falls only on Richland vehicle owners, a sales tax would broaden the base to include commuters, visitors, and tourists, who make up nearly 30% of the city's daytime population. He noted that the City of Kennewick already funds its TBD through sales tax, and a reciprocal structure would better balance regional contributions.

Household impact analysis showed most residents would pay less under the sales tax model, with essential items such as groceries, utilities, prescriptions, fuel, and real estate exempt from taxation. City Manager Amundson noted that if the City transitions to a sales tax, the authorization sunsets after 10 years (2036), providing an earlier review point than the current car tab fee, which runs until 2039.

Three (3) alternatives were presented:

- Keep the \$20 vehicle tab fee and continue backfilling with General Fund, REET, and reserves.
- Increase the vehicle tab fee, which would remain a flat, resident-only charge.
- Replace the fee with a 0.1% sales tax.

City Manager Amundson recommended Council pursue the sales tax option, which provides higher, growth-sensitive revenue, reduces long-term reliance on flexible funds, and shares costs more equitably.

Following the presentation, Councilmembers expressed general support for eliminating the vehicle tab fee and adopting the proposed sales tax and stressed the importance of clear public communication about the financial impacts, transparency in how funds are spent, and educating residents on the City's commitment to maintaining a good PCI range. Council also recognized the benefit of the 10-year sunset clause, which will allow for periodic review of the tax.

Mayor Richardson thanked Council for their discussion and confirmed consensus to direct staff to prepare a proposal to eliminate the \$20 vehicle tab fee and transition to a 0.1% sales tax, along with an implementation timeline. She emphasized the importance of maintaining the City's PCI standard as previously committed.

Detailed information can be found in the PowerPoint presentation included in the agenda packet.

Reports and Comments

City Manager

City Manager Amundson had no comment.

City Council

Councilmember Lukson expressed appreciation for the evening's presentations, particularly the IRONMAN 70.3 presentation. He added that he looks forward to attending the event to support a friend who is competing and to join the community in cheering on participants.

Councilmember Maier thanked everyone for the evening's presentations, especially the proclamation recognizing Constitution Week, noting his mother is a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution organization. He then thanked staff members of Richland Fire & Emergency Services for their prompt and outstanding service during a recent incident involving his family. Next, Councilmember Maier raised concerns regarding persistent animal control issues and suggested the City review its service agreement to ensure accountability, responsiveness, and value. He emphasized the need for a critical evaluation of how animal control services are structured and delivered.

Councilmember Maier noted the importance of community engagement through board, commission, and committee service and questioned the exemption of the Library Board of Trustees from the term limit waiver, suggesting that this policy be reevaluated.

City Manager Amundson shared that terms for members of the Richland Public Library Board of Trustees are governed by state law, which does not allow for such extensions.

Councilmember Whitten reiterated his support for extending public comment time from two minutes to three minutes. Addressing the concerns about pit bulls, Councilmember Whitten emphasized the need to address safety concerns related to irresponsible dog ownership and pit bull packs. Councilmember Whitten urged action to remove invasive Russian Olive trees along the riverfront in coordination with the US Army Corps of Engineers. In conclusion, he also commended Development Services Director Rizzitiello for his thorough and innovative presentation on attainable housing.

Councilmember Jones thanked residents for their active participation and emphasized that community engagement is essential to building a better city. She then voiced concerns about the City's contract with the Tri-City Animal Shelter, stating that the costs are too high for the limited services received. She emphasized the need to reevaluate the arrangement and pursue alternative solutions.

Councilmember VanDyke thanked those who attended the meeting, emphasizing that their involvement makes a difference.

Mayor Pro Tem Kent also commended Development Services Director Rizzitiello for the presentation he delivered on attainable housing during the August 26, 2025 City Council workshop meeting, calling it the most thorough she has seen on the topic. She encouraged community members to review the recorded workshop, as it highlighted innovative approaches to affordable and attainable housing used in other jurisdictions.

Mayor Pro Tem Kent thanked applicants to the Richland Public Library Board of Trustees and other boards, commissions and committees, emphasizing the importance of their input in Council's decision-making process.

Mayor Pro Tem Kent further thanked City Manager Amundson for his comprehensive presentation on the TBD. She highlighted the City's commitment to transparency and encouraged residents to explore the resources available on the City's website. In closing,

she urged the community to continue showing kindness and support for one another, especially as the holiday season approaches, reminding residents to remain attentive to neighbors and friends who may need help.

Mayor

Mayor Richardson commended Development Services Director Rizzitiello for his attainable housing presentation at the August City Council workshop meeting. She then shared results from a student exercise at Rivers Edge High School, where approximately 150 students participated in an exercise in which attainable housing emerged as the top priority.

Reflecting on this exercise, Mayor Richardson emphasized that Council's recent housing workshop identified strategies that could be advanced sooner rather than later. She urged Council to approach the issue of affordable housing with greater intentionality, noting its significant importance to younger generations and the broader community.

Adjournment

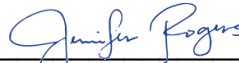
Mayor Richardson adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

APPROVED:



Theresa Richardson, Mayor

ATTEST:



Jennifer Rogers, City Clerk

DATE APPROVED: October 7, 2025

DATE PUBLISHED: October 8, 2025