



## MINUTES

Richland City Council Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, December 16, 2025  
Richland City Hall ~ Council Chambers  
625 Swift Boulevard

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### 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.

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|-------------|-----------------------|---------|
| 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, Parks & Public Facilities Director Waite, Development Services Director Rizzitiello, Human Resources Director Paulsen 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 JONES MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PUBLISHED. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.**

### Presentations

1. Ben Dezember, Shameka Garcia, Brian Mora-Pulido and Exceptional Entry Trevor Lang and Marco Covarrubias

Police Chief Pilcher introduced five (5) new hires and provided brief background information on each.

## 2. Fire Chief Huntington - Retirement Recognition

Mayor Richardson formally recognized the retirement of Fire Chief Tom Huntington by presenting a plaque for his 31 years of service with the City of Richland. She highlighted his leadership, modernization of Fire & Emergency Services, regional leadership development efforts, management of significant workforce transition, and receipt of the 2025 Fire Chief of the Year award. Mayor Richardson expressed the City's appreciation and extended best wishes to Chief Huntington and his family in retirement.

## 3. Proclamation with Plaque for Mayor Pro Tem Kent and Councilmember Lukson

Mayor Richardson read a proclamation and presented a plaque to recognize Mayor Pro Tem Kent for her seventeen (17) years of service on the Richland City Council. Mayor Pro Tem Kent offered remarks reflecting on her tenure, expressed appreciation for City staff and the community, and emphasized the importance of maintaining Richland's sense of community and collaboration.

Mayor Richardson also read a proclamation and presented a plaque to recognize Councilmember Lukson for his eight (8) years of service on the Richland City Council, including his leadership as mayor during the COVID-19 pandemic. Councilmember Lukson thanked his family and supporters and acknowledged the commitment required of elected service.

City Manager Amundson stated that Mayor Pro Tem Kent and Councilmember Lukson each played a pivotal role in building a new City Hall, which was completed in 2019. In recognition, he presented Mayor Pro Tem Kent and Councilmember Lukson with a watercolor rendering of Richland City Hall commissioned by a local artist as an additional expression of appreciation for their years of service on Richland City Council.

## **Council Recess (15 minutes)**

At 6:25 p.m., Council recessed for 15 minutes to allow for photographs and refreshments. The meeting resumed at 6:40 p.m.

## **Public Hearing**

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

## 4. Proposed Surplus and Authorizing Relinquishment of a portion of a Utility Easement lying within 1651 April Loop, Resolution No. 2025-165

Mayor Richardson opened and closed the public hearing at 6:43 p.m. No testimony was offered.

## 5. Proposed Surplus and Authorizing Relinquishment of a portion of a Utility Easement lying within 1832 Hunt Avenue, Resolution No. 2025-166

Mayor Richardson opened and closed the public hearing at 6:44 p.m. No testimony was offered.

6. Proposed Surplus and Authorizing Relinquishment of a portion of a Utility Easement lying within 266 Saint Street, Resolution No. 2025-167

Mayor Richardson opened and closed the public hearing at 6:44 p.m. No testimony was offered.

### **Public Comments**

The following individuals provided public comments:

- Kathy Miller, Richland resident, expressed concerns relating to governance and workplace culture at Ben Franklin Transit.
- Scott Frewing, Richland resident and Communications Director for a local church, reported that approximately \$300,000 was raised over a 19-day period through the *Giving Machine*, placed at Fairchild Cinemas. Donations will be distributed directly to local non-profit organizations. He noted that there was strong community participation and thanked Mayor Richardson and Council for their support.
- Francesca Maier, Richland resident, thanked Mayor Pro Tem Kent and Councilmember Lukson for their years of service on the Richland City Council.

### **Consent Calendar**

City Clerk Rogers read the Consent Calendar.

### **Minutes**

7. Approval of the December 2, 2025 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

### **Ordinances - First Reading**

None.

### **Ordinances - Second Reading & Passage**

8. Ordinance No. 2025-23, Amending Richland Municipal Code Section 9.22.075 related to Park Hours
9. Ordinance No. 2025-26, Related to Waivers of System Development Charges for Affordable Housing
10. Ordinance No. 2025-37, Providing for the Sale of 2026 Electric Revenue Bonds

11. Ordinance No. 2025-38, Amending the 2025 Budget in the General Fund, Streets Capital Construction Fund, General Government Construction Fund, Golf Course Fund, Medical Service Fund, Workers Compensation Fund, Health Care Benefits Plan Fund and Unemployment Fund
12. Ordinance No. 2025-39, Amending Richland Municipal Code Section 14.24.060 related to Electric Retail Rates

### **Resolutions - Adoption**

13. Resolution No. 2025-156, Authorizing a First Amendment to the Horn Rapids Farm Lease with Frank Tiegs, LLC
14. Resolution No. 2025-157, Authorizing an Agreement with the State of Washington Department of Ecology for Brownfields Funding related to Columbia Point Landfill Tract D
15. Resolution No. 2025-158, Authorizing a Consultant Agreement with Maul Foster & Alongi, Inc. for Supplemental Investigation of the Columbia Point Landfill
16. Resolution No. 2025-159, Awarding Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Funds to Desert Veterinary Clinic for Property located at 42 Goethals Drive **(PULLED BY COUNCILMEMBER MAIER AND RELOCATED UNDER ITEMS OF BUSINESS)**
17. Resolution No. 2025-160, Awarding 2026 Business License Reserve Fund Grants
18. Resolution No. 2025-161, Authorizing a Reimbursement Agreement with Nor Am Investment, LLC for Street Improvements on Trowbridge Boulevard
19. Resolution No. 2025-162, Authorizing a Third Amendment to the Wholesale Water Service Agreement with the City of West Richland
20. Resolution No. 2025-163, Authorizing a Second Amendment to the Department of the Army Recreational Lease to remove Bateman Island from the Recreational Lease Premises
21. Resolution No. 2025-164, Authorizing a Consultant Agreement with Efficiency Solutions LLC for Energy Efficiency Commercial Project Inspections and Assessments

### **Items – Approval**

22. Authorizing an Increase to the City Manager's Annual Salary for Calendar Year 2026

## **Expenditures – Approval**

23. Expenditures from November 1, 2025 to November 30, 2025 for \$35,863,185.72 including Travel Checks Nos. 20919-20928, Accounts Payable Check Nos. 341481-342212, Accounts Payable Wire Nos. 10778-10817, Payroll Wires & ACH Nos. 15110-15175, Payroll Check Nos. 237652-237663, and Payroll Direct Deposits Nos. 253090012044-253280013441

**COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN MOVED AND MAYOR PRO TEM KENT 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**

24. Ordinance No. 2025-41, Rezoning Approximately 29 Acres located at Parcel No. 1-2098-100-0002-004 from Suburban Agriculture (SAG) to Low Density Residential (R-1-10) (First Reading) (Closed Record)

Mayor Richardson, City Attorney Kintzley, and City Clerk Rogers read the closed record hearing procedures.

Mayor Richardson identified the items that comprise the record for purposes of the closed-record review hearing. The items of record include all documents that were presented to the Richland Hearing Examiner and accepted into evidence at or prior to the open-record public hearing held on July 14, 2025, along with the Hearing Examiner's November 7, 2025 written decision and all ordinances and comprehensive plans adopted by the City and applicable to the project.

City Attorney Kintzley asked if any councilmembers had any potential conflicts of interest regarding the topic. No conflicts were disclosed. City Attorney Kintzley asked the audience if anyone had an objection to any councilmember's participation in the closed record review. No objections were raised. Finally, City Attorney Kintzley asked if anyone present had any objection on jurisdictional grounds as required by the Richland Municipal Code. No objections were raised.

Mayor Richardson opened the public hearing at 7:00.

Planning Manager Stevens presented a request submitted by Story Family Five, LLC, on behalf of property owners Raymond French and Thomas French, to rezone approximately 29 acres from Suburban Agriculture (SAG) to Low Density Residential (R-1-10) for Benton County Parcel No. 1-2098-100-0002-004. The property is approximately 29 acres and is part of what is commonly known as the *French Orchard*.

The Richland Hearing Examiner conducted an open-record public hearing on this request on July 14, 2025, and issued a recommendation for approval of the rezone request on

November 7, 2025. Staff recommended that Council concur with the Hearing Examiner's written recommendation and approve Ordinance No. 2025-41 for first reading.

No other testimony was offered. Mayor Richardson closed the public hearing at 7:05 p.m.

Councilmember Jones questioned whether the subject property could be considered for Medium-Density zoning to allow for additional housing development. Planning Manager Stevens replied that under the City's current Comprehensive Plan, the property is designated as Low-Density Residential. He explained that changing the zoning designation would require an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, which has not been requested by the applicant. He added that such a change could be considered as part of the City's periodic Comprehensive Plan update, which is currently underway and anticipated to be presented to Council for adoption approximately this time next year.

Planning Manager Stevens further added that the recent Middle Housing requirements established by the State of Washington are in the process of being incorporated into city regulations. Once adopted concurrently with the Comprehensive Plan update, the regulations would allow property owners to add additional housing units on their property, should they choose to do so.

**COUNCILMEMBER LUKSON MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER MAIER SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE ORDINANCE NO. 2025-41, REZONING APPROXIMATELY 29 ACRES LOCATED AT PARCEL NO. 1-2098-100-0002-004 FROM SUBURBAN AGRICULTURE (SAG) TO LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (R-1-10) FOR FIRST READING. 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. Ordinance No. 2025-42, Rezoning Approximately 58.39 Acres located at Parcel Nos. 1-3498-201-0595-005, 1-3498-200-0005-007 and 1-3498-200-0008-000 from Agriculture (AG) to Medium-Density Residential - Small Lot (R-2S) and Retail Business (C-2) (First Reading) (Closed Record)

Mayor Richardson, City Attorney Kintzley, and City Clerk Rogers read the closed record hearing procedures.

Mayor Richardson identified the items that comprise the record for purposes of the closed-record review hearing. The items of record include all documents that were presented to the Richland Hearing Examiner and accepted into evidence at or prior to the open record public hearing held on September 8, 2025, along with the Hearing Examiner's November 17, 2025, written decision and all ordinances and comprehensive plans adopted by the City and applicable to the project.

City Attorney Kintzley asked if any councilmembers had any potential conflicts of interest regarding the topic. No conflicts were disclosed. City Attorney Kintzley asked the audience if anyone had an objection to any councilmember's participation in the closed

record review. No objections were raised. Finally, City Attorney Kintzley asked if anyone present had any objection on jurisdictional grounds as required by the Richland Municipal Code. No objections were raised.

Mayor Richardson opened the public hearing at 7:13 p.m.

Planning Manager Stevens presented on the proposed rezone request, which would amend the current Agriculture (AG) zoning to Medium Density Residential - Small Lot (R-2S) and Retail Business (C-2). Future residential and commercial development consistent with the Badger Mountain South Subarea land use classifications would be allowed. Combined, the three (3) parcels, located at 1251 Bermuda Road, also referenced as Peach Tree Estates 3, are approximately 58.39 acres.

The Richland Hearing Examiner conducted an open-record public hearing on this request on September 8, 2025, and issued a recommendation for approval of the rezone request on November 17, 2025. Staff recommended that Council concur with the Hearing Examiner's written recommendation and approve Ordinance No. 2025-42 for first reading.

Councilmember Maier asked clarifying questions regarding pedestrian and trail connectivity associated with the proposed development. Councilmember Maier noted that while the commercial zoning relocation had previously been discussed, the issue of intended trail connections on the west side of the property had not been clearly addressed. He asked whether there is a cohesive plan to maintain pedestrian access, particularly where existing trails appear to traverse plats to the south.

Planning Manager Stevens replied that the pedestrian connectivity is established through the preliminary plat. He explained that a primary trail corridor is planned along the western property boundary, and that connection points will link through Peach Tree Estates Phase II, with additional connections planned as part of Peach Tree Estates Phase III.

He noted that recent design changes were made to minimize the need for pedestrians to walk long distances along roadways. He also noted that mid-block crossings are proposed to help maintain connectivity between the school site and nearby residential areas. School access via the trail system remains an element of the overall plan.

No other testimony was offered. Mayor Richardson closed the public hearing at 7:20.

**COUNCILMEMBER LUKSON MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER MAIER SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE ORDINANCE NO. 2025-42, REZONING APPROXIMATELY 58.39 ACRES LOCATED AT PARCEL NOS. 1-3498-201-0595-005, 1-3498-200-0005-07, AND 1-3498-200-0008-000 FROM AGRICULTURE (AG) TO MEDIUM-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL-SMALL LOT (R-2S) AND RETAIL BUSINESS (C-2) FOR FIRST READING. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.**

26. Ordinance No. 2025-40, Approving the 2029 Council Compensation Plan (First Reading)

Human Resources Director Paulsen presented the proposed 2029 Council Compensation Plan. The update includes a 2.10% market adjustment that will be applied to Council compensation beginning in 2029.

**COUNCILMEMBER LUKSON MOVED AND MAYOR PRO TEM KENT SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE ORDINANCE NO. 2025-40, APPROVING THE 2029 COUNCIL COMPENSATION PLAN FOR FIRST READING. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.**

27. Resolution No. 2025-155, Establishing Service Delivery Objectives for Richland Fire & Emergency Services

Fire Chief Huntington provided a high-level overview of the Richland Fire & Emergency Service (RFES) Department's proposed updates to its response standards and service delivery objectives. He noted the resolution would establish the adopted standards as the baseline for calendar year 2025, with performance measured against those standards, and that the standards would later serve as performance targets for 2026. He further stated that a comprehensive Standards of Cover document incorporating the updates would be presented by Fire Chief Aust in 2026 as a public-facing planning document.

The objectives define measurable performance standards for emergency response, daily operations, and community risk reduction efforts. Adopting the standards strengthens the department's ability to allocate resources efficiently, aligns departmental operations with industry best practices, and ensures the continued delivery of timely, high-quality emergency services to Richland's residents, businesses, and visitors.

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

**COUNCILMEMBER MAIER MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER VANDYKE SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 2025-155, ESTABLISHING SERVICE DELIVERY OBJECTIVES FOR RICHLAND FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.**

28. Resolution No. 2025-165, Declaring Surplus and Authorizing Relinquishment of a portion of a Utility Easement lying within 1651 April Loop

Deputy City Manager Schiessl presented the request for relinquishment of a portion of a utility easement lying within 1651 April Loop. The easement is no longer needed for city

purposes, and staff recommended approval of the relinquishment.

Councilmember Maier asked whether there were any additional easements that are no longer needed, and whether the City could proactively relinquish them so other property owners on the block would not need to submit similar requests. Deputy City Manager Schiessl replied that such an opportunity might exist and stated that staff would review the matter further.

**COUNCILMEMBER LUKSON MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER MAIER SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 2025-165, DECLARING SURPLUS AND AUTHORIZING RELINQUISHMENT OF A PORTION OF A UTILITY EASEMENT LYING WITHIN 1651 APRIL LOOP. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.**

29. Resolution No. 2025-166, Declaring Surplus and Authorizing Relinquishment of a portion of a Utility Easement lying within 1832 Hunt Avenue

Deputy City Manager Schiessl presented the request for relinquishment of a portion of a utility easement lying within 1832 Hunt Avenue. The easement is no longer needed for city purposes, and staff recommended approval of the relinquishment.

**COUNCILMEMBER LUKSON MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER MAIER SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 2025-166, DECLARING SURPLUS AND AUTHORIZING RELINQUISHMENT OF A PORTION OF A UTILITY EASEMENT LYING WITHIN 1832 HUNT AVENUE. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.**

30. Resolution No. 2025-167, Declaring Surplus and Authorizing Relinquishment of a portion of a Utility Easement lying within 266 Saint Street

Deputy City Manager Schiessl presented the request for relinquishment of a portion of a utility easement lying within 266 Saint Street. The easement is no longer needed for city purposes, and staff recommended approval of the relinquishment.

**COUNCILMEMBER LUKSON MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER MAIER SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 2025-167, DECLARING SURPLUS AND AUTHORIZING RELINQUISHMENT OF A PORTION OF A UTILITY EASEMENT LYING WITHIN 266 SAINT STREET. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, LUKSON, MAIER, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.**

31. Resolution No. 2025-159, Awarding Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Funds to Desert Veterinary Clinic for Property located at 42 Goethals Drive **(FORMERLY ITEM NO. 16 ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR)**

Councilmember Maier explained that he pulled this item from the Consent Calendar because he had previously been a customer of the business in the past and wished to recuse himself from the vote.

**COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER VANDYKE SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 2025-159, AWARDED COMMERCIAL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT FUNDS TO DESERT VETERINARY CLINIC FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 42 GOETHALS DRIVE. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS JONES, LUKSON, VANDYKE AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. COUNCILMEMBER MAIER ABSTAINED. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.**

*City Manager*

City Manager Amundson announced that the City is currently seeking community input on the *Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan*, which will guide decisions related to parks, recreational programs, and open spaces for the next six (6) years and beyond. City Manager Amundson encouraged residents to help identify priorities and areas where City resources and efforts should be focused. The survey will be available on the City's website through January 2, 2026.

Next, City Manager Amundson stated that prior to the start of the meeting, Councilmember Maier had shared concerns related to Flock Safety and recent articles on the topic. In response, he coordinated with Chief Pilcher to address some of those concerns and noted that Councilmember Maier will also have the opportunity to provide any additional remarks during his comments.

In closing, City Manager Amundson expressed his appreciation to Mayor Pro Tem Kent and Councilmember Lukson, stating that it had been an honor and pleasure to work closely with them on numerous projects over the years.

City Manager Amundson turned the meeting over to Police Chief Pilcher. Chief Pilcher provided an update on the City's use of the Flock Safety Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR). His comments included information on its use, system access, data retention, actions taken to restrict access to other agencies, and law enforcement outcomes.

Access to the City's system is now restricted to Washington State agencies, with the expectation that those agencies comply with Washington law. Chief Pilcher explained that requests from outside agencies may still be considered on a case-by-case basis when supported by a case number and sufficient justification.

In closing, Chief Pilcher stated the Flock Safety system and ALPR technology are valuable tools that play an important role in protecting public safety and cited several examples demonstrating the system's effectiveness.

### *City Council*

Councilmember Maier commented on the City's use of ALPR technology by emphasizing that the primary concern was not the existence of the system itself, but the City's responsibility to safeguard and control the data it generates. He explained that the previously undisclosed access by federal agencies was identified through a University of Washington study, not through internal detection, and expressed his opinion related to the City's role in providing oversight. While acknowledging Chief Pilcher's actions to restrict access once the issue was identified, Councilmember Maier underscored the importance of limiting data sharing to agencies with comparable auditing standards and controls.

Councilmember Maier also provided an update on matters related to Ben Franklin Transit, noting that an ongoing investigation is being conducted with the assistance of independent legal counsel and third-party support. He stated that he is closely monitoring the situation, remains in regular communication with legal counsel and the Chair of the Ben Franklin Transit Board, and is committed to responsible stewardship of public funds. While unable to discuss details due to the active investigation, he indicated that updates would be provided as appropriate.

In closing, Councilmember Maier shared that he participated in the annual *National Wreaths Across America Day* event held on December 13, 2025. The event featured broad representation from local scouting organizations and a local color guard, with many veterans in attendance who participated in the laying of wreaths. He expressed appreciation for the strong community turnout and described the ceremony as well-attended and meaningful.

Councilmember Whitten thanked Fire Chief Huntington for his years of service and wished him well in retirement. He then stated that he was honored and privileged to have served alongside Mayor Pro Tem Kent and Councilmember Lukson on the Richland City Council. He thanked them for their leadership and wished them well in their future endeavors. In conclusion, Councilmember Whitten thanked staff for their efforts in preparing John Dam Plaza for the Winter Wonderland event and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Councilmember Jones thanked Fire Chief Huntington, Mayor Pro Tem Kent, and Councilmember Lukson for their years of service and wished them well in their future endeavors. She then extended holiday greetings by wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Councilmember VanDyke thanked Fire Chief Huntington, Mayor Pro Tem Kent and Councilmember Lukson for their years of service to the City.

Councilmember Lukson thanked Fire Chief Huntington for his years of service to the City and stated the work he accomplished during his tenure was significant and lasting. He credited Chief Huntington's leadership with improving response times and overall

department performance, and opined that Chief Huntington is leaving the Richland Fire Department and the City of Richland in a stronger position as a result of his contributions.

Councilmember Lukson then shared his motivation for running for City Council out of a desire to give back to the community. He commented on the challenges of service in an elected role, including the responsibility of making difficult decisions, processing large amounts of information, and receiving public criticism while maintaining professionalism. Councilmember Lukson identified serving as mayor as the highlight of his professional career. He reflected on being selected as mayor in January 2020 and unexpectedly leading the City through the COVID-19 pandemic, which included periods of financial uncertainty and deep community division.

In conclusion, Councilmember Lukson encouraged Council to remain focused on core services that matter most to residents, including public safety, emergency medical services, infrastructure, and affordable utilities. He concluded by thanking staff for their exceptional work and stating that it had been an honor to serve the City of Richland.

Mayor Pro Tem Kent stated that much of the City's work, while not highly visible, is essential to ensuring the reliable delivery of core services. She commended the City's Finance Department for completing the annual budget prior to year-end, noting the extensive and often thankless effort involved. She expressed appreciation to the City's strong return on investment to residents, emphasizing that Richland consistently does more with limited resources. Mayor Pro Tem Kent stated that Council's and staff's disciplined and fiscally conservative approach to spending and revenue decisions has been instrumental in maintaining the City's financial strength and enhancing its reputation as an attractive place to live, both regionally and beyond.

Mayor Pro Tem Kent also addressed recent reports of vandalism to Winter Wonderland displays in John Dam Plaza. She expressed disappointment and underscored the importance of community responsibility and respect for shared public amenities. She acknowledged that staff has addressed the vandalism and are exploring measures to reduce future incidents. Mayor Pro Tem Kent concluded by wishing everyone a happy holiday season and encouraged residents to spend time with family and friends, while supporting and helping others in the community.

### *Mayor*

Mayor Richardson inquired whether there was interest among Council to further discuss the Flock camera issue in a future City Council workshop meeting. No councilmember indicated a desire for additional discussion on the matter.

Mayor Richardson reflected on the City's progress under the City's 2024-2026 Strategic Plan and highlighted several accomplishments achieved in 2025. These included major upgrades to the City's website and customer utility portal, development of a strategic communications and community engagement plan, and continued strong financial stewardship marked by clean audits, solid bond ratings, conservative reserves, and the

decision not to take the optional one percent property tax levy increase.

Mayor Richardson also highlighted significant development and quality-of-life achievements, including long-term planning efforts that supported new commercial development, continued growth in Badger Mountain South and Horn Rapids, and the creation of a renewable gas facility. She recognized the Police Department's emphasis on community-oriented policing, the Fire Department's adaptation to growth, and improvements to parks and community events, such as Iron Man and Winter Wonderland, that enhance residents' quality of life. She emphasized the importance of workforce development and succession planning, crediting leadership for fostering a culture of service.

Mayor Richardson concluded by expressing appreciation to City Manager Amundson and staff for their professionalism, dedication, and commitment to Richland, and encouraged the community to remain engaged in supporting the City's continued success.

### **Adjournment**

Mayor Richardson adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

APPROVED:



Theresa Richardson, Mayor

ATTEST:



Jennifer Rogers, City Clerk

DATE APPROVED: January 6, 2026

DATE PUBLISHED: January 7, 2026