



MINUTES

Richland City Council Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 20, 2026
Richland City Hall ~ Council Chambers
625 Swift Boulevard

City Council Regular Meeting - 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 VanDyke	Present
Councilmember Holten	Present
Councilmember Jones	Present
Councilmember Maier	Present
Councilmember Whitten	Present

Also present were City Manager Amundson, Deputy City Manager Schiessl, Assistant City Manager Florence, City Attorney Kintzley, Fire Chief Aust, 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 Richardson 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 6-0.

Presentations

None.

Public Hearing

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

1. Proposed 2026-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Richland Police Professional Staff Guild, Resolution No. 2026-09

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

Public Comments

The following individuals provided public comments:

- Rebecca Krieg, representing the Tri-Cities Alliance for the Unhoused (TCAU), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focused on serving unhoused individuals, provided an overview of the organization and its mission. Ms. Krieg stated that TCAU is seeking to partner with the City of Richland and the greater Tri-Cities region to identify an appropriate site and facility to provide services to the community. She also provided printed materials for Council's review.
- Kiersten McNeal, a Richland resident, requested City Council and the Richland Police Department (RPD) issue a public statement reaffirming that RPD will not collaborate with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) beyond what is legally required. Ms. McNeal expressed concerns over reported ICE actions in other cities and urged Council to clearly state that RPD will support community safety and uphold the law.

Consent Calendar

City Clerk Rogers read the Consent Calendar.

Minutes

2. Approval of the January 6, 2026 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Ordinances - First Reading

None.

Ordinances - Second Reading & Passage

3. Ordinance No. 2026-01, Amending Richland Municipal Code Title 23: Zoning Regulations related to Minimum Parking Requirements

Resolutions – Adoption

4. Resolution No. 2026-06, Authorizing an Interlocal Agreement with Energy Northwest for Technical Services

5. Resolution No. 2026-07, Authorizing 2026 Grant Applications to Ben Franklin Transit for Bus Passes
6. Resolution No. 2026-08, Authorizing an Interlocal Agreement for Patient Health Information Exchange

Items - Approval

None.

Expenditures – Approval

7. Expenditures from December 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025 for \$43,155,972.33 including Travel Checks Nos. 20929-20934, Accounts Payable Check Nos. 342213-343171, Accounts Payable Wire Nos. 10818-10859, Payroll Wires & ACH Nos. 15176-15253, Payroll Check Nos. 237664-237674, and Payroll Direct Deposit Nos. 253370013449-253640015775

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

Items of Business

8. Resolution No. 2026-09, Approving the 2026-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Richland Police Professional Staff Guild

Human Resources Director Paulsen presented key provisions of the proposed 2026-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the City of Richland and the Richland Police Professional Staff Guild. She reported that negotiations began in June 2025 and concluded with a tentative agreement on December 19, 2025, which was subsequently ratified by the Guild on January 6, 2026. The two (2) year agreement establishes wages, hours, and working conditions for 2026-2027.

Councilmembers Maier and Whitten thanked Human Resources Director Paulsen for the extensive and detailed work undertaken by both parties during the CBA process. They commended the collaborative effort required to reach a mutually acceptable agreement, and noted the value of achieving consensus through good-faith negotiations.

MAYOR PRO TEM VANDYKE MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER MAIER SECONDED THE MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2026-09, APPROVING THE 2026-2027 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT WITH THE RICHLAND POLICE PROFESSIONAL STAFF GUILD. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON,

MAYOR PRO TEM VANDYKE, AND COUNCILMEMBERS HOLTEN, JONES, MAIER AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

9. Law Enforcement Emerging Technology Preview (Discussion Only)

Chief Pilcher introduced the topic by noting the continual evolution of public safety technology throughout his career. He emphasized that new tools, including aerial response and artificial intelligence applications, are intended to enhance public safety as a whole, not only law enforcement.

Chief Pilcher introduced Commander Mason and invited him to present on the Public Safety Aerial Response (PSAR) program.

With the aid of a PowerPoint Presentation, Commander Mason outlined the PSAR program as an operational support capability that provides real-time aerial situational awareness for officers, Fire & EMS, and professional staff during active incidents. He emphasized that PSAR is not an enforcement tool, is not autonomous or armed, and does not replace officers. Instead, it supports better decision-making, earlier de-escalation, and safer outcomes by giving responders accurate information before and during incidents. The program would deploy drones from fixed, secure locations, stream live video to supervisors and responders, and operate within a real-time information center.

Implementation would follow a phased rollout with training, pilot testing, evaluation, and anticipated full operational readiness by late 2026 or early 2027. Success would be measured through improved response times, safer incident results, documented de-escalation outcomes, and community feedback.

In closing, Commander Mason stated that PSAR will enable responders to see first, decide smarter, and act safer; reducing risk, supporting informed decision-making, and enhancing public safety while respecting community values and expectations.

Detailed information regarding the PSAR program is included in the agenda packet.

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

Reports and Comments

City Manager

City Manager Amundson reported that the City held its annual all-staff in-service meeting the day before. He noted that the event included a keynote speaker, followed by breakout sessions that highlighted ongoing initiatives and projects. The event provided employees with a valuable opportunity to learn about the work occurring across the organization and strengthen communication, cohesion, and teamwork. City

Manager Amundson thanked Council for their continued support of the annual staff in-service event, and reported that he consistently receives positive feedback from employees.

Mr. Amundson then advised that efforts to fill vacant Position No. 4 on Richland City Council would continue with an executive session that evening, followed by applicant interviews held during a special meeting on January 27, 2026 starting at 3:00 p.m. and continuing until approximately 5:30 p.m.

Finally, City Manager Amundson outlined the January 27, 2026 workshop agenda, which includes a presentation by Deputy City Manager Joe Schiessl and the Tri-Cities Development Council (TRIDEC) regarding the shoreline reconveyance project, an initial draft of police station options, and a utility rate discussion led by Public Works Director Carlo D'Alessandro covering sewer, stormwater, and solid waste services.

City Council

Councilmember Holten expressed enthusiasm for formally beginning the process of filling vacant City Council Position No. 4, and for the opportunity to travel to Olympia with staff and fellow councilmembers to engage with state legislators.

Councilmember Whitten thanked Rebecca Krieg for her presentation on the Tri-Cities Alliance for the Unhoused (TCAU), and stated he looks forward to seeing the project move forward. He then stated his support for the Richland Police Department's compliance with state law regarding interagency cooperation, affirmed the public's right to hold law enforcement accountable, and encouraged citizens not to impede agencies when they are lawfully performing their duties. Lastly, Councilmember Whitten expressed anticipation for the upcoming police station presentation and acknowledged staff's efforts toward advancing the project.

Councilmember Maier reported that Ben Franklin Transit ridership continues to increase, including within Richland, and referenced Resolution No. 2026-07 related to the distribution of free bus passes to community organizations. He then acknowledged recent media attention concerning Ben Franklin Transit and stated that third-party investigations have commenced. He emphasized that results are not yet available and that it would be inappropriate to comment further until findings are released.

Additionally, Councilmember Maier raised concerns regarding the City's use of Flock automated license plate reader (ALPR) technology. He expressed diminished confidence in the vendor and interest in exploring options to transition away from the company. He requested a future update from City Manager Amundson regarding the status of the City's ALPR technology, including any potential plans to expand the partnership with Axon and a timeline for a possible changeover.

Councilmember Jones and Mayor Pro Tem VanDyke had no comments.

Mayor

Mayor Richardson had no comments.

Executive Session

10. Executive Session Per RCW 42.30.110(1)(h): Evaluate the Qualifications of a Candidate for Appointment to Elective Office (60 minutes)

At 6:48 p.m., Mayor Richardson announced that Richland City Council would convene in executive session for sixty (60) minutes to evaluate the qualifications of candidates for appointment to elective office. A brief transition from the Council Chambers to the executive session room occurred, with the executive session beginning at 6:53 p.m.

Present with Council for the executive session was City Manager Amundson.

Council exited the executive session at 7:42 p.m. No additional action was taken after exiting executive session.

Adjournment

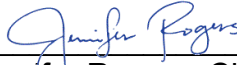
Mayor Richardson adjourned the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

APPROVED:



Theresa Richardson, Mayor

ATTEST:



Jennifer Rogers, City Clerk

DATE APPROVED: February 3, 2026

DATE PUBLISHED: February 4, 2026