



MINUTES

Utility Advisory Committee Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 13, 2026
Richland City Hall ~ Council Chambers
625 Swift Boulevard

Utility Advisory Committee Regular Meeting - 3:00 p.m.

Chair Porter called the meeting to order at 3:06 p.m.

Welcome and Roll Call

Attendance: Chair Porter	Present
Vice Chair Staven	Present
Member Hofstetter	Absent
Member Hyson	Absent
Member Wallin	Present
Member Larkin	Present
Member Richmond	Absent

Also present were Staff Liaison and Energy Services Director Whitney, Deputy Fire Chief Aust, Public Works Director D’Alessandro, and Administrative Assistant II Kirkpatrick.

Approval of Agenda

COMMITTEE MEMBER LARKIN MOVED AND VICE-CHAIR STAVEN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PUBLISHED. THE MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

Minutes

1. Approval of the October 29, 2025 Utility Advisory Committee Special Meeting Minutes and the November 12, 2025 Utility Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

VICE-CHAIR STAVEN MOVED AND COMMITTEE MEMBER WALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 29, 2025 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES. THE MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LARKIN MOVED AND COMMITTEE MEMBER WALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE NOVEMBER 12, 2025 MEETING MINUTES. THE MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

Public Comments

None.

Items of Business

2. Election of Officers for 2026

Chair Porter moved and Vice-Chair Staven seconded the motion to nominate Committee Member Hyson for Vice-Chair. The motioned carried 4-0.

Committee Member Larkin moved and Chair Porter seconded the motion to nominate Vice-Chair Staven for Chair. The motioned carried 4-0.

Chair Staven went over procedural discussion items.

3. Status of Each City Utility

Fire & EMS

Chief Huntington officially retired effective December 31, 2025. Updates were provided regarding promotions and shifts, including the Battalion Chief position and Tim Birch's promotion to EMS Captain, and it was noted that ten new hires will begin at the end of January. The increased utility rate went into effect this month. Two programs—the Blood Program and the Bi-Directional Hub—were discussed as part of a quality assurance initiative. Chief Aust personally invited members to schedule meetings with him and Trish from data analysis. Members thanked Chief Aust and expressed appreciation for the invitation, and there were no questions from the committee.

Public Works

Public Works Director D'Alessandro provided updates on departments within Public Works, reviewed recently completed and ongoing projects in the Water, Wastewater, and Landfill divisions. Updates included the 2026 Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater Comprehensive Plan update is underway and will be brought to the committee at an upcoming meeting. Significant modernization projects for the water treatment plants were discussed, including a \$10 million project spanning five years that is currently under review, as well as design work for water replacement and the Taptal 2 water booster. Utility rate increases to support capital improvement projects are expected to be presented to the committee in March. Staff recruitment for wastewater is ongoing, with several vacancies currently being filled. Recruitment for the Deputy Public Works position was successful, with a start date scheduled for February.

Energy Service Director Whitney introduced Mrs. Kirkpatrick, Administrative Assistant II for Energy Services, to the Committee. The first billing of the new utility rates has been sent out to residents. Bank One of Stevens Substation is now online and operating at twice its previous capacity. Committee members were informed that they could do a self-guided tour by starting at the Thayer substation, driving North on Thayer to the Wilson/Woodbury area and then you will be at Steven's substation. Bonneville Power

Administration (BPA) has completed installation of poles on Thayer Drive and will be working at the Stevens Substation to remove the overhead lattice transmission structure. BPA will later conduct work at the Thayer Substation, including rebuilding the transmission line. Progress is also being made on the transmission interconnection replacement project, including work at the Island View, Kingsgate, and Triton substations. Director Whitney thanked the Chair for recognizing the project plan included in the meeting packet.

4. Horn Rapids Solar, Storage and Training (HRSST) Project Expansion Option

Energy Services Director Whitney introduced Scott with Energy West, who presented the proposed project structure, roles, and high-level PPA terms, including anticipated cost benefits, resource certainty, and forecasting considerations. He noted that proposed next steps are dependent on the developer's ability to secure federal ITC benefits, which will affect final PPA pricing.

Member Porter asked what the city would lose if the July 4 deadline is not met. Staff responded that the primary cost would be approximately \$50,000 associated with Whetstone, with other investments expected to be minimal. Staff stated they are comfortable with the proposed timeline and the project outlook as presented.

MEMBER PORTER MOVED AND COMMITTEE MEMBER LARKIN SECONDED THE MOTION TO SUPPORT DUE DILIGENCE, INITIATION OF THE BPA INTERCONNECTION PROCESS, NEGOTIATION OF A NEW PPA, ASSIGNMENT OF APPLICABLE SITE LEASES, AND CONSTRUCTION TO MEET UPCOMING DEADLINES. THE MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

5. Ruby Flats Solar Projects Status

Energy Services Director Whitney gave a brief overview of the project and history. It's a simpler project, but larger. It does not have the BPA interconnection complete. Council approved a letter of interest in July of 2025. It is continuing to move forward with a lot of pieces that are still risking this project to seeing completion.

6. S&P Global Bond Rating For Richlands Electrical Utility

S&P global ratings affirmed an "A" rating with a stable outlook for the City of Richland's Energy Services (RES) long-term revenue bonds planned for issuance in the first quarter of 2026. The rating reflects strong credit fundamentals, including a long-term power supply contract with the Bonneville Power Administration, competitive electric rates relative to the state average, above-average local income levels, and well-established financial policies and planning practices.

7. 2026 Capital Work Plan – Energy Services

Energy Services Director Whitney presented a brief plan review and noted that he would present at the March meeting a 2025 What Did We Accomplish to the Committee.

8. Forward Agenda

- Energy Services Advanced Modular Update – March
- Angie from FCS (future rate structure update) – March
- Cost of Service Analysis (COSA) Update – June 2026
- Reliability of all Utilities Update – June 2026

Adjournment

Chair Staven adjourned the meeting at 4:56 pm.

Prepared by: Carly Kirkpatrick
Carly Kirkpatrick, Administrative Assistant II

Approved by: Harry Staven
Harry Staven, Chair

DATE APPROVED: 3/10/2026

DATE PUBLISHED: 3/27/2026