



MINUTES

Richland City Council Regular Meeting
Tuesday, March 17, 2026
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 VanDyke	Present
Councilmember Holten	Present
Councilmember Jones	Present
Councilmember Maier	Present
Councilmember Samuel	Present
Councilmember Whitten	Present

Also present were City Manager Amundson, Deputy City Manager Schiessl, Assistant City Manager Florence, City Attorney Kintzley, Chief of Police Pilcher, Fire Chief Aust, Energy Services Director Whitney, Finance Director Allen, Human Resources Director Paulsen, Parks & Public Facilities Director Waite, Development Services Director Rizzitiello, Public Works Director D'Alessandro and City Clerk Rogers.

Pledge of Allegiance

Councilmember Samuel led the Council and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

MAYOR PRO TEM VANDYKE MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER JONES SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PUBLISHED. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Presentations

1. Proclamation Recognizing Savannah Thorpe of Richland High School as the 2026 WIAA 4A High School Girls Wrestling State Champion

Mayor Richardson introduced Savannah Thorpe to the audience and highlighted her outstanding athletic and academic accomplishments.

Mayor Richardson then read a proclamation honoring Savannah Thorpe as the 2026 WIAA 4A High School Girls Wrestling State Champion.

2. Proclamation Recognizing the Richland High School Boys Basketball Team as the 2026 WIAA 4A State Champions.

Mayor Richardson introduced the Richland High School Boys Basketball Team, Head Coach Earl Streufert, and Assistant Coach Bruce Robertson to the audience. Mayor Richardson commended the team's undefeated 28-0 season and the significance of earning the team's first state championship title in 47 years.

Mayor Richardson then read a proclamation honoring the Richland High School Boys Basketball Team in recognition of achievement as the 2026 WIAA 4A State Champions.

3. National Reading Month Proclamation

At Mayor Richardson's invitation, Cara Hernandez, Chair of the Richland Public Library Board, read a proclamation designating the month of March as National Reading Month.

4. Richland Public Library Board Annual Presentation

Cara Hernandez, Chair of the Richland Library Board of Trustees, introduced Board members in attendance and expressed appreciation to the Friends of the Library and the Library Foundation for their continued support and collaboration.

She then provided a high-level overview of the Library's 2025 operations, with the assistance of a PowerPoint presentation, highlighting strong community engagement, expanded services, and continued growth in library usage.

Looking ahead, Ms. Hernandez shared that the Library will celebrate its 75th anniversary beginning May 1, 2026, and will continue to expand programming, partnerships, and services to meet the evolving needs of the community.

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

Following the presentation, councilmembers engaged in a question-and-answer session with Ms. Hernandez.

Public Hearing

None.

Public Comments

City Clerk Rogers read the Public Comments procedure.

The following individuals provided public comments:

- Eugene Pratt, a Richland resident, referenced a request he submitted to the Richland Police Department to investigate eight (8) airplane hangar owners and three (3) Port Commissioners for potential defrauding of a public utility. He alleged improper use of the City's water and sewer services and requested a formal investigation.
- Marie Nuron, a Richland resident, urged City Council to support an investigation into the Port of Benton Commissioners for alleged defrauding of a public utility. She emphasized the need for accountability, restitution for uncollected utility revenues, and equitable treatment of residents who comply with permitting and payment requirements.

Consent Calendar

City Clerk Rogers read the Consent Calendar.

Minutes

5. Approval of the March 3, 2026 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Ordinances - First Reading

None.

Ordinances - Second Reading & Passage

None.

Resolutions – Adoption

6. Resolution No. 2026-31, Authorizing an Interlocal Agreement for Continued Reciprocal Borrowing between Area Libraries
7. Resolution No. 2026-32, Authorizing a Grant Application to the Washington State Department of Commerce for a Library Capital Improvement Program Grant
8. Resolution No. 2026-33, Authorizing a Grant Application to the Washington State Department of Transportation Pedestrian and Bicycle Program
9. Resolution No. 2026-34, Authorizing a Consultant Agreement with Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc. for the SR-240/Aaron Interchange Complete Streets Improvements Project

10. Resolution No. 2026-35, Accepting Surface Transportation Block Grant Funds for the SR-240/Aaron Drive Complete Streets Improvements Project
11. Resolution No. 2026-36, Authorizing Award of Bid to Prater Electric Inc. for the Thayer Substation Bank 1 Replacement Construction Project
12. Resolution No. 2026-37, Authorizing a Traffic and Criminal Software Record Sharing Agreement between the Washington State Patrol and the City of Richland Police Department
13. Resolution No. 2026-38, Ratifying a Renewal of Contract No. 119-25 with Remedy Health and Wellness, PLLC for Direct Primary Care Services

Items - Approval

14. Appointment to the Arts Commission: Leo Bowman, Lexie Forbes, and Nathan Reynolds
15. Appointment to the Code Enforcement Board: Eric Bostrom, Branden Gradin, and Skye White
16. Appointment to the Parks & Recreation Commission: Eric Morel, Sawyer Kreis, and Akshath Motkuri

Expenditures – Approval

17. Expenditures from February 1, 2026 to February 28, 2026 for \$37,940,409.39 including Travel Checks Nos. 20944-20961, Accounts Payable Check Nos. 344016-344873, Accounts Payable Wire Nos. 10895-10932, Payroll Wires & ACH Nos. 15319-15380, Payroll Check Nos. 237668-237682, and Payroll Direct Deposit Nos. 26420017347-26560018168.

COUNCILMEMBER JONES MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR AS PUBLISHED. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM VANDYKE, AND COUNCILMEMBERS HOLTEN, JONES, MAIER, SAMUEL AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Items of Business

18. Term Limit Waiver Request for Parks & Recreation Commission Membership: James Buelt

Parks & Public Facilities Director Waite presented a term limit waiver request for Parks & Recreation Commission member James Buelt. He explained that Mr. Buelt has served the maximum term limit of twelve (12) consecutive years on the Commission and has

reapplied to continue service. Parks & Public Facilities Director Waite stated the Parks & Recreation Commission interview panel has requested Council approve a term limit waiver request to allow Mr. Buelt to continue serving an additional three (3) year term on the Commission.

COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER MAIER SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE TERM LIMIT WAIVER REQUEST FOR PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBER JAMES BUELT. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM VANDYKE, AND COUNCILMEMBERS HOLTEN, JONES, MAIER, SAMUEL AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

19. Ordinance No. 2026-05, Rezoning Approximately 10.3 Acres Located at Parcel No. 1-2098-101-2790-001 from Suburban Agriculture (SAG) to Single Family Residential (R-1-10) (Closed Record)

Mayor Richardson identified the items that comprise the record for the 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 January 12, 2026, along with the Hearing Examiner's February 13, 2026, written decision.

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 any 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 objections on jurisdictional grounds as required by the Richland Municipal Code. No objections were raised.

City Clerk Rogers read additional closed record hearing procedures.

Mayor Richardson opened the public hearing at 6:53 p.m.

Planning Manager Mike Stevens presented the request submitted by Rick Simon of RPS Planning Consultant, LLC, on behalf of property owner, Robin French. The request proposed rezoning approximately 10.3 acres, located at the southern end of the French Orchard near Dallas Road and the Keene/Kennedy intersection (Benton County Parcel No.1-2098-101-2790-001) from Suburban Agriculture (SAG) to Single Family Residential (R-1-10).

Planning Manager Stevens further stated that the rezone request was necessary to facilitate the development of the proposed French Meadows subdivision, a 31-lot single-family residential project located north of the previously approved Estates at White Bluffs subdivision. He explained that, if approved by the City Council, the rezone would be forwarded to the Hearing Examiner, who would issue a final decision on the associated preliminary plat application.

Neither the applicant nor the individuals who provided testimony during the open-record hearing were present to provide comments.

Mayor Richardson closed the hearing at 6:57 p.m.

COUNCILMEMBER MAIER MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE ORDINANCE NO. 2026-05, REZONING APPROXIMATELY 10.3 ACRES LOCATED AT PARCEL NO. 1-2098-101-2790-001 FROM SUBURBAN AGRICULTURE (SAG) TO SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (R-1-10), FOR FIRST READING. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR RICHARDSON, MAYOR PRO TEM VANDYKE, AND COUNCILMEMBERS HOLTEN, JONES, MAIER, SAMUEL AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Reports and Comments

City Manager

City Manager Amundson provided an overview of the March 24, 2026 City Council workshop meeting agenda items.

City Council

Councilmember Samuel reported on several recent meetings and community events he attended. He highlighted the dedication of the Richland Public Library's outdoor play and reading area, known as The Lawn, noting that the event was well attended. He commended Councilmember Maier for effectively emphasizing how amenities such as The Lawn enhance quality of life, support community engagement, and contribute to the City's ability to attract and retain residents.

Councilmember Samuel also reported on his attendance at the Utility Advisory Committee, where discussions focused on the need to replace and expand aging electrical, water, and sewer infrastructure to accommodate growth and proactively address potential system failures. He noted that the committee and staff are working collaboratively to evaluate these needs and develop informed recommendations.

Additionally, he summarized updates from the Code Enforcement Board, where progress was reported on ongoing enforcement cases, and from the Planning Commission, which continues to focus on the Comprehensive Plan update, particularly issues related to affordable housing, recent state legislation, and potential amendments to the Richland Municipal Code.

In conclusion, Councilmember Samuel shared insights from a Washington State University Tri-Cities panel on critical minerals.

Councilmember Holten reported that she attended the dedication of The Lawn at the Richland Library and expressed pride in the facility, noting its value as an outstanding

community asset. She also shared community pride and connection in attending several basketball games.

In addition, Councilmember Holten stated that she participated in interviews for the Parks & Recreation Commission. She noted that several strong candidates, including youth applicants, were considered. She expressed enthusiasm about the perspectives and energy these individuals would bring to the Commission.

Councilmember Jones had no comments.

Councilmember Whitten welcomed Leo Bowman to the Arts Commission and congratulated Lexi Forbes and Nathan Reynolds on their reappointments to the Arts Commission.

Councilmember Whitten then highlighted the upcoming Tri-Cities Veterans Cemetery Town Hall scheduled for March 25, 2026, and described the project as an important and exciting development for the community. He also extended congratulations to Savannah Thorpe and the Richland High School Boys Basketball team for their achievement as state champions.

Councilmember Maier expressed appreciation to councilmembers who attended the dedication of The Lawn at the Richland Public Library. He described the project as a valuable community asset and commended its successful ribbon-cutting event.

He also congratulated City staff on securing the Tri-Cities Veterans Cemetery in Richland and emphasized its importance as an opportunity for the community to honor and give back to veterans. Councilmember Maier also reported on Ben Franklin Transit ridership data and regional transit activity.

In conclusion, Councilmember Maier shared his experience attending an Iftar gathering at the Islamic Center in a personal capacity. He reflected positively on the welcoming environment and community inclusiveness, noting the opportunity to connect with neighbors and observe a meaningful cultural and religious tradition.

Mayor Pro Tem VanDyke stated that he attended his first Police LEOFF I Pension Board meeting and Richland Chamber of Commerce meeting earlier in the day, and commended City staff for their effective representation at the Chamber meeting, including the distribution of materials related to the Downtown Loop.

Mayor Pro Tem VanDyke also highlighted the strong community support demonstrated during the Richland High School Boys basketball games, with attendance in the Richland section estimated between 4,000 and 5,000 spectators.

Mayor

Mayor Richardson expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to recognize

outstanding youth in the community and noted the significance of celebrating their accomplishments.

Executive Session

20. Executive Session Per RCW 42.30.110(1)(b): Discuss Lease or Purchase of Real Estate if Disclosure Would Increase Price (30 minutes)

At 7:10 p.m., Mayor Richardson announced that Richland City Council would convene in executive session for 30 minutes to discuss lease or purchase of real estate if disclosure would increase price. A brief transition from the Council Chambers to the executive session room occurred, with the executive session beginning at 7:15 p.m.

Individuals present during the executive session were Mayor Richardson, Mayor Pro Tem VanDyke, and Councilmembers Holten, Jones, Maier, Samuel and Whitten. Also present were City Manager Amundson, Deputy City Manager Schiessl, Assistant City Manager Florence, City Attorney Kintzley, and Chief of Police Pilcher.

At 7:45 p.m., Mayor Richardson extended the executive session an additional 30 minutes.

Council exited the executive session at 8:11 p.m. No action was taken.

Adjournment


Mayor Richardson adjourned the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

APPROVED:



Theresa Richardson, Mayor

ATTEST:



Jennifer Rogers, City Clerk

DATE APPROVED: April 7, 2026

DATE PUBLISHED: April 8, 2026