



**MINUTES**  
Utility Advisory Committee Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, March 10, 2026  
Richland City Hall ~ Council Chambers  
625 Swift Boulevard

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

Chair Staven called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

**Welcome and Roll Call**

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

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

**Approval of Agenda**

**COMMITTEE MEMBER PORTER MOVED AND COMMITTEE MEMBER LARKIN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PUBLISHED. THE MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

**Minutes**

1. Approval of the January 13, 2026 Utility Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

**COMMITTEE MEMBER PORTER MOVED AND COMMITTEE MEMBER LARKIN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 13, 2026 MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

**Public Comments**

None.

**Items of Business**

2. Status of Each Utility (10 Minutes)  
Deputy Fire Chief Landon, Public Works Director DAlessandro and Energy Services Director Whitney each provided a brief update regarding their respective utilities.

### 3. Horn Rapids Solar Project Expansion – Assumption of Lease Analysis

At the January 13, 2026, UAC meeting, Energy Services Director Whitney presented a proposed expansion of the Horn Rapids Solar, Storage and Training (HRSST) project, adding approximately 15 MW of solar generation through a new Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Whetstone Power. The existing facility includes solar, battery storage, and a training site through a public-private partnership. Analysis showed it would be more cost-effective for the city to acquire the current lease rather than have Whetstone assume it, resulting in estimated savings of \$137,593 over 20 years. The lease acquisition would depend on successful negotiation and City Council approval of the new PPA.

**COMMITTEE MEMBER PORTER MOVED AND COMMITTEE MEMBER LARKIN SECONDED THE MOTION TO SUPPORT AND RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL AUTHORIZES THE PURCHASE AND ASSUMPTION OF THE HRSST SITE LEASE FROM TUCCI ENERGY SERVICES CONTINGENT UPON COUNCIL'S APPROVAL OF A NEW PPA WITH WHETSTONE POWER. THE MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

### 4. Small Data Server Rate Discussion

Energy Services Director Whitney gave a brief presentation outlining the risks associated with multiple small, high-energy data server loads (under 10 aMW) being served under the City's blended retail rates, which combine lower-cost BPA Tier 1 and higher-cost Tier 2 power. While large loads must self-supply, smaller high-load customers can increase reliance on more expensive Tier 2 energy without fully covering those costs, potentially shifting costs to other ratepayers and distorting pricing signals. The presentation also highlighted risks of load segmentation, where larger users divide demand to qualify for lower rates. To mitigate these issues, staff discussed potential strategies including a High-Density Energy Rate, a Tier 2 cost adder, and load aggregation rules with minimum demand requirements.

**COMMISSION MEMBER PORTER MOVED AND COMMISSION MEMBER LARKIN SECONDED THE MOTION TO SUPPORT FURTHER EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF A DEDICATED HIGH ENERGY DENSITY RATE FOR SMALL DATA SERVER TYPE LOADS LESS THAN 10 AMW.**

### 5. Sewer And Stormwater Rates

Staff reported that several sections of the Richland Municipal Code (RMC) establish sewer and stormwater rates and require periodic updates to reflect current conditions. A current review of wastewater and stormwater revenue requirements indicates that existing rates are insufficient to meet cost recovery needs, particularly considering anticipated capital expenses in the coming years.

Committee discussion followed, with Porter emphasizing concerns about funding capital replacement and cost recovery for wastewater utilities, noting the current lack of sufficient reserves and the need to revisit the policy for funding through rates. Porter stated that

while the City cannot afford to forgo rate increases, a stronger policy is needed to avoid returning to this situation.

**COMMITTEE MEMBER PORTER MOVED AND COMMITTEE MEMBER LARKIN SECONDED THE MOTION TO SUPPORT THE REVISION OF SEWER AND STORMWATER UTILITY RATES AS PROPOSED AND PRESENTED.**

6. City Comprehensive Plan – Utilities and Capital Facilities Element

Senior Planner Ballard and Nicole Stickney, Associate Principle with AHBL, gave an overview of the City’s Comprehensive Plan update, noting the current plan was completed in 2017 and must be updated by December 31, 2026, to meet new state requirements and reflect the community’s 20-year vision. A draft Utilities element, previously reviewed by the Planning Commission, was presented for initial feedback and to determine interest in future discussion. Committee members were also encouraged to visit the project webpage and participate in an online transportation survey open through April 6, 2026.

**Informational Items**

7. 2026Capital Work Plan Update

8. Forward Agenda

- Reliability of all Utilities updates – MAY 2026
- Cost of Service Analysis (COSA) Update – July 2026

**Adjournment**

Chair Staven adjourned the meeting at 4:47 pm.

Prepared by: Carly Kirkpatrick  
Carly Kirkpatrick, Administrative Assistant II

Approved by: Harry Staven  
Harry Staven, Chair

DATE APPROVED: 05/12/2026

DATE PUBLISHED: May 14, 2026