



MINUTES

Richland City Council Regular Meeting
Tuesday, May 5, 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, Development Services Director Rizzitiello, Energy Services Director Whitney, Finance Director Allen, Fire Chief Aust, Human Resources Director Paulsen, Information Technology Director Goodhue, Parks & Public Facilities Director Waite, Chief of Police Pilcher, 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

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

Presentations

1. Hanford High School Cheer Team 2026 USA Spirit National Champions Proclamation

The Hanford High School Varsity Cheer Team performed a cheer for Council and members of the audience.

At Mayor Richardson's invitation, Coach Mayer addressed Council, stating that this was the fifth national title in Hanford High School history, and the 16th state title, along with one world title. She highlighted the team's year-round dedication, resilience in overcoming adversity, and learning life skills that the program instills in its athletes.

Mayor Richardson presented a proclamation recognizing the Hanford High School Cheer Team for winning the 2026 USA Spirit National Championship in the Game Day Fight Song Medium category.

2. New Hires and Retirements

A video featuring three (3) new hires for the month of April was played for the audience.

- Katie Eli – Customer Service Representative, Customer Service Division
- Guillermo Correa Plata – Utility Craftworker, Water Maintenance Division
- Samantha Sainz Rahmig – Customer Service Associate, Solid Waste Disposal Division

Fire Battalion Chief Brenda Rodgers was recognized for her retirement after 34 years of service with the City.

Public Hearing

None.

Public Comments

City Clerk Rogers read the Public Comments script.

The following individuals provided comments:

- Jonny Epperson, a resident of Richland, spoke in opposition to the Downtown Loop project, expressing concern that the impact of increased vehicle speeds will negatively impact nearby businesses and reduce pass-through traffic that might otherwise stop in the area. He also advocated for alternative projects rather than funding the project.
- Jamie Staruk, a resident of Richland, requested greater transparency regarding the proposed data center project in Richland. She raised concerns about water and electricity consumption, infrastructure upgrade costs, and potential environmental and health impacts. She requested that long-term environmental and health impact assessments be conducted by independent third parties before the project proceeds.
- Edward Munoz, a resident of Richland, commented on the ongoing concerns regarding a property located on Pullen Street, describing it as a fire hazard, health hazard, and nuisance that has expanded onto neighboring properties, the sidewalk,

and the roadway, and urged the City to take expedited action to address the condition of the property.

Consent Calendar

City Clerk Rogers read the Consent Calendar.

Minutes

3. Approval of the April 21, 2026 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes and April 28, 2026 City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes

Ordinances - First Reading

None.

Ordinances - Second Reading & Passage

4. Ordinance No. 2026-010, Amending Chapter 2.04 of the Richland Municipal Code related to the Administrative Code

Resolutions – Adoption

5. Resolution No. 2026-62, Authorizing a First Amendment to the Infrastructure Agreement with Tapteal Properties LLC related to Stormwater Conveyance
6. Resolution No. 2026-63, Authorizing a Consultant Agreement with Control Systems NWLLC for the Water and Wastewater Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) System Replacement Project
7. Resolution No. 2026-64, Authorizing Change Order No. 5 to Contract No. 85-25 with Ellison Earthworks, LLC for the South George Washington Way Intersection Improvements Project
8. Resolution No. 2026-65, Authorizing a Purchase and Sale Agreement for 1300 George Washington Way in Support of the Downtown Connectivity Improvements Project
9. Resolution No. 2026-66, Authorizing a Consultant Agreement with Control Systems NW LLC for On-Call SCADA System Services and Operational Technology Cybersecurity Support
10. Resolution No. 2026-67, Awarding a Construction Contract to Granite Construction Company for the 2025 Overlay Project

Items – Approval

11. Appointment to the Board of Adjustment: Ken Buechler (Position No. 5, effective upon appointment through March 31, 2031).

Expenditures – Approval

None.

COUNCILMEMBER HOLTEN MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER MAIER 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

12. Richland Police Department Annual Report

Chief of Police Pilcher presented the Richland Police Department (RPD) Annual Report, which included an overview of RPD's activities in 2025 and current 2026 initiatives. The presentation highlighted departmental staffing, calls for service volume, use of force statistics, crime trends, traffic and code enforcement activity, and the work of specialized units.

Chief Pilcher also provided updates on several 2026 priorities, including the upcoming Drone as First Responder program, officer recruitment and academy graduations, a new canine officer nearing certification, and RPD's pending Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) accreditation.

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

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

13. Richland Fire & Emergency Services Annual Report

Fire Chief Aust presented the Richland Fire & Emergency Services (RFES) Annual Report, describing 2025 as a year of intentional internal investment. The report covered organizational sustainability, service delivery performance, life safety outcomes, community risk reduction efforts, and employee development. Fire Chief Aust highlighted that RFES directly saved 198 lives in 2025 and received the American Heart Association Mission Lifeline Gold Award.

During the presentation, Fire Chief Aust also highlighted the Resource Navigator program and its continued impact.

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

Following the presentation, Council engaged in a question-and-answer session with Fire Chief Aust.

Reports and Comments

City Manager

City Manager Amundson acknowledged that the week of May 5-8, 2026 is Public Service Recognition Week. He expressed appreciation for the more than 600 employees across 11 departments who serve the City of Richland daily, noting the presentations from the Richland Police Department and the Richland Fire & Emergency Services Department as reflective of the broader dedication across all City departments.

City Council

Councilmember Maier reported that he attended the Richland Public Library's 75th anniversary celebration on May 1, 2025. He described the event as well-organized and well-attended by community members throughout the region.

Councilmember Samuel reported on the following activities:

- Attended an open house and tour of Mirror Ministries' new facility in Kennewick. The non-profit organization helps underage girls who are trying to escape or recover from sex trafficking.
- Attended the Richland Public Library's 75th anniversary celebration, noting the library has evolved into a community connecting hub rather than a traditional academic resource.
- Attended the volunteer kickoff event for the Ironman 70.3 Washington Tri-Cities event, scheduled for September 19-21, 2026, in Richland for the third consecutive year. The event relies on approximately 1,500 volunteers. The Richland event has been rated among the top Ironman events nationally and internationally, largely due to volunteer enthusiasm and community support.

Councilmember Holten reported on the following:

- Rat sightings have been reported in at least three (3) neighborhoods and requested information on contributing factors.

- Attended a Visit-Tri Cities meeting, noting the addition of helicopter tours to the region's tourism offerings, with routes covering the B Reactor area and White Bluffs.
- Reported that flights at the Tri-Cities Airport have decreased slightly.
- Noted that Richland's hotel-motel tax revenue is holding steady, supported in part by the hotels at Columbia Point near the marina.
- Attended a Tri-Cities Regional Chamber of Commerce legislative luncheon event.
- Visited the Hanford Reach Solar System Project, a to-scale representation of the solar system with planetary markers stretching from the REACH Museum to various points throughout Richland and Kennewick.
- Attended a Chamna Natural Preserve event, which celebrated removal of the causeway to Bateman Island. She noted the event was well attended with representatives from Washington D.C., the Army Corps of Engineers, fisheries, and irrigation agencies.
- Noted a lack of sufficient garbage receptacles at Leslie Groves Park and reminded citizens that motorized vehicles are not permitted on that side of the island.
- Noted upcoming community events, including the Hanford Community Town Hall meeting, the Richland Police Department Community Day Open House, and a National Travel and Tourism Open House.

Councilmember Jones raised concerns regarding the City's permitting portal, EnerGov, which was updated in 2024. She referenced feedback from constituents about reduced ability to communicate directly with City staff, slower response times on applications, and limited scheduling flexibility for inspections.

City Manager Amundson replied that the current system represents a significant improvement over its predecessor by offering broader communication capabilities and permit search functionality. He acknowledged that specific inspection time windows are not always feasible given workload demands, and invited Councilmember Jones to share specific cases for follow-up.

Councilmember Whitten reported attending the Hanford Reach Solar System Project event and highlighted the scale of the installation. He noted that Jupiter's markers are located on opposite sides of the blue bridge and at Howard Amon Park. He noted that additional markers are planned for locations between Richland and Kennewick.

Mayor Pro Tem VanDyke welcomed Chad Goodhue to his first City Council meeting in his new role as the City's first Information Technology Director.

Mayor

Mayor Richardson reported on her attendance at the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA) Conference, where discussions focused on nuclear legacy waste, new nuclear opportunities, data center growth, and database development. She noted that several nuclear-related entities already have a presence in Richland, and that the conference provided valuable insights and networking opportunities. She noted the next ECA conference is scheduled for September in Washington, D.C., and that expenses are covered by the U.S. Department of Energy.

In conclusion, Mayor Richardson congratulated Richland citizens Art and Leslie Kelley on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Adjournment

Mayor Richardson adjourned the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

APPROVED:



Theresa Richardson, Mayor

ATTEST:



Lynne Follett, Acting Deputy City Clerk

DATE APPROVED: May 19, 2026

DATE PUBLISHED: May 20, 2026