



Minutes

City Council Regular Meeting

Tuesday, June 16, 2026

Richland City Hall ~ Council Chambers

625 Swift Boulevard

City Council Regular Meeting - 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tem VanDyke Called the Council meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Welcome and Roll Call

Mayor Pro Tem VanDyke welcomed those in the audience and expressed appreciation for their attendance.

Attendance:	Mayor Richardson	Absent
	Mayor Pro Tem VanDyke	Present
	Councilmember Holten	Present
	Councilmember Jones	Present
	Councilmember Maier	Absent
	Councilmember Samuel	Present
	Councilmember Whitten	Present

Also present were 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 and Public Facilities Director Waite, Human Resources Director Paulsen, Public Works Director D'Alessandro, Development Services Director Rizzitiello, Information Technology Director Goodhue, and City Clerk Rogers.

COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER SAMUEL SECONDED THE MOTION TO EXCUSE MAYOR RICHARDSON AND COUNCILMEMBER MAIER. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Approval of Agenda

COUNCILMEMBER JONES MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER HOLTEN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PUBLISHED. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Presentations

1. Introduction of K-9 Cody and Officer Matthew Smith

Chief of Police Pilcher introduced Officer Smith and his canine partner, K-9 Cody. He noted the team has logged more than 400 hours of training together as it prepares to certify as a K-9 team.

2. Introduction of Basic Law Enforcement Academy Class No. 937 Graduates: Jay Aoyama, Darius Bunch, Leonardo Gallardo, Mason Martinell, Clayton Rice, and Exceptional Entry: Michael Hayter, and Lateral Cassie Martinez

Chief of Police Pilcher introduced recently hired officers, several of whom graduated from Basic Law Enforcement Academy Class No. 937 and provided a short background on each officer.

Christine Ortega, President of the Richland Police Foundation, welcomed the new officers on behalf of the Foundation and announced that each would receive a welcome basket of items donated by local businesses and organizations as a token of appreciation.

3. America 250 Month Proclamation

A proclamation declaring July as *America 250 Month* in the City of Richland was read by Mayor Pro Tem VanDyke and presented to Wendy Todd, representing the Columbia River Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR).

Public Hearing

City Clerk Rogers read the public hearing and public comments procedures.

4. Proposed Surplus and Authorizing Relinquishment of a Storm Sewer Easement lying within 608 Williams Boulevard, Resolution No. 2026-83

Mayor Pro Tem VanDyke opened and closed the public hearing at 6:17 p.m. No comments were offered.

Public Comments

The following individuals provided public comments:

- Randy Slovic, a Richland resident, reviewed Atlas Agro's financial and project history, questioning the company's reliance on subsidies and outside funding, its lack of completed projects, and the source of financing for the proposed fertilizer plant and data center.
- Connie Muñoz, a Richland resident, spoke in opposition to Resolution No. 2026-84, raising concerns regarding the project's 350-megawatt electrical demand, water use, Atlas Agro's lack of completed projects, limited permanent job creation, potential decommissioning costs, and possible financial impacts to Richland taxpayers.

- Laila Krowiak, a Richland resident, urged Council to slow the pace of the project to allow for quality control and environmental impact regulations to be established, while considering the quality of life of Richland residents.
- Natalie Williams, a Pasco resident, expressed concerns about water pollution related to the data center project.
- Jamie Stayrook, a Richland resident, expressed concerns regarding the lack of long-term health impact studies for data centers, potential water consumption and water safety impacts.
- Heather Sheldon, a Richland resident, requested that Council deny data center applications or, at minimum, consider a one-year moratorium on data center building and planning. She cited concerns regarding Atlas Agro's lack of completed projects, and potential environmental, economic, and health impacts.
- Paul Fraser, a Richland resident, spoke in opposition to Resolution No. 2026-84, citing concerns regarding potential utility rate increases, limited job creation, increased cost of living, environmental impacts, and water use.
- Carrie Williams, a Richland resident, spoke in opposition to the construction of a data center and fertilizer plant. She expressed concern that the projects would create few jobs while presenting long-term environmental risks to residents, children, and future generations.
- Donna Davis, a Richland resident, urged Council to consider the potential long-term impacts of the proposal on children, grandchildren, and future generations.
- Angie Merlot, a Richland resident, expressed concern that the project would negatively affect residential property values.
- Lindsey Schiffel, a West Richland resident, spoke in opposition and urged Council to consider the region's Hanford legacy and the potential health and safety impacts on future generations.
- Sheldon Miller, a Richland resident, expressed opposition to the proposed data center, particularly if it involved artificial intelligence, citing concerns regarding energy inefficiency and questioning the need for additional data center capacity.
- Kayla Madsen, a Richland resident, expressed concern regarding potential impacts to public health, safety, clean water, air quality, agriculture, property values, and long-term community well-being.
- Adrianna Davis, a Richland resident, expressed concern regarding water use and impacts to the local water table, citing existing regional water challenges and the importance of protecting surrounding agricultural communities.

- Chadwick Williams, a Pasco resident, spoke in opposition and expressed concern regarding water resources, long-term health, financial impacts, and whether the agreement would benefit residents.
- Marie Noorani, a Richland resident, questioned the City's anticipated use of proceeds from the pending land sale for a new police station and expressed concern that financial considerations may be influencing support for the project.
- Sean O'Brien, a Kennewick resident and Executive Director of the Tri-Cities Energy Forward Alliance, spoke in support of Resolution No. 2026-84. He stated that the resolution authorizes an agreement with Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) for transmission infrastructure rather than approval of a data center. The anticipated transmission line would support economic development and help provide power for the community's long-term growth.

He added that the Tri-Cities Energy Forward Alliance supports the Atlas Agro fertilizer plant as an innovative project to provide clean fertilizer for farmers, and encouraged residents to rely on local scientific expertise, including Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL), when evaluating potential impacts on future growth.

Consent Calendar

City Clerk Rogers read the consent calendar.

Minutes

5. Approval of the June 2, 2026 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Ordinances - First Reading

None.

Ordinances - Second Reading & Passage

6. Ordinance No. 2026-13, Rezoning Approximately 8.38 Unplatted Acres identified as Parcel No. 1-3498-201-0595-008 from Agriculture (AG) to Medium Density Residential Small Lots (R- 2S) and Limited Business (C-LB)
7. Ordinance No. 2026-14, Amending the 2026 Budget to provide for Additional Appropriations in Various City Funds

Resolutions – Adoption

8. Resolution No. 2026-79, Accepting Surface Transportation Block Grant Funds for the Gage Boulevard and Leslie Road Intersection Improvements Project and Transportation Alternative Program Grant Funds for the Systemic Pedestrian

Crossing Safety Improvements Phase 2 Project

9. Resolution No. 2026-80, Authorizing a Services Agreement with InfoSend, Inc. for Utility Bill Print and Mail Services
10. Resolution No. 2026-81, Awarding Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Funds to the Downtown Business Improvement District for Improvements to 710 The Parkway
11. Resolution No. 2026-82, Authorizing a Grant Application to the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office for Improvements at the Horn Rapids Athletic Complex
12. Resolution No. 2026-85, Authorizing an Interagency Agreement with the Washington State Department of Ecology for Waste Tire Removal Funds
13. Resolution No. 2026-86, Authorizing Addendum No. 3 to the 2017 Metro Interlocal Agreement

Items – Approval

None.

Expenditures – Approval

14. Expenditures from May 1, 2026 to May 31, 2026 for \$41,007,129.21 including Travel Check Nos. 21044-21064, Accounts Payable Check Nos. 346660-347620, Accounts Payable Wire Nos. 11015-11052, Payroll Wires & ACH Nos. 15505-15566, Payroll Check Nos. 237690- 237693, and Payroll Direct Deposit Nos. 261260022198-261480023838

COUNCILMEMBER SAMUEL MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER JONES SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR PRO TEM VANDYKE AND COUNCILMEMBERS HOLTEN, JONES, SAMUEL AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Items of Business

15. Ordinance No. 2026-15, Amending Chapter 9.12 of the Richland Municipal Code related to Miscellaneous Crimes to add RMC 9.12.140: Failure to Supervise a Child Unlawful (Passage)

Councilmember Whitten stated that while he fully supported adoption of the ordinance, he reiterated that he would like the ordinance to be amended to clarify or strike the term “unreasonable” from subsection 2.

Chief of Police Pilcher replied that the reasonableness standard is commonly used throughout law enforcement, and cited the use of the term “reasonable” in state laws related to child neglect, use-of-force standards, and vehicular pursuits. He added that the legal system frequently evaluates the reasonableness of an individual’s conduct based on the circumstances, including the actions of parents in child neglect cases under Washington law, and that officers are required to consider and articulate the specific context and circumstances supporting their actions when applying the reasonableness standard to make a charging decision, eliminating the opportunity for enforcement based on vagueness.

COUNCILMEMBER JONES MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER HOLTEN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE ORDINANCE NO. 2026-15, AMENDING CHAPTER 9.12 OF THE RICHLAND MUNICIPAL CODE RELATED TO MISCELLANEOUS CRIMES TO ADD RMC 9.12.140: FAILURE TO SUPERVISE A CHILD UNLAWFUL. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR PRO TEM VANDYKE AND COUNCILMEMBERS HOLTEN, JONES, SAMUEL AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

16. Resolution No. 2026-83, Declaring Surplus and Authorizing Relinquishment of a Stormwater Easement lying within 608 Williams Boulevard

Public Works Director D’Alessandro presented the proposed relinquishment of a stormwater easement, and stated that earlier this year, Council approved a resolution authorizing a stormwater reimbursement agreement with HAPO Community Credit Union to relocate an existing stormwater line out from under the new facility’s footprint.

HAPO has installed the relocated line, which has been accepted by the City. HAPO has also committed to granting an easement for the relocated line to the City simultaneous with relinquishment of the existing easement. Staff recommended that Council declare the original stormwater easement surplus and authorize its relinquishment.

COUNCILMEMBER HOLTEN MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER WHITTEN SECONDED THE MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2026-83, DECLARING SURPLUS AND AUTHORIZING RELINQUISHMENT OF A STORMWATER EASEMENT LYING WITHIN 608 WILLIAMS BOULEVARD. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR PRO TEM VANDYKE AND COUNCILMEMBERS HOLTEN, JONES, SAMUEL AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

17. Resolution No. 2026-84, Authorizing a Reimbursable Agreement with the Bonneville Power Administration for Engineering and Procurement Activities associated with Line and Load Interconnection Request No. L0534 (Atlas Agro), and a BPA Second Cost Allocation Agreement with Atlas Agro Data Center, LLC.

Energy Services Director Whitney presented Resolution No. 2026-84, which authorizes a reimbursable agreement with the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) for engineering and procurement of Long-Lead Time Materials (LLTM) related to Line and Load Interconnection Request No. L0534 for Atlas Agro. He explained that the agreement

allows the City and BPA to move forward with the necessary preliminary work and establishes a cost allocation agreement with Atlas Agro Data Center, LLC.

Energy Services Director Whitney explained that the two agreements total approximately \$51.3 million and are structured to avoid financial risk to the City. Payments would be made directly to BPA by Atlas Agro as prepaid progress payments, and if payments are not made, work would not proceed. He also noted that the equipment involved has a significant lead time of approximately 200 weeks, meaning materials ordered now would not arrive until near the end of 2029.

Energy Services Director Whitney further explained that several future agreements and approvals would still be required before construction or development could occur. He noted that large-load customers in the Northwest Advanced Clean Energy Park would be required to secure their own power contracts, and that power could not come from BPA or the federal hydropower system.

He emphasized that execution of the proposed agreements does not authorize the construction of the transmission infrastructure, nor does it authorize future permitting and construction for any data center or fertilizer manufacturing facility as part of the transmission interconnection process.

Energy Services Director Whitney also explained that, under the 1980 Northwest Power Act, new large single loads (those greater than 10 average megawatts) cannot be served by the federal power system, so each customer would be required to secure its own power supply, and that power could not come from BPA or the federal hydropower system. That requirement, together with the state's carbon-free power requirements, helps insulate existing City ratepayers from cost increases.

Following the presentation, Council engaged in a question-and-answer session with Energy Services Director Whitney.

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

COUNCILMEMBER JONES MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER SAMUEL SECONDED THE MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2026-84, AUTHORIZING A REIMBURSABLE AGREEMENT WITH THE BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION FOR ENGINEERING AND PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH LINE AND LOAD INTERCONNECTION REQUEST NO. L0534 (ATLAS AGRO), AND A BPA SECOND COST ALLOCATION AGREEMENT WITH ATLAS AGRO DATA CENTER, LLC. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR PRO TEM VANDYKE AND COUNCILMEMBERS HOLTEN, JONES, SAMUEL AND WHITTEN. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Reports and Comments

City Manager

Deputy City Manager Schiessl reported that the June 23, 2026 City Council workshop meeting will be canceled for lack of agenda items. September 29, 2026 will be held as a placeholder workshop date, if needed.

Next, Deputy City Manager Schiessl presented a \$1,000 sponsorship opportunity from the REACH Museum for its free Community Days celebrating America 250.

City Council

Councilmember Samuel highlighted upcoming community events and activities, including the 75th anniversary of the Richland Public Library's Summer Reading Challenge, the reopening of George Prout Pool, the Richland Farmers Market, Cool Desert Nights, the Party in the USA celebration, and the Richland Regatta.

He also recognized the memorial service for longtime Port of Benton Commissioner, Bob Larson, noted that Parks & Recreation is preparing its six-year plan to be presented to City Council in late July, announced a vacancy on the Parks & Recreation Commission, and mentioned the upcoming Association of Washington Cities (AWC) Conference to be held in Spokane the following week.

Councilmember Holten reported on attending a memorial service for longtime Benton County Commissioner, Bob Larsen. She thanked Parks & Recreation staff for organizing community activities and events, including Cool Desert Nights. She also reported that the Parks & Recreation Commission continues to work on its six-year plan, shared constituent appreciation for city maintenance at Jason Lee Park, and commended utilities staff for their prompt response to a recent water main issue. In closing, Councilmember Holten shared that she will be attending the AWC Conference.

Councilmember Jones reminded everyone to be extra careful during this time of high fire danger. She encouraged community members to do their part to reduce wildfires.

Councilmember Whitten congratulated and welcomed all new police officers, recognized the nation's 250th anniversary, encouraged fire safety during the 4th of July/America 250 celebrations, and announced that the Arts Commission will be hosting an art tour during its workshop meeting the following day.

Mayor Pro Tem VanDyke thanked residents for their participation and councilmembers for their service as liaisons to their assigned boards, commissions, and committees.

Mayor

Mayor Richardson was absent.

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Adjournment

Mayor Pro Tem VanDyke adjourned the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

APPROVED



Theresa Richardson, Mayor

ATTEST



Jennifer Rogers, City Clerk

DATE APPROVED: July 7, 2026

DATE PUBLISHED: July 8, 2026