



MINUTES

RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, August 17, 2021

Richland City Hall ~ 625 Swift Boulevard

Zoom - Public Telephone Access: (206) 337-9723 or (253) 215-8782

Meeting ID No. 505 625 7380

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

Mayor Lukson called the Council meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was a hybrid of in-person at Richland City Hall Council Chambers and online attendance via Zoom.

Welcome and Roll Call

Mayor Lukson welcomed those in the audience and those attending remotely.

Remote Attendance: Mayor Lukson, Mayor Pro Tem Kent, and Councilmembers Alvarez, Boring, Christensen, Lemley and Thompson were present.

In-Person Attendance: Interim City Manager Amundson, City Attorney Kintzley, Chief of Police Bruce, Fire Chief Huntington, Transportation & Development Manager D'Alessandro and City Clerk Rogers.

Also remotely present: Public Works Director Rogalsky, Development Services Director Jensen, Energy Services Director Whitney, Parks & Public Facilities Director Schiessl and Finance Director Allen.

Pledge of Allegiance

Councilmember Boring led the Council and audience in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

COUNCILMEMBER THOMPSON MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER BORING SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PUBLISHED. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Presentations

1 Update on 2021 Law Enforcement Legislative Changes

Chief Bruce provided a high-level overview of the 2021 legislative changes affecting law enforcement along with their possible impacts on policing in the City of Richland. More details are available in Chief Bruce's PowerPoint presentation.

Council requested bi-weekly Police and Fire reports providing comparative data on criminal-related response calls and outcomes. Council also requested feedback reflecting the community and RPD employee response to the new legislative changes.

Chief Bruce engaged in a question and answer session with Council regarding the projected impacts the legislative changes will have on RPD and the community.

2 COVID-19 Update

Interim City Manager Amundson provided an update on the COVID-19 pandemic. Information included the rising number of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and events impacted by the pandemic.

To assist in mitigating the spread of the Delta variant, face coverings are once again mandated for all city staff. The Benton-Franklin Health District (BFHD) held a press event in which notice of potential cancellations for certain large community events was given.

Mayor Lukson added that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kadlec requested the City's assistance in implementing methods to mitigate the increasing number of COVID-19 positive cases.

Parks & Public Facilities Director Schiessl recited a number of private and city events scheduled over the next several months. Each event should be considered independently with organizers cancelling the event at their discretion. Dr. Amy Person with the BFHD requested the City voluntarily reduce activity capacities.

Council provided comments regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Mayor Lukson stated that hospitals are over-extended, and patients who require care for disease or illness other than COVID-19 are being diverted to other health care facilities for treatment.

Mayor Lukson introduced the possibility of offering vaccination incentives to city employees and sought feedback from Council. Council discussed the proposal at length and provided perspectives regarding the value and benefit of providing incentives for vaccination. With the majority of councilmembers in support of proposing vaccination incentives for city employees, Mayor Lukson directed Interim City Manager Amundson to explore potential incentives for presentation at a future meeting for Council review.

Mayor Pro Tem Kent expressed an interest in receiving comparative health and wellness program information from neighboring jurisdictions.

Mayor Lukson asked staff to collaborate with Dr. Person to obtain additional information and guidance to assist with mitigating the rising number of positive COVID-19 cases.

Public Hearing

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

3. Proposed Amendment to the 2022-2027 Transportation Improvement Program, Resolution No.102-21.

Transportation & Development Manager D'Alessandro provided an overview of the

proposed amendment to the 2022-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as detailed in Resolution No. 102-21.

Mayor Lukson opened and closed the public hearing at 7:13 p.m. No public testimony was offered.

Public Comments

The following individuals provided in-person comments during the meeting:

- Ronald Omberg - 2321 Davison, Richland, WA: Mr. Omberg stated his support for the IBEW line crews and encouraged City Council to show line crew employees courtesy and consideration during labor negotiations.
- Pauline Santos - 1488 Oxford Avenue, Richland, WA: Ms. Santos voiced her support for the IBEW line crews who she believes are understaffed, over-worked and underpaid. She encouraged City Council to provide a comparable wage and benefits during labor negotiations. Ms. Santos spoke against hiring contractors which could potentially lead to higher utility rates.
- Aoife Santos - 1488 Oxford Avenue, Richland, WA: Ms. Santos stated her support for the IBEW line crews and encouraged City Council to provide a comparable wage during labor negotiations. Ms. Santos spoke against hiring contractors which could potentially lead to higher utility rates.
- Darrell Fisher - 229 Saint Street, Richland, WA: Mr. Fisher stated his support for the IBEW line crews and encouraged City Council to provide a comparable wage during labor negotiations.
- Shelby Covert - 195 Bitterroot Drive, Richland, WA: Ms. Covert expressed gratitude to the Richland line crew for working overtime while understaffed. She then expressed disappointment with Council for attending the meeting remotely while members of the public attended in-person. Ms. Covert thanked Council for discussing the importance of mitigating the rising number of COVID-19 positive cases.
- Dwayne Anderson - 200 Barth Avenue, Richland, WA: Mr. Anderson expressed disappointment with Council for not communicating their decision to meet remotely to the public.
- Maureen Anderson - 202 Barth Avenue, Richland, WA: Ms. Anderson stated her support for the IBEW line crews and encouraged City Council to provide a comparable wage during labor negotiations.
- Colleen Somes - 562 Sedgwick Place, Richland, WA: Ms. Somes stated her support for the IBEW line crews and encouraged City Council to provide a comparable wage during labor negotiations.

- David Johnson - 1207 Stevens Drive, Richland, WA: Mr. Johnson stated his support for the Richland line crews and encouraged City Council to provide a comparable wage during labor negotiations.
- Tiffany Johnson - 1207 Stevens Drive, Richland, WA: Ms. Johnson stated her support for the IBEW line crews and encouraged City Council to provide a comparable wage during labor negotiations.
- Mitchell Malloy - 703 Catskill Street, Richland, WA: Mr. Malloy stated his support for the IBEW line crews and encouraged City Council to provide a comparable wage during labor negotiations.
- Scott Howland - 575 Columbia Point Drive Avenue, Richland, WA: Mr. Howland stated his support for the IBEW line crews and encouraged City Council to provide a comparable wage during labor negotiations.
- Corey G. Miller - 1208 Benham Street, Richland, WA: Mr. Miller stated his support for the IBEW line crews and encouraged City Council to provide a comparable wage during labor negotiations.
- Heidi Pace - 2601 Jason Loop, Richland, WA: Ms. Pace stated her support for the IBEW line crews and encouraged City Council to provide a comparable wage during labor negotiations.
- Steven Maiuri - 1076 Tomich Avenue, Richland, WA: Mr. Maiuri stated his support for the IBEW line crews and encouraged City Council to provide a comparable wage during labor negotiations.
- Ginger Wireman - 2435 Michael Avenue, Richland, WA: Ms. Wireman provided comments on the Paradise fire, the sale of city property on Jadwin Avenue, and the proposed vacation of a portion of Davenport Street. Lastly, Ms. Wireman responded to comments made by Councilmember Thompson regarding COVID-19 hospitalization rates.
- Rob Marlow - 3802 Emerald Street, Richland, WA: Mr. Marlow expressed disappointment over comments made by Councilmember Thompson regarding demographics most affected by the pandemic and the absence of opposition from fellow Councilmembers for his comments.

There were no telephonic comments for this meeting.

Councilmember Alvarez provided clarification concerning his inquiries during a previous City Council meeting. Councilmember Alvarez explained that he did not hear Mayor Lukson's statements.

Councilmember Thompson supported the comments he made during the COVID-19

update, citing a publication in the New York Times as his source of information.

Consent Calendar

City Clerk Rogers read the Consent Calendar.

COUNCILMEMBER LEMLEY MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER BORING SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR AS PUBLISHED. THOSE IN FAVOR: MAYOR LUKSON, MAYOR PRO TEM KENT, AND COUNCILMEMBERS ALVAREZ, BORING, CHRISTENSEN AND LEMLEY. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Minutes

4. Approval of the August 2, 2021 Richland City Council Special Meeting Minutes and the August 9, 2021 Richland City Council Special Meeting Minutes

Ordinances - First Reading

None.

Ordinances - Second Reading & Passage

5. Ordinance No. 19-21, Amending Richland Municipal Code Title 3: Finance to add a new Chapter 3.09 entitled Donations and Acceptance of Interests in Real Property
6. Ordinance No. 20-21, Amending the 2021 Budget in the General Fund, Equipment Replacement Fund, Community Development Block Grant Fund, Solid Waste Fund, Streets Capital Fund and Capital Improvements Fund

Resolutions – Adoption

7. Resolution No. 99-21, Authorizing a Purchase and Sale Agreement with Brad Tapani for 8.09 Acres located at 2401 Logan Street
8. Resolution No. 100-21, Setting a Public Hearing Date for the Proposed Vacation of a Portion of Davenport Street
9. Resolution No. 101-21, Establishing Pricing for City-Owned Properties in the Horn Rapids Business Center, Horn Rapids Commercial Plaza and Horn Rapids Industrial Park
10. Resolution No. 102-21, Amending the 2022-2027 Transportation Improvement Program to reflect new grant funding
11. Resolution No. 103-21, Approving the Final Plat of West Village – Phase 6

12. Resolution No. 104-21, Authorizing a Fourth Amendment to the Gas Purchase and Site License Agreement for the Horn Rapids Landfill Gas-to-Fuel Project

Items - Approval

13. Appointment to the Tri-City Regional Hotel-Motel Commission: Wendy Higgins

Expenditures - Approval

Expenditures from July 1, 2021 to July 30, 2021 for \$24,165,447.82 including Travel Check Nos. 19999-20000, Accounts Payable Check Nos. 291332-292121, Accounts Payable Wire Nos. 8637-8680, Payroll Wires & ACH Nos. 12188-12234, Payroll Direct Deposit & Check Nos. 180938-182100 and Pension Check Nos. 5888-5914.

Items of Business

1. Use of Pre-Meetings (Discussion)

Councilmember Christensen provided reasoning for his interest in resuming pre-council workshop meetings. Council discussed meeting location, public attendance, transparency, time restraints and the overall effectiveness of pre-meeting workshops.

During Council's discussion, City Attorney Kintzley was called upon to provide a synopsis of the events leading to the discontinuance of pre-meeting workshops. City Attorney Kintzley also explained the procedural distinctions between workshops and regular council meetings.

City Attorney Kintzley stated that pre-meeting workshops may be held so long as the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) are met. Further, while Proclamation 20-28 is in effect, the City must continue to provide a remote meeting option in addition to the in-person component.

COUNCILMEMBER CHRISTENSEN MOVED TO REINSTITUTE PRE-MEETING WORKSHOPS AT A TIME WHEN IN-PERSON MEETINGS RESUME AND A VIRTUAL COMPONENT FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS IS NO LONGER REQUIRED. THE MOTION FAILED FOR LACK OF A SECOND.

Councilmember Christensen stated his intent for having this item on the agenda was to determine if there was sufficient interest from Council entertain the practice of resuming pre-meeting workshops. Council engaged in further discussion on this topic. Mayor Lukson encouraged councilmembers to contact him or Interim City Manager Amundson to propose potential workshop or agenda items.

2. Prohibition of Local Income Tax (Discussion)

Councilmember Christensen provided reasoning for his interest in adopting a resolution prohibiting a local income tax.

At Mayor Lukson's request, City Attorney Kintzley outlined the distinctions between a resolution and an ordinance. Councilmember Christensen listed a number of cities that have amended their charters opposing a local income tax, and expressed an interest in following suit with an amendment to the Richland City Charter reflecting the same.

Council discussed this topic at length while providing supporting or opposing views.

Mayor Lukson inquired about the procedural process for amending the Richland City Charter. City Attorney Kintzley replied that Council will be given information and recommendations for proposed charter amendments to be placed on the November 2022 Election ballot. City Attorney Kintzley further stated that if Council desires to include the prohibition of a local income tax as a charter amendment, it can be facilitated in 2022 along with other proposed charter amendments. Council engaged in additional discussion on the topic.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMPSON MOVED AND COUNCILMEMBER CHRISTENSEN SECONDED THE MOTION TO ADOPT A RESOLUTION PROHIBITING A LOCAL INCOME TAX IN THE CITY OF RICHLAND. THE MOTION PASSED 6-1. COUNCILMEMBER BORING OPPOSED.

Reports and Comments

City Manager

Interim City Manager Amundson recommended that Council defer holding a closed session on pending labor negotiations until August 24, 2021 after the City Council workshop meeting. Council concurred.

City Council

Councilmember Christensen encouraged everyone to take care of themselves and their families. He then provided comparative observations between the Spanish Flu pandemic and the variant strain that is following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councilmember Boring thanked Wendy Higgins for her willingness to serve on the Tri-City Regional Hotel-Motel Commission.

Councilmember Thompson responded to public comments regarding the Richland IBEW labor negotiations. Councilmember Thompson also commented on the COVID-19 pandemic, published studies, implications of the imposed mandates, and the treatment of individuals who have elected to not vaccinate.

Councilmember Alvarez thanked Mayor Lukson for allowing him the opportunity to provide statements during the public comment portion of the meeting.

Councilmember Lemley responded to the public comments regarding Council's decision to attend the meeting remotely. Councilmember Lemley provided comments regarding

the Richland IBEW labor negotiations, false accusations, and the labor negotiation process.

Mayor Pro Tem Kent thanked each councilmember for providing diverse opinions during Council discussions. Mayor Pro Tem Kent thanked the public for their comments regarding the IBEW labor negotiations, and reminded them that labor negotiations are handled exclusively by the respective labor negotiators. Lastly, Mayor Pro Tem Kent agreed with Councilmember Lemley's statements regarding Council's decision to attend the meeting remotely.

Mayor

Mayor Lukson spoke in favor of removing the in-person component of the City's public meetings and resuming only virtual meetings until the number of positive cases decline. Mayor Lukson addressed Council's decision to meet remotely, adding that perhaps Council would have decided differently had they been able to anticipate that a large number of in-person attendees would be present.

Mayor Lukson provided comments regarding the IBEW labor negotiations and expressed his disappointment in the inaccurate information circulated. Lastly, Mayor Lukson stated that there is a need for the City to provide accurate information to the public reflecting the City's position on the negotiations.

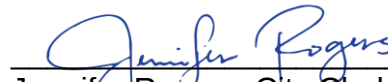
Adjournment

Mayor Lukson adjourned the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

APPROVED:


Ryan Lukson, Mayor

ATTEST:


Jennifer Rogers, City Clerk

DATE APPROVED: September 7, 2021

DATE PUBLISHED: September 8, 2021