



MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL

TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2026 AT 6:30 PM

COUNCIL ROOM, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 450 S. MAIN ST., RICHLAND CENTER, WI 53581 & VIRTUALLY

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Mayor Coppernoll at 6:30 PM. Members present were Ron Fruit, Karin Tepley, Tom McCarthy, Rachel Schultz, Melony Walters (virtually), Steve Downs, and Ryan Cairns. Absent: Douglas Martyniuk.

Others Present: Ashley Oliphant, City Administrator; Jasen Glasbrenner, DPW/Economic Development; Darcy Perkins, Municipal Services Specialist; Scott Gald, Utilities Superintendent; Billy Jones, Police Chief; Nova Video representative; and members of the public.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: *Motion by Schultz to approve the agenda as presented. Second by Downs. Motion carried unanimously.*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *Motion by Tepley to waive the reading and approve the December 2, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Downs. Motion carried unanimously.*

CITY AND UTILITY DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS AND CONCERNS

Economic Development (Glasbrenner): Updates provided on ongoing grant work (including congressional, CDI, and WEDC filings), campus housing, school district coordination, and active projects like Story Field, Panorama Estates, and Cobblestone Hotels investor outreach.

Public Works (Glasbrenner): Organizational changes noted, with Matt Williams named Assistant Public Works Director. Operations included street ratings, snow monitoring, tree pickup, and street data updates to increase aid eligibility.

Utilities (Gald): Annual electric system treatment and Christmas décor removal were completed, with the 13th year of SWTC training support. Wastewater addressed budget items and advanced jet and plow truck replacements. Water AMI installations continue; lead service notifications were issued, 24 replacements remain for summer, and utility locates reached a record high due to fiber projects.

Police (Jones): Officer Emma Bloom nearing completion of field training; year-end reporting in progress.

Administration (Oliphant): The Symons Planning Project is entering public engagement, with input sessions beginning January 29. Demolition is underway at 695 N. Chestnut. The 2026 EMS contract was submitted; county coordination for future years is ongoing. Spring Election filings are complete for all Aldermanic districts and the Mayoral race. McCarthy, Fruit, and Coppernoll filed notices of non-candidacy.

MAYOR AND ALDERPERSONS

The Mayor and Alderpersons expressed appreciation for City and Utility staff, noting recent staffing changes, organizational restructuring, and ongoing projects, and acknowledged the continued commitment of civil service employees while looking ahead to 2026. A Library Board update was provided, reporting that two City-appointed seats have been filled and that the Library Director and Technical Services Librarian are actively participating in state-level committees and professional cohorts.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Report included in the packet; no discussion, no action.

UTILITY TREASURER'S REPORT: No action.

APPROVAL OF BILLS: *Motion by Cairns, second by Downs to approve payment of bills in the amount of \$344,007.15, consisting of \$2,260.30 which are Greater Richland Tourism and \$341,746.85 which are general fund expenditures. Motion upon roll call vote, carried 7-0.*

FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION: (CAIRNS)

178 S. Central Avenue (Vintage Interiors LLC) Hazardous Sidewalk Replacement

Staff outlined ongoing safety concerns and repeated attempts since July 2025 to obtain compliance from the property owner. A notice of violation was issued in October, but the owner has not come into compliance.

Motion by Cairns, second by Schultz to approve authorizing staff to proceed with hazardous sidewalk replacement, issue required legal notices, solicit bids under Wisconsin public construction law, and recover all associated costs from the property owner. Motion upon roll call vote, carried 7-0.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION: (FRUIT)

Consider Designating Tax Parcel 276-0924-1000 for Future Public Safety Facility Development

Staff and Public Safety Committee representatives outlined long-term facility capacity concerns for police and fire services and the need to proactively designate a site to support future planning and grant applications. Council discussed prior planning concepts, parcel suitability, and the importance of flexibility should a consolidated public safety facility be pursued. It was clarified that the action before Council was limited to site designation; lease terms were deferred.

Motion by Fruit, second by Tepley to designate Tax Parcel 276-0924-1000 for future public safety facility development. Motion carried unanimously.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION: (COPPERNOLL)

Proposed Infrastructure Design Changes for Stori Field

Council reviewed Planning Commission–recommended changes to the Stori Field infrastructure design, including narrower street width (30'), extended cul-de-sac length (~560'), sidewalk removal, and administrative determination of street lighting. Staff confirmed adequate emergency access and long-term municipal maintenance responsibilities. Public concerns included pedestrian access and developer obligations.

Motion by Downs, second by Tepley to approve the proposed modifications to the infrastructure design specifications for the Stori Field development and to authorize City Administrator and City Attorney to amend the Development Agreement as necessary. Motion upon roll call vote, carried 7-0.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Campus Housing Project

Council reviewed a proposal to pursue housing development on a portion of the former UW campus, building on prior 2025 discussions and County Campus Reconfiguration Committee engagement.

Motion by Fruit, second by Downs to authorize the City Administration and Economic Development Departments to offer to purchase, from Richland County, a portion of the former UW Campus property for \$1 for the purpose of housing development. Motion upon roll call vote, carried 7-0.

APPOINTMENT & CONFIRMATION Committees, Commissions and Boards

The Mayor presented nominations to fill open positions on the Library Board and Redevelopment Authority. Sarah Schultz and Anna Jarvis were appointed to serve on the Library Board. Keith Bailey, John Collins, and Ray Wilson, along with Council representatives Doug Martyniuk and Karin Tepley were appointed to serve on the Redevelopment Authority.

Motion by Schultz, second by Tepley to confirm the appointments. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

AD German Warehouse – Resident Sheila Troxel highlighted the site's growing tourism and cultural impact, requesting City support for future grant opportunities to fund building improvements. Staff noted that a CDI grant resolution is likely forthcoming, pending pre-application review.

Stori Field Petition – Resident Ruth Wilson voiced concern about the handling of a citizen petition regarding the Stori Field development. She cited statutory timelines and requested Council action or clarification. City Attorney Michael Windle confirmed a meeting is scheduled for the following week to provide the requested clarification.

CLOSED SESSION: Legal consultation regarding Panorama Estates contract breach

Enter into Closed Session – The Chair may entertain a motion to enter closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat., 19.85(1)(g) Conferring with legal counsel for the governmental body who is rendering oral or written advice concerning strategy to be adopted by the body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved.

Motion by Tepley, second by Downs to enter closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 19.85(1)(g). Motion carried unanimously. Council entered closed session at 8:02 p.m.

Reconvene in Open Session – Reconvene in open session pursuant to Wisconsin Stat, Sec 19.85(2) to vote on matters discussed during closed session. Roll call vote if motion is not unanimous.

Motion by Fruit, second by McCarthy to reconvene in open session. Motion carried unanimously. Council reconvened in open session at 9:00 p.m.

Action on Matters Discussed During Closed Session – *Motion by Walters, second by Schultz, to withdraw the offer to amend the development agreement with Panorama Estates and direct the City Attorney to pursue legal remedies for potential breach of contract. Motion upon roll call vote, carried 7-0.*

SET NEXT MEETING DATE: Tuesday, February 3, 2026

ADJOURNMENT: *Motion by Downs, second by Tepley to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.* The meeting adjourned at 9:02 PM.

Minutes recorded by MSS Darcy Perkins.