
COUNCIL ROOM AT THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 450 S. MAIN STREET, RICHLAND CENTER, WI 53581

CALL TO ORDER The meeting was called to order at 5:31 PM. Members present: Fruit, Walters, Schultz. Also present were Director of Public Works Jasen Glasbrenner and Municipal Services Specialist Darcy Perkins. The meeting was properly noticed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES Motion by Walters to approve the May 15, 2025 meeting minutes. Seconded by Schultz. Motion carried by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF BILLS The bills from 5/15/2025-6/17/2025 were presented totaling \$81,451.00. Motion by Schultz to approve the bills as presented. Seconded by Walters. Motion carried by voice vote.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT REPORTS PRESENTED BY DPW JASEN GLASBRENNER

- Streets
 - Emphasis on fostering a unified team structure.
 - Airport mowing reassigned to Streets Crew.
 - Ongoing crack sealing, street patching, dike work, landfill support.
 - Rodeo sand hauling noted; short on equipment due to end loader issue.
 - Weed spraying and vegetation trimming reported.
- Buildings & Grounds
 - Daily 7 AM briefings implemented post-lead departure.
 - DPW and Zoning Admin now co-managing.
 - Full seasonal crew in place.
 - Event prep for Taste of the Hills and youth tournaments.
 - Assisted with Race for Grace, Cops & Bobbers events.
 - Footbridge repairs completed.
 - Emergency AC purchase for Police Department.
- Airport
 - Reassignment of mowing to Streets Crew.
 - Discussion with BOA agent Hal Davis regarding airport ownership and long-term implications of divestment.
 - Emphasis on investing further to make it self-sufficient.
- Cemetery
 - Operational challenges discussed—120 labor hours/week required.
 - Summer staff now directly assigned to leads to distribute responsibility.
 - Street Crew assisted with string trimming.
- Director Notes
 - American flag display discussed: challenges with no-furl hardware, visual standards, black brackets.
 - Reported tractor breakdowns due to non-commercial grade use.
 - Softball field lighting being reviewed but underfunded.
 - Highway 14 retaining wall remains under DOT negotiation.
 - Zero-turn mower out for warranty frame replacement.

DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

4. Award Annual Leachate Line Jetting Work

The Director explained that annual jetting of the leachate line is required by administrative code and was previously performed by the sewer utility, which is no longer able to do so. Three quotes were obtained, with the recommendation to award the work to Superior Jetting at an approximate cost of \$3,950.

Motion by Walters to recommend that the Finance Committee and City Council approve awarding the annual leachate line jetting work to Superior Jetting at a cost of approximately \$3,950.00. Seconded by Fruit. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Award 2025 Street Overlay Project

Staff reviewed options for the annual street resurfacing project. While past projects used asphalt overlay, this year chip sealing was recommended as a more cost-effective and durable alternative for streets with compromised base layers. Quotes were solicited for both overlay and chip sealing. Based on cost (chip seal is 17–58% cheaper) and expected longevity, staff recommended proceeding with Farner Asphalt Sealers at \$2.56/sq yd (single) and \$5.05/sq yd (double), not to exceed \$105,000. Some roads will receive single chip seal and others double, depending on condition.

Motion by Schultz to recommend that the Finance Committee and City Council approve awarding the 2025 Street Overlay Project, using Chip Seal, to Fahrner Asphalt Sealers at a cost of \$2.56/sq yd for Single Seal and \$5.05/sq yd for Double Seal with the expenditure amount not to exceed \$105,000. Seconded by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Award Church & E. Court Parking Lot Repaving Project

The committee reviewed the proposed repaving project for the shared Church and East Court Street parking lot. The project became a priority after the fire department received a grant from DL Gasser to repave its portion. Adjacent property owner Pratt's also agreed to participate in repaving their section, creating an opportunity for a coordinated full-lot improvement. Only one bid was received—from DL Gasser—for approximately \$32,340. Additional work, including blacktop removal and grading, will be completed at a low cost by a local contractor. Funding is proposed from the Outlay Roadways budget line.

Motion by Walters to recommend that the Finance Committee and City Council approve awarding the Church & E. Court Parking Lot Repaving Project to D.L. Gasser Construction at a cost of approximately \$32,340.00. Seconded by Schultz. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Streets - Request for End Loader Repair

Staff presented a recommendation to replace the engine in the City's 2010 John Deere 624K end loader at a cost of approximately \$32,433. The machine is currently out of service due to engine failure. Alternative options were evaluated, including upgrading hydraulics on the older 1999 loader (~\$12,000), purchasing new or used equipment (\$180,000–\$250,000), or leasing (\$8,000/month). Replacing the engine is seen as the most cost-effective solution to restore key equipment and maintain operational flexibility. Funding will be reallocated from the contracted roadwork budget line, made possible by cost savings from using chip seal in the 2025 street resurfacing project.

Motion by Schultz to recommend that the Finance Committee and City Council approve the engine replacement for the John Deere Model 624K end loader, at an approximate cost of \$33,000.00. Seconded by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Buildings & Grounds - Request for Mower Repair

Staff recommended replacing the engine on a 2017 Ferris mower with approximately 2,000 hours of use. Despite the engine failure, the mower's frame and components are in good condition, and the repair is considered a cost-effective way to extend its service life. Funding for the repair is available within the existing equipment repair budget.

Motion by Walters to recommend that the Finance Committee and City Council approve the repair of the 2017 Ferris mower at a cost of approximately \$4,100.00. Seconded by Fruit. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Buildings & Grounds and Street Team Work Hours

Staff presented a proposal to standardize work hours for both the Buildings & Grounds and Street crews to a year-round schedule of Monday–Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The current schedule limits Friday coverage and affects service delivery. While the Street crew already follows this schedule during winter, Buildings & Grounds operate on a staggered schedule with early Friday departures.

The proposed change aims to improve coordination, responsiveness, and alignment with other departmental schedules. Staff acknowledged concerns about personnel impacts and noted flexibility could remain (e.g., seasonal rotations). Committee members agreed the issue warrants further discussion by the Personnel Committee to consider potential staff impacts and existing policies.

Motion by Schultz to refer this item to the Personnel Committee for review. Seconded by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

10. Buildings & Grounds - Work Priority

Staff discussed ongoing challenges with deferred maintenance and the inability to complete all tasks due to limited staffing and expanded property responsibilities.

Key points included:

- Wet weather and increasing maintenance demands have led to service delays, particularly in mowing and trimming.
- Staff are doing their best to prioritize high-visibility and high-traffic areas, but some lower-use sites (e.g., dog park, trails, transfer station) may receive less frequent attention.
- The department is exploring options, including hiring additional adult seasonal staff or contracting out mowing at certain sites to improve efficiency.
- There is a recognized need to align maintenance expectations with current staffing and equipment levels.
- Committee members discussed the potential for better volunteer coordination, targeted seasonal hiring, and long-term budget planning.

No formal action was taken; the consensus was to continue discussing deferred maintenance, staff capacity, and work prioritization within Public Works, Personnel, and Council without a formal motion. Staff will incorporate updates into future reports.

11. Donation of Dugouts for Krouskop Park Softball Fields

The committee reviewed a proposal for a non-monetary donation from the Knights of Columbus, organized by Rick Ermelio, to construct roof-only dugouts at the Krouskop Park softball fields. The estimated value of the donation is \$12,000. Due to proximity to Highway 14 and long-term maintenance considerations, the dugouts will be open-sided with no solid walls. City staff will review and approve structural plans. It was confirmed the donation agreement will transfer ownership and future maintenance discretion to the City. Construction is anticipated later this summer, with no significant staff time required.

Motion by Schultz to recommend to the Finance Committee and Common Council the approval of Resolution 2025-07 Acceptance of Non-Monetary Donation by Knights of Columbus for Ball Field Dugouts. Seconded by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

12. Placement of Purple Heart Sign in Public Right-of-Way on Highway 80

Staff informed the committee of a proposed placement of two new Purple Heart signs—one near the Mobil Mart on city-owned property along Highway 14 and another near Toney Estates Farm off Highway 14. The signs are being coordinated by a local veteran's group.

The City was not previously consulted but is now working to ensure proper procedures are followed. Placement of the signs may require DOT approval, zoning review, and confirmation of compliance with City ordinances governing off-premise signage. No action was taken; this item was presented for awareness and future coordination. Staff will continue working with the veteran's group to ensure compliance.

13. Smoke Free Park Signs

Staff presented a design for smoke-free park signs, intended for select locations throughout the Richland Center park system. The signs are small (approx. 9"x12"), visually consistent with current city signage, and funded entirely by community advocates. Temporary laminated versions have already been placed at key sites for awareness. Staff sought committee affirmation to demonstrate proper process and support. The signs are expected to be installed as production schedules allow.

Motion by Fruit to affirm the general style of the Smoke Free Park Signs to be installed in select areas of the Richland Center park system. Seconded by Schultz. Motion carried unanimously.

14. Report on Aquatic Center Maintenance Concerns

Staff provided a detailed update on the growing maintenance needs and operational challenges at the Richland Center Aquatic Center. Issues include:

- **Facility Deterioration:** Cracked caulking, peeling finishes, tile failures, and aging slide infrastructure requiring significant maintenance.
- **Mechanical Failures:** A non-functioning splash pad heater, corrosion on water slide supports, and problems with chlorine and circulation systems.
- **Operational Strain:** Over 180 hours of staff time (Jodi, Public Works, and Utilities) was needed to open the facility in 2025, detracting from other park responsibilities.

The committee was informed of upcoming capital needs, such as insulation (\$19K–\$32K), slide restoration (~\$25K), and control system upkeep. Staff forecast a need in 2026 for a dedicated aquatic technician (\$30K+) to manage the facility's complexity.

Staff also expressed concern over additional donations for new features, like a second slide, given the City's current inability to maintain what's already built. A discussion is planned with major donors to realign expectations and emphasize the need for sustainable funding, not expansion.

This was a discussion item only. No formal action was taken. Committee members acknowledged the seriousness of the issues and supported continued communication and future budgeting discussions.

REPORTS, REQUESTS, AND CONCERNS

Walters:

- **City Mowing Concerns** – Residents noted unmowed areas, specifically the dike. Walters explained that limited mowing occurs early in the season due to staffing, with seasonal help starting in June. Staff clarified that mowing on the North Dike has been intentionally reduced for resource prioritization, consistent with NRCS requirements, which only mandate the removal of woody vegetation and monitoring for burrowing animals.
- **Hanging Flower Baskets** – A resident inquired why flower baskets were no longer displayed downtown. Walters clarified the baskets were historically provided and maintained by the Chamber of Commerce, which opted to hang American flags instead this year.
- **Junk Property Complaints** – Walters was contacted about junk accumulation on private properties. She directed the constituent to report concerns to Chief Jones or Zoning Administrator Matt Williams and offered to assist if property addresses were provided.

Schultz:

- **Mailbox Zoning Violation Near Roller Rink** – Schultz reported on a recent zoning issue involving mailboxes rebuilt near the roller rink that encroached into the city’s right-of-way. Zoning Administrator Williams had issued a violation notice but ultimately worked with residents to find a resolution. Schultz emphasized the value of constructive communication over confrontational enforcement.
- **Status of Hotel Project** – Schultz inquired about the current status of the hotel project, citing constituent concern that it had been dropped. Director Glasbrenner clarified that the City’s financial advisor, Ehlers, is finalizing a financial analysis. While delays occurred due to slow data submission from project partners, the project remains active and under review.

Fruit:

- **Ferrell Gas Property Use Concerns** – Fruit reflected on the recent Council discussion regarding Ferrell Gas’s use of land for tank storage. He noted that the nature of the business—rare tank changes and limited direct service needs—may not justify the concerns raised. He supported Director Glasbrenner’s suggestion to explore alternate industrial-zoned locations, such as Foundry Drive, for potential relocation.
- **Recognition of Public Works Staff** – Fruit commended City staff for their dedication, noting examples of workers pulling weeds along Highways 14 and 80 in the rain. He emphasized the need to recognize their commitment despite limited resources.
- **Concerns About Junk Promotion and Property Maintenance** – Fruit raised concern over a social media post encouraging people to “drop off junk” at a local business, Bindl Tire and Auto. He noted ongoing property maintenance issues at that location and referenced a heavily cluttered site near R&K Tree Service that has prompted resident complaints. He stressed the importance of ordinance enforcement to uphold community standards.
- **Sidewalk Conditions** – Fruit referred to a resident complaint about deteriorating brick sidewalk near a residential property. Director Glasbrenner noted that sidewalk maintenance is typically the property owner’s responsibility, though enforcement can be complex. He also mentioned the City has started exploring professional services to evaluate and prioritize sidewalk repairs across the community.
- **Economic Development and Community Standards** – Fruit discussed how neglected properties impact public perception. Staff emphasized that consistent enforcement of ordinances is essential for preserving neighborhood appearance and promoting economic vitality.

SET NEXT MEETING DATE The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, July 17th at 5:30 PM.

ADJOURNMENT Motion to adjourn by Walters, seconded by Schultz. Motion carried by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:21 PM.

Minutes recorded by Darcy Perkins.