



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
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Meeting Minutes Public Safety Standing Committee

Tuesday, January 24, 2023

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – City Hall

Committee Members

The Honorable Reva Trammell – Chair
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert – Vice Chair
The Honorable Kristen Nye – Member

Others in Attendance

LaTasha Holmes, Council Chief of Staff
Greg Lukanuski, Deputy City Attorney
Pamela Nichols, Council Management Analyst
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Rebecca Sullivan, Assistant City Clerk
Steven Taylor, Council Policy Analyst
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chairwoman Reva Trammell called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m., and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Citizen Speaker Guidelines

Assistant City Clerk Rebecca Sullivan provided information on the appropriate manner in which the Council Chamber is to be evacuated in the event of an emergency along with citizen speaker guidelines.

Public Comment Period

Rose Hines raised concerns about her ability to contact her incarcerated son at the city jail. Ms. Hines also raised a concern that the jail was not providing adequate health services for her son.

Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert requested that Sheriff Antionette Irving share information on how to contact the city jail.

Sheriff Irving shared information on how to contact the city jail by telephone. Sheriff Irving explained how visitation procedures had changed since the outbreak of COVID-19, and outlined how to request a special visitation.

Chair Reva Trammell inquired about the accessibility of inmate visitation and whether inmates had adequate access to health services at the city jail.

Sheriff Irving suggested that all individuals with questions or concerns should call the Sheriff's Office for assistance. Sheriff Irving also shared that the city jail had an entire medical staff and that health care was accessible to the inmates 24 hours a day.

William Bullock, Muslim Chaplin Services of Virginia member and volunteer for the city of Richmond and Chesterfield County jails, raised a concern regarding the lack of religious services available to the inmates in the city jail.

Vice Chair Lambert requested Sheriff Irving to elaborate on the current religious services offered at the city jail.

Sheriff Irving shared that COVID-19 had impacted the amount of religious services available at the city jail, however, the Sheriff's Office was working towards receiving religious partners back into the facility by March 2023.

Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of November 22, 2022, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

[CD.2022.424](#) November 22, 2022 Public Safety Meeting Minutes

Presentations

911 Emergency Communications Employee Retention/Recruitment

Stephen Willoughby, Director of Emergency Communications, introduced Tory Maye as the presenter.

Tory Maye, Department of Emergency Communications Deputy Director of Operations, provided the committee with a presentation regarding the status of the emergency communications services in the city. Specifically, Mr. Maye shared information about the staffing challenges currently faced by the Department of Emergency Communications (DEC), and what actions were being taken to recruit more employees.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

[CD.2023.024](#) January 24, 2023 Public Safety - Emergency Communications
Employee Recruitment and Retention

Chair Reva Trammell shared her support for the DEC, and asked for clarification on the capabilities of the text 911 option.

Mr. Maye shared how the 911 text messages were received and responded to by the DEC.

Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert asked for the most common kinds of emergency calls received by the DEC. Vice Chair Lambert stated she specifically was interested in the amount of Marcus Alerts or mental health service calls in the city.

Mr. Maye shared what he estimated to be the most common kinds of emergency calls received, and elaborated on the amount of Marcus Alerts and mental health calls to which the city responded.

Vice Chair Lambert asked for clarification on how to access the DEC's automobile tow notifications.

Mr. Maye shared that individuals could access the automobile tow notifications by visiting the DEC website.

Director Willoughby noted that there was an overview on the Marcus Alert each month published on the DEC's Administrative Report, and that a presentation was available for Council at a future date.

Member Kristen Nye shared her support for the DEC and requested more information on the Marcus Alert and how to efficiently use the 911 system. Member Nye asked for information on the salary range of employees at the DEC call centers. Member Nye also asked for information on the DEC's relationship with local schools.

Mr. Maye shared that the demands of the job can impact the staff turnover at the call centers. Mr. Maye also shared the hiring process used to employ the call centers. Mr. Maye shared information on the current connections and programs the public safety community has with local educational facilities including community outreach and job fairs.

Chair Trammell asked for clarification on retirement benefits available to call center employees.

Mr. Maye described the current retirement benefits available to employees at the DEC.

Director Willoughby further elaborated on the challenges of addressing salaries and benefits in the DEC, and that many of the issues would need to be addressed by the Virginia General Assembly, as well as, by City Council.

Richmond Police Department Update & Gun Buyback Program

Rick Edwards, Interim Police Chief, provided the committee a presentation on the results of the Richmond Police Department Gun Buyback initiative. Interim Chief Edwards shared the number and type of guns received, and noted that the program provided a service of gun disposal for individuals in the city.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

[CD.2023.027](#) January 24, 2023 Public Safety - Gun BuyBack Initiative

Member Kristen Nye asked what results were to be expected from the Gun Buyback program.

Interim Chief Edwards stated that the Gun Buyback program was a component of the city's overall strategy to combat gun violence.

Interim Chief Edwards shared a presentation with the committee on the amount and types of crime committed in the city over the course of 2022. Interim Chief Edwards elaborated on the decrease of homicides, and the increase of theft over the year.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

[CD.2023.034](#) RPD Year End Review 2022

Vice Chair Lambert requested hard copies of the presentation to be distributed to all Council members.

Chair Trammell shared concerns she had received from her constituents, specifically relating to crimes of theft in her district. Chair Trammell inquired if it were possible to create more educational campaigns to inform individuals on safety in the city.

Interim Chief Edwards shared information on upcoming educational campaigns and community outreach provided by the Police Department.

Paper(s) for Consideration

There were no papers for consideration.

Discussion Item(s)

Employee Recruitment and Retention, Employee and Inmate Safety at the City Jail

Sheriff Antionette Irving shared information about the current staffing situation within the Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Irving also reported on the status of the city jail and described the resources available to inmates incarcerated there.

[CD.2023.033](#) After Item Public Safety - 20230124 Sheriff Irving City Jail

Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert asked for clarification on what funding the city provided for the Sheriff's Office. Vice Chair Lambert also asked for more information about the Sheriff Office's salary rates.

Sheriff Irving reported that the City Council determines funds for the salaries of employees in the Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Irving also shared that the salary rates of the Richmond Sheriff's Office were comparable to the larger localities, but that there were hopes to raise the salaries in the Sheriff's Office.

Chair Reva Trammell asked for clarification on the staffing shortages. Chair Trammell also asked for a presentation on the Sheriff Office's budget.

Member Kristen Nye asked for clarification on the number of vacant positions in the Sheriff's Office. Member Nye also raised a concern for the number of employees currently staffing the city jail.

Sheriff Irving stated that the city jail was adequately staffed. Sheriff Irving pointed out limitations of the jail's facilities and noted the kind of inmate population currently housed in the facilities.

Chair Trammell asked for clarification on the length of the training academy. Chair Trammell also raised her concern that the city jail may be inadequately staffed or properly maintained.

Sheriff Irving shared information on the training process and elaborated on the challenges to hiring qualified employees. Sheriff Irving also updated the committee on actions the Sheriff's Office had taken to address public complaints and problems. Sheriff Irving noted that it would take the collaboration of the Sheriff's Office, City Council, and other governing bodies to ensure the city jail was operating at its best.

Vice Chair Lambert stated that many constituents had shared concerns surrounding their ability to contact inmates at the city jail, especially individuals struggling with mental health conditions. Vice Chair Lambert asked for clarification on what an individual could do if attempting to contact an inmate at the city jail.

Sheriff Irving shared the telephone numbers available to call in order to communicate with the inmates or the medical professionals working with the inmates at the city jail.

Board Vacancies

Pamela Nichols, Council Management Analyst, reviewed board applications for consideration by the committee.

Member Kristen Nye moved to continue consideration of the Richmond Ambulance Authority board appointment applications to the March 23, 2023 meeting which was seconded and unanimously approved.

[CD.2023.022](#) January 24, 2023 Board Vacancy Report

Staff Report

Steve Taylor, Council Policy Analyst, provided the committee with the January staff report.

[CD.2023.023](#) January 24, 2023 Public Safety Standing Committee Staff Report

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:56 p.m.