



# City of Richmond

## Special Meeting Minutes

900 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
[www.richmondgov.com/cityclerk](http://www.richmondgov.com/cityclerk)

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Friday, August 25, 2017

10:00 AM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

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### **Councilmembers Present**

The Honorable Chris Hilbert, President  
The Honorable Cynthia Newbille, Vice President  
The Honorable Andreas Addison  
The Honorable Kim Gray (early departure)  
The Honorable Michael Jones  
The Honorable Kristen Larson  
The Honorable Ellen Robertson

### **Councilmembers Absent**

The Honorable Parker Agelasto  
The Honorable Reva Trammell

## **CHAMBER EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN**

Council President Chris Hilbert called the meeting to order at 10:18 a.m. and presided. Upon the president's request, Deputy City Clerk Candice Reid provided information on the appropriate manner in which to evacuate the Council Chamber in the event of an emergency.

## **DISCUSSION ITEM**

### **Referendum to Amend the Richmond City Charter for School Modernization Plan Development**

City Attorney Allen Jackson provided an overview of the Richmond City Circuit Court's order, to add to the November 2017 general election ballot, a question regarding an amendment to the city charter that would require the mayor to develop a plan to fund the modernization of schools without raising taxes.

President Hilbert stated that Council needs to determine if it will challenge the order before it becomes final on September 5<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor Ellen Robertson requested a copy of the city attorney's review of the order and the options provided therein.

City Attorney Jackson recommended that the body convene in closed session so a thorough discussion could occur regarding Council's options.

Councilor Michael Jones questioned the need to hold a closed session asking why the discussion could not take place in open forum.

City Attorney Jackson responded that he needed to advise the council of the pros and cons of each option and their possible outcomes, and a public discussion could prejudice the city's legal position.

Councilors Jones and Kristen Larson voiced concerns regarding entering into closed session citing issues with maintaining confidentiality and discussing matters not exempt from open meeting laws.

## CLOSED SESSION

At 10:39 a.m., Councilor Ellen Robertson moved that the City Council go into Closed Session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(8) for the purpose of consulting with legal counsel regarding a specific legal matter requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel, specifically Petition of Referendum, Case No. CL17-2041 in the Circuit Court for the City of Richmond.

The motion was seconded and approved by the following vote: 5 Ayes – Robertson, Larson, Addison, Newbille and Hilbert; 1 No – Gray; 1 Abstention – Jones.

*Councilor Kim Gray exited the meeting at 10:41 a.m.*

*Councilor Michael Jones exited the closed session at 10:55 a.m.*

At 10:57 a.m., Councilor Andreas Addison moved to exit the closed session. The motion was seconded and approved by the following vote: 5 Ayes – Robertson, Larson, Addison, Newbille, Hilbert; 0 Noes; 1 Abstention – Jones.

### **CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING**

August 25, 2017

WHEREAS, the Council has convened in closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Council that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law:

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Council hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge (i) only public matters lawfully exempt from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certifying resolution applies; and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Committee.

WITNESS the following vote of Council members, as recorded by Candice Reid, Deputy City Clerk:

#### CERTIFYING:

Christopher A. Hilbert, President  
Cynthia I. Newbille, Vice President  
Andreas D. Addison  
Kristen N. Larson  
Michael J. Jones  
Ellen F. Robertson

#### DECLINING TO CERTIFY:

Councilor Larson expressed that she believes Council should challenge the referendum order stating that it would undermine the authority of the Richmond school board.

Vice President Cynthia Newbille stated that she is concerned that the referendum does not consider that the Education Compact between Council, the mayor and the school board includes a commitment to school modernization.

President Hilbert cautioned that opening the city charter to make the referendum amendment, should it pass, could allow the General Assembly the ability to make additional changes to it; however, he does not oppose the passage of the referendum.

Councilor Robertson stated that, though the referendum is problematic, the public would only see a Council challenge to the order as an unwillingness to improve schools.

Councilor Andreas Addison commented that, despite the flaws of the referendum, Council should allow citizens the opportunity to vote on the matter while it works diligently to advance the quality of schools and education for Richmond's children.

Councilor Robertson asked that President Hilbert lead the charge for Council members and staff to discuss and research changes the body can make to the city charter.

After additional comments, it was the consensus of Council to take no action regarding the court's referendum order.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

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CITY CLERK