



City of Richmond

Meeting Minutes

Public Safety Standing Committee

Tuesday, October 22, 2019

11:00 AM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – City Hall

Committee Members and Staff in Attendance

The Honorable Reva Trammell – Chair
The Honorable Kim Gray – Vice Chair
Samson Anderson, Council Budget Analyst
Richard Hill, Assistant City Attorney
Jamie Isley, Assistant City Clerk
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Steven Taylor, Council Policy Analyst
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Absent

The Honorable Chris Hilbert – Committee Member

Call to Order

Chairwoman Reva Trammell called the meeting to order at 11:11 a.m., and presided.

Evacuation Announcement and Citizen Speaker Guidelines

Assistant City Clerk Jamie Isley 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.

It was the consensus of the committee to suspend Council's Rules of Procedure so that citizens unaware of the rescheduled meeting time, would have an opportunity to speak upon arrival.

Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of Tuesday, September 24, 2019, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

Board Vacancies

Allison Miessler, boards and commissions administrator, reviewed board applications for consideration by the committee.

Vice Chair Kim Gray moved to forward the following reappointments to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved:

Board Name	Criteria for Appointment	Applicant Name
Advisory Board for the Assessment of Towing Fees and the Storage of Vehicles (7 members)	Towing and Recovery Operator* (1 vacancy)	Melvin Lawson (reappointment)
Richmond Ambulance Authority (11 members)	* (2 vacancies)	DeWitt C. Baldwin (reappointment)

*Applicant must either work or reside in the city

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Presentation(s)

The committee rescheduled the Richmond Police Department homicide report to the November 26, 2019, Public Safety Standing Committee meeting.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance was considered:

ORD. 2019-263

To abolish the Citizen Advisory Commission on Alternatives to Incarceration; to repeal ch. 2, art. V, div. 4 (§§2-844-2-846) of the City Code, concerning the creation, composition, terms of office, duties, and functions of the Commission; and to terminate the terms of the commission's members.

Patron: Ms. Robertson

Steve Taylor, Council policy analyst, addressed ORD. 2019-263 and indicated that the Citizen Advisory Commission on Alternatives to Incarceration provided no conclusive report regarding the request for the commission to be terminated.

Vice Chair Kim Gray expressed concern that the requested report from the Citizen Advisory Commission on Alternatives to Incarceration was not received. She asked for additional information regarding the commission's allocated budget and the amount of staff time spent working on commission related functions at the November 26, 2019, Public Safety Standing Committee meeting.

Chairwoman Reva Trammell suggested that Council review all boards and commissions to determine if they are functioning as intended and requested that staff provide information regarding inactive boards and commissions.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Vice Chair Kim Gray moved to forward ORD. 2019-263 to the November 12, 2019, City Council meeting with recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

The following ordinance was considered:

ORD. 2019-288

To amend ch. 27, art. II of the City Code by adding therein a new § 27-40.1, concerning distracted driving, for the purpose of prohibiting distracted driving while using a handheld personal communications device.

Patron: Mayor Stoney

Police Chief William Smith introduced ORD. 2019-288 and explained that in addition to penalties for dangerous driving offenses, officers who encounter drivers distracted by the use of a handheld personal communications device can issue civil penalties for distracted driving.

Vice Chair Kim Gray asked for clarification regarding the ways in which a civil penalty with less authority than Va. Code § 46.2-1078.1, could increase public safety at the local level. She expressed concern for ambiguity within the code, potential officer complaints and profiling during traffic stops if ORD. 2019-288 were implemented. Vice Chair Gray stated that she does not believe that the penalty is strong enough to make an impact and that it will cause issues.

Police Chief Smith advised that the civil penalty would allow for a wider range of activity to address distraction inside the car regarding handheld devices. He stated that distracted drivers will impede strides made towards Vision Zero and endanger the public as the city becomes more multimodal.

Chairwoman Reva Trammell expressed support for ORD. 2019-288.

Support

Sarah Shaughnessy, Richmond City Health Department community health planner and built environment specialist, spoke in support of ORD. 2019-288 and shared several public safety benefits of the proposed ordinance.

Louise Lockett Gordon, Bike Walk RVA director, spoke in support of ORD. 2019-288 and shared several statistics regarding distracted driving, pedestrian fatalities and similar ordinances passed in other localities. She asked that the committee consider amending ORD. 2019-288 to strike the text from page 1 part a which states “where such use diverts such person’s attention from the operation of the motor vehicle” due to concerns regarding equitable enforcement and subjectivity.

Janet Brooking, Drive Smart RVA executive director, spoke in support of both ORD. 2019-288 and Ms. Lockett Gordon’s proposed amendment. She mentioned several statistics regarding hands free legislation to include a sixteen percent decrease in traffic fatalities within twelve states with hands free laws.

Bill Pantele spoke in support of ORD. 2019-288 and informed the committee of how enacting a city ordinance that is parallel to an existing state statute would benefit the city.

After additional discussion, **Chairwoman Reva Trammell moved to forward ORD. 2019-288 to the November 12, 2019, City Council meeting with recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

Public Comment Period

Douglas Bowen, expressed grief concerning a recent fatal motorcycle accident involving close friends on I-95. He requested improved road maintenance on the entrance and exit ramps to local highways.

Chairwoman Reva Trammell requested that Mr. Bowen, the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Virginia State Police attend the November 26, 2019, Public Safety Standing Committee meeting.

Assistant City Attorney Richard Hill advised that the committee can request for the Virginia State Police to attend the next committee meeting, but they are not required to attend.

The following ordinance was considered:

ORD. 2019-289

To amend ch. 19, art. VII, div. 2 of the City Code by adding therein a new §19-334.2, concerning the

reporting of lost or stolen firearms, for the purpose of imposing a requirement that lost or stolen firearms be reported to the Department of Police and prescribing a civil penalty for violations thereof.

Patron: Mayor Stoney

Police Chief William Smith introduced ORD. 2019-289 and advised the committee of its purpose to require that lost or stolen firearms be reported within twenty-four hours of the detection of loss or theft.

Vice Chair Kim Gray requested additional information regarding the potential of ORD. 2019-289 to increase public safety.

Police Chief Smith advised that ORD. 2019-289 will decrease the amount of time between the loss or theft of a firearm and police awareness of its presence in the community. He stated that ORD. 2019-289 will help improve compliance in reporting the loss or theft of legally owned firearms.

Support

Kristin DuMont, Moms Demand Action Richmond leadership team member, spoke in support of ORD. 2019-289 and highlighted several statistics regarding gun violence and lost or stolen firearms.

Chairwoman Reva Trammell requested a copy of Ms. DuMont's statement.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

James Minor, Richmond National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) president, spoke in support of ORD. 2019-289 on behalf of the local and national NAACP branches. He also read a statement on behalf of Charles Willis, United Communities Against Crime executive director, who wrote in support of ORD. 2019-289 and efforts to decrease gun violence.

Bill Pantele spoke in support of ORD. 2019-289 and stated that it is a common sense measure that provides additional barriers to access to illegal firearms.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Vice Chair Kim Gray moved to forward ORD. 2019-289 to the November 12, 2019, City Council meeting with recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

The following ordinance was considered:

ORD. 2019-290

To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Police Mutual Aid Joint Aviation Agreement between the County of Henrico, Virginia, the County of Chesterfield, Virginia, and the City of Richmond, Virginia, and to repeal Ord. No. 2018-010, adopted Mar. 12, 2018, which authorized the Chief Administrative Officer to execute a Police Mutual Aid Joint Aviation Agreement between the County of Henrico, Virginia, the County of Chesterfield, Virginia, and the City of Richmond, Virginia, for the purpose of operating a joint aviation unit to support aerial law enforcement activities in the party jurisdictions.

Patron: Mayor Stoney

Police Chief William Smith introduced ORD. 2019-290 and advised that it is a re-approval of an existing agreement between the county of Henrico, county of Chesterfield and the city of Richmond.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Vice Chair Kim Gray moved to forward ORD. 2019-290 to the November 12, 2019, City Council meeting with recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

Vice Chair Kim Gray advised that meeting attendees unaware of the rescheduled meeting time recently entered the Chamber and would like to provide public comment.

Public Comment Period

Yohance Whitaker, Richmond Transparency and Accountability Project (RTAP) member, provided the committee with an update concerning interactions with the Richmond Police Department (RPD) regarding a community input meeting to discuss the new records management system.

Police Chief William Smith advised that RPD met with and informed Dr. Elizabeth Coston of RTAP of the need for an internal presentation regarding the new records management system prior to a public meeting. He informed the committee of current hindrances to the progress of the project.

Vice Chair Kim Gray requested updates regarding the date of RPD's public meeting to discuss the new records management system.

Discussion Item(s)

There were no items for discussion.

Staff Report

Steve Taylor, Council policy analyst, provided the committee with the October staff report.

Vice Chair Kim Gray requested information regarding jurisdictional responsibility of elevators and communication requirements for outdated elevator inspections within the city, at the November 26, 2019, Public Safety Standing Committee meeting. She expressed concern regarding several local elevators currently out of use for significant periods of time.

Chairwoman Reva Trammell requested a report regarding closing the communication loop between the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and Virginia State agencies regarding elevator inspections at the November 26, 2019, Public Safety Standing Committee meeting.

A copy of the report provided has been filed.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 12:26 p.m.