



Richmond City Council

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
www.rva.gov/office-city-clerk

Informal Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 22, 2025

4:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Council Members Present

The Honorable Cynthia Newbille, President
The Honorable Katherine Jordan, Vice President
The Honorable Sarah Abubaker
The Honorable Andrew Breton
The Honorable Kenya Gibson
The Honorable Nicole Jones
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch (late arrival)
The Honorable Ellen Robertson (late arrival)
The Honorable Reva Trammell

Staff Present

Lisa Braxton, Council Management Analyst, Principal
Laura Drewry, City Attorney
Kiley Kesecker, Deputy City Clerk
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Tabrica Rentz, Deputy City Attorney
RJ Warren, Council Chief of Staff

Call to Order

Council President Cynthia Newbille called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Announcement

Upon the President's request, Council Management Analyst Lisa Braxton provided information on the appropriate way to evacuate the Council Chamber in an emergency.

Docket Review

Council Management Analyst Lisa Braxton reviewed the following agenda items as indicated:

Consent Agenda:

1. Ord. 2025-025 – retained on Consent Agenda

2. Ord. 2025-032 – retained on Consent Agenda
3. Ord. 2025-046 – retained on Consent Agenda
4. Ord. 2025-052 – to be continued to Tuesday, October 14, 2025
5. Ord. 2025-079 – to be amended and continued to Tuesday, October 14, 2025
6. Ord. 2025-081 – to be amended and continued to Tuesday, October 14, 2025
7. Ord. 2025-113 – to be amended and continued to Tuesday, October 14, 2025
8. Ord. 2025-148 – withdrawn
9. Ord. 2025-150 – to be continued to Tuesday, October 14, 2025
10. Ord. 2025-173 – retained on Consent Agenda

Councilor Ellen Robertson arrived at 4:03 p.m. and was seated.

11. Ord. 2025-187 – retained on Consent Agenda
12. Ord. 2025-189 – retained on Consent Agenda
13. Ord. 2025-192 – retained on Consent Agenda
14. Ord. 2025-193 – retained on Consent Agenda
15. Ord. 2025-194 – retained on Consent Agenda
16. Ord. 2025-195 – retained on Consent Agenda
17. Ord. 2025-196 – retained on Consent Agenda
18. Ord. 2025-197 – retained on Consent Agenda
19. Ord. 2025-198 – retained on Consent Agenda
20. Ord. 2025-199 – retained on Consent Agenda
21. Ord. 2025-200 – retained on Consent Agenda
22. Ord. 2025-201 – retained on Consent Agenda

- 23. Ord. 2025-202 – retained on Consent Agenda
- 24. Ord. 2025-203 – retained on Consent Agenda
- 25. Ord. 2025-204 – retained on Consent Agenda
- 26. Ord. 2025-205 – retained on Consent Agenda
- 27. Ord. 2025-206 – retained on Consent Agenda
- 28. Res. 2025-R036 – retained on Consent Agenda
- 29. Res. 2025-R037 – retained on Consent Agenda
- 30. Res. 2025-R038 – retained on Consent Agenda
- 31. Res. 2025-R039 – retained on Consent Agenda
- 32. Res. 2025-R040 – retained on Consent Agenda

Regular Agenda:

- 33. Ord. 2025-100 – retained on Regular Agenda
- 34. Ord. 2025-161 – to be continued to Tuesday, October 14, 2025
- 35. Ord. 2025-184 – to be continued to Tuesday, October 14, 2025
- 36. Ord. 2025-185 – to be continued to Tuesday, October 14, 2025
- 37. Ord. 2025-186 – to be continued to Tuesday, October 14, 2025
- 38. Ord. 2025-207 – retained on Regular Agenda
- 39. Ord. 2025-208 – retained on Regular Agenda

Mayor Danny Avula addressed Council regarding Ord. 2025-208 and stated that this would not be a good time to reduce the real estate tax rate, since it would have an adverse effect on city services as well as it not being beneficial to the renters' citizenry.

Chief Administrative Officer Odie Donald provided Council with a presentation regarding the impact of proposed Ord. 2025-208, which would establish a \$1.16 real estate tax rate for the 2026 tax year. A copy of the presentation has been filed.

Councilor Kenya Gibson inquired regarding the projected real estate assessment value used

to craft the fiscal year 2026 budget verses accrual receivables and requested a final analysis of the comparison.

Councilor Stephanie Lynch arrived at 4:30 p.m. and was seated.

CAO Donald informed Council that actual real estate assessments are trending lower than projected, which warrants Council's decision to align the city's budget and assessment processes.

Councilor Gibson also requested documentation regarding the specific costs of the city's current obligations and/or needs such as collective bargaining and certain capital improvement projects.

Councilor Sarah Abubaker expressed the need to have a thorough discussion regarding the election of the real estate tax rate and stated that Council should not rush to adopt either Ord. 2025-207 or Ord. 2025-208 later that evening during the Formal Session of Council. Councilor Abubaker suggested that the city's future budget plans be formulated based on the \$1.146 real estate roll back rate.

Councilor Reva Trammell shared her constituents' concerns regarding redevelopment, affordable housing and higher consumer costs amongst the need to lower the real estate tax rate.

Mayor Avula stated that he agreed with wanting to provide relief for residents, however, the proposed four-cent reduction in the real estate tax rate referenced by Ord. 2025-208 would not help citizens that need it the most.

Councilor Stephanie Lynch mentioned the lower real estate tax rates of surrounding counties and the services they provide, and suggested the city reevaluate funding priorities.

Mayor Avula commented on historic events and policies that plagued the city's prior growth and cited that the city's comparison to other localities was not equivalent.

City Attorney Laura Drewry explained that pursuant to state code, Council has until November 10th to consider Ords. 2025-207 and 2025-208 or the real estate tax rate would revert to the \$1.146 roll back rate.

Councilor Gibson inquired regarding the "RVA Stay" tax relief program and the four-cent tax rebate offered to residents last year.

Mayor Avula commented on city administration's opposition to the proposed adoption of Ord. 2025-100.

40. Res. 2025-R035 – moved to Consent Agenda

At the request of President Cynthia Newbille, it was the consensus of Council to move Res. 2025-R035 to the Consent Agenda for consideration later that evening during the Formal Session of Council.

There were no further comments or discussions concerning Consent and Regular Agenda items reviewed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

CITY CLERK