



City of Richmond

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

Minutes

Governmental Operations Standing Committee

Wednesday, January 27, 2021

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – Virtual Meeting

Committee Members and Staff in Attendance

The Honorable Kristen Larson – Chair
The Honorable Katherine Jordan – Vice Chair
The Honorable Michael Jones – Member (*late arrival*)
The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Council Vice President (*late arrival*)
Lisa Braxton, Council Management Analyst
Joyce Davis, Interim Council Chief of Staff
Jamie Isley, Assistant City Clerk
Pamela Nichols, Senior Assistant City Clerk
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Tabrica Rentz, Acting Deputy City Attorney
Dominique Thaxton, Assistant City Clerk
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Kristen Larson called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m., and presided.

Council Vice President Ellen Robertson joined the meeting at 2:03 p.m.

Electronic Meeting Announcement

Assistant City Clerk Jamie Isley, in accordance with Ordinance No. 2020-093, adopted April 9, 2020, as most recently amended by Ordinance No. 2020-232, adopted December 14, 2020, announced the meeting would be held through electronic communication means. Assistant City Clerk Isley stated notice of the meeting was provided to the public through a public information advisory issued on January 22, 2021, and through Legistar on the city website in accordance with usual practice. She also stated members of the public were encouraged to provide comments in writing prior to the meeting and all comments received prior to 10:00 a.m., on Wednesday, January 27, 2021, were provided to committee members. Ms. Isley indicated that members of the public who signed up to speak and provide comment would be called to speak at the appropriate time.

Citizen Speaker Guidelines

Upon the Chair's request, Assistant City Clerk Jamie Isley provided the citizen speaker guidelines.

Public Comment

There were no public comment speakers.

Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of Wednesday, December 16, 2020, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

Board Vacancies

Senior Assistant City Clerk Pamela Nichols reviewed board applications for consideration by the committee.

Member Michael Jones joined the meeting at 2:04 p.m.

Chair Kristen Larson highlighted what she believes to be a chronic issue regarding mayoral board vacancy nominations, and noted plans to address the issue within the Governmental Operations Standing Committee.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan agreed with Chair Larson's statements and informed the committee of her preference for Richmond residents to be appointed to board and commission vacancies.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan moved to forward the following application for appointment to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved:

Board Name	Criteria for Appointment	Applicant Name
Sister Cities Commission (13 members)	* (2 vacancies)	Kejie Meng 3 rd District Resident

**Applicants must either reside or work in the city*

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Presentation(s)

There were no presentations.

Paper for Consideration

The following resolution was considered:

RES. 2020-R056

To request that the Chief Administrative Officer cause the Department of Finance and the Department of Human Resources to conduct a study of the City's telecommuting workforce to determine if cost savings and other benefits have been derived from the telecommuting policies adopted by the City in response to the COVID-19 pandemic for the purpose of potentially continuing or expanding upon such policies after the pandemic.

Patron: Ms. Robertson

Council Vice President Ellen Robertson introduced RES. 2020-R056 and discussed the legislative history and purpose of the proposed resolution. She further discussed the benefits of teleworking and expressed a willingness to amend RES. 2020-R056, if needed.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan spoke in support of RES. 2020-R056, and the permanent implementation of telecommuting policies. She also highlighted the positive environmental impact and

increased flexibility that telecommuting provides.

Member Michael Jones expressed hope that RES. 2020-R056 will be seen as a method to redesign workflow. He also stated that decisions regarding intradepartmental telework permissions may lie with department leadership.

Jeff Gray, Senior Policy Advisor to the Chief Administrative Officer, stated that city administration will work with Council to examine and review telecommuting policies and develop best practices for potential implementation.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan asked if city administration plans to conduct a space utilization study as a part of RES. 2020-R056, to determine how city office spaces are being utilized and if there are cost saving opportunities to consider.

Robin Redmond, Human Resources division chief, stated that city administration can examine space utilization and has looked at some methods in the past. Ms. Redmond discussed current pandemic operations within the city and highlighted several issues regarding productivity and ensuring equity regarding city staff telework permissions. She further discussed several benefits and barriers to telecommuting and informed the committee of training and policy guidelines to be evaluated before implementation.

Vice Chair Jordan reiterated her request for a space utilization study and discussed methods to collect data.

Robert Steidel, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of Operations, informed the committee that the Department of Public Works is working to complete a space utilization study, as requested by the Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth, Master Plan. He further stated that facilities space planning is underway for all city departments and that information will be provided to members once the data is available.

Chair Kristen Larson requested a timeline for the completion of the space utilization study.

Mr. Steidel informed the committee that all of the facilities maintenance information has been collected, and that city administration is currently examining the results of the pandemic. He further stated that all of the information will need to be compiled by the summer of 2021.

Council Vice President Robertson requested city administration provide a timeline and broad strategy regarding RES. 2020-R056, and to collaborate with Chair Larson to schedule regular updates to the Governmental Operations Standing Committee. She further stated that she has not set any deadlines regarding RES. 2020-R056, in order to provide city administration with ample time to create an action plan along with assistance from Council staff and appointees.

Vice Chair Jordan requested to be added as a co-patron to RES. 2020-R056.

Acting Chief Administrative Officer Lincoln Saunders requested the Mayor be added as a co-patron to RES. 2020-R056. He also stated that the review of city facilities and questions regarding such will be significant and will require a collaborative effort between city administration and Council.

Member Jones requested to be added as a co-patron to RES. 2020-R056.

Chair Larson asked whether RES. 2020-R056 designates a specific timeline and if an amendment may be needed.

Council Vice President Robertson stated that city administration may provide the work plan and present information to the committee based on a timeline that city administration and Chair Larson decide upon. She further advised that to her knowledge there is no timeline within the proposed resolution, and that an amendment would not be required.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Member Michael Jones moved to forward RES. 2020-R056 to the February 8, 2021, Council meeting with recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

Discussion Item(s)

There were no items for discussion.

Staff Report

Interim Council Chief of Staff Joyce Davis provided the committee with the January staff report.

Chair Kristen Larson informed the committee of a list of items typically addressed by the Governmental Operations Standing Committee by month, which will be circulated to committee members. She asked members to provide input and return to the next committee meeting with action items regarding presentations and issues to be addressed. She further stated that the committee will address issues regarding board and commission mayoral nominees through legislation.

Ms. Davis informed the committee that she will circulate a list of 2021 agenda items, and she provided examples of standard annual reports. Ms. Davis stated that additional items added by committee members will be considered special reports. Ms. Davis also informed the committee that several councilors have expressed concerns regarding the boards and commissions recruitment and application processes. She further stated that boards and commissions will be discussed at the February 1, 2021, Organizational Development Standing Committee meeting, and will be considered for discussion at the upcoming Council retreat.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan asked if there were any actions to be taken in the interim to address boards and commissions and whether standing committees are allowed to recommend their own applicants or nominees.

Chair Larson discussed the mayoral board vacancy nomination process, and she suggested the issue may be resolved with legislation. Chair Larson requested a report regarding boards and commissions.

Ms. Davis informed the committee that she would confer with the Office of the City Clerk.

Acting Chief Administrative Officer Lincoln Saunders stated that city administration will collaborate with Council staff on boards and commissions, and will review the total appointment load to get a clear picture of work plans and responsibilities.

Chair Larson requested Ms. Davis work with the Office of the City Clerk to develop a full report of all boards and commissions vacancies to use as a starting point for filling vacancies.

A copy of the report provided has been filed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.