



Richmond City Council

Formal Meeting Minutes

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

Monday, February 23, 2026

6:00 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
The Honorable Ellen Robertson (early departure)
The Honorable Reva Trammell

Call to Order

Council President Cynthia Newbille called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and presided.

Spanish Interpretation Announcement

City Clerk Candice Reid stated that Spanish interpretation service was available in the Council Chamber and that attendees should speak with a representative to receive the appropriate equipment. She also stated that Spanish interpretation service was available virtually through Microsoft Teams.

Roxana Talavera-Denson, Language Access Coordinator, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Engagement, provided Spanish interpretation of City Clerk Reid's announcement.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Pastor Herbert L. Ponder of Mount Tabor Baptist Church provided the invocation. Members of Council and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Public Speaker Guidelines

Upon the President's request, Deputy City Clerk Kiley Kesecker provided information on the appropriate way to evacuate the Council Chamber in an emergency along with public speaker guidelines.

Awards and Presentations

[CD.2026.059](#) 20260223 Formal Awards and Recognitions Ceremony Docket

The Honorable Council President Cynthia Newbille and Mayor Danny Avula recognized and honored the Richmond Free Press, upon the printing of its final edition after more than three decades of publication. The founding family, reporters, staff, photographers, and editors were commended for the important role they served in the community.

Agenda Review and Amendments

Vice President Katherine Jordan moved to amend the agenda as follows:

2. [ORD. 2025-270](#) To authorize the special use of the property known as 217 West Clay Street for the purpose of a restaurant with outdoor dining, upon certain terms and conditions. (As Amended) (2nd District)

Patrons: Mayor Avula (By Request)

To be amended and continued to Tuesday, March 10, 2026

3. [ORD. 2025-276](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute an Outside Agency Contract between the City of Richmond and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Richmond for the purpose of funding the expansion of life skills programming at Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

To be continued to Tuesday, March 10, 2026

4. [ORD. 2026-003](#) To declare surplus and direct the conveyance of the City-owned real estate known as 301 Boroughbridge Road, consisting of 3.636± acres, 201 Covington Road, consisting of 1.284± acres, 209 Covington Road, consisting of 0.367± acres, 301 Covington Road, consisting of 0.367± acres, 307 Covington Road, consisting of 0.367± acres, and 313 Covington Road, consisting of 0.367± acres and commonly known as Sankofa Community Orchard, for nominal consideration to Central Virginia Agrarian Commons for the purpose of facilitating urban agriculture.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

To be continued to Tuesday, March 10, 2026

5. [ORD. 2026-019](#) To authorize the special use of the property known as 602 West 26th Street for the purpose of no more than [two] one single-family detached [dwellings] dwelling and one two-family detached dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions. (As Amended) (5th District)

Patrons: Mayor Avula (By Request)

To be amended and continued to Tuesday, March 10, 2026

15. [ORD.](#)
[2026-041](#) To amend Ord. No. 2025-057, adopted May 12, 2025, which adopted the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 General Fund Budget and made appropriations thereto, by (i) transferring \$14,700,000.00 from the Contingency Reserve; (ii) creating a new line item in the Outside Agencies and Central Appropriations agency entitled “EDA - Diamond District;” and (iii) appropriating such transferred funds to such new line item in the Outside Agencies and Central Appropriations agency, all for the purpose of providing funding to the Economic Development Authority of the City of Richmond for the redevelopment of the area known as the Diamond District.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

To be moved to the Regular Agenda

17. [RES.](#)
[2026-R003](#) To commit to working with the City’s Administration to development and implement a comprehensive energy efficiency program that reduces the energy burden and cost of living for vulnerable households, supports small businesses, assists in the preservation of housing and the stabilization of neighborhoods, and makes meaningful progress towards the City’s climate goals.

Patrons: Ms. Lynch, Mr. Breton, Vice President Jordan, Ms. Abubaker, Ms. Gibson and President Newbille

To be continued to Monday, March 23, 2026

23. [ORD.](#)
[2025-215](#) To authorize the special use of the property known as 1705 Commonwealth Avenue for the purpose of a space for outdoor events, upon certain terms and conditions. (As Amended) (1st District)

Patrons: Mayor Avula (By Request)

To be continued to Monday, March 23, 2026

24. [ORD.](#)
[2025-231](#) To authorize the special use of the property known as 3219 Tuxedo Boulevard for the purpose of up to five single-family detached dwellings, upon certain terms and conditions. (7th District)

Patrons: Mayor Avula (By Request)

To be continued to Tuesday, March 10, 2026

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Public Comment

[CD.2026.057](#) February 23, 2026 Public Comment Period Speakers List

Jing Lei expressed concerns with the dangerous community impact of FLOCK automated license plate readers and their deployment in minority areas.

Steven Keener, Director of the Center for Crime Equity and Justice at Christopher Newport University, and Justice Board of Virginia member, urged Council to cancel the city's contract with FLOCK safety and provided information on the increased levels of surveillance in primarily Black and lower income neighborhoods.

Kalia Harris, Executive Director of the Virginia Student Power Network, spoke on the dangers of FLOCK safety data security and the potential fourth amendment violations putting minority communities most at risk.

Victoria McCullough, Richmond Democratic Socialists of America, urged the city to cancel its contract with FLOCK safety, citing documented cases of the misuse of data collected by FLOCK cameras.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Olivia Holt expressed concerns with FLOCK technology and data being used for federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement activities.

Almonte Canselo requested that the city cancel its contract with FLOCK safety, citing landmark Supreme Court cases upholding a reasonable expectation of privacy in public.

Cullen Murr spoke on the dangers of FLOCK safety data security and the potential for misuse and access by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms to track and target protestors.

Kayla Morgan, Richmond Tenants' Union General Secretary, spoke on the negative impact of automated license plate reader technology, providing a list of recommendations of actions for cities to take to increase public safety by the Council on Criminal Justice.

Ruby Cherian, attorney in the Civil Rights and Racial Justice Program with the Legal Aid Justice Center, outlined the functions of FLOCK technology and provided examples of its misuse, as well as localities that have canceled contracts with FLOCK.

The Consent Agenda

The following ordinances and resolutions were considered:

1. [ORD. 2025-259](#) To authorize the special use of the property known as 2315 Floyd Avenue for the purpose of a two-family attached dwelling with an accessory dwelling unit, upon certain terms and conditions. (As Amended) (2nd District)

Patrons: Mayor Avula (By Request)

6. [ORD. 2026-024](#) To authorize the special use of the property known as 401 West Marshall Street for the purpose of one single-family detached dwelling and a multifamily dwelling containing no more than three dwelling units,

upon certain terms and conditions. (As Amended) (2nd District)

Patrons: Mayor Avula (By Request)

7. [ORD. 2026-026](#) To authorize the special use of the property known as 715 Mosby Street for the purpose of a mixed-use building, upon certain terms and conditions, and to repeal Ord. No. 2010-128-172, adopted Oct. 11, 2010, and all amendatory ordinances thereto. (As Amended) (7th District)

Patrons: Mayor Avula (By Request)

8. [ORD. 2026-034](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$10,000.00 from the Family and Children's Trust Fund of Virginia and to appropriate the increase to the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Department of Social Services Special Fund by \$10,000.00 for the purpose of providing funding for the Healthy Families program.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

9. [ORD. 2026-035](#) To amend Ord. No. 2025-057, adopted May 12, 2025, which adopted the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 General Fund Budget and made appropriations pursuant thereto, by changing the uses and allocation of the Council District Funds for the Seventh District pursuant to Va. Code § 15.2-2503 for the use of the Council Member in the representation of the Seventh District.

Patrons: President Newbille

10. [ORD. 2026-036](#) To amend Ord. No. 2025-057, adopted May 12, 2025, which adopted the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 General Fund Budget and made appropriations pursuant thereto, by transferring \$50,000.00 from the Outside Agencies and Central Appropriations agency Reserve for Council Amendment line item and appropriating such transferred funds to the Outside Agencies and Central Appropriations agency Presbyterian Homes & Family Services, Inc. line item for the purpose of providing funding to support a family crisis fund.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

11. [ORD. 2026-037](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$41,240.00 from the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority and to appropriate the increase to the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services' OAA Harm Reduction Vending Machines Special Fund by \$41,240.00 for the purpose of providing funding for harm reduction vending machines to combat the opioid crisis.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

12. [ORD. 2026-038](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$100,000.00 from the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority, and to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by creating a new special fund for the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services entitled "OAA Mini Grants Special Fund" and appropriating the increase to the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services' "OAA Mini Grants Special Fund" by \$100,000.00 for the purpose of providing grants to community partners to combat the opioid crisis.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

13. [ORD. 2026-039](#) To amend City Code §§ 14-181, concerning definitions related to land use and development performance criteria in Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas, 14-263, concerning general performance criteria, and 14-264, concerning criteria for resource protection areas for the purpose of aligning the City Code with state law.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

14. [ORD. 2026-040](#) To amend § 14-336, concerning Richmond Erosion and Stormwater Management Program fees, for the purpose of aligning such section with recent amendments to state law and regulations approved by the State Water Control Board.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

16. [ORD. 2026-045](#) To repeal City Code § 12-46, concerning the disposition of revenues derived from the expiration of partial exemptions from real estate taxation and from certain sales of tax delinquent properties, and to amend ch. 12, art. II, of the City Code by adding therein a new section

12-48, concerning disposition of certain real estate tax revenue, for the purpose of providing for the disposition and evaluation of certain revenues for affordable housing initiatives.

Patrons: Ms. Robertson, Mayor Avula, Ms. Lynch, Ms. Trammell, Mr. Breton, Ms. Jones, President Newbille and Vice President Jordan

18. [RES.](#) To name the alley located in the block bounded by T Street, North 31st Street, Kuhn Street and North 32nd Street as “Strong Oak Alley.” (7th District)
[2026-R008](#)

Patrons: Mayor Avula (By Request)

19. [RES.](#) To designate the property known as 4611 Walmsley Boulevard as a revitalization area pursuant to Va. Code § 36-55.30:2. (8th District)
[2026-R009](#)

Patrons: Mayor Avula

20. [RES.](#) To express the City Council's support for and request the Commonwealth Transportation Board to provide funding for the City's SMART SCALE Round 7 candidate projects for 2026.
[2026-R010](#)

Patrons: Mayor Avula

21. [RES.](#) To provide for the issuance of general obligation public improvement refunding bonds of the City of Richmond, Virginia, in the maximum principal amount of \$42,085,000 to refund all or portions of certain general obligation bonds previously issued by the City, and to authorize the Director of Finance, with the approval of the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City, to sell such refunding bonds for such purpose, to provide for the form, details and payment of such bonds, and to authorize the issuance of such bonds as either federally tax-exempt or federally taxable bonds, or both.
[2026-R011](#)

Patrons: Mayor Avula

22. [RES.](#) To provide for the issuance of public utility revenue refunding bonds of the City of Richmond, Virginia, in the maximum principal amount of \$294,280,000 to refund all or portions of certain public utility revenue bonds previously issued by the City, to authorize the Director of Finance, with the approval of the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City, to sell such refunding bonds for such purposes, providing for the form, details and payment of such bonds and
[2026-R012](#)

approving the form of supplemental indenture of trust, and to authorize the issuance of such bonds as either federally tax-exempt or federally taxable bonds, or both.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Mayor Avula gave brief remarks on ORD. 2026-045, noting that it provides a predictable source of dedicated funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Chief Administrative Officer Odie Donald II provided information on the functional aspects of ORD. 2026-045 and thanked City Council for their collaboration.

Councilor Ellen Robertson provided an overview of the history of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and highlighted the importance of the funding stream established by ORD. 2026-045.

Public Hearing

Derek Starr Redwine, Richmonders Involved to Strengthen our Communities (RISC), spoke in support of ORD. 2026-045 and the affordable housing trust fund.

Brenda Hawkins, RISC, spoke in support of ORD. 2026-045 and the affordable housing trust fund.

Janice Lacy, RISC, spoke in support of ORD. 2026-045 and the affordable housing trust fund.

Martin Wegbreit, RISC, spoke in support of ORD. 2026-045 and the affordable housing trust fund.

Beverley Ross, RISC, spoke in support of ORD. 2026-045 and the affordable housing trust fund.

Nancy Kunkel, Affordable Housing Trust Fund Oversight Board member, spoke in support of ORD. 2026-045 and the affordable housing trust fund.

Ralph Hodge, RISC, spoke in support of ORD. 2026-045 and the affordable housing trust fund.

Alex Kreiger, RISC, spoke in support of ORD. 2026-045 and the affordable housing trust fund.

Councilor Kenya Gibson thanked Mayor Avula and Council Members for the collaboration involved in ORD. 2026-045, and stated that the financial health of the city is dependent on affordable housing.

Councilor Nicole Jones thanked Councilor Robertson and all those involved with ORD. 2026-045, stating that it demonstrates fairness and accountability by the city.

Councilor Sarah Abubaker thanked all those involved in ORD. 2026-045 and stated that she will continue to support more robust reporting and accountability measures in the future.

Councilor Reva Trammell thanked Mayor Avula and CAO Donald for their collaboration on ORD. 2026-045.

President Cynthia Newbille expressed appreciation for her colleagues on City Council, Council and administrative staff, Mayor Avula, housing advocates, and community partners for their continued efforts in addressing affordable housing in the city.

There were no further comments and the Consent Agenda was adopted: Ayes 8, Breton, Gibson, Jones, Robertson, Trammell, Abubaker, Jordan, Newbille. Noes 0. Lynch was away.

The Regular Agenda

The following ordinance was considered:

15. [ORD. 2026-041](#) To amend Ord. No. 2025-057, adopted May 12, 2025, which adopted the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 General Fund Budget and made appropriations thereto, by (i) transferring \$14,700,000.00 from the Contingency Reserve; (ii) creating a new line item in the Outside Agencies and Central Appropriations agency entitled "EDA - Diamond District;" and (iii) appropriating such transferred funds to such new line item in the Outside Agencies and Central Appropriations agency, all for the purpose of providing funding to the Economic Development Authority of the City of Richmond for the redevelopment of the area known as the Diamond District.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Sharon Ebert, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Planning and Economic Development, outlined the proposed ordinance intended to assist the Economic Development Authority in acquiring the SportsBackers Stadium parcel from VCU.

Chief Administrative Officer Odie Donald II provided contextual background information about funding for the Diamond District development.

Public Hearing

Jason Guillot, Diamond District Partners and Talhimer Realty Partners, spoke in support of the proposed ordinance and the use of contingency funding, noting the urgent nature of certain aspects of the project.

Grace Washington, JNG Workforce Development Services, spoke in support of the proposed ordinance, stating that the funding would be beneficial for those working on the redevelopment as well as the affordable housing that will be built as part of the project.

Councilor Kenya Gibson expressed concerns with the use of contingency funds for the project, stating that such a use is not in alignment with the City Code, and therefore she would not be supporting the proposed ordinance.

At the request of Councilor Andrew Breton, Michael Nguyen, Deputy Director of Finance, explained how the use of funds outlined in the proposed ordinance is more akin to an investment on the city's part rather than an expenditure. Mr. Nguyen stated that in effect, it is the exchange of cash for a promissory note, which becomes an asset to the city's fund balance in the contingency reserve.

Councilor Breton clarified that the contingency reserve balance would remain the same due to the cash value of the promissory note, which Mr. Nguyen confirmed.

Councilor Sarah Abubaker expressed concerns with whether the proposed allocation is an appropriate use of contingency funds, and stated that Council is being put in a situation where it is asked to vote against its own rules or an entire economic development deal will fall through.

CAO Donald acknowledged the fairness of Councilor Abubaker's statement, but noted that the funds are not leaving the city coffers. He also stated that at this point in the Diamond District project, the situation is unique enough to warrant the use of contingency funds.

Vice President Katherine Jordan stated that the proposed use of contingency funds is allowable under the City Charter, which was outlined in the staff report presented to the Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee on February 18, and addressed at that time. She expressed confidence in administrative and Council staff regarding the proposed ordinance, and the time and expertise involved in every step of the funding process. She noted that the economic climate has changed greatly since the Diamond District project began, and the city's ability to adapt to and accommodate those changes has kept the project alive, even as similar projects in other parts of the country fail.

There were no further comments and the ORD. 2026-041 was adopted: Ayes 8, Breton, Jones, Robertson, Lynch, Trammell, Abubaker, Jordan, Newbille. Noes 1, Gibson.

Motions

Councilor Reva Trammell moved that the ordinance entitled:

2. [ORD. 2025-270](#) To authorize the special use of the property known as 217 West Clay Street for the purpose of a restaurant with outdoor dining, upon certain terms and conditions. (As Amended) (2nd District)

Patrons: Mayor Avula (By Request)

be amended and continued to March 10, 2026, to modify certain terms and conditions.

The motion was seconded and approved: Ayes 8, Breton, Gibson, Lynch, Robertson, Trammell, Abubaker, Jordan, Newbille. Noes 0. Jones was away.

Councilor Kenya Gibson moved that the ordinance entitled:

5. [ORD. 2026-019](#) To authorize the special use of the property known as 602 West 26th Street for the purpose of no more than [two] one single-family detached [dwellings] dwelling and one two-family detached dwelling, upon certain terms and conditions. (As Amended) (5th District)

Patrons: Mayor Avula (By Request)

be amended and continued to **March 10, 2026**, to modify the number of dwelling units.

The motion was seconded and approved: **Ayes 8, Breton, Gibson, Jones, Robertson, Trammell, Abubaker, Jordan, Newbille. Noes 0. Lynch was away.**

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

There were no amendments or corrections to the following meeting minutes, which were approved as presented.

[CD.2026.043](#) February 9 2026 Informal Meeting Minutes

[CD.2026.058](#) February 9, 2026 Formal Meeting Minutes

Introduction of Ordinances and Resolutions

[CD.2026.062](#) February 23, 2026 Introduction Papers List

City Council will hold a public hearing on the following ordinances on **Tuesday, March 10, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.:**

25. [ORD. 2026-046](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$2,500.00 from the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority and to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 General Fund Budget by creating a new line item in the Outside Agencies and Central Appropriations agency entitled "Henrico County Regional Recovery Day" and appropriating \$2,500.00 to such new line item in the Outside Agencies and Central Appropriations agency, all for the purpose of making a grant of matching funds to Henrico County to support the Regional Recovery Day initiative funded by the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

This ordinance was introduced and committee referral waived pursuant to Rule VI(B)(3)(c).

26. [ORD. 2026-047](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$10,000.00 from the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority and to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 General Fund Budget by creating a new line item in the Outside Agencies and Central Appropriations agency called the "Henrico County OAA Hospital Liaison Grant," and appropriate the increase to the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 General Fund Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to such

new line item by \$10,000.00, all for the purpose of making a grant of matching funds to Henrico County to support the Hospital Liaison initiative funded by the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

This ordinance was introduced and committee referral waived pursuant to Rule VI(B)(3)(c).

27. [ORD. 2026-048](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Sublease Agreement between the City of Richmond, as sublandlord, and UGK Community First Corp., as subtenant, for the purpose of subleasing a portion of certain real property located at 1400 Oliver Hill Way. (6th District)

Patrons: Mayor Avula

This ordinance was introduced and committee referral waived pursuant to Rule VI(B)(2).

28. [ORD. 2026-049](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute an Operational Agreement for Cooperative Partnerships for Opioid Abatement Authority Award for Hospital Liaison Effort between the City of Richmond, the Counties of Henrico, Chesterfield, and Hanover, and the City of Colonial Heights for the purpose of supporting a hospital liaison initiative to combat the opioid crisis.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

This ordinance was introduced and committee referral waived pursuant to Rule VI(B)(2).

29. [ORD. 2026-050](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute an Operational Agreement for Cooperative Partnerships for Regional Recovery Day between the City of Richmond and the Counties of Henrico, Chesterfield, and Hanover for the purpose of supporting a Regional Recovery Day event funded by the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

This ordinance was introduced and committee referral waived pursuant to Rule VI(B)(2).

City Council will hold a public hearing on the following ordinances on Monday, March 23, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.:

30. [ORD. 2026-051](#) To authorize the special use of the property known as 4021 Crutchfield Street for the purpose of a home occupation within an accessory structure, upon certain terms and conditions. (5th District)

Patrons: Mayor Avula (By Request)

This ordinance was introduced and referred to the Planning Commission meeting on Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

31. [ORD. 2026-052](#)

To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$69,015.00 from the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, and to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by creating a new special fund for the Department of Fire and Emergency Services called the “Virginia Fire Services PPE Grant Special Fund,” and increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services’ “Virginia Fire Services PPE Grant Special Fund” by \$69,015.00 for the purpose of providing funding for firefighter turnout gear and personal protective equipment.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

This ordinance was introduced and referred to the Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting on Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.

Reports or Announcements by Members of the Council

Members of Council provided reports and announcements regarding respective district meetings and activities.

Councilor Ellen Robertson left the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

CITY CLERK