



City of Richmond

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

Draft Meeting Minutes Governmental Operations Standing Committee

Wednesday, July 23, 2025

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Committee and Other Council Members in Attendance

The Honorable Katherine Jordan - Chair

The Honorable Sarah Abubaker - Vice Chair

Absent

The Honorable Kenya Gibson - Committee Member

Staff in Attendance

Maria Garnett, Council Policy Analyst

Susan McKenney, Senior Assistant City Attorney

Kimberly Morris, Assistant City Clerk

William Perkins, Council Senior Legislative Services Manager

Candice Reid, City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Katherine Jordan called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Public Speaker Guidelines

Upon the Chair's request, Assistant City Clerk Kimberly Morris provided information on the appropriate manner in which the Council Chamber is to be evacuated in the event of an emergency along with public speaker guidelines.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comment speakers.

Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes to be approved.

Presentation(s)

Employee Training and Engagement

Tyrome Alexander, Director of Human Resources, provided a presentation regarding employee training and engagement

[CD.2025.244](#) Department of Human Resources Engagement and Training Update

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker asked how the turnover rate at the city compared to national standards.

Mr. Alexander stated the turnover rate of government employees was between ten and fifteen percent nationally. He also stated the city's turnover rate had decreased over the years.

Vice Chair Abubaker asked if any employees have self-reported what has kept them working for the city.

Mr. Alexander state he did not have that specific information on hand, but that his interpretation of the decrease in turnover was that employees were now excited and motivated to work for Richmond City government. He also stated that there were challenges with the culture of some departments and a perceived lack of trust between frontline staff and senior leadership.

Vice Chair Abubaker asked what other municipalities were doing to engage frontline workers, and how the city could promote value in its employees.

Mr. Alexander stated that employees would first need an opportunity to identify what improvements they would like to see, then the city could build a program around those outcomes. He also suggested engaging with upper management to promote positive relationships, forming focus groups and creating a plan of action to strengthen employee morale.

Chair Katherine Jordan asked when updates on city position vacancies would be completed.

Mr. Alexander stated that his team would be compiling data from the last fiscal year, and he expected it to be ready to present around the end of July.

Report on Reports (Part Two)

Maria Garnett, Council Policy Analyst for the Office of the Council Chief of Staff, provided a presentation regarding city code required reports.

[CD.2025.242](#) Report on Reports (Part Two)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker asked if best practices were identified in the research of local government, and how required reports were organized.

Ms. Garnett stated specific research for best practices was not conducted; however, she added it would be done going forward.

Vice Chair Abubaker asked what mechanisms were in place to get required reports submitted and on time.

Adam Hohl, Senior Policy Advisor for Public Utilities, stated that city administration would like to have a dialogue with members to determine which city code required reports were still needed. He noted that Chief Administrative Officer Odie Donald II should be included in those discussions.

Circular Economy

Tara Worden, Sustainability Manager for the Office of Sustainability, provided a presentation regarding creating a circular economy system in the city.

[CD.2025.245](#) Circular Economy Positioning Richmond to Lead Virginia's Circular Economy Revolution

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Vice Chair Abubaker asked if any local businesses or organizations were willing to participate in the city's circular economy initiative.

Ms. Worden stated some mattress recycling and textile companies were interested in partnering with the city on the initiative. She also stated some potential city owned properties were under consideration.

Daniel Klein, Sustainability Coordinator for the Office of Sustainability, gave an overview of the city's cooling kits.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance was considered:

1. [ORD. 2025-136](#) To repeal City Code §§ 2-29, 2-31, 2-32, and 2-33, concerning the classifications of Council liaison, Council Policy Analyst, Council Budget Analyst, and the Council Public Relations Specialist, respectively, and to amend City Code § 2-30, concerning the Council Chief of Staff appointment and duties, for the purpose of providing for the appointment of employees in such classifications by the Council Chief of Staff. (As Amended)

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

Chair Katherine Jordan provided an introduction and background information regarding the proposed ordinance. She stated the intent of the ordinance is to streamline the Council Chief of Staff office with the other Council offices.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

There were no comments or discussions and Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker moved to forward ORD. 2025-136 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 2, Abubaker and Jordan. Noes, 0.

The following ordinance was considered:

2. [RES. 2025-R031](#) To authorize the utilization of the design-build procurement method for the construction of the Canoe Run Park CSO Storage Tank project.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Robert Stone, Deputy Director of Public Utilities, provided an introduction and background information regarding the proposed resolution.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

Vice Chair Abubaker asked what the advantages of the project were. She also asked for clarity regarding the cost efficiency of the new design build versus the standard design already in use.

Mr. Stone stated the advantages were timeline improvement, price reduction and an innovative mindset of the delivery method.

Rene Almarez, Director of Procurement, stated the process was better overall because the cost was identified up front which results in lower prices.

Chair Katherine Jordan asked who would inform the public of the construction process at Canoe Run Park.

Mr. Stone stated a meeting has been held with Councilor Stephanie Lynch, and other forms of communication are forthcoming.

There were no further comments or discussions and Vice Chair Abubaker moved to forward RES. 2025-R031 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 2, Abubaker and Jordan. Noes, 0.

Board Vacancies

[CD.2025.241](#) Governmental Operations Standing Committee Boards & Commissions
Vacancy Report Wednesday, July 23, 2025

Vice Chair Abubaker moved to forward the following applications for appointment and reappointment to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 2, Abubaker and Jordan. Noes, 0.

Audit Committee:

Zanas DaQuan Talley

Clean City Commission:

Crystal Carter

Sustainability and Resilience Commission:

Daniel Hart (reappointment)

Luis Huertas (reappointment)

Harrison Wallace (reappointment)

Frank Novitzki

Renee Purdy

Discussion Item(s)

There were no discussion items.

Staff Report

Council staff provided the committee with the July Governmental Operations Standing Committee staff report.

The committee also discussed the need to reschedule conflicting committee meeting dates in November and December, having a city position vacancy report from the Department of Human Resources presented at the October committee meeting, and a possible upcoming presentation from the General Registrar. The committee also agreed to cancel its scheduled August meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.