



# City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
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## DRAFT Meeting Minutes Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee

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Wednesday, October 15, 2025

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – City Hall

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### Committee Members and Other Council Members in Attendance

The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Chair  
The Honorable Katherine Jordan - Vice President  
The Honorable Nicole Jones – Vice Chair  
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Member (late arrival and early departure)

### Staff in Attendance

Tori Cotman, Assistant City Attorney  
Maria Garnett, Council Policy Analyst  
Kiley Kesecker, Deputy City Clerk  
Kimberly Morris, Assistant City Clerk  
Candice Reid, City Clerk

### Call to Order

Chair Ellen Robertson called the meeting to order at 2:02 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 way to evacuate the Council Chamber in an emergency along with public speaker guidelines.

### Public Comment Period

There were no public comment speakers.

### Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of September 17, 2025, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

[CD.2025.305](#) September 17, 2025 - Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [20250917 Finance Minutes - DRAFT](#)

## Board Vacancies

Pamela Nichols, Council Management Analyst, reviewed board vacancies and applications for consideration by the committee.

[CD.2025.306](#) October 15, 2025 - Finance and Economic Development Board  
Vacancy Report

Attachments: [20251015 - Finance Board Vacancy Report](#)

*A copy of the material provided has been filed.*

*Member Stephanie Lynch joined the meeting at 2:14 p.m.*

**Vice Chair Nicole Jones made a motion to continue consideration of appointment applications for vacancies on the Participatory Budgeting Steering Commission and Richmond Region Tourism, to the January 21, 2026, Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting, and to forward the following board reappointment and appointment applications to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Lynch, Jones and Robertson. Noes None.**

Economic Development Authority Board of Directors:  
Kenneth Smither  
Lamarr Johnson

Local Finance Board for Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust:  
Michael Nguyen (reappointment)  
Tanikia Jackson

Minority Business Enterprise and Emerging Small Business Advisory Board:  
Morris Cephas (reappointment)  
Shirley Crawford (reappointment)

Richmond Region Tourism:  
Paulin Cheatham (reappointment)

## Paper(s) for Consideration

**The following ordinance was considered:**

1. [ORD. 2025-225](#) To amend Ord. No. 2025-057, adopted May 12, 2025, which adopted the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget and made appropriations thereto, by transferring \$2,000,000.00 from the

“Delinquent Tax Sales” special fund and appropriating such transferred funds to the “Affordable Housing Trust Fund” special fund for the purposes set forth in City Code § 16-53.

**Patrons:** Mayor Avula, Ms. Robertson, Ms. Lynch, Ms. Jones and President Newbille

**Attachments:** [Ord. No. 2025-225](#)

Meghan Brown, Director of Budget and Strategic Planning, provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed ordinance. Director Brown stated that the proposed ordinance would transfer \$2,000,000.00 from the Delinquent Tax Sales account to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund per the commitment of administration after the restitution payment for Marvin Grimm, Jr.

Chair Ellen Robertson asked if there was any plan for the outstanding balance, and requested detailed reports on the accounts.

Director Brown stated the plan was to restart the Delinquent Tax program, and she agreed to provide the requested information.

## Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

Chair Ellen Robertson, Member Stephanie Lynch, and Vice Chair Nicole Jones requested to be added as patrons of Ord. 2025-225.

**There were no further comments or discussions and Member Nicole Jones moved to forward ORD. 2025-225 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Lynch, Jones, Roberson. Noes None.**

**The following ordinance was considered:**

2. [ORD. 2025-232](#) 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 Virginia Department of Energy, to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by creating a new special fund for the Office of Sustainability called the “Virginia Energy Resilience Study (VERS), Virginia Energy Resilience Planning Grant Special Fund,” and to appropriate the increase to the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Office of Sustainability’s “Virginia Energy Resilience Study (VERS), Virginia Energy Resilience Planning Grant Special Fund” by \$10,000.00 for the purpose of funding the implementation of energy resilience planning in the city’s East End.

**Patrons:** Mayor Avula

**Attachments:** [Ord. No. 2025-232](#)

Laura Thomas, Director for the Office of Sustainability, provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed ordinance, stating that it was for a small grant for the development of a resilience hub to incorporate solar energy in the city's East End.

## Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

Vice Chair Ellen Robertson asked questions about the source of funding for the plan, and she requested a map of resilience hubs across the city.

**There were no further comments or discussions and Member Stephanie Lynch moved to forward ORD. 2025-232 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Lynch, Jones, Roberson. Noes None.**

## The following ordinances were considered:

3. [ORD. 2025-233](#) To authorize a proposed tourism project at 921 Myers Street pursuant to the Virginia Tourism Authority's Tourism Development Financing Program in accordance with state law. (2nd District)

**Patrons:** Mayor Avula, Vice President Jordan, Ms. Robertson, Ms. Jones and Ms. Lynch

**Attachments:** [Ord. No. 2025-233](#)

4. [ORD. 2025-234](#) To authorize a proposed tourism project at 1600 Roseneath Road pursuant to the Virginia Tourism Authority's Tourism Development Financing Program in accordance with state law. (2nd District)

**Patrons:** Mayor Avula, Vice President Jordan, Ms. Robertson, Ms. Jones and Ms. Lynch

**Attachments:** [Ord. No. 2025-234](#)

Matt Welch, Senior Policy Advisor with the Department of Economic Development, provided the committee with a presentation regarding Ord. 2025-233 and Ord. 2025-234, and tourism development, which included tourism processes, tourism zones, finance structure, and market demand.

[CD.2025.321](#) Tourism Development Financing Program

Attachments: [Finance Committee Update](#) [TDFP Overview](#) [10.15.25](#)

*A copy of the material provided has been filed.*

Member Stephanie Lynch asked why the city has not used the state gap financing program more often.

Mr. Welch stated the state had a long and arduous process which could be the reason the program was not used more.

Chair Ellen Robertson asked if this was the first opportunity the city considered using the funds from the state for designated zones in the city and if grant funds required repayment.

Mr. Welch stated that Ord.2025-233 and Ord.2025-234 were the first ordinances brought before Council for consideration to utilize the program. He stated that a part of the city's revenue would be reappropriated to cover the gap financing.

Chair Robertson asked what was the total gap amount from the city and the state.

Mr. Welch stated the total gap for both city and state is 25%.

Vice President Katherine Jordan, Chair Ellen Robertson, Vice Chair Nicole Jones, and Member Stephanie Lynch requested to be co-patrons of Ord. 2025-233 and Ord. 2025-234.

## Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

Vice President Katherine Jordan stated she believed the ordinances provided resources for the unique needs in both tourism zones.

Chair Robertson suggested that city administration work closely with the Richmond Region Tourism Board to strengthen its partnership.

**There were no further comments or discussions and Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to forward ORD. 2025-233 and ORD. 2025-234 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Lynch, Jones, Robertson. Noes None.**

**The following ordinance was considered:**

5. [ORD. 2025-236](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Grant Agreement between the City of Richmond, Bellevue Gardens VA LLC, and the Economic Development Authority of the City of Richmond for the purpose of facilitating the construction of an affordable housing development located at 3940 Rosedale Avenue. (3rd District)

Patrons: Mayor Avula

**Attachments:** [Ord. No. 2025-236](#)

## Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

Rachel Hightman, Project Development Manager for Housing and Community Development, provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed ordinance. Ms. Hightman stated that the proposed ordinance was for an affordable housing performance grant for a development project in the 3rd District.

Chair Ellen Robertson asked if this was a performance grant or a grant that was directly from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. She stated the committee would like verbiage to identify it as a performance grant for monitoring purposes.

Ms. Hightman described the performance grant as a incremental tax rebate that was only in effect upon completion of the project. She agreed to include the necessary verbiage in future ordinances of a similar nature.

**There were no further comments or discussions and Member Stephanie Lynch moved to forward ORD. 2025-236 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Lynch, Jones, Robertson. Noes None.**

**The following ordinance was considered:**

6. [ORD. 2025-237](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute The Third Enterprise Zone Cooperation Agreement between the City of Richmond, Virginia and the Economic Development Authority of the City of Richmond for the purpose of administering the Enterprise Zone Program to stabilize and revitalize enterprise zone areas by stimulating private investment through financial incentives.

**Patrons:** Mayor Avula

**Attachments:** [Ord. No. 2025-237](#)

Jacquelyn Teemer, Programs Administrator with the Department of Economic Development, provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed ordinance, stating that it established the administrative framework for managing the city's local enterprise zone program in partnership with the Commonwealth of Virginia.

## Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

**There were no comments or discussions and Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to forward ORD. 2025-237 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Lynch, Jones, Robertson. Noes None.**

**The following ordinance was considered:**

7. [RES. 2025-R043](#) To request that the Chief Administrative Officer cause the Department of Finance and Department of Housing and Community Development, in coordination with other relevant City departments, to conduct an inventory of existing City programs and initiatives that mitigate displacement, to assess their effectiveness, and to report findings and recommendations to the Council within 120 days.

**Patrons:** Ms. Robertson, Ms. Lynch, Ms. Jones and Vice President Jordan

**Attachments:** [Res. No. 2025-R043](#)

Chair Ellen Robertson provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed resolution stating it resulted from a study performed by Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) of Virginia, for the city to assist with mitigating housing displacement.

Maria Garnett, Council Policy Analyst, stated the resolution was developed to provide information about staffing, programs, and funding to the committee before the budget process.

Member Stephanie Lynch requested to be a co-patron of Res. 2025-R043.

*Member Stephanie Lynch left the meeting at 3:02 p.m.*

## Public Hearing

Annika Schunn, Housing Policy Advocate for Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME), spoke in support of Res. 2025-R043 and provided additional information regarding the proposed resolution.

Vice Chair Nicole Jones requested to be a co-patron of Res. 2025-R043.

There were no comments or discussions and Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to forward RES. 2025-043 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 2, Jones, Robertson. Noes None.

## Presentation(s)

### Risk Management and Claims

Donnell Stewart, Chief of Risk Management with the Department of Finance, provided the committee with information and an overview regarding local, state and federal policies, and fiscal year 2025 settlements.

[CD.2025.320](#) October 15, 2025 - Risk Management Presentation

Attachments: [20251015 - Risk Management Presentation](#)

*A copy of the material provided has been filed.*

Chair Robertson asked what contributed to the significant reduction in liability and workers' compensation claims, and if there was any explanation for the Fire Department's FY2024 worker compensation claims.

Mr. Stewart stated lower severity and the lowered number of claims decreased the cost of damages, and the Fire Department was governed by a presumption type of claim. He also stated the General Assembly increased the number of cancers that were covered by Medicaid.

Chair Robertson asked how risk management was progressing, and if the city was within a reasonable margin of error relating to risk and costs. She asked if there were any programs or recommendations in place to reduce the city's risk, and she requested information related to workers compensation and liability claim reductions.

Mr. Stewart stated that the city's position with risk includes rising litigation, medical, and insurance costs. He stated insurance carriers were not flexible in reference to rates, and that he could provide additional information to the Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee by the close of the following week.

Vice Chair Nicole Jones asked if there was any information regarding to the city's liability insurance or claims related to workplace discrimination or harassment. She also asked if risk management had a role with assisting the city with an analysis of service coverage risk due to legally protected leave programs, and she also requested a breakdown of liability claims paid by the city on behalf of the Richmond Police Department (RPD).

Mr. Stewart stated that workplace harassment claims and the leave program were handled by Human Resources. He stated he could provide the Finance and Economic and Development Committee with a report of RPD claims.

Vice President Katherine Jordan asked if risk management was working to protect workers against stress and heat related claims.



Mr. Stewart stated risk management works with agencies to post heat advisories and provide hydration stations.

### **Tax Relief Program Performance**

Letitia Shelton, Director of Finance, provided the committee with information regarding the GAP Grant Program, the Older Adults and Persons With Disabilities Program (OAPD), the Real Estate Tax Exemption Program, the Personal Property Tax Relief Act and the Tax Amnesty Program.

[CD.2025.319](#) October 15, 2025 - Tax Relief Presentation

Attachments: [20251015 - Tax Relief Presentation](#)

*A copy of the material provided has been filed.*

Chair Ellen Robertson asked if the additional staff hired by Finance would be working to identify eligible applicants for the GAP Grant Program, and if staff was working with citizens to assist with incomplete applications.

Director Shelton stated staff contacted the residents by phone or email who had incomplete applications.

Vice Chair Nicole Jones stated the GAP Grant was trending on social media, and encouraged the Department of Finance to acquire staff to handle the volume of responses from citizens. She asked if there was any process that details what was needed to apply for the program.

Director Shelton stated there was communication detailing what was required for the program.

Vice President Katherine Jordan asked if there was a caller identification process for the GAP program, and if there was any mail received follow-up process for citizens.

Director Shelton stated there was no such process.

Chair Robertson asked if there were more applications received than budgeted for the OAPD program.

Jackie Hubbard, Revenue Manager for the Department of Finance, stated she was not aware of any rejected applications due to the budget.

Chair Robertson asked if there was a tax amnesty program in 2025.

Director Shelton stated there had not been a program since 2018.

Vice President Jordan asked if there would be a tax amnesty program to provide residents an opportunity to become current on overdue taxes.

Director Shelton stated she would have to obtain more information and possibly approval from the state for implementation of that type of program.

### **Discussion Item(s)**

There were no discussion items.

### **Staff Report**

Council staff provided the committee with the October Finance and Economic Development staff report.

[CD.2025.325](#) October 2025 Finance & Economic Development Meeting Council Staff Report

**Attachments:** [October 2025 - Council Staff Finance Prep](#)

*A copy of the material provided has been filed.*

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:57 p.m.