



Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

Office of the Council Chief of Staff

Government Operations Standing Committee

June 24, 2026

Staff Prep Memo for Councilmembers

Previous Meeting: May 27, 2026

Next Meeting: July 22, 2026

Legistar Link: <https://richmondva.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=1346125&GUID=0230220F-B550-4CCF-AC7B-EB9E0550E958&Search=>

Presentation:

- DPU on Customer Information System and Billing – Scott Morris, Director
- Office of Elections Updates – David Levine, General Registrar

Papers for Consideration:

- Ord. 2026-XXX (Newbille, 2026 Recodification)

Discussion Item:

- Scheduling updates

Wed, 7/22 Meeting Preview:

- CSR (311) on department SOPs and service level agreements (SLAs) for resident requests
- Review proposed schedule of Gov Ops presentations (September 2026 through February 2027)

New Customer Information System (CIS) and Billing Update – DPU, Scott Morris

Staff Notes:

- **System Launch:** DPU went live on May 26 with 2 out of its 3 planned new Customer Information Systems, a project initially known as Project Synergy.
- **Legacy Replacement:** The new systems replace a 40-year-old legacy Customer Information System and an outdated Service Suite Field system.
- **Modernized Technology:** The upgrade utilizes cloud-optimized, Software as a Service (SaaS) technology to automate manual processes and prepare DPU for the large-scale deployment of Automatic Metering Infrastructure (AMI).
- **Operational Improvements:** The transition features intelligent dispatch to reduce response times and improve scheduling adherence for customer appointments.
- **Enhanced User Experience:** The Customer Cloud Service (CCS) centralizes information into a single interface with a simplified search function, integrated contact histories, and automated rate/adjustment calculations to improve accuracy and speed up customer interactions.

Potential Questions:

Customer Information System Transition:

- What new functionalities does the new CIS offer that weren't available under the old system?
- Please outline DPU's process for protecting customer information during this transition.
- What services will customers be able to self-serve via the new DCS portal?
- Have there been any additional costs (operating or capital) to complete this transition?
- How will delinquent bills be managed under the new system?
- Is there any plan to integrate DPU into the city's main 311 system?

Accuracy of Bills:

- How specifically will the new CIS improve bill accuracy, especially water bills?
- What % of water meters are > 10 years old? When will DPU's modernization efforts be finished?
- How many homes exceeded the goal of two back-to-back estimates?
- Please elaborate on DPU's Automatic Metering Infrastructure (AMI).
- Outline DPU's process for managing bill disputes. How many complaints have you received thus far in FY26 and how are these complaints resolved, i.e. what % of complaints are substantiated?
- Who administers the formal hearing associated with a bill dispute?

Recent Billing Issues

- There were [two recent](#) press releases about "issues involving third-party billing and payment processing vendors that have affected some customer accounts." What specifically happened and how is DPU working to resolve these issues?
- Did any customers submit double payments? What is the process for getting them re-credited?
- Do you anticipate any further related issues with the transition, or is this matter settled?

Office of Elections Update – General Registrar, David Levine

Staff Notes:

- **August Primary Timeline Shifts:** In-person early voting runs from June 18 through August 1, 2026, with key holiday closures on June 19 and July 3. The final deadline for voter registration and mail ballot applications is July 24.
- **Voting Location & Legislative Adjustments:** Early voting is hosted at the Office of Elections and expands to City Hall on July 19 (the Hickory Hill site is unavailable this cycle). Operations are adjusted to comply with new state mandates, including required Sunday early voting hours (SB 438) and stricter absentee site security (HB 909).
- **Staffing & Capacity Rebuilding:** The office is on track to fill its vacancies across key areas—including leadership, operations, voter services, and communications—by the end of the month to strengthen day-to-day execution while maintaining its core experienced staff.
- **Enhanced Security & Transparency:** To reduce risk while preserving public access, the office is introducing metal detector screenings, security guards at both entrances, and an updated observer policy. Public trust is being prioritized by reopening Electoral Board meetings to the public and launching a plain-language website overhaul.

Potential Questions:

Timeline Changes and Voter Access

- What specific outreach or alternative transportation efforts are being made to ensure voters in the Hickory Hill area still have equitable access to early voting, given that this site is unavailable this cycle due to pre-existing programming?
- With Senate Bill 438 requiring Sunday early voting on the second and third Sundays before the election, how is the Office of Elections planning to promote these new weekend hours to ensure the public is aware of the expanded timeline?

Security, Transparency, and Mandates

- The presentation highlights increased security measures, including metal detectors and entry wands at voting locations. How will staff ensure that these heightened security checkpoints do not inadvertently create long lines or act as a deterrent to voters?
- House Bill 909 introduces stricter polling place conduct restrictions to absentee voting locations. How is the newly updated observer policy balancing these tighter restrictions with the office's core priority of maintaining public transparency?

Staffing, Operations, and Public Outreach

- It's encouraging to see that all six FY26 vacancies are expected to be filled by the end of the month. What strategies are being implemented to retain these new hires in leadership, operations, and voter services to ensure institutional knowledge isn't lost in future cycles?
- Do you anticipate any budget shortfalls caused by the April 2026 special election? If so, what is the plan to make sure there's adequate funding in place to meet your obligations through Fiscal Year 2027?

1. Ordinance No. 2026-XXX

Patron: President Newbille

Title: To adopt a new Code of the City of Richmond, Virginia; to repeal the Code of the City of Richmond, Virginia, 2020; to prescribe the effect of such repeal; and to provide for the manner of amending the new City Code.

Council Staff Notes:

- First recodification since December 2020 (Ord. 2020-238) – resulting in a 2,034-page document to replace the 2020 version of City Code.
- Future regular supplementation will reflect ordinances adopted since October 14, 2025.
- Updates include several changes to City Code definitions to align with state law and remove obsolete provisions from City Code.