



City of Richmond

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

Meeting Minutes Governmental Operations Standing Committee

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Committee Members and Others in Attendance

The Honorable Kristen Nye – Chair
The Honorable Michael Jones – Member (late arrival)
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert – Alternate Member

Tori Cotman, Assistant City Attorney
Joyce Davis, Interim Council Chief of Staff
Rachael Paul, Assistant City Clerk
Candice Reid, City Clerk
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Absent

The Honorable Katherine Jordan – Vice Chair

Call to Order

Chair Kristen Nye called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m., and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Citizen Speaker Guidelines

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

Member Michael Jones arrived at 2:06 p.m. and was seated.

Public Comment Period

Kevin Cianfarini expressed his concern over the management of Richmond Gas Works. He stated that Richmond Gas Works' permit history after 2009, showed that Richmond Gas expansion was happening outside of the city, primarily in wealthy suburban neighborhoods. He noted that the projects are paid with revenue bonds and have a long pay-back period. Mr. Cianfarini also stated that he believed the expansion of the gas utility was in conflict with Res. 2021-R049, which declared the existence of a climate and ecological emergency.

Barry Green stated that he traded his car for a bike to reduce congestion on the roads of his neighborhood due to the lack of frequent and efficient public transportation. He informed members of the lack of protected bike lanes and that the 40mph speed limits on roads make corridors like Warwick Road unsafe for cyclists and pedestrians. He also stated that the sidewalks were covered in tree limbs and overgrown grass/weeds, forcing cyclists and pedestrians into the road. He requested the reinstatement of the Urban Forestry Commission to provide guidance and support to ensure canopy's are maintained and enhance tree populations.

Member Michael Jones thanked Barry Green for his comments and stated that the Department of Public Works (DPW) needs to make the proper sign change on Warwick Road with the updated speed limit of 35mph. He also stated the need to find out who was responsible for sidewalk clean up, if it was the property owner or the city.

Robert Steidel, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for operations, stated that he agreed with Member Michael Jones and that city administration was working to address the concerns raised. He informed the committee that if the blockage on the sidewalk was in the right-of-way, then the city should maintain it, but if it is on private right-of-way, then the city tries to work with the homeowner to maintain it.

Sarah Weisiger discussed how the Richmond gas utility can help lower the burden of gas cost and also help transition from fossil fuels. She informed the committee that in Richmond City Code, the gas utility director may implement a rebate program for energy audits subject to the available funding, but she noted that there is not a program for houses and apartments. She continued that the incentive program would fit with the Richmond 300 Master Plan, Res. 2021-R049, and RVA Green 2050. She stated that Dominion Energy has an incentive program and hopes that City Council can make an incentive program happen.

Chair Kristen Nye asked Sarah Weisiger if she would be able to send her comments in an email and thanked her for her comments.

Erik Shilts, Rewire America Senior Director of Data Science, stated that city residents need help to access clean energy and help transition from fossil fuels in homes. He also advocated for ending the practice of laying gas pipes that he believed would harm the cities credit rating in the coming years. He spoke about the incentives from the Inflation Reduction Act that residents need help with accessing.

Approval of Minutes

There were no corrections or amendments to the meeting minutes of Wednesday, July 27, 2022, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

[CD.2022.301](#) July 27, 2022 Governmental Operations Committee Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [20220727 Gov Ops Mins](#)

Board Vacancies

There were no board vacancies for review.

Paper(s) for Consideration

1. [ORD. 2022-219](#) To repeal City Code §§ 11-19-11-50, concerning sound control, to repeal City Code § 26-929, concerning advertising and vehicles carrying sound devices on streets, and to amend ch. 11, art. II of the City Code by adding therein new §§ 11-32-11-38 for the purpose of modifying the City's sound control program. (As Amended)

Patrons: Mayor Stoney, President Newbille, Ms. Jordan, Ms. Lambert, Mr. Jones and Ms. Nye

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2022-219 - Amended 20221010](#)
[20221010 Admendment of Ord. No. 2022-219](#)

Richmond Police Department (RPD) Civilian Deputy Chief Victoria Pearson provided an update regarding fines/fees referenced in Ord. 2022-219. She stated that Council wanted to double the fees for civil penalties from \$50 to \$100 for the first offense and \$100 to \$200 for the second offense within seven days. Deputy Chief Pearson noted that the \$500 fine for the third offense would remain capped by state code. Deputy Chief Pearson also stated that the amplified sound within a park setting is addressed in the sound ordinance, and that the police as well as the Department of Parks and Recreation would have the tools necessary to measure sound.

Alternate Member Ann-Frances Lambert asked how the ordinance would be enforced and what a citizen should do if they hear a violation.

Civilian Deputy Chief Victoria Pearson replied that criminal code and civil penalties would apply to audible noise, which then an officer can pursue. Deputy Chief Pearson stated that citizens can call 911 or call the non-emergency number.

Public Hearing

John Snouffer questioned how the noise ordinance would relate to city refuse collection and construction. He proceeded with stating the previous noise ordinance was not being enforced. He addressed the current time frame for the current ordinance and wanted to know why the time frame is different for city refuse collection and construction. He spoke in favor of increasing the civil penalties for fines.

Civilian Deputy Chief Victoria Pearson responded about the different hours of operation for which exemptions apply.

Chair Kristen Nye and Alternate Member Ann-Frances Lambert had further discussion with Civilian Deputy Chief Victoria Pearson.

Chair Nye noted that there is a fiscal impact associated with the ordinance which was not noted in the legislation.

There were no further comments or discussions and Member Michael Jones moved to forward Ord. 2022-219 to Council with a recommendation to approve with amendment, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Discussion Item(s)

There were no discussion items.

Staff Report

Interim Council Chief of Staff (CCOS) Joyce Davis provided committee members with the staff report.

Ms. Davis also gave a Charter Review Commission Update. Chair Nye stated that a Gas Works presentation should be next month. Member Jones requested Animal Care & Control Operations & Support needs to do a presentation at a future Governmental Operations Standing Committee Meeting.

Closed Session

At 2:48 p.m., Member Michael Jones moved that the Governmental Operations Standing Committee hold a closed meeting pursuant to subdivision (1) of section 2.2-3711(A) of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act to discuss individually with the City Assessor, the City Auditor, the City Clerk, and the Inspector General their performance and how it will be evaluated.

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Member Michael Jones motioned to exit closed session. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Members reconvened in open session at 3:46 p.m.

Certification of Closed Meeting

WHEREAS, the Governmental Operations Standing Committee has convened in closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Governmental Operations Standing Committee that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law:

NOW, THEREFORE,
BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Governmental Operations Standing Committee hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge (i) only public matters lawfully exempt from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certifying resolution applies; and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Governmental Operations Standing Committee.

WITNESS the following vote of committee members, as recorded by Candice D. Reid, City Clerk:

CERTIFYING:

Kristen N. Nye, Chair
Michael J. Jones
Ann-Frances Lambert

DECLINING TO CERTIFY:

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:47 p.m.