



# City of Richmond

## Special Meeting Minutes

900 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
[www.rva.gov/office-city-clerk](http://www.rva.gov/office-city-clerk)

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Monday, October 25, 2021

6:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

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### **Councilmembers Present**

The Honorable Cynthia Newbille, President  
The Honorable Andreas Addison  
The Honorable Michael Jones  
The Honorable Katherine Jordan  
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert (early departure)  
The Honorable Kristen Larson (late arrival)  
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch  
The Honorable Reva Trammell

### **Absent**

The Honorable Ellen Robertson, Vice President

Council President Cynthia Newbille called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m., and presided.

### **CITIZEN SPEAKER GUIDELINES**

Upon the President's request, Council Management Analyst Lisa Braxton 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.

### **PAPER FOR CONSIDERATION**

**The following ordinance was considered:**

#### **ORD. 2021-291**

To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept the first tranche of American Rescue Plan Act funds in the amount of \$77,439,914.00 from the United States Department of the Treasury; to amend the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 General Fund Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the General Fund Budget for certain agencies and reserves for contingencies by \$35,639,914.00; to amend the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Capital Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities for certain new capital improvement projects in the Culture and Recreation category by \$28,300,000.00; to amend the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Stormwater Utility Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Stormwater Utility Budget by \$12,500,000.00; and to amend the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Water Utility Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Water Utility Budget by \$1,000,000.00 all for the purpose of funding the City's efforts to recover from the economic and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in accordance with the American Rescue Plan Act.

Citizens were provided an opportunity to offer comments in writing regarding ORD. 2021-291 prior to the Special City Council meeting. All written comments received by the Office of the City Clerk were provided to members of the Council prior to the meeting, and are included as an attachment to the October 25, 2021 Special City Council meeting minutes, which can be accessed at

Chief Administrative Officer Lincoln Saunders provided an introduction and background information regarding the proposed ordinance.

### **Public Hearing**

**Keisha Cummins, 2Love LLC Founder and CEO**, spoke in support of ORD. 2021-291, and stated it was important that children who reside in public housing have access to recreation centers. Ms. Cummings also stated that she supported the proposed funding for the Calhoun Center referenced in ORD. 2021-291.

**Stacey Daniels-Fayson, Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority Interim CEO**, spoke in support of ORD. 2021-291, and stated that investments in community centers throughout the city would improve the quality of life for residents of public housing. Ms. Daniels-Fayson also stated that the community centers would benefit the city's youth, especially young males.

**Mike Kemetic, New Era Richmond President and Co-founder**, spoke in support of ORD. 2021-291, and he stated that many of the investments referenced in ORD. 2021-291 should have previously been addressed by the city through its normal budgeting process.

*Councilor Kristen Larson arrived and was seated at 6:22 p.m.*

**Bryce Robertson, Richmond Together Volunteer**, spoke in support of ORD. 2021-291, and he stated that Richmond Together wanted to commend Council and the public for the review and public engagement efforts regarding the city's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) spending plan proposal. Mr. Robertson also stated that Richmond Together supported the proposed allocation of \$5,000,000 to the Richmond Health Equity Fund, additional funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF), and the proposed funding for work force development.

**Dr. Aubrey Jones, Richmonders Involved with Strengthening Our Communities (RISC) Member**, spoke in support of ORD. 2021-291. Dr. Jones discussed the issue of citizens experiencing a lack of affordable housing, and the impact of past evictions on families trying to obtain housing. Dr. Jones informed Council of his support for the proposed allocation of \$20,000,000 in funds for the AHTF referenced in ORD. 2021-291.

**Nerland Nicolas, RISC Team Leader, St. Elizabeth's Catholic Church Member, East End Fellowship Member**, spoke in support of ORD. 2021-291, and shared with Council the experiences of citizens who encounter difficulties obtaining affordable housing. Ms. Nicolas requested that Council approve the allocation of \$20,000,000 in funds for the AHTF referenced in ORD. 2021-291.

**Martin Wegbreit, RISC Member, AHTF Oversight Board Member**, spoke in support of ORD. 2021-291, and stated that the city was experiencing an affordable housing and eviction crisis. Mr. Wegbreit also stated that many citizens were rent burdened due to a lack of affordable housing options in the city. Mr. Wegbreit requested that the AHTF receive sufficient funding to address affordable housing and eviction diversion.

**Reverend Caitlin Deyerle, RISC Board Member, Southminster Presbyterian Pastor**, spoke in support of ORD. 2021-291, and stated that the allocated funding to the AHTF would help citizens remain in stable and safe housing. Reverend Deyerle also stated that the funding would help initiate needed affordable housing development.

**Karen Stanley, CARITAS President and CEO**, spoke in support of ORD. 2021-291, and stated that CARITAS was experiencing difficulties providing sufficient emergency housing for individuals in need, due to the lack of affordable housing options in the city. Ms. Stanley requested that Council approve the allocated funding for the AHTF.

**Charlene R. Pitchford** spoke in support of ORD. 2021-291, and stated that the Calhoun Center provided her and the community with much needed services. Ms. Pitchford requested Council adopt ORD. 2021-291 and allocate funding for the Calhoun Center.

**Barrett Hardiman, Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority Board of Commissioners Member**, spoke in support of ORD. 2021-291 and the proposed \$20,000,000 in funding for the AHTF. Mr. Hardiman informed Council that residents of public housing shared with him the importance of the Calhoun Center in their lives, and he requested Council adopt ORD. 2021-291.

*Councilwoman Reva Trammell thanked Mayor Levar Stoney and city administration for including the T.B. Smith Community Center within the proposed ARPA spending plan referenced in ORD. 2021-291.*

*Councilor Kristen Larson stated she would have preferred that more of Council's recommendations for ARPA spending were included in the city's ARPA spending plan referenced in ORD. 2021-291. Councilor Larson informed Council that she would vote to adopt ORD. 2021-291, and she also stated that she was hopeful Council would review the priorities and recommendations discussed by Council during review of the city's ARPA spending plan.*

*Councilor Stephanie Lynch stated that Council should revisit certain priorities Council previously identified during the review of the city's next budget.*

*Councilor Andreas Addison stated he was concerned that certain priorities were not being funded and addressed by the city's ARPA spending plan. Councilor Addison also stated that the city needs to prepare to adequately maintain the ARPA investments made in parks and community centers. Councilor Addison informed Council that he would vote to adopt ORD. 2021-291.*

*Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert stated that it was a priority for her to have the city invest in the Calhoun Center. Councilor Lambert also stated that ORD. 2021-291 would help make a positive impact on the city.*

*Councilor Michael Jones stated that he was excited about the proposed ARPA investments in the city's Southside. Councilor Jones also stated that he believed the majority of the spending proposals referenced in ORD. 2021-291, would benefit the individuals most impacted by COVID-19. Councilor Jones further stated that Council should be proactive to address the priorities identified by Council that were not addressed by the city's ARPA spending plan.*

*Councilor Katherine Jordan stated her appreciation for citizens who provided feedback on the city's ARPA spending plan. Councilor Jordan requested that citizens remain engaged as the funds provided by ORD. 2021-291 are used.*

*President Cynthia Newbille stated her appreciation for citizens who provided feedback on the city's ARPA spending plan. President Newbille also stated her appreciation for Councilmembers and city staff regarding work and collaboration involving the city's ARPA spending plan. President Newbille further stated it was important that the city use funds provided by ARPA to leverage additional funding to address city priorities.*

There were no further comments or discussions and **ORD. 2021-291 was adopted: Ayes 8, Addison, Jordan, Lambert, Larson, Lynch, Trammell, Jones, Newbille. Noes None.**

## DISCUSSION ITEM

### First Responders

*Councilwoman Reva Trammell stated her concerns with Richmond Police Department (RPD) staffing. Councilwoman Trammell informed Council that she was concerned the city did not have enough police officers to properly serve the population size of the city. Councilwoman Trammell further stated that she believed it was low morale and a feeling of being underappreciated that led to low staffing numbers for the RPD.*

*Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert exited the meeting at 7:18 p.m.*

*President Cynthia Newbille stated the city had a tremendous public safety officer work force, and she added that the city was taking steps to provide a premium pay bonus to first responders and complete a study of a proposed new public safety officer pay plan.*

Chief Administrative Lincoln Saunders stated that the city would provide Council with information regarding public safety officer staffing levels.

Police Chief Gerald Smith informed Council that RPD currently had 102 staffing vacancies, and he stated that was not unusual compared to other police agencies throughout the country. Chief Smith also stated that many of the vacancies were a result of officers leaving the police profession. Chief Smith further stated that a concern was the low number of applications RPD was receiving for new officers.

Fire Chief Melvin Carter stated that the Richmond Fire Department (RFD) was experiencing a large number of staffing vacancies, and provided Council with vacancy data. Chief Carter also addressed RFD's mandatory overtime policy and its relation to staffing shortages.

Mr. Saunders informed Council that city administration planned to address first responder staffing in greater detail at the October 26, 2021 Public Safety Standing Committee meeting.

*Councilwoman Reva Trammell stated it was important that councilors remind first responders how much they are appreciated.*

*Councilor Katherine Jordan stated that it was important the city prepare to adequately compensate first responders before deliberations of the next city budget begins.*

*Councilor Kristen Larson informed Council of RES. 2021-R075, and she stated the proposed resolution would request that the city compensate first responders as recommended from the proposed new public safety officer pay plan being reviewed by the city's third party consultant, the Segal Group. Councilor Larson also stated her concerns with first responder staffing shortages and public safety officer morale.*

*Councilor Michael Jones stated that he supported public safety officers in the city. Councilor Jones also stated that speeding and reckless driving needed to be addressed in the city. Councilor Jones further stated that he believed city administration should lead the effort to ensure that first responders were properly compensated.*

*President Cynthia Newbille stated her appreciation for Councilwoman Trammell requesting that Council address first responder staffing. President Newbille also stated that Council was committed to ensuring that compensation for public safety officers is adequate and appropriate in the next city budget.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

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CITY CLERK