



Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

Office of the Council Chief of Staff

Organizational Development Standing Committee

May 5, 2025

Staff Prep Document for Councilmembers

Previous Meeting: April 7, 2025

Next Meeting: June 2, 2025

Agenda Overview:

Administration Reports:

1. Tax Rebate Updates ~ Sheila White, Director of Finance

- Has Department of Finance completed its validation of remaining checks?
Are we confident that the process is now going to proceed smoothly?
- What is the timeline for printing and mailing new checks?
- What caused the errors printing and mailing real estate tax rebate checks?
- Do we have a sense of how many residents may need to submit requests for reimbursement for bank fees caused by this error?
- Why was Ms. Atkinson's resignation (dated Monday, April 21st) not announced until a week later (Monday, April 28th)?
- What steps are we taking to prevent mistakes like this from happening again?

2. Water Treatment Plant Updates ~ Scott Morris, Director of Public Utilities

- What happened that caused fluoride levels to spike at the water plant on Wednesday, April 23rd?
- Why did DPU not communicate the situation with its regional counterparts like Henrico, Chesterfield, and Hanover Counties sooner?
- It's been reported that a plant operator knew about the problem on Thursday, April 24th (4 days before it was reported publicly) ([WTVR news](#)).
 - Why is that and how can we do better?
 - Why wasn't Richmond adding fluoride from Jan 6th to April 22nd?
- What is the timeline for finishing new Standard Operating Procedures for regional communications like this?
- What are we doing to repair trust and communication protocols with our regional utility counterparts?

Education and Human Services:

Last Month Meeting Summary (Thu, 4/10):

- [meeting was cancelled]

This Month Meeting Plans (Thu, 5/8):

- Office of Aging & Disability Service will share an update on its needs assessment completed in spring 2024
- Introduce new DCAO for Human Services, Amy Popovich

Finance and Economic Development:

Last Month Meeting Summary (Wed, 4/16)

- Approved five papers related to Peer Recovery Specialists funded by the National Opioid Settlement Fund (no local fiscal impact).
- Forwarded with no recommendation [Ord. 2025-068](#) (CM Trammell) to change the real estate tax rate to \$1.16 per \$100 of assessed value beginning January 1, 2026. *(It has since been withdrawn)*
- City Assessor McKeithen and Interim CAO Joy-Hogg shared a presentation on the upcoming real estate assessment freeze ("realignment"), including motivations for changing to a July-June fiscal year cycle. The City will base its FY26 and FY27 budgets on January 1, 2026 land book values. The City will hire a communications firm (< \$200,000) later this summer to help explain these changes to various specific audiences (ex: residents, City employees, mortgage companies, etc.).
- HR Director Alexander shared a presentation on the financial impacts of collective bargaining agreements, including that 76% of employees are included in one of the five bargaining units across 23 departments. FY26 CBA salary and benefits will cost \$328 million (assuming two outstanding agreements approved) and will increase to \$350 million in FY27. HR will present on the status of Collective Bargaining again in July 2025.

This Month Meeting Plans (Wed, 5/21)

- Presentation from DCAO Sharon Ebert on economic development plans and pipeline for upcoming projects
- Four papers referred including Ord. 2025-099 to establish a disposable plastic bag tax and Ord. 2025-100 from Councilmembers Lynch, Breton, Jordan, Gibson and Jones related to publishing agency-level budget requests ahead of the mayor's proposed budget next year.

Government Operations:

Last Month Meeting Summary (Wed, 4/23):

- Committee recommended 3 ordinances for approval (Ord. 2025-070 and 071 for Collective Bargaining Agreements; Ord. 2025-072 to amend right of entry agreement with state DGS).
- Committee recommended Res. 2025-R016 (CM Jordan) to establish a new Honorary Street Sign policy beginning July 1, 2025. The policy (detailed here) includes an annual cap of 10 approved signs per year to be heard at no more than two Council meetings and establishment of an application process.
- DPU Deputy Director Laura Bendernagel shared an update on DPU's Lead Service Line Replacement Program including recent regulatory changes and efforts to complete the city's service line inventory mapping efforts (estimate ~66,000 service lines on private property with unknown materials).
- DIT Director Charles Todd shared an overview of the City's Enterprise Systems including the number of systems (428) and each system's level of criticality (67 considered "high criticality"). Mr. Todd shared a review of critical systems across several agencies and the department's approach to ensuring systems are kept operational and up to date.
- HR Director Tyrome Alexander shared an update on open audit recommendations, including that over the last two years the number has shrunk from 35 in February 2023 to 6 open in April 2025.
- OCCOS staff shared a review of required reports to Council. Currently there are 78 separate reports required to be sent to Council each year, plus Strategic Action Plans for each agency. The report gathered preliminary information which will be refined in a later presentation on which reports are being delivered, workload measures related to compiling each report and recommendations for changes in the future.

This Month Meeting Plans (Wed, 5/28):

- DPU on Gas Works CIP
- DGS on capital maintenance program
- DPW on urban forestry

Land Use, Housing and Transportation:

Last Month Meeting Summary (Tue, 4/22):

- Committee members heard testimony related to the proposed rental inspection program (RRIP) (generally supportive but with specific feedback: a request to use “deterioration” or “deteriorated” instead of “blight”; opposition to prohibition on rent increases by landlords not making improvements and to the tenant organizing requirement).
- The committee also received a presentation by DCAO Sharon Ebert on The Shockoe Project and associated plans, costs, and timelines. Councilmember Robertson indicated she will follow up directly with Ms. Ebert to provide comments and questions.
- Committee forwarded with recommendation to approve Ord. 2025-069 (Walmsley Blvd) and Res. 2025-R015 (Six Points N’hood Node). The Committee continued Res. 2024-R041 (high-risk intersection speed cameras) with a request that DPW will submit recommendations in response to study already completed.

This Month Meeting Plans (Tue, 5/20):

- Three presentations scheduled:
 - DPW on traffic calming
 - Housing and Community Development on affordable housing opportunities
 - Office of Sustainability on the city’s tree canopy
- Continue review of Res. 2024-R041 from Councilmember Lynch on study of speed cameras at high-risk intersection segments including recommendations from DPW.

Public Safety

Last Month Meeting Summary (Tue, 4/22)

- Richmond Ambulance Authority CEO Chip Decker and Dept. of Emergency Communications Director Stephen Willoughby both shared reports and separate data comparisons on 911. Members expressed disappointment that repeated requests for shared data collection (side-by-side) across the two entities was not available. Mr. Willoughby committed to following up next month with a combined report.
- Interim Fire Chief Jeffery Segal shared a 2nd quarter presentation on fire including number of incident responses (293) and median response time (4 minutes, 36 seconds) and EMS including number of responses (5,222) and median response time (4 minutes, 52 seconds). Further, Chief Segal shared that the city's Arson K9 ("Erny") despite being near retirement age, will have to stay on duty due to recent federal funding cuts.

This Month Meeting Plans (Thu, 5/29)

- Re-scheduled to Thursday May 29th at 1pm
- Continue discussion of 911 performance data comparison across RAA and the Dept of Emergency Communications, Preparedness, and Response.