

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Richmond City Council Public Safety Committee

June 25, 2024.

Janet Ramsey, Richmond

Pursuant to the Rules of Procedure, the Public Comment is an opportunity for citizens to present information to the Council.

<https://www.rva.gov/sites/default/files/2024-03/Res.%20No.%202024-R007.pdf>

The Media has reported the following information.

(The citation links are given below.)

February 20, 2017:

“Richmond’s mayor has hired a former state official who was convicted of embezzling nearly \$240,000.”

Jul. 18, 2017: (Referring to the Auditor)

“The administration wanted to get rid of Dalal because he found too much fraud and waste, embarrassing the city.”

Apr. 13, 2022:

“Messages reveal mayor's office asked Richmond auditor to change school construction cost report.”

Jul. 20, 2022:

“The city's watchdog found black holes in the record-keeping of how that money was spent.”

Aug. 29, 2022: (Regarding the collapsed Enrichmond Foundation)

“CBS 6 has reached out to RPD inquiring if any complaints have been filed but has not heard back.”

Sep. 9, 2022: (Again regarding Enrichmond)

“The city’s police department did not immediately respond to a request for comment.”

Oct. 14, 2022: (Enrichmond)

“There has been nothing from the Mayor’s office.”

Oct. 28, 2022: (Enrichmond)

“Richmond’s commonwealth’s attorney, attended the volunteers’ meeting and said three community groups were in contact with a Richmond police detective.”

“If there’s an investigation, it’s at the very beginning,” she said.

She “also outlined which law enforcement agencies might be able to investigate the issue.”

Dec. 7, 2022: (Enrichmond)

“Everyone is pitching in to help — except the Mayor and the City.”

Dec. 23, 2022: (Enrichmond)

“They have also pleaded their case to the Richmond Police Department, City of Richmond, Richmond Commonwealth’s Attorney, and other agencies. So far, there has been no visible progress toward a just resolution.”

Jan. 26, 2023: (Enrichmond)

A citizen “said he and a few other former Enrichmond partners had brief conversations with a Richmond detective, “but his position was that there was no evidence of a crime, and without some evidence he could not investigate.

Jan. 13, 2023:

“The city legally cannot pursue the Enrichmond Foundation in a court of law, because we have not given money to the Enrichmond Foundation for two years,” said a Councilmember.

A citizen “said they had spoken to the Richmond Police Department (RPD), but were told there was no evidence of a crime and it could not be investigated... CBS 6 has reached out to RPD for comment on this.”

Feb. 13, 2023:

“The local commonwealth’s attorney told us they were waiting for an investigation by law enforcement before deciding whether any action could be taken. But neither Richmond nor state police are currently investigating.”

Mar. 23, 2023:

A City Hall official “said the City Attorney’s Office has determined that because no city funds were involved, the city had no legal right to sue...”

“The Richmond Police Department and Commonwealth’s Attorney’s Office have found no evidence that embezzlement or other criminal activity was involved in the loss, and have deemed it a civil matter.”

Apr. 4, 2023:

The Mayor... “But though he said the city would assist in that investigation, he added they had no plans to strengthen their own oversight of organizations like Enrichmond.”

“It’s not the city’s role to oversee non-profits. At the end of the day, that’s the Office of the Attorney General,” he said.

May 17, 2023:

“8News previously reported that the Richmond Police Department (RPD) was looking into the dissolution, with Richmond City Commonwealth’s Attorney... confirming that her office was waiting on information from RPD “to see if charges were appropriate.”

“The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) have since begun investigating the foundation’s sudden collapse.”

July 19, 2023: (Fraud at Dept. Public Works)

“A former Richmond Department of Public Works official and his wife pleaded guilty Wednesday to defrauding the city...”

“The Department of Justice says from at least 2016 through 2021, Michael and Samaria took steps to defraud the DPW. Samaria and other co-conspirators first created and operated straw companies to bid on DPW work.”

Aug. 11, 2023: (Towing case, 19 counts of Grand Larceny of a Motor Vehicle, according to court records)

“...Richmond Police... served a search warrant at No Limit Towing... in a fraud and motor vehicle theft investigation.”

(Video - Minute 1:15) “Most of our officers, before they knew what was going on, thought that this is just a civil matter, you guys work it out in the courts.”

Aug. 18, 2023: (Grand Larceny of a Motor Vehicle)

“Sherral Crawley... [was] arraigned on... motor vehicle theft... When asked by the judge if she had an attorney... [the attorney]... told her... that this was a civil matter...”

Aug. 18, 2023: (Grand Larceny of a Motor Vehicle)

Sherral Crawley... “said the lawyer... said her case should be a civil matter.....”

“Diggs... says he tried to go to police but was told it was a civil matter...”

“Now, it is a criminal case.”

“Police thought that there was a possibility that it was simply a civil infraction. And after speaking with them, it was very clear there was some malicious intent involved,” Richmond Police Sergeant Nicholas Castrinos said.

Sept. 5, 2023: (Grand Larceny of a Motor Vehicle)

“The Richmond Police Department’s message has remained consistent since this story first broke. The department has continued to ask anyone who believes they might have been victims to file a police report and contact Richmond Police Detective Sergeant Castrinos at 804-646-1144...”

“Our team also asked police if there was any way victims could get their money back. Police remained vague in their response as this matter continues to be under investigation, but they did reiterate that this investigation has elements of both criminal and civil violations...”

“Police said that — as with any civil matter — victims should follow processes in place like contacting attorneys and “availing themselves of the court system for relief.”

Oct. 23, 2023: (Meanwhile, Harrisonburg knows how to prosecute embezzlement.)

“In a Harrisonburg White Collar Crime Case..”

“The Circuit Court sentenced Hahn to 20 years on each embezzlement count...”

“Office of Attorney... assisted in the investigation of the case with the Harrisonburg Police Department and Rockingham County Commonwealth Attorney.”

Oct. 24, 2023: (Also Harrisonburg embezzlement)

“Offender in embezzlement, money laundering case sentenced to 15 years.”

“... Several law enforcement agencies, including the Winchester Police Department, Homeland Security Investigations and Frederick County Sheriff’s Office, all assisted in the investigation, and investigators from the Office of the Attorney General of Virginia partnered with HPD detectives throughout the process.”

Dec. 7, 2023: (Update on Public Works case)

“Woman says former executive who defrauded city also fooled her.”

“The Free Press was told that DPW employees who knew what was happening kept silent after finding the department fired people who talked about the misdeeds of senior department executives.”

Mar 1, 2024: (Meanwhile, Henrico knows how to investigate and prosecute embezzlement in a nonprofit case.)

“Former Henrico youth baseball president sentenced to 20 years for embezzlement.”

“According to evidence from the Henrico Commonwealth’s Attorney’s investigation, McCook used the baseball team’s debit card over 70 times between 2020 and 2021. He also made large withdraws from the team’s account, which added to more than \$26,000.”

Apr 01, 2024: (Car Thefts)

“Car thefts are skyrocketing in Richmond, but cases are rarely getting solved”

Apr 11, 2024: (Enrichmond)

“They lost thousands when EnRichmond collapsed. Now they're learning no one will be prosecuted.”

“A spokesperson for the Justice Department declined to comment on why they decided not to press charges.”

CITATIONS

February 20, 2017:

Richmond Mayor Hires Ex-official Convicted of Embezzlement
<https://www.nbcwashington.com/local/dc-wtop-richmond-mayor-hires-ex-official-convicted-of-embezzlement/36611/>

Jul. 18, 2017:

Mayor Stoney on city auditor scandal: 'Sad to see him go'
<https://www.12onyourside.com/story/35913259/mayor-stoney-on-city-auditor-scandal-sad-to-see-him-go/>

Apr. 13, 2022:

Messages reveal mayor's office asked Richmond auditor to change school construction cost report.
<https://www.yahoo.com/news/messages-reveal-mayors-office-asked-231206137.html>

Jul. 20, 2022:

Thousands of Covid relief dollars unaccounted for, wasted in Richmond: 'There were some holes'
<https://www.wtvr.com/news/local-news/thousands-unaccounted-for-richmond-cares-act-money-july-20-2022>

Aug. 29, 2022:

Richmond community groups still searching for answers after dissolution of nonprofit
<https://www.wtvr.com/news/local-news/enrichmond-dissolution-leaves-community-groups-searching-for-answers-august-29-2022>

Sep. 9, 2022:

Enrichmond Foundation expected to face criminal complaints
<https://www.wric.com/news/local-news/richmond/enrichmond-foundation-expected-to-face-criminal-complaints/>

Oct. 14, 2022:

Embarrassing Non-Action and Crickets
<https://rva5x5.substack.com/p/rva-5x5-oct-14-2022>

Oct. 28, 2022:

Volunteer groups affected by Enrichmond dissolution plan next steps

<https://www.vpm.org/news/2022-10-28/volunteer-groups-affected-by-enrichmond-dissolution-plan-next-steps>

Dec. 7, 2022:

Volunteer groups affected by Enrichmond dissolution plan next steps

<https://www.vpm.org/news/2022-10-28/volunteer-groups-affected-by-enrichmond-dissolution-plan-next-steps>

Dec. 23, 2022:

Enwhatnow?

A Controversial Virginia Nonprofit Collapses, Leaving Questions and Anger

<https://medium.com/@bxpnyc/enwhatnow-312157ef4ca7>

Jan. 26, 2023: (Enrichmond)

Enrichmond Foundation must be held accountable. Its Victims must be made whole.

https://richmond.com/zzstyling/column/williams-enrichmond-foundation-must-be-held-accountable-its-victims-must-be-made-whole/article_66cf5a81-6321-53fe-9ae0-667cbe32deaf.html

Jan. 13, 2023:

Groups impacted by Enrichmond's dissolution still seeking answers: 'What happened to the funds?'

<https://www.wtvr.com/news/local-news/groups-impacted-by-enrichmond-dissolution-still-seeking-answers-january-13-2023>

Feb. 13, 2023:

Richmond nonprofit dissolves; months later dozens of community groups still don't have their money or answers

<https://www.wvtf.org/news/2023-02-13/richmond-nonprofit-dissolves-months-later-dozens-of-community-groups-still-dont-have-their-money-or-answers>

Mar. 23, 2023:

Enrichmond groups may receive City Hall funding

<https://richmondfreepress.com/news/2023/mar/23/enrichmond-groups-may-receive-city-hall-funding/>

Apr. 4, 2023:

CRIME. Miyares to investigate collapse of Richmond non-profit managing historic cemeteries
<https://www.wric.com/news/crime/miyares-to-investigate-collapse-of-richmond-non-profit-managing-historic-cemeteries/>

May 17, 2023:

Financial documents, internal communications shed new light on months before Enrichmond collapse
<https://www.wric.com/news/taking-action/financial-documents-internal-communications-shed-new-light-on-months-before-enrichmond-collapse/>

July 19, 2023: (Fraud at Dept. Public Works)

Former Richmond DPW official and wife sentenced in fraud scheme
<https://www.12onyourside.com/2023/11/07/former-richmond-dpw-official-wife-plead-guilty-fraud/>

Aug. 11, 2023:

(Video - Minute 1:15) “Most of our officers, before they knew what was going on, thought that this is just a civil matter, you guys work it out in the courts.”

This morning the Richmond Police Department served a search warrant at No Limit Towing and Recovery
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=3467038620277219>

Aug. 18, 2023:

Owner of Richmond towing company, accused of stealing cars and quickly selling, denied bond
<https://www.wtvr.com/news/local-news/no-limit-towing-owner-sheral-crawley-bond-denied-august-18-2023>

Aug. 18, 2023: (Grand Larceny of a Motor Vehicle)

Owner of ‘No Limit Towing’ denied bond after denying accusations of stealing vehicles
<https://www.12onyourside.com/2023/08/18/owner-no-limit-towing-denied-bond-after-denying-accusations-stealing-vehicles/>

Sept. 5, 2023:

No Limit Towing owner back in court amid house arrest, alleged victims still looking for help recovering

<https://www.wric.com/news/local-news/richmond/no-limit-towing-owner-back-in-court-amid-house-arrest-alleged-victims-still-looking-for-help-recovering/>

Oct. 23, 2023:

Attorney General Miyares Applauds Sentencing in Harrisonburg White Collar Crime Case

<https://www.oag.state.va.us/media-center/news-releases/2626-october-23-2023-attorney-general-miyares-applauds-sentencing-in-harrisonburg-white-collar-crime-case>

Oct. 24, 2023:

Offender in embezzlement, money laundering case sentenced to 15 years

<https://harrisonburgva.gov/sites/default/files/Police/files/news-releases/2023/10-24%20Offender%20in%20Embezzlement%20and%20Money%20Laundering%20Case%20Sentenced%20to%2015%20Years.pdf>

Dec. 7, 2023:

Woman says former executive who defrauded city also fooled her

<https://richmondfreepress.com/news/2023/dec/07/woman-says-former-executive-who-defrauded-city-als/>

Mar 1, 2024:

“Former Henrico youth baseball president sentenced to 20 years for embezzlement.”

<https://www.wric.com/news/local-news/henrico-county/former-henrico-youth-baseball-president-sentenced-to-20-years-for-embezzlement/#:~:text=On%20Friday%2C%20March%201%2C%20Christopher,and%20six%20months%20behind%20bars.>

Apr 01, 2024:

Car thefts are skyrocketing in Richmond, but cases are rarely getting solved: 'This hurts peoples' lives'

<https://www.wtvr.com/news/local-news/skyrocketing-richmond-car-thefts-apr-1-2024>

Apr 11, 2024: (Enrichmond)

“They lost thousands when EnRichmond collapsed. Now they're learning no one will be prosecuted.”

<https://www.wtvr.com/news/local-news/enrichmond-collapse-update-april-11-2024>