



City of Richmond

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

Draft Meeting Minutes Governmental Operations Standing Committee

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Committee and Other Council Members in Attendance

The Honorable Katherine Jordan - Chair
The Honorable Sarah Abubaker - Vice Chair
The Honorable Kenya Gibson - Committee Member

Staff in Attendance

Kiley Kesecker, Deputy City Clerk
Susan McKenney, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Kimberly Morris, Assistant City Clerk
William Perkins, Council Senior Legislative Services Manager
Candice Reid, City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Katherine Jordan called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m., and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Public Speaker Guidelines

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

Public Comment Period

There were no public comment speakers.

Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes to be approved.

Presentation(s)

Public Utilities and Services Commission Annual Report

Kevin Cianfarini, Commission Chair, presented the committee with a briefing on the Public Utilities Commission's annual report regarding water, natural gas, wastewater and stormwater, and solid waste.

[CD.2025.346](#) Public Utilities Services Commission Annual Report

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker asked if there was a downside of not implementing the line extension allowance. She also asked if there was anything Council could do to assist with adjusting any bylaws for the commission.

Mr. Cianfarini stated that the biggest downside was that homeowners would have to pay for connection costs upfront. He also stated that Council could assist with an ordinance to clarify members of the commission who are currently seated, and the commission would also like to work with Council to fill three vacancies.

Member Kenya Gibson asked if there were any high level insights that would be of public interest to have safe water. She also asked if there were any other ways Council could assist with the growth of the commission.

Mr. Cianfarini stated that the replacement of lead lines would be a start to help ensure safe water and public health. He also stated that he would defer to the water subcommittee for input to address any needs or request assistance from Council.

Chair Katherine Jordan asked if any research on lead line replacement was done regarding financing and assisting citizens with grant funding. She also asked if a virtual meeting option would assist the water subcommittee with a quorum, and what the outlook of the commission was in the next 12 months.

Scott Morris, Director of Public Utilities, stated that the department would like to pursue the block by block lead line pipe replacement program, and the funding was contingent upon the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He also stated that any utility backed financing would have to be evaluated.

Mr. Cianfarini stated that the current virtual participation policy was unclear; however, he also stated that he would follow up with the commission's attorney and update the Governmental Operations Standing Committee with additional information. He also stated that the twelve month plan was to fill vacancies, round out water expertise, hold meetings with external partners, and host tours of facilities.

Combined Sewer Overflow System Update

Scott Morris, Director of Public Utilities, provided a presentation regarding the combined sewer overflow program. He discussed the Department of Public Utilities wastewater system, impacts on water quality in the James River, work to improve water quality, regulatory requirements, final goals and next steps, and audit updates.

[CD.2025.347](#) Combined Sewer Overflow System Update

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Chair Katherine Jordan asked what went into the \$500,000.00 reduction in overall cost, and what the city was giving up in value engineering. She also asked if there were any negative outcomes by choosing the least expensive options.

Director Morris stated the city engineers had the difficult task of looking at alternatives and selecting the most cost effective one. He also stated the process was time consuming, and the most important piece was bacteria load reductions and ensuring the selection does not cause negative impacts.

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker asked for an update on the department's billing issues.

Director Morris stated the department was updating its antiquated billing system, implementing a meter replacement program, and acquiring mobile equipment to enhance services in the future.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance were considered:

1. [ORD. 2025-209](#) To amend City Code § 2-772, concerning the filing of statements of economic interests, for the purpose of requiring more detailed disclosure forms of members of certain boards and commissions [with the power to issue bonds or expend funds in excess of \$10,000 in any fiscal year]. (As Amended)

Patrons: Ms. Gibson, Ms. Abubaker and Ms. Lynch

Member Kenya Gibson provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed ordinance, as amended, which was intended to consider and address potential conflicts of interest for members of boards and commissions.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

There were no further comments or discussions, and Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker moved to forward ORD. 2025-209 to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Gibson, Abubaker, and Jordan. Noes 0.

The following ordinances were considered:

2. [ORD. 2025-210](#) To amend City Code § 2-1351, concerning definitions related to open data and a transparency program, and to amend ch. 2, art. VII, div. 4 of the City Code by adding therein a new section 2-1361, concerning a Freedom of Information Act request library, for the purpose of establishing an online Freedom of Information Act library. (As Amended)

Patrons: Ms. Gibson, Ms. Abubaker and Ms. Lynch

3. [ORD. 2025-240](#) To amend City Code § 2-1351, concerning definitions related to open data and a transparency program, and to amend ch. 2, art. VII, div. 4 of the City Code by adding therein a new section 2-1361, concerning a Freedom of Information Act request library, for the purpose of establishing an online Freedom of Information Act library. (As Amended)

Patrons: Mayor Avula, Ms. Jones, Ms. Abubaker, Vice President Jordan, President Newbille and Ms. Lynch

Member Kenya Gibson provided remarks and updated information regarding the proposed ordinance to establish a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Library, which would provide transparency and easily accessible information to the public.

Ross Catrow, Director of the Office of Strategic Communications and Civic Engagement, provided remarks regarding Ord. 2025-240, and provided updated information regarding moving forward with the FOIA Library and a rubric that adapts to new situations.

Chair Katherine Jordan asked Director Catrow to explain what a library notice was. She also asked what was in the rubric.

Director Catrow stated the library notice was the text that appeared in the JustFOIA Library, and it includes the rubric that lists what was included in and excluded from the library.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

Member Gibson asked if records contributing to the public's understanding of the city's operations policy, its decision making activities, those that expose the wrongdoing of a public official, and those relevant to the performance evaluation and accountability of city programs, would be determined by the city.

Director Catrow stated the city's FOIA manager and the subject matter expert would make those determinations.

Member Gibson asked if the current FOIA information released by the city compromised minors. She also asked why the time for the appeal process was thirty days.

Director Catrow stated he could get the information about minors, and that the appeal process time was reasonable.

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker stated that there should be an annual report on the number of published and unpublished FOIA requests received by the city.

There were no further comments or discussions, and Chair Katherine Jordan moved to forward ORD. 2025-240 to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 2, Abubaker, and Jordan. Noes 1, Gibson.

There were no further comments or discussions, and Chair Katherine Jordan moved to forward ORD. 2025-210 to Council with no recommendation, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Gibson, Abubaker, and Jordan. Noes 0.

Board Vacancies

There were no board vacancies.

Discussion Item(s)

There were no discussion items.

Staff Report

Council staff provided the committee with the November Governmental Operations Standing Committee staff report.

[CD.2025.359](#) Government Operations Standing Committee Staff Report November 12, 2025

Vice Chair Abubaker requested that the Public Utilities Commission and Director Scott Morris discuss the feasibility of discontinuing the line extension program.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:03 p.m.