



City of Richmond

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

Meeting Minutes Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee

Wednesday, May 20, 2026

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – City Hall

Committee Members and Other Council Members in Attendance

The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Chair
The Honorable Nicole Jones – Vice Chair
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Member (late arrival and early departure)
The Honorable Sarah Abubaker – Council Member (early departure)
The Honorable Andrew Breton – Council Member (early departure)
The Honorable Kenya Gibson – Council Member (early departure)
The Honorable Reva Trammell – Council Member (early departure)

Staff in Attendance

Maria Garnett, Council Policy Analyst
Kiley Kesecker, Deputy City Clerk
Nahdiyah Muhammad, Assistant City Clerk
Tabrica Rentz, Deputy City Attorney
Candice Reid, City Clerk
RJ Warren, Council Chief of Staff

Call to Order

Chair Ellen Robertson called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m., and presided

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Public Speaker Guidelines

Upon the Chair's request, Assistant City Clerk Nahdiyah Muhammad provided information on the appropriate way to evacuate the Council Chamber in an emergency along with public speaker guidelines.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comment speakers.

Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of April 16, 2026, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

[CD.2026.129](#) April 16, 2026 - Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee Meeting Minutes

Agenda Amendments

Chair Ellen Robertson stated that there were requests to continue several papers for consideration.

Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to continue ORD. 2026-081, RES. 2026-R019, ORD. 2026-090, and RES. 2026-R021 to the June 17, 2026, Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 2, Jones, Robertson. Noes None. Lynch had yet to arrive.

2. [ORD. 2026-081](#) To amend City Code § 12-16, concerning publication of the City's payment register, for the purpose of promoting transparency and accountability in the expenditure of public funds by providing public access to information regarding payments made by the City to vendors for goods and services and reimbursements to employees, while protecting confidential and personal information as required by law.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

7. [RES. 2026-R019](#) To authorize the Council's Organizational Development Standing Committee to investigate the City's failure to publish a monthly payment register as required by City Code § 12-16 and application of exclusions allowed under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

Patrons: Ms. Gibson and Ms. Trammell

3. [ORD. 2026-090](#) To amend City Code §§2-1301.4, concerning the City's rights and authority, and 2-1301.14, concerning labor-management dispute and impasse resolution, to modify collective bargaining procedures. (As Amended)

Patrons: Ms. Trammell, Ms. Gibson, Ms. Abubaker, Ms. Robertson, Ms. Lynch and Vice President Jordan

9. [RES. 2026-R021](#) To request that the Chief Administrative Officer to cause the Department of Planning and Development Review, in coordination with other relevant City departments, to conduct a study of the feasibility of establishing a registration system for non-profit and for-profit housing providers to register housing units reserved for affordable housing tenants and purchasers within the city for the purpose of identifying such

units and recognizing affordability restrictions in the valuation of such properties for taxation purposes and to provide the Council with recommendations for implementing such system.

Patrons: Ms. Robertson and President Newbille

Councilor Kenya Gibson stated that she was unaware of any request to continue RES. 2026-R019 and requested that the committee proceed with consideration of both ORD. 2026-081 and RES. 2026-R019.

Lawson Wijesooriya, Chief of Staff to the Mayor, stated that city administration was unaware of any request to continue ORD. 2026-081 and requested that the committee proceed with consideration of the proposed ordinance.

Member Stephanie Lynch arrived at 2:11 p.m., and was seated.

The committee reached a consensus to rescind the previous motion to continue the above mentioned legislation.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance was considered:

1. [ORD. 2025-282](#) To amend ch. 26, article V, div. 2 of the City Code by adding therein a new section 26-370, concerning a deferral program for certain real estate taxes pursuant to and in accordance with Code of Virginia § 58.1-3219. (As Amended)

Patrons: City Council

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

There were no comments or discussions and Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to forward ORD. 2025-282 to Council with the recommendation to approve with an amendment, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

The following ordinance was considered:

2. [ORD. 2026-081](#) To amend City Code § 12-16, concerning publication of the City's payment register, for the purpose of promoting transparency and accountability in the expenditure of public funds by providing public access to information regarding payments made by the City to vendors for goods and services and reimbursements to employees, while protecting confidential and personal information as required by law.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Lawson Wijesooriya, Chief of Staff to the Mayor, provided a presentation on the proposed ordinance. She stated that the legislation is intended to balance transparency and privacy by preserving public access to meaningful financial information while protecting sensitive personal data. Ms. Wijesooriya explained that the proposal does not affect rights under Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), but would revise the city's proactive disclosure requirements to address privacy concerns and administrative challenges associated with the current check registry. She noted that the proposed ordinance would disclose information such as vendors, employee reimbursements, departments, payment amounts, and cost centers, allowing the public to monitor spending while maintaining compliance with privacy laws. She concluded that the administration reviewed practices used by other localities and developed the proposal to provide a practical, sustainable, and standardized approach to financial transparency.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Public Hearing

Angela Warner expressed opposition to the proposed ordinance, stating that it excludes information disclosed by some other localities and may limit the ability of auditors and the public to identify spending trends or potential fraud.

Christine Gibson expressed opposition to the proposed ordinance, citing concerns about transparency and accountability. She referenced a case of unaccounted municipal funds in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, and urged full disclosure of all payments to ensure proper tracking of public spending.

Leah Whitehurst-Gibson expressed support for the proposed ordinance, emphasizing the need to balance transparency with privacy protections. She noted her experience as a foster parent and cautioned that certain disclosures could pose safety risks for families. She concluded that the ordinance should be refined to improve financial transparency while protecting vulnerable individuals.

Vice Chair Nicole noted the importance of ensuring the ordinance achieves its intended purpose while reflecting community input and Council responsibilities, and recommended a continuance to allow further discussion and refinement.

There were no further comments or discussions and Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to continue ORD. 2026-081 to the June 17, 2026, Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Councilor Kenya Gibson stated that the city's payment register was removed from public access in August 2024 after a series of concerns raised in media reports regarding city spending and oversight. She expressed support for continued review of the proposed ordinance, noting the importance of ensuring that any changes to the payment registry are justified and do not reduce accountability.

Councilor Sarah Abubaker departed the meeting at 2:40 p.m.

The following resolution was considered:

7. [RES. 2026-R019](#) To authorize the Council's Organizational Development Standing Committee to investigate the City's failure to publish a monthly payment register as required by City Code § 12-16 and application of exclusions allowed under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

Patrons: Ms. Gibson and Ms. Trammell

Councilor Kenya Gibson provided an overview of the proposed resolution, explaining that it seeks to examine barriers to implementing the payment register and assess whether the city has complied with the law requiring it. She said the goal is to review the register in the most unredacted form as legally permissible. She noted that prior requests for the information were met with delays and high costs, which she described as barriers to access.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to continue RES. 2026-R019 to the June 17, 2026, Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting, which was seconded.

Vice Chair Nicole Jones emphasized the importance of allowing time to address outstanding questions, consult with the administration, and return with a more complete response. She added that both Council and the public deserve a thorough review process to ensure informed decision making.

Member Stephanie Lynch expressed support for continued discussion regarding the proposed legislation, noting that past concerns about city financial practices have impacted public trust. She stated that Council and the administration share the goal of greater transparency and encouraged finding a compromise that addresses all concerns.

Chair Ellen Robertson requested that council staff provide, ahead of the June meeting, information on the process for the requested investigation and how it will be managed. She also requested details on the administration's position, including cost impacts and rationale for alternatives, and asked that Council members submit questions to staff in advance.

There were no further comments or discussions, and the motion was unanimously approved.

The following ordinance was considered:

3. [ORD. 2026-090](#) To amend City Code §§2-1301.4, concerning the City's rights and authority, and 2-1301.14, concerning labor-management dispute and impasse resolution, to modify collective bargaining procedures. (As Amended)

Patrons: Ms. Trammell, Ms. Gibson, Ms. Abubaker, Ms. Robertson, Ms. Lynch and Vice President Jordan

Councilor Reva Trammell provided an overview of the proposed ordinance, stating that she introduced the proposed ordinance to promote fairness and equal opportunity for city employees across all departments. She explained that the proposed ordinance is intended to ensure that employees are not overlooked in promotion processes and that advancement decisions are made equitably.

Public Hearing

Bill Pantele, representative for the Richmond Coalition of Police (RCOP), expressed support for the proposed ordinance, stating that it is intended to address issues arising from the city's 2022 collective bargaining process. He explained that the amendment would restore the ability of unions to negotiate certain personnel matters, including promotions, transfers, and vacancies, consistent with the intent of prior agreements.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Christine Gibson expressed support for the proposed ordinance, stating that the city should honor its agreements with unions and maintain consistency in negotiated terms.

Brendan Leavy, President of RCOP, expressed support for the proposed ordinance, stating that it clarifies the intent of prior collective bargaining agreements regarding promotions and transfers. He noted that the amendment would allow discussion of promotional procedures while maintaining management authority and improving transparency in personnel decisions.

Keith Andes, President of the Richmond Fire Fighters Association Local IAFF 995, expressed his support of the proposed ordinance.

Chair Ellen Robertson requested an overview regarding the amendments stated in the proposed ordinance. Chair Robertson stated that she had been advised that negotiations are scheduled to begin in mid-June.

Bill Pantele stated that the existing ordinance is not being fully implemented as intended. He explained that the proposed amendment makes limited language changes to clarify the original intent of ORD. 2022-221. He noted that the revised wording reinforces that the city's management rights include a limited exception allowing unions to discuss employment matters, consistent with the original agreement.

Odie Donald II, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), stated that the administration believes the proposed ordinance may have fiscal and administrative impacts that require further review. He emphasized the need to fully evaluate the legislation's potential effects on management rights, labor relations, and city operations before implementation. CAO Donald noted that collective bargaining requests have already been received and negotiations are expected to begin around July 1, 2026. He cautioned against changing policy during an active bargaining process without fully understanding the implications, and requested a 45-day continuance to allow the administration to complete its review and provide Council with a more comprehensive assessment.

Member Stephanie Lynch suggested allowing additional time for discussion and negotiation among stakeholders to identify potential amendments to the legislation and develop a proposal that could be considered by the full Council before July 1, 2026.

CAO Donald stated that the city's collective bargaining framework has been a leading model within the Commonwealth but acknowledged that stakeholders have identified areas where adjustments may be warranted. He emphasized that any changes should be carefully evaluated and that moving quickly may not necessarily result in the best outcome.

Councilor Kenya Gibson stated that the proposed ordinance would strengthen collective bargaining by improving procedures related to promotions, transfers, and dispute resolution. She emphasized the importance of fair and transparent processes for city employees and urged the committee to advance the legislation before upcoming negotiations.

Councilor Reva Trammell asked whether union representatives had been consulted by the administration prior to the introduction of the proposed ordinance.

CAO Donald stated that the mayor had recently met with union and labor representatives to discuss a variety of issues, including labor related matters. He added that he also plans to meet with labor partners.

There were no further comments or discussions and Member Stephanie Lynch moved to forward ORD. 2026-090 to Council with the recommendation to approve with an amendment, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

The following ordinance was considered:

4. [ORD. 2026-110](#) To amend City Code § 8-555, concerning fees for temporary use of Main Street Station, to modify the fee schedule.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Dironna Moore Clarke, Deputy Director of Equitable Transit and Mobility for the Department of Public Works, stated that the proposed ordinance updates the Main Street Station fee schedule in response to reduced leasable space and changing market conditions following recent construction. She explained that revisions include reduced rental rates for the first floor shed, a new package rate for the commercial kitchen and square to encourage pop-up and demonstration uses, consolidation of North Plaza, and parking areas to expand rentable outdoor space. She also noted a minor increase for the square and the creation of additional rentable areas within the lobby and hallway, projecting over \$1 million in annual revenue when combined with existing agreements.

Member Stephanie Lynch departed the meeting at 3:22 p.m.

Councilor Kenya Gibson departed the meeting at 3:22 p.m.

Councilor Reva Trammell departed the meeting at 3:22 p.m.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

Vice Chair Nicole Jones requested that Council receive updates regarding the revenue generated from the implementation of the proposed ordinance.

There were no further comments or discussions and Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to forward ORD. 2026-110 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 2, Jones, Robertson. Noes None. Member Stephanie Lynch had departed the meeting.

The following ordinances were considered:

5. [ORD. 2026-114](#) To approve the Work Plan and Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, for the provision of services in the Downtown Special Service and Assessment Districts.

Patrons: Ms. Robertson, Ms. Jones and President Newbille

6. [ORD. 2026-115](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute an Eighth Amendment to the Agreement for the Provision of Services in the Downtown Richmond Special Service and Assessment Districts between the City of Richmond and Venture Richmond, Inc., for the purpose of extending the term of the agreement to June 30, 2031.

Patrons: Ms. Robertson, Ms. Jones and President Newbille

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

Vice Chair Nicole Jones requested to be added as co-patron to ORD. 2026-114 and ORD. 2026-115.

There were no comments or discussions and Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to forward ORD. 2026-114 and ORD. 2026-115 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 2, Jones, Robertson. Noes None. Member Stephanie Lynch had departed the meeting.

Councilor Andrew Breton departed the meeting at 3:32 p.m.

The following resolution was considered:

8. [RES. 2026-R020](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to submit four separate applications to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to (i) amend the boundaries of Enterprise Zone 19 and Enterprise Zone 28A within the city of Richmond and (ii) modify the local enterprise zone incentive package for the amended Enterprise Zones.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Jacquelyn Teemer, Programs Administrator for the Department of Economic Development, presented the proposed resolution to amend the city's Enterprise Zone boundaries and incentive programs. She stated that the amendments would modernize the program, align it with current development priorities, and strengthen support for business investment, redevelopment, and job creation.

Ms. Teemer explained that staff evaluated existing boundaries and incentives and recommended removing underutilized parcels, adding targeted growth areas, and updating incentive programs to better reflect current market conditions. She noted proposed changes include creating a business investment grant, expanding the machinery and equipment rebate, increasing the employee assistance grant, and eliminating several underutilized rebates. She concluded that the revised Enterprise Zones would remain within state acreage limits and that the required public hearing and property owner notifications have been completed.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

There were no comments or discussions and Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to forward RES. 2026-R020 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 2, Jones, Robertson. Noes None. Member Stephanie Lynch had departed the meeting.

The following resolution was considered:

9. [RES. 2026-R021](#) To request that the Chief Administrative Officer to cause the Department of Planning and Development Review, in coordination with other relevant City departments, to conduct a study of the feasibility of establishing a registration system for non-profit and for-profit housing providers to register housing units reserved for affordable housing tenants and purchasers within the city for the purpose of identifying such units and recognizing affordability restrictions in the valuation of such properties for taxation purposes and to provide the Council with recommendations for implementing such system.

Patrons: Ms. Robertson and President Newbille

Megan Field, Senior Policy Advisor for Housing and Community Development, stated that staff supports studying the proposal but recommended incorporating it into the ongoing update of the One Richmond strategic housing plan. Ms. Field noted that evaluating the proposal alongside other city housing policies would provide a more comprehensive assessment of its potential impact on affordable housing. She added that the One Richmond update is scheduled for completion by December 16, 2026.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

There were no comments or discussions and Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to forward RES. 2026-R021 to Council with the recommendation to approve with an amendment, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 2, Jones, Robertson. Noes None. Member Stephanie Lynch had departed the meeting.

Presentation(s)

There were no presentations.

Board Vacancies

There were no board vacancies.

Discussion Item(s)

Quarterly ARPA Update

Tanikia Jackson, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Finance and Administration, provided the committee with a quarterly update on the city's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) expenditures. DCAO Jackson reported that the city expended \$7.1 million during the third quarter, bringing total expenditures to approximately 89% of the \$154 million ARPA allocation, with \$17.6 million remaining. She stated that all remaining projects are on track to expend funds by December 31, 2026, except for the down payment assistance program. She noted that the Creighton Court Redevelopment project and the Office of Community Wealth Building Workforce Development and Community Ambassadors program both reached 100% completion during the quarter. She further stated parks projects accounted for the largest share of quarterly expenditures, totaling approximately \$4.0 million.

DCAO Jackson stated that the down payment assistance program has experienced increased interest and applications following the expansion of eligibility to public school employees. While application activity has increased significantly, she noted that staff cannot yet guarantee that all program funds will be expended by year end. She concluded that the city engaged Delivery Results Solutions (DRS) to assist with ARPA closeout activities, compliance, and audit readiness. A report from DRS is expected in June and will be included in the next quarterly update.

[CD.2026.141](#) Quarterly ARPA Update

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Updates to Financial Reporting

DCAO Tanikia Jackson provided the committee with updates to financial reporting. She stated that over the past 60 days, her team has taken a comprehensive approach to improving financial reporting, including the establishment of a steering committee and working group to assess reporting needs and processes. Ms. Jackson stated that staff are reviewing reporting practices used by peer jurisdictions and evaluating reporting tools to improve efficiency and reduce the labor intensive nature of current reporting. She noted that the proposed reporting format is designed to align with the city's budget structure and will include budget to actual comparisons, year over year analysis, and enhanced narrative explanations. She acknowledged the need to better communicate the city's financial position in a way that is accessible to both residents and Council members and stated that doing so will require organizational and cultural changes. DCAO Jackson concluded that staff plans to engage Council within the next 30 days to gather feedback on the proposed reporting format, clarify reporting requests, and discuss which enhancements can be implemented in the near term.

[CD.2026.142](#) Updates to Financial Reporting

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Staff Report

Council staff provided the committee with the May Finance and Economic Development staff report.

[CD.2026.147](#) Finance and Economic Development Staff Report

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:49 p.m.