



City of Richmond

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

Draft Meeting Minutes Governmental Operations Standing Committee

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

1:00 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
The Honorable Andrew Breton - Alternate 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 1:00 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 amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of May 28, 2025, June 11, 2025, July 23, 2025, and September 24, 2025, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

[CD.2025.329](#) May 28, 2025 Governmental Operations Meeting Minutes

[CD.2025.330](#) June 11, 2025 Governmental Operations Meeting Minutes

[CD.2025.331](#) July 23, 2025 Governmental Operations Meeting Minutes

[CD.2025.332](#) September 24, 2025 Governmental Operations Meeting Minutes

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance was 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, which she stated was intended to consider and address potential conflicts of interest for members of boards and commissions. She stated she would like additional time to include proposed amendments to the ordinance and discuss the amended version at the next committee meeting.

Public Hearing

There was no public hearing held for this paper.

There were no further discussions and Member Kenya Gibson moved to continue ORD. 2025-209 to the November 12, 2025 Governmental Operations Standing Committee meeting, which was seconded and was unanimously 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

4. [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 an introduction and additional background information regarding her proposed ordinance to establish a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Library, which she stated would provide transparency and easily accessible information to the public.

Ross Catrow, Director of the Office of Strategic Communications and Civic Engagement, provided a presentation to introduce the city administration's version of Ord. 2025-240, and provided information regarding the FOIA Library. He also discussed trust and privacy of city residents, transparency, accountability, and a rubric that adapts to new situations.

Public Hearing

Sean Cassar, member of the Richmond Democratic Socialists of America, spoke in support of Ord. 2025-210. He stated FOIA requests were not a weapon or a liability, but an accountability measure.

Quinton Robbins, Chair of Richmond For All, spoke in support of Ord. 2025-210, stating he preferred the version over Ord. 2025-240 because it removed discretion from the administration in determining what information was released to the public.

David Meyer spoke in support of Ord. 2025-210, stating that citizens could be involved in assisting with identifying corruption and the ordinance would also provide transparency.

Megan Rhyne, Director for the Virginia Coalition for Open Government, spoke in support of Ord. 2025-2010, and addressed the committee regarding the FOIA Library relative to cost, exemptions, trust and transparency.

Member Kenya Gibson asked if there were fewer records in the library, why would there be an increase in costs.

Director Catrow stated that FOIA requests were free at large. He stated what would be identified in reference to risk for the city, what requests would require more review, and if an additional layer of review would be needed when broadcasted to the public.

Member Gibson asked why the rubric was included in the press release, but not in the ordinance.

Director Catrow stated the rubric will always be public.

Chair Katherine Jordan asked what the precedent was for rubrics in other localities, and how often they were updated.

Director Catrow stated the basis of the rubric comes from the federal government, and he would find out how often it was updated.

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker asked for the number of annual weaponized requests the city has received. She also stated the rubric needed to be codified.

Lawson Wijesooriya, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor, stated that administration would be open to implementing more of the rubric in the legislation.

Alternate Member Andrew Breton asked if there were any after the fact accountability measures available, and if there were ways to submit a request of FOIA requests received by the city. He also asked if there were any examples of the public conducting inappropriate, weaponized activity on forums.

Director Catrow stated administration had received requests of FOIA requests, and he suggested creating an internal Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). He further stated the JustFOIA software could be a robust way to track the requestor, and the software also provides an extensive reporting dashboard.

Chair Jordan asked what the rationale was for excluding certain departments from Ord. 2025-210.

Ms. Gibson stated her objective for the ordinance was to address concerns of city residents in a way that exhibited full transparency.

There were no further discussions and Vice Chair Abubaker moved to continue Ord. 2025-210 and Ord. 2025-240 to the November 12, 2025 Governmental Operations Standing Committee meeting, which was seconded and unanimously approved: Ayes 2, Abubaker and Jordan. Noes 1, Gibson.

The following ordinance was considered:

3. [ORD. 2025-211](#) To amend City Code § 2-1352, concerning general requirements of the open data portal, to prohibit charging fees for requesting information required to be posted in the open data portal pursuant to section 2-1360 and to amend ch. 2, art. VII, div. 4 of the City Code by adding therein a new section 2-1360, concerning required datasets, for the purpose of requiring publication of certain datasets in the open data portal. (As Amended)

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

Member Kenya Gibson provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed ordinance, stating that the objective was to provide a more comprehensive data set specific to contract and procurement information.

Public Hearing

Quinton Robbins, Richmond For All, spoke in support of Ord. 2025-2011. He expressed his concerns about funds spent on temporary staff and the workforce in the public sector.

There were no further comments or discussions, and Member Kenya Gibson moved to forward ORD. 2025-211 to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Gibson and Abubaker, Jordan. Noes 0.

Presentation(s)

Joint Energy Team (JET) Overview and Sustainable Design Standards

[CD.2025.326](#) FY25 Joint Energy Team Annual Report

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Laura Thomas, Director of the Office of Sustainability, gave an overview of the Joint Energy Team. She stated the team was comprised of 100 city employees and promotes clean energy and operational efficiency. Director Thomas also presented sustainable design standards.

Dawn Oleksy, Program and Operations Manager with the Office of Sustainability, provided the committee with additional information on the Joint Energy Team (JET), which included who and what JET is, and how it was created.

Chair Katherine Jordan asked what LEED and also Envision was, and how many members of staff participated in the certification program. She also asked what the project cost threshold was for sustainable design standards, and if there was something that could be done legislatively to encourage implementation of sustainable design standards.

Director Thomas stated approximately ten staff members participated in the program. She stated the cost for horizontal structures was \$50,000,000 and the cost for vertical structures was \$5,000,000. She stated the implementation of a technical advisory panel would be helpful in evaluating and assisting as needed.

Green Fleet Plan Update

[CD.2025.327](#) City of Richmond Green Fleet Transition Plan

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Jason Arndt, Program and Operations Manager, Department of General Services, provided the committee with a presentation regarding the green fleet transition plan. He stated the city's fleet department consisted of police and light duty, fire, street sweepers, mowers, medium and heavy trucks, solid waste, and the body shop.

Gail Johnson, Director of the Department of General Services, discussed the fuel program audit, fuel policy and oversight, technology and vendor tools, training and education, and fuel truck reconciliation.

Member Kenya Gibson asked if there was any documentation on the amount spent in the misuse of fuel. She also asked how the city's fuel policy was applied and if the misspent amount would be included in the Department of General Service's upcoming budget.

Director Johnson stated that once the policy had been approved, the cost could be identified, and the misused amount would not be in the budget.

Chair Katherine Jordan asked if the city auditor could speak to any amount identified in the audit regarding misuse of funds and spending that should not occur in the next budget.

Riad Ali, City Auditor, stated that a sample of the audit would be conducted to determine the problem and subsequent next steps.

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker asked how many vehicles there were overall, and how many were electric vehicles or hybrid vehicles.

Mr. Arndt stated there were 25 electric vehicles and 48 hybrid vehicles.

Board Vacancies

Pamela Nichols, Council Management Analyst, reviewed board vacancies and applications for the committee's consideration.

[CD.2025.324](#) Governmental Operations Standing Committee - Boards &
Commissions Vacancy Report Wednesday, October 22, 2025

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Chair Katherine Jordan made a motion to continue consideration of appointment applications for vacancies on the Sister Cities Commission to the January 28, 2026, Governmental Operations Standing Committee meeting, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Gibson, Abubaker, and Jordan. Noes None.

Chair Katherine Jordan moved to forward the following applications for appointment to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved: Ayes 3, Gibson, Abubaker, and Jordan. Noes, 0.

Clean City Commission
Kenrick Cameron, Jr.
William Wenn, II

Discussion Item(s)

November and December Committee Meetings Updates

Will Perkins, Council Senior Legislative Services Manager, provided an overview of future meeting dates for the Governmental Operations Standing Committee meeting, to be held on November 12, 2025, at 1:00 p.m., and December 10, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.

Chair Katherine Jordan asked if the office received any reports from Human Resources.

Mr. Perkins stated the office received the Human Resources vacancy and turnover report, and the 2026 first quarter overtime report.

Chair Jordan requested a formal slide format for future Governmental Operations presentations.

Staff Report

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

[CD.2025.335](#) Government Operations Standing Committee Staff Report October 22,
2025

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.