

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 Sargeant 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>

June 25, 2024
To: Richmond City Council
Attention: City Clerk
Purpose: Written Public Comment

I am expressing my views in writing in addition to an oral 3-minute presentation for a matter of Public Record today at the Public Safety Meeting of City Council on June 25, 2024.

3-Minute Speech

I come here today to challenge you to “**Reach for the Stars!**” which is the motto on Richmond's *Seal* and contains the *symbol of justice.*

When we see Richmond's Seal, we expect to see *legitimate Justice.*

The City of Richmond, has a “constitutional duty to take care that the laws be faithfully executed”; and, to administer justice.

Having said that, the Media has reported some *interesting* comments relating to our city's “**Star**” Leaders.

I hope the following information will inspire city leaders to work hard to make citizens proud and welcome Richmond's Seal as a symbol of *embracing justice*, and **not** a symbol of *deprivation of rights.*

Richmond's mayor Levar Stoney hired a former state official who was convicted of **embezzling**. (Does the Mayor sound like a “star” leader?)

City Council Members say that when *Nonprofits embezzle* in Richmond, the police are to treat the crime as a “Civil Matter”. (Does this inspire confidence in our city or our “star” leaders?)

A Richmond Commonwealth Attorney says that § 18.2 – 111 Embezzlement deemed larceny is a “Civil Matter” when Nonprofits commit the **crime of embezzlement**.

A clerk of the court says that the Commonwealth’s Office does not “do” Nonprofit embezzlement.

Richmond detective asserts that RPD **purposely** trains officers **incorrectly** in the academy to say that Nonprofit embezzlement is a “Civil Matter”.

Erroneously, RPD officers, detectives, sergeants, captains, and majors say that the crime of embezzlement § 18.2 – 111 is a “Civil Matter” if the crime happens within a Nonprofit.

Mistakenly, RPD dispatch tells victims of embezzlement that it's a "Civil Matter" if the perpetrator is the president of a Nonprofit.

RPD has also told victims of grand-theft-auto and extortion that it is **their problem**. Chief Edwards said, "Most of our officers, before they knew what was going on, **thought** that this is just a "civil matter".

The Property Crimes guy, Sergeant Castrinos, said that there are over 1,000 entries in the police department's system which are related to the *illegal towing*. He said, "Police thought that there was a possibility that it was simply a *civil infraction*".

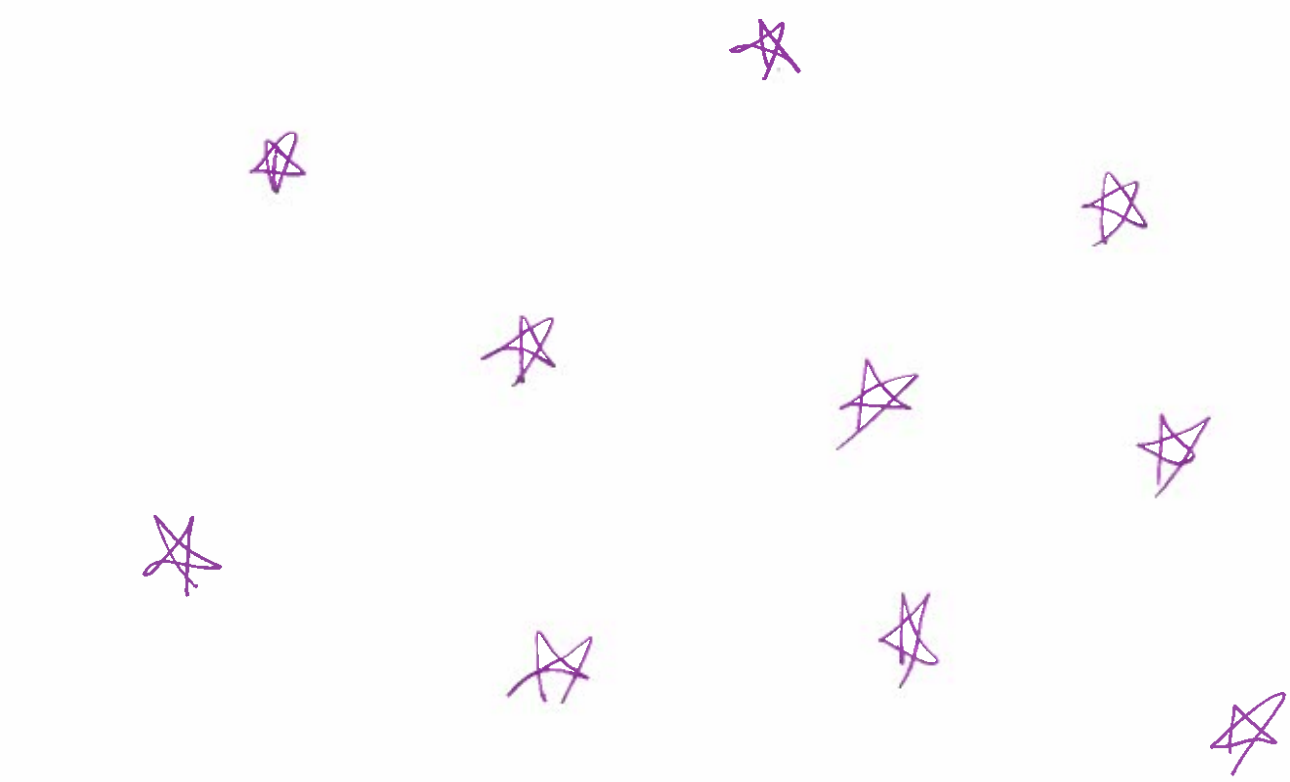
Citizens have been victims of tow-truck companies stealing cars for over 20 years and RPD is just realizing that it's a **crime** to steal cars?! (Does this inspire confidence in our city or our **"star"** leaders?)

I challenge our leaders to put a stop to the obstruction of justice that is taking place under the color of law, but instead reach for the stars, *administer justice*, and make Richmond shine again.

★ "Thus do we reach the stars" 5 of 1 ★



★ "So it goes to the stars" ★



Powers of Investigation by City Council Members

§ 4.16. - Powers of investigation.

(a) The council, or any committee of members of the council when authorized by the council, shall have power to make such investigations relating to the municipal affairs of the city as it may deem necessary, and shall **have power to investigate any or all departments, boards, commissions, offices and agencies of the city government and any officer or employee of the city**, concerning the performance of their duties and functions and use of property of the city.

Today I am formally requesting, again, that this Council use their powers of investigation that are granted to them under these codes to figure out why Law Enforcement is lying to citizens and thereby helping the criminals get away with such crimes as grand larceny and arson.

So, will you obey the law and report Law Enforcements misconduct and bring honor to the citizens by launching an investigation?

Lastly, the Virginia Constitution says in Article V, Section 7 that the Governor shall **enforce the execution of the laws**, so if you need back up then I suggest that you give him a ring.

Thoughts...

City Council has a responsibility under the VA Municipal Code to report misconduct that they are aware of within the Police Department and the Commonwealth's Office.

This Council has been made aware that Law Enforcement is lying to citizens by saying that crimes are a "civil matter". Citizens have also been told by Law Enforcement when they have their cars stolen that "it's just kids"; implying that

the victim won't get justice for the crime of grand larceny. Victims of grand-theft-auto are being told that it's a "civil matter". (tow-truck company scheme)

Richmond Virginia Municipal Code

Sec. 2-161. - Procedure for disclosure.

(a) City employees are responsible for reporting instances of misconduct, including fraud, waste and abuse. An employee shall disclose all relevant information regarding evidenced misconduct to the Inspector General or the designee thereof within one month of the day on which he knew or reasonably should have known of the misconduct. He may contact the Office of the Inspector General by way of the hot line, through the Inspector General's website, in writing or in person. The Inspector General shall publicize the means by which employees may disclose information pursuant to this section.

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Civil Law is Non-Criminal Law

https://virginiarules.org/varules_topics/civil-law-basics/

Civil Law Basics
What is civil law?

Civil law is the term used to describe non-criminal law having to do with private rights and remedies related to property, commerce, and administrative matters.

Someone who violates a criminal law may be jailed, fined, or placed on probation.

Someone who is liable under civil law may be ordered by a court to pay a sum of money to another person or to take some other action to remedy a problem.

It is possible for a person to be charged with a crime and be held liable for damages under civil law for the same act. For example, someone who attacks another person may be charged criminally with assault and battery. However, the victim may also pursue the matter civilly to be paid for damages related to the attack such as broken glasses, medical bills, and lost wages.

Embezzlement is a CRIME

<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title18.2/chapter5/>

Code of Virginia
Chapter 5. Crimes Against Property

<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title18.2/chapter5/section18.2-111/>

§ 18.2-111. Embezzlement deemed larceny; indictment.

If any person wrongfully and fraudulently use, dispose of, conceal or embezzle

any money, bill, note, check, order, draft, bond, receipt, bill of lading or any other personal property, tangible or intangible,

which he shall have received for another or for his employer, principal or bailor, or by virtue of his office, trust, or employment, or which shall have been entrusted or delivered to him by another or by any court, corporation or company,

he shall be guilty of embezzlement.

Proof of embezzlement shall be sufficient to sustain the charge of larceny.

Embezzlement is Taught in the Police Academy

<http://rva.gov/sites/default/files/2019-01/MinimumTrainingStandards.pdf>

Training Manual and Compulsory Minimum Training Standards

Page 39. Performance Outcome 2.4.

Respond to request by determining whether the facts are civil or criminal.

Page 245. Performance Outcome 2.13.

Apply knowledge of the law related to a larceny, motor theft, extortion, and embezzlement.

Training Objectives for 2.13. 1.

2.13.7. Define embezzlement and elements of the crime.

2.13.8. Identify punishments associated with the crime of embezzlement.

Also

<https://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/law-enforcement/manual/standards-performance-outcomes/law-enforcement-officers/legal-issues>

Civil or Criminal - in COURTROOM

https://virginiarules.org/varules_topics/introduction-to-a-virginia-courtroom/#:~:text=Criminal%20cases%20involve%20a%20violation,has%20a%20courthouse%20with%20courtrooms.

Introduction to a Virginia Courtroom

Criminal cases involve a violation of law;

civil cases involve a dispute between individuals or groups of individuals.

(Examples of Embezzlement can be found by scrolling the Circuit Court docket.)

Embezzlement is a Federal Crime

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/embezzlement/#:~:text=Embezzlement%20is%20the%20fraudulent%20taking,it%20to%20a%20third%20party.>

embezzlement

Embezzlement is the fraudulent taking of personal property by someone to whom it was entrusted. It is most often associated with the misappropriation of money. Embezzlement can occur regardless of whether the defendant keeps the personal property or transfers it to a third party.

Feb 20, 2017 Mayor Hires Embezzler

<https://www.nbcwashington.com/local/dc-wtop-richmond-mayor-hires-ex-official-convicted-of-embezzlement/36611/>

Richmond Mayor Hires Ex-official Convicted of Embezzlement
February 20, 2017, Channel 4, Washington.

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Richmond's mayor has hired a former state official who was convicted of embezzling nearly \$240,000. The Richmond Times-Dispatch reports that Mayor Levar Stoney has hired Steven Hammond Jr. to serve as an executive assistant. Hammond pleaded guilty in federal court in 2015 to stealing money designed for substance abuse education when he worked for the Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control. Stoney spokesman Jim Nolan says the mayor believes Hammond "deserves a second chance." The newspaper was unable to reach Hammond for a comment. Hammond had faced up to 10 years in prison, but was given community service and three years of probation and ordered to pay restitution. The judge said he was moved by Hammond's apology for the crime.

Feb. 20, 2017 Mayor: Attitude on Embezzlement ?

<https://www.wric.com/news/stoney-assistant-convicted-of-embezzlement-violating-probation-resigns/>

Stoney assistant convicted of embezzlement, violating probation resigns

Feb 20, 2017

Also
<https://www.wtvr.com/2017/02/21/stoney-aide-convicted-of-embezzlement-sent-threatening-texts-resigns>

Aide resigns after apologizing to Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney

Feb 21, 2017

The man convicted of embezzling nearly \$240,000 and violating probation by sending threatening text messages, has resigned from his position as executive assistant to Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney...

Hammond's resignation came one day after Mayor Stoney defended hiring Hammond saying he "believes in second chances."
"When I ran for office, and my time in public service, I've always talked about second chances and redemption, and I still stand today as a firm believer in second chances and redemption," Stoney said.
At the time, the mayor was only aware of embezzlement charges Hammond faced.

According to a criminal complaint filed in U.S. District court, Steven Hammond Jr. admitted to stealing from an ABC program that receives federal funds.

...
Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring told CBS 6 reporter Shelby Brown back in 2015, "he would arrange for others who were not providing any education services but getting checks written to them allegedly for education outreach programs but a portion of the money would go back to him."

...
Facing up to 10 years behind bars, Hammond received no prison time. He was sentenced to serve 240 hours of community service and three years of probation. He was also ordered to pay \$150 per month in an effort to pay back the \$239,000 he took.

Jul. 18, 2017 Mayor: What happens to efficient City Auditors ?

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

Mayor Stoney on city auditor scandal: 'Sad to see him go'

Jul. 18, 2017

Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney says he is sad to see former Richmond City Auditor Umesh Dalal go, but the decision was entirely in the hands of the City Council.

...
Stoney refuted claims made by City Councilwoman Reva Trammell that the administration wanted to get rid of Dalal because he found too much fraud and waste, embarrassing the city. Stoney's administration has been in operation for six months.

May 14, 2020 Virginia Nonprofit Club Embezzled

<https://patch.com/virginia/ashburn/ashburn-man-arrested-embezzling-6k-swim-club-police>

Ashburn Man Arrested For Embezzling \$6K From Swim Club: Police

The sheriff's office said its investigation determined Costanzo embezzled more than \$6,000 from the swim team by transferring monies from the club through his personal PayPal account.

... an official with the swim club said its board worked with the sheriff's office on the investigation.

Nov-Dec 2021 - EnRichmond Board to review IRS form AFTER approving

<https://ewscripps.brightspotcdn.com/0f/8b/0a2c51954d9489478ba744cc028c/timeline-final-1-4-2023.pdf>

November/December 2021

Board received an email from John Sydnor, Enrichmond Executive Director/Elizabeth (Beth) Captain, SBAY Inc., Enrichmond CPA. The 2021 Draft IRS 990 Form was attached to the email.

Enrichmond Board Members were asked via email to urgently vote to approve the 2021 Draft IRS 990 Form. The 2021 IRS 990 form was for an 18-month period January 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021 (Enrichmond changed fiscal year from January/December to July/June).

Board members submitted questions to the Executive Director, John Sydnor, but would not vote on the document without further review.

A representative of WellsColeman answered questions during a December conference call.

The Board Members were advised that they could review the 2021 IRS 990 Form AFTER approving.

The Board Members did not vote on the document.

Jan 24, 2022 - Board - Audit - Discrepancies

<https://ewscripps.brightspotcdn.com/0f/8b/0a2c51954d9489478ba744cc028c/timelinc-final-1-4-2023.pdf>

1/24/2022 2021 Annual Financial Audit (January 2020-June 30, 2021)

Zoom Conference Call. Representatives from WellsColeman, Enrichmond Board Members, Enrichmond Executive Director, John Sydnor, Enrichmond Assistant Executive Director, James Mickle, Beth Captain SBAY Inc. Enrichmond CPA

During the 2021

Financial Audit, the board discovered discrepancies

in the classification of income and use of funds.

Immediately, the board began a deep dive to understand the presentation of the financials in the provided documents.

Feb 2022 Board - Awaiting Answers, Requesting Information

<https://ewscripps.brightspotcdn.com/0f/8b/0a2c51954d9489478ba744ec028e/timeline-final-1-4-2023.pdf>

February 2022

While still awaiting answers from staff, board took action to curb expenses.
Evaluated and canceled most consultant contracts executed solely by John Sydnor.
Furloughed all but critical staff.
Cut all but essential programs.

Continued to

request information to understand the bookkeeping and finances.

Idea: Police, Prosecutor, Court, Subpoena, Bank, Forensics, Grand Jury, Indictment, Court

Feb 7, 2022 - Board Requests Specific Items

<https://ewscripps.brightspotcdn.com/0f/8b/0a2c51954d9489478ba744ec028c/timeline-final-1-4-2023.pdf>

2/7/2022

Enrichmond Board Members

requested specific items

from John Sydnor/Beth Captain i.e. specific contracts signed by Executive Director, accounts payable, loans, assets along with detailed accounting/bookkeeping records.

Feb 15, 2022 - Board Encouraged to take out another loan

2/15/2022

John Sydnor/Beth Captain encouraged Enrichmond Board Members to look at

taking out a second SBA Loan as a way to survive.

Board Members did not see this as a viable solution and did not approve this request.

Feb 2022 - Board - 1st Member Resigns

Mid-February 2022

Report submitted to Enrichmond Board Members from John Sydnor/Beth Captain.

The report advised a path forward for the organization including properties, assets, other funding sources and provided a 30-60-90 day plan to resolve cash flow issues.

At this time, senior staff were still advising board that this was possible.

First board member resignation submitted.

Feb. 28, 2023 - Illegal Towing

Richmond Sergeant: Possible towing fraud in the city goes back years

Richmond Police are conducting a widespread investigation into a Richmond-based towing company, saying the company may have fraudulently towed hundreds of drivers over the years.

...

Sergeant Nicholas Castrinos, who executed a search warrant for the company in December, said over 1,000 entries in the police department's system are related to the investigation.

<https://www.wtvr.com/news/local-news/possible-fraud-towing-vehicles-richmond-virginia-february-28-2023>

Mar 2022 - Board - City Funding Request

<https://ewscripps.brightspotcdn.com/0f/8b/0a2c51954d9489478ba744ec028e/timeline-final-1-4-2023.pdf>

March 2022

John Sydnor reached out to the City of Richmond including the Mayor and City Council to reinstate non-departmental funding which had been paused during 2021 and 2022.

Enrichmond 2023 Funding budgeted by the City of Richmond was also removed.

Virginia Outdoors Foundation and the City of Richmond Parks and Recreation were advised of Enrichmond's situation also at this time.

March 14, 2022,

John Sydnor presented an Action Plan

to Enrichmond Board Members.

Apr 13, 2022 - Mayor's Office asked Auditor to change report

<https://www.wtvr.com/news/problem-solvers/richmond-auditor-texts>

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

Apr 13, 2022

Apr/May 2022 Board Timeline - Alternatives

<https://ewscripps.brightspotcdn.com/0f/8b/0a2c51954d9489478ba744ec028e/timeline-final-1-4-2023.pdf>

April/May 2022

Board Members researched alternatives

recommended in the action plan.

The only viable solution put forth included additional short-term loans.

Apr 22, 2022 - Board - Sydnor Resigns

<https://ewscripps.brightspotcdn.com/0f/8b/0a2c51954d9489478ba744ec028e/timeline-final-1-4-2023.pdf>

4/4/2022

Resignation letter submitted by Executive Director, John Sydnor,

acknowledging that his final day of employment as April 22, 2022.

Jun 29, 2022 - Board Voted to Dissolve

Jun 30, 2022 - Enrichmond Collapsed, Treasury Depleted

<https://richmondfreepress.com/news/2022/jun/30/enrichmond-foundations-status-unclear/>

Enrichmond Foundation's status is unclear

The nonprofit has been an umbrella for some 85 volunteer organizations

A 32-year-old foundation that was created to support the city Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities and that is now the owner of two historic Black cemeteries may have collapsed.

The Free Press has been told that the Enrichmond Foundation's board has resigned without notice or replacement and that the foundation's treasury may have been depleted.

Foundation Collapsed, Treasury Depleted

The foundation, which dates to 1990, has served as an umbrella nonprofit for at least 85 volunteer organizations that support individual parks and undertake other recreation initiatives.

Since 2017, with the assistance of a state foundation, Enrichmond has taken ownership of the long-neglected Evergreen and East End cemeteries that straddle the Richmond-Henrico County border near Oakwood Cemetery.

The foundation has received small amounts of city funding, but largely has been self-supporting and independent in operation.

The foundation appears to have last filed a required financial statement with the Internal Revenue Service in 2019

John Sydnor, who served 11 years as Enrichmond's executive director, left the organization last year.

Jul 7, 2022 Free Press - Lynch - Audit

<https://richmondfreepress.com/news/2022/jul/07/councilwoman-calls-audit-defunct-foundation/>

Councilwoman calls for audit of defunct foundation

Jeremy M. Lazarus | 7/7/2022, 6 p.m.

The chair of City Council's Education and Human Services Committee plans to seek a financial audit of the collapsed Enrichmond Foundation, which previously played a crucial role in providing support for city parks and recreation.

Fifth District Councilwoman Stephanie A. Lynch issued the statement in the wake of a Free Press article last week reporting on the sudden and unexpected demise of the independent foundation after 32 years.

Ms. Lynch said the closure has left in the lurch dozens of civic associations, parks and other recreation-related organizations that relied on the nonprofit to be their fiscal agent. "None of my neighborhood associations or nonprofits can access their money," she stated.

Such groups "are the backbone of this city," Ms. Lynch continued. "The trust between these groups and Enrichmond has been broken.

"We need to do everything in our power to protect these group's civic assets as well as hold Enrichmond accountable," she said. "We need to conduct a thorough audit and get a handle on how these groups can be made whole" financially.

As reported last week, the foundation's board has resigned, its staff has been laid off and its bank account apparently has been depleted. The foundation's website also has been shut down, although the Facebook page is still accessible.

On Tuesday an attorney for the foundation, Kerry B. Hutcherson, confirmed in an email distributed to representatives of its partner organization, that the organization is taking legal steps to dissolve.

The foundation's collapse also is raising concern about the operation and maintenance of two historic Black cemeteries it owns, Evergreen and East End, located adjacent to Oakwood Cemetery.

Those cemeteries are to become the property of the Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities after the foundation is dissolved, according to the foundation's charter.

Ms. Lynch stated that she hopes to get more information from Mayor Levar M. Stoney's administration at the next meeting of her committee scheduled for Thursday, July 14.

In addition, she plans to request that the full council authorize the city's auditor to undertake the financial investigation.

The foundation appears to have no direct ties to the city, which apparently did not have a role in appointing board members or hiring staff.

The Stoney administration, including the mayor's office and Christopher Frelke, director of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities, has not responded to Free Press requests for information on Enrichmond.

Commonwealth's Attorney Colette W. McEachin, responding to a Free Press query Tuesday, stated that her office has not been asked to investigate as there has "been no specific allegation of criminal conduct by or against any person." She stated that makes it a civil matter.

July 20, 2022 - City Audit for Covid Relief - Some Holes

<https://www.wtvr.com/news/local-news/thousands-unaccounted-for-richmond-cares-act-money-july-20-2022>

Thousands of Covid relief dollars unaccounted for, wasted in Richmond: 'There were some holes'

Jul 20, 2022

RICHMOND, Va. -- Millions of federal dollars flowed into the City of Richmond during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to help those who were struggling. Nearly two years later, the city's watchdog found black holes in the record-keeping of how that money was spent.

The city received about \$40 million in CARES Act funding in the summer of 2020 which was meant to serve as immediate aid for impacted Richmonders. By December 2020, the city had already gone through 94% of it...

4th District Council Member Kristen Nye, who sits on the audit committee, said the council and the mayor directed the city auditor, Lou Lassiter, to investigate how the money was spent in Richmond to catch any issues before having to file reports with the federal government.

"The whole purpose of doing the audit is not to do a 'gotcha.' It's more to find the holes in government and to make sure that as we move forward, that they're fixed," Nye said.

After reviewing the completed audit, Nye said she was concerned about gaps in cash distribution and that most of the issues listed in the audit involved the Office of Community Wealth Building, the city department which addresses poverty.

"Since then, there's been a change in leadership in that office, as well as some internal controls that have been put together," Nye said. "I personally will be monitoring that department."

Lassiter found issues in the following areas:

...

Staff members who processed assistance for businesses and non-profits also participated in the screening and approval of applications. Lassiter also said he could not determine if \$50,000 in business aid was spent allowably due to a lack of documentation of how the money was spent.

...

The city did a poor job keeping records of more than \$1 million worth of gift cards distributed to citizens. The auditor couldn't account for potentially dozens of cards that could total up to \$44,000.

"My biggest concerns came from the items that were related to cash, like gift cards that were distributed. There were definitely some holes in tracking who received them," Nye said.

Mayor Levar Stoney agreed with the auditor that the city hall has room for improvement in money management.

...

"I think it comes down to better bookkeeping, right? And so more training on how we go about bookkeeping to make sure we can keep track of those dollars," Mayor Stoney said.

The mayor also defended the work of essential employees during the peak of the crisis.

"Remember, this was an emergency situation. And local government, that's where the rubber meets the road. We had to step in right away, make sure folks stayed in their homes, make sure folks got fed, and we did exactly that," Stoney said.

Lassiter made eight recommendations in which city departments can better document and manage funds in the future. He also suggested the city eliminate the use of gift cards for assistance moving forward.

All recommendations were accepted by city hall leaders, and Nye said she will make sure each change is met by the deadlines set forth by Lassiter.

"It's really important as we continue to take these ARPA [American Rescue Plan Act] dollars from the federal government that we are spending them wisely and that there is accountability for all those dollars," Nye said.

Jul 21, 2022 - Lynch - Meeting Auditor, Inspector General - Investigation

<https://www.axios.com/local/richmond/2022/07/21/enrichmond-foundation-collapse-throws-nonprofits-in-limbo>

Enrichmond Foundation's collapse throws nonprofits in limbo

What they're saying: "Enrichmond was a bank, essentially, for 86 organizations, and they're hurt, they're disappointed, and they're angry," Councilperson Stephanie Lynch tells Axios.

Lynch and her colleagues say they have a meeting scheduled with the city auditor and inspector general to discuss a potential investigation.

...

The foundation had received more than \$140,000 from the state to maintain the properties since 2017 and another \$550,000 in grants from the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, a state-affiliated nonprofit, according to public records collected by Brian Palmer.

Jul 21, 2022 - Lynch - Criminal - Meeting - Also McEachin, Nye

<https://richmondfreepress.com/news/2022/jul/21/councilwoman-hints-criminal-acts-may-explain-enric/>

Councilwoman hints 'criminal' acts may explain Enrichmond's missing funds

Fifth District City Councilwoman Stephanie A. Lynch, chair of the Education and Human Services Committee, said "there may very well be criminal activity" involved in the disappearance of the funds.

Instead of just seeking an audit, she now plans to meet Friday, July 22, with several officials to determine the next step. The officials are to include City Auditor Louis Lassiter, City Inspector General James Osuna and Commonwealth's Attorney Colette W. McEachin, Ms. Lynch indicated.

Ms. Lynch set up the meeting following a request from Mr. Lassiter and 4th District Councilwoman Kristen M. Nye.

Jul 28, 2022 Free Press - How to Investigate

<https://richmondfreepress.com/news/2022/jul/28/city-officials-debate-how-investigate-defunct-nonp/>

City officials debate how to investigate defunct nonprofit

Jeremy M. Lazarus | 7/28/2022, 6 p.m.

A criminal probe of the collapsed Enrichmond Foundation is on the way, according to 5th District Councilwoman Stephanie A. Lynch. Ms. Lynch said she is working with Commonwealth's Attorney Colette A. McEachin and other officials to determine how best to proceed to carry out the probe.

Jul 2022 Board Timeline - Temporary Reinstatement, Dissolution Process

<https://ewscripps.brightspotcdn.com/0f/8b/0a2c51954d9489478ba744ec028e/timeline-final-1-4-2023.pdf>

July 2022

Enrichmond Board Members were requested to reinstate for 30 days to meet Bylaws requirements for a minimum of 10 members. All voted to reinstate in attempt to find a path forward for dissolution, which would provide for disbursement of assets.

Board Members voted to proceed with the dissolution of the Enrichmond Foundation.

Beth Captain, Enrichmond CPA, resigned and became unavailable for questions

WellsColeman resigned as Auditor.

Kerry Hutcheson, Coyner and Coyner, agreed to help Board Members pro bono, in a very limited capacity, to identify properties held by the Enrichmond Foundation and Parity, LLC.

Kerry Hutcheson recommended that the Board engage a lawyer to advise on dissolution options.

Aug. 11, 2023 - Towing - Castrinos

2023

https://www.12onourside.com/2023/08/11/owner-richmond-towing-company-faces-16-felony-indictments-stealing-vehicles/?utm_source=ground.news&utm_medium=referral

Aug 25, 2022 - Lynch - Groups Filing Police Complaints only way to criminal probe

<https://richmondfreepress.com/news/2022/aug/25/nonprofits-urged-file-complaint-against-defunct-um/>

[Nonprofits urged to file complaint against defunct umbrella foundation](#)

Richmond City Councilwoman Stephanie A. Lynch is encouraging organizations whose funds disappeared after the collapse of the Enrichmond Foundation to file a complaint with the Richmond Police Department.

The 5th District councilwoman who chairs the Education and Human Services Committee said that is the only way that a criminal probe could take place.

Ms. Lynch said the city government had stopped contributing to the foundation two years ago, and she has been advised that the city's stake is insufficient to involve the commonwealth's attorney's office or investigators.

Aug 25, 2022 Free Press - Lynch - Police

<https://richmondfreepress.com/news/2022/aug/25/nonprofits-urged-file-complaint-against-defunct-um/>

[Nonprofits urged to file complaint against defunct umbrella foundation](#)

Jeremy M. Lazarus | 8/25/2022, 6 p.m.

Aug 29, 2022 - Options: Police / Embezzlement; City / Civil Suit; A/General

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

[Richmond community groups still searching for answers after dissolution of nonprofit](#)

Among those who have been looking into the next steps has been Richmond City Council 5th District Representative Stephanie Lynch, who is chair of the council's Education and Human Services Standing Committee.

"The frustration on the time it is taken to get clarity around these answers is real, it's palpable, I'm also equally as frustrated, I think, you know, the members of the organizations, the administration, I mean, all of us want to get to the bottom of it as quickly as we can and find resolve," said Lynch. "There's several options on the table, none of which seem to be great options..."

One, having the community groups file, as individuals, with the Richmond Police Department and launch an investigation into the organization for potential fraud and embezzlement.

Two, in parallel to that, the city is exploring what options it has to start a civil suit.

And then there's been discussion around what powers or purview does the attorney general's office have over nonprofit organizations."

News of Lynch's call for criminal complaints was first reported by the Richmond Free Press.

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

CBS 6 has also reached out to the Virginia Attorney General's office asking if they have been asked or are considering an investigation, but have not heard back.

Aug 2022 Board Timeline - Dissolution Process

<https://ewscripps.brightspotcdn.com/0f/8b/0a2c51954d9489478ba744ec028e/timeline-final-1-4-2023.pdf>

August 2022

Enrichmond Board Members contracted with the firm of Hirschler Fleischer for a limited scope of services to identify legal options for the dissolution of the Enrichmond Foundation. Board Members paid for this contract using personal funds.

Sep 9, 2022 - Groups Organizing - Police Criminal Complaint Planned

<https://www.axios.com/local/richmond/2022/09/09/criminal-complaint-enrichmond>

Criminal complaint planned against Enrichmond

The groups are currently organizing to file a formal complaint with police in hopes of initiating a criminal investigation.

...
Meanwhile, the roughly 20 community groups that plan to pursue a criminal complaint are asking other affected organizations to contact them.

Sep 9, 2022 - Groups Plan to File Police Criminal Complaints

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

Enrichmond Foundation expected to face criminal complaints

He added that the groups involved in the accountability project have communicated with Richmond police about a possible investigation and plan to file individual criminal complaints against Enrichmond.

The city's police department did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

...
Rep. Donald McEachin (D-Va.) sent a letter to the foundation's board calling for them to "ensure that all federal funds granted to the Foundation are fully accounted for and ensure that these funds were allocated according to agreements in place with the relevant federal agencies."

Mid-Sep 2022 - Board - Legal Options

<https://ewscripps.brightspotcdn.com/0f/8b/0a2c51954d9489478ba744ec028e/timeline-final-1-4-2023.pdf>

Mid-September 2022

Enrichmond Board Members, Representatives from Hirschler Fleischer. Meeting to review legal options to dissolve the Enrichmond Foundation. Five options were presented by Andrew Sherrod.

Hirschler Fleischer attends meeting with legal counsel for City of Richmond Parks and Recreation to advise of status of the organization and request assistance. This ended the contractual scope with Hirschler Fleischer.

Oct 14, 2022 - Police Have IRS Data ?

<https://www.baconsrebellion.com/wp/some-pretty-good-clues-to-the-enrichmond-saga/>

Some Pretty Good Clues to the EnRichmond Saga

To throw some light, I offer the last Form 990 from EnRichmond that is available online. It was filed October 20, 2020.

The balance sheet indicates EnRichmond finished 2019 with savings and temporary cash investments of \$210,961 and \$124,699.

I guess it is possible for that amount to have increased to \$3 million that is being discussed as missing, but the total revenue in 2019 was \$1,175,990 which was exceeded by \$1,542,978 in expenses.

I am also sure that Richmond police have this data. So it really cannot remain a mystery.

Oct 14, 2022 - Lynch vocal; Mayor, City Hall inactive

<https://www.baconsrebellion.com/wp/embarrassing-non-action/>

Embarrassing Non-Action

So, where are the "leaders" of the city on all this? Well, it's hard to say because hardly anyone has said anything. Leland Pinder at CBS 6 reported that Councilwoman Stephanie Lynch has been the most vocal of anyone at City Hall and not only called for a criminal investigation but also litigation,

...
Volunteer groups affected by Enrichmond dissolution plan next steps

...
There has been nothing from the Mayor's office.

City Hall should put this burden on their shoulders and be out there leading the way to make these groups whole ASAP and then demand and push for a thorough investigation, litigation, and whatever it takes to find out what happened to the money and recover it or pursue any legal recourse.

Oct 28, 2022 - Groups- lawyer - McEachin: Groups - Police Detective

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

Volunteer groups affected by Enrichmond dissolution plan next steps

"We're pretty desperate for any legal representation, especially pro-bono," he said.

Colette McEachin, 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.

McEachin also outlined which law enforcement agencies might be able to investigate the issue.

Rep. Donald McEachin (D-Va.), who is married to Commonwealth's Attorney Colette McEachin, wrote to the board asking for answers.

Sep/Oct/Nov 2022 - Board Options, Discussions

<https://ewscripps.brightspotdn.com/0f/8b/0a2c51954d9489478ba744ec028c/timeline-final-1-4-2023.pdf>

September/October/ November 2022

Board Members unsuccessfully pursued each of the legal options put forth by Hirschler Fleischer to dissolve the organization.

Discussions with:

- Creditors
- State of Virginia Attorney General's Office
- City of Richmond Attorney's Office
- City of Richmond Parks and Recreation
- Congressman McEachin's Office
- Potential Stewards

Dec 7, 2022 - City's Inaction, Creditors

<https://www.baconsrebellion.com/wp/rva-5x5-enrichmond-and-the-citys-radio-silence-the-clock-is-ticking/>

RVA 5X5: Enrichmond and the City's Radio Silence

Suddenly in June, the Foundation announced a cessation of operations, leaving no transition plan. The Board voted to dissolve the Foundation but left no accounting of the funds it had in its accounts, and then within weeks the lawyer representing the Board stepped away from his role as counsel.

None of the "leaders" at City Hall has said anything about this. Not. A. Word.

...

City's lack of action

...

There are only two entities currently with a claim to file receivership for Enrichmond's assets: a bank, which is an outstanding creditor, and the City. Essentially, the first to file for receivership would control the process that is driven by the courts. The court-appointed receiver could sell the land or assets to recoup its costs.

According to my sources, Enrichmond has asked the City to initiate the receivership filing with the court and, as mentioned, the City has standing because it is owed money. The receivership process is not particularly complicated, but the City has made it known that it does not want to address this in a quick time frame — perhaps six months from now, in the summer of 2023 — maybe.

...

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

Dec 23, 2022 - Accountability Group: Police, City, McEachin - Civil

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

A Controversial Virginia Nonprofit Collapses, Leaving Questions and Anger

After Enrichmond's implosion, members of some of these groups formed the Enrichmond Accountability Project (EAP) to try to claw back their money. 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.

...

Recently, EAP started working with an advocate from the nonprofit sector to secure pro bono legal assistance. "It seems like litigation may be the only option, since the city council is no longer willing or able to take responsibility," said Mac Wood of EAP and Friends of Pump House, a former Enrichmond community partner. "I would love to settle outside of court, but the silence from Enrichmond's board and the City of Richmond is leaving us with few options," Wood said.

...

Parity, "c/o Enrichmond Foundation," still owns East End and Evergreen. Enrichmond's executive director, John Sydnor, was Parity's only "sole member-manager."

...

"All digital repositories were lost (as far as I know)," the consultant Enrichmond hired to lead the project wrote on her blog. "Files, electronics, and historic documents stored in the company office are in the hands of some unknown person. Everything that people had been working on since 2017, vanished."

Dec 2022 Board - Irregularities, Final Resignations

<https://ewscripps.brightspotcdn.com/0f/8b/0a2c51954d9489478ba744ec028e/timeline-final-1-4-2023.pdf>

<https://ewscripps.brightspotcdn.com/0f/8b/0a2c51954d9489478ba744ec028e/timeline-final-1-4-2023.pdf>

Memorandum for Enrichmond Board of Directors

As a volunteer, non-compensated board, we have dedicated the past year delving into the daily organizational practices/finances that put Enrichmond in its current situation. We have put in thousands of hours and personal funds in an effort to find an orderly process to restore the viability of the organization and Enrichmond's commitments. It has become apparent through meetings, consultations and legal counsel that it is beyond the expertise and knowledge of the board members to find a realistic path, which would allow Enrichmond to distribute assets and establish a process to resolve debts. The Board is providing an approximate timeline of activity since we became aware of the operational irregularities.

.....

(See above)

December 2022

After a year of seeking assistance and a path forward, it has become apparent that the situation is much too complicated for a volunteer board to resolve. From January to December, the board unsuccessfully sought to find a solution to dissolve, which would provide a path for distribution of assets to creditors and turn assets over to the City of Richmond per Enrichmond Bylaws.

The majority of the volunteer board submitted final resignations.

Historical documents, financial records, staff IT equipment and other stored items have been donated to the City of Richmond per Enrichmond Bylaws.

Jan 6, 2023 - Groups: Detective: No Evidence of Crime, Can't Investigate

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

Enrichmond Foundation must be held accountable.

Richmond Times-Dispatch

Pohlmann 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.

(paywall)

Jan 9, 2023 - City Hall: Accountable in Court - Lynch: Criminal or Civil

<https://www.12onyourside.com/2023/01/09/richmond-city-council-explores-next-steps-over-enrichmond-foundation-flop-including-litigation/>

City Council explores next steps over Enrichmond Foundation flop, including litigation

Richmond City Hall says Enrichmond Foundation will be held accountable in court

...

criminal activity," said Stephanie Lynch

...

discuss the next steps, including criminal or civil litigation.

Jan 13, 2023 - Council: Helpless - Police: No Crime, No Investigation

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

Groups impacted by Enrichmond's dissolution still seeking answers:

"So, if it's options we have before us like A, B, and C, that would be great, rather than just waiting to figure out what the best answer is," said 1st District Councilmember Andreas Addison.

"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 5th District Councilmember Stephanie Lynch...

Pohlmann said legal action is something the Enrichmond Accountability Project (EAP), made up of former Enrichmond groups, is pursuing. He 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.

Jan 26, 2023 - It's Complicated - Free Press

<https://richmondfreepress.com/news/2023/jan/26/its-complicated/>

It's complicated

Beleaguered foundation's last member determined to maintain Black cemeteries, despite ongoing obstacles

Jeremy M. Lazarus | 1/26/2023, 6 p.m.

Both the Richmond Police Department and Commonwealth's Attorney's Office have rejected a probe, considering the transfer of the community groups' funds to other uses as a civil matter as there has been no evidence the money personally benefitted anyone associated with the foundation.

Feb 13, 2023 - McEachin: Waiting for Police - OAG Waiting for Complaint

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

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

"You need that police power, you need the subpoena power, you need to be able to get their records," Schmidt explains.

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.

Schmidt says the best person for the job is the state Attorney General – who has authority over nonprofit fraud and access to state police resources.

"The Attorney General today could assign an assistant attorney general and call up the state police and say, 'Let's go subpoena all of these records and get to the bottom of this.' And that is really where the ultimate authority, I think, and the ultimate responsibility lands," Schmidt says.

A spokesman for the state attorney general says they haven't received a formal complaint, but that the office stands ready to take action where appropriate.

Mar 23, 2023 - City Attorney: No Rights - McEachin, Police: No Evidence, Civil Matter

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

Mr. Saunders 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 - FBI Mum - Attorney General Confirms - Mayor: Resolution

<https://www.wtvr.com/news/local-news/enrichmond-foundation-investigation-april-4-2023>

Mayor: FBI, Virginia AG Office investigating financial collapse of Enrichmond Foundation

When contacted by CBS 6, the Richmond Office of the FBI said they could not confirm or deny any ongoing investigations.

The Attorney General's office confirmed they are investigating but could not provide further comment.

...

"... However, we are happy to hear that the Office of the Attorney General will be doing their own investigation as well, and potentially federal partners might be involved in investigating what occurred here," Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney said. "We think it's very, very important that we bring some sort of resolution to the number of private citizens who've been involved in bettering their communities through these friends' groups."

Apr 4, 2023 Mayor: Richmond assist in embezzlement investigations ?

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

Miyares to investigate collapse of Richmond non-profit managing historic cemeteries

Apr 4, 2023 -

Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney ... federal authorities were involved.

"...Attorney General... investigation as well," ... "And potentially maybe federal partners..."

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.

Apr 5, 2023 - Lynch: Always Criminal Case

<https://www.12onyourside.com/2023/04/05/fbi-virginia-attorney-general-investigating-enrichmond-foundation-missing-money/>

FBI, Attorney General investigating Enrichmond Foundation missing money

"This was always a criminal case. This was always criminal activity, and that is why we called for a criminal investigation," said Stephanie Lynch with Richmond City Council.

Apr 13, 2023 - Attorney General Confirmed Investigation

https://richmond.com/news/local/government-politics/enrichmond-foundation-miyares/article_bebff3d4-d963-11ed-a204-1f75973ecbb2.html

State launches investigation into Enrichmond Foundation

Now, the groups could soon get the chance, as the office of Attorney General Jason Miyares has confirmed it is investigating the foundation. (paywall)

May 17, 2023 - McEachin Still Waiting for Police

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

Financial documents, internal communications shed new light on months before Enrichmond collapse

8News previously reported that the Richmond Police Department (RPD) was looking into the dissolution, with Richmond City Commonwealth's Attorney Colette McEachin 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 DPW Fraud

<https://www.justice.gov/usao-edva/pr/former-city-richmond-official-and-wife-plead-guilty-fraud>

Former City of Richmond Official and Wife Plead Guilty to Fraud
Wednesday, July 19, 2023

Former Richmond DPW official and wife plead guilty to fraud
Jul. 19, 2023

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.

<https://www.12onyourside.com/2023/07/19/former-richmond-dpw-official-wife-plead-guilty-fraud/>

<https://www.wric.com/news/local-news/richmond/former-senior-richmond-employee-pleads-guilty-to-defrauding-city-alongside-his-wife/>

Aug 11, 2023 - Towing - Crawley - Police Chief - issue of civil matter

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=3467038620277219>

Police Chief Edwards -video

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

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 - WTVR - Towing - Crawley

<https://www.wtvr.com/news/local-news/no-limit-towing-owner-sherral-crawley-bond-denied-august-18-2023>

Owner of Richmond towing company, accused of stealing cars and quickly selling, denied bond

Sherral Crawley... arraigned on... motor vehicle theft... indicted by a grand jury on Aug. 7.

...
When asked by the judge if she an attorney... she... told her... say that this was a civil matter...

She then told the court that she denied wrongdoing... She added this was a civil matter.

...
Judge Melvin Hughes told Crawley she was facing felonies and it was a criminal matter.

...
Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney John Jung told the court he was opposed to bond for Crawley

Aug 18, 2023 - Channel 12 - No Limit Towing - Police - Civil Matter

<https://www.12onourside.com/2023/08/18/owner-no-limit-towing-denied-bond-after-denying-accusations-stealing-vehicles/>

Owner of 'No Limit Towing' denied bond after denying accusations of stealing vehicles

The owner of "No Limit Towing" was in the courtroom

...
Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney John Jung says a grand jury indicted... Crawley... of grand larceny

...
She said the lawyer... said her case should be a civil matter...

...
Diggs... He 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.

Sep 5, 2023 - No Limit Towing - Castrinos asks victims to report

<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/>

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

Sherral Crawley... was back in court on Tuesday... Tuesday's hearing was largely procedural

...
"This is going to be dealt with in Criminal Court," Stone said. "Whether or not there are also civil ramifications... we just don't know."

...
Davis... said she is looking into possibly taking her complaints to civil court.

...
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 5, 2023 - Enrichmond - Community Foundation - Chopus

Funds available for groups hurt by Enrichmond's collapse
Jeremy M. Lazarus | 10/5/2023

A promised \$250,000 bailout fund for more than 80 community groups that lost most of their money in the 2022 collapse of the Enrichmond Foundation is finally available.

...

City Council cleared the way for the release of the money that will go to the Richmond Outdoor and Prosperity Fund that is being administered by The Community Foundation.

As previously reported, the money was included in the 2023-24 budget but needed council approval to be released.

The fund, led by charity consultant Kelly Chopus, has been notifying the affected groups and plans to award grants of \$1,000 to \$10,000 to the organizations based on their applications, according to information provided to the council.

Oct 23, 2023 VA Circuit Court - Attorney General - Hahn, Harrisonburg

<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>

Attorney General Miyares Applauds Sentencing in Harrisonburg White Collar Crime Case
~ Andrew T. Hahn was sentenced to 15 years by the Rockingham Circuit Court ~

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

Office of Attorney General Senior Financial Crimes Investigator Howard Mulholland, Senior Crime Analyst Jennifer Dazier, and Senior Financial Crime Investigator Mark De Almeida assisted in the investigation of the case with the Harrisonburg Police Department and Rockingham County Commonwealth Attorney.

Oct 24, 2023 Local Police, Prosecutor, Court - Cooperate with Feds

<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>

Oct. 24, 2023
Harrisonburg Police Department

Offender in embezzlement, money laundering case sentenced to 15 years

Andrew Hahn

Rockingham County Circuit Court

The sentence brings to a close a case that began on Oct. 12, 2021, when HRCSB alerted HPD to the suspected embezzlement scheme. HPD detectives initiated an extensive, yearlong investigation, leading to Hahn's arrest on Oct. 17, 2022. 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.

Nov. 7-8, 2023 DPW Fraud

Former Richmond DPW official and wife sentenced in fraud scheme

Nov. 7, 2023

A former Richmond Department of Public Works official and his wife were sentenced Tuesday to over 2 years in prison for defrauding the city.

<https://www.12onyourside.com/2023/11/07/former-richmond-dpw-official-wife-plead-guilty-fraud/>

Former Richmond Department of Public Works employee, wife sentenced for defrauding the City

Nov. 7, 2023

<https://www.wric.com/news/local-news/richmond/former-richmond-department-of-public-works-employee-wife-sentenced-for-defrauding-the-city/>

Former Richmond public works official gets 27-month prison sentence in fraud case

Nov 08, 2023

<https://www.wtvr.com/news/local-news/former-richmond-official-gets-27-month-sentence-november-8-2023>

<https://richmondfreepress.com/news/2023/nov/16/need-attention-detail/>

Need: Attention to detail
11/16/2023, 6 p.m.

City Hall is a \$3 billion yearly operation with a lot of moving parts and thousands of employees. Given that the city operates with taxpayers' money, there is a need for attention to detail to ensure that the money is well spent and the reason why there is an internal auditor and an inspector general to look into the conduct of city business. Two recent examples suggest that city officials are often less than attentive. In the past week, two former employees of the Department of Public Works were sentenced to prison terms after they pleaded guilty to ripping off the department for more than \$600,000 over at least a five-year period. One was Michael Evins, the now retired director of DPW operations. He created phony companies with his wife, Samaria Evins, who was listed as the owner-operator. He then directed phony contracts to those companies with the assistance of a DPW technician, Shaun Lindsey, who was empowered to select vendors for smaller contracts. Invoices were then sent to the Department of Finance even though Mrs. Evins' companies never did any work. The conspirators got away with it until the inspector general, James Osuna, got a tip, investigated and brought in the federal government to assist in holding the trio accountable for one of the biggest efforts in city history to enrich themselves at taxpayers' expense. As it turns out, the scheme worked because neither City Council nor the executives working under Mayor Levar M. Stoney have required each department to have internal controls, essentially practices that ensure that one person is not allowed free rein to do as they please. The U.S. military is a far larger operation than the city, but the Pentagon has internal controls in every element of the military. Each section with a budget must submit an internal controls report, signed off on by a ranking officer, to the inspector general's office so that the spending can be checked and verified as proper. In Richmond, the three conspirators got away with \$600,000, not a lot of money for the city when spread over five years when more than \$10 billion would have sloshed through city coffers. Still, there does not seem to be a good reason why controls are not in place to prevent another Michael Evins from operating without any attention from his bosses or anyone else.

Another example of a lack of city oversight involves the distribution of grants to largely volunteer community organizations that lost money when the city-created but independent Enrichmond Foundation collapsed in 2022. The city, with council approval, in July provided \$250,000 to The Community Foundation, which set up the five-member Richmond Outdoor and Prosperity Fund Committee (ROPFC) to divvy it up for the groups. The \$250,000 might just be a token. The total money that disappeared is still unknown. The Stoney administration originally estimated the loss that more than 80 groups experienced total around \$250,000 to \$300,000, but other estimates have suggested the total loss was up to 10 times as much. A state and federal investigation into the loss was started earlier this year. However, with no one at the city or on the council paying attention, ROPFC decided it could do what it wanted with the money. Even though the council approved the \$250,000 to be used to reimburse the organizations for losses, the ROPFC refused to do so. Instead, the ROPFC, led by Kelly Chopus, determined without any consultation with the council that it would award the money to applying groups only for new projects, the Free Press has been told. Last week, the ROPFC reported to a council committee that it had awarded 19 organizations a total of \$140,895 or an average of \$7,416 apiece, with the remaining \$109,105 to be distributed in 2024 in a second round of grants. To add insult to injury, the ROPFC did not even bother in its report to list the groups that got the money and the purpose for which each grant is to be used. Just as bothersome, Ms. Chopus and other members decided to cut out the Free Press, which broke the story of the foundation's collapse. Ms. Chopus and other committee members have not been available for comment, and The Community Foundation also did not respond to a request for comment on the ROPFC's practices and decisions. The ROPFC stated in its report to council's Education and Human Services Committee that Matt Leighty, an ROPFC member, was to issue a press release about the grants. But the Free Press has received no such release. But this is taxpayer money, not The Community Foundation's nor the ROPFC's. It remains unexplained why such or any group, no matter how reputable, would be allowed to use city money without being required to detail that use in a report that is open to the public. More attention to detail, please.

Dec. 7, 2023 DPW Case

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

Woman says former executive who defrauded city also fooled her
Jeremy M. Lazarus | 12/7/2023,

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 Henrico baseball president - embezzlement

Former Henrico youth baseball president sentenced to 20 years for embezzlement
Mar 1, 2024

HENRICO COUNTY, Va. (WRIC) — The former president of Lakeside Youth Baseball League was sentenced to 20 years in prison for reported embezzlement from the team.

On Friday, March 1, Christopher McCook, the former president of Lakeside Youth Baseball League was sentenced to 20 years in prison for two embezzlement charges, but will serve only three years and six months behind bars.

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.

In January, McCook filed a motion to withdraw his guilty plea to embezzling thousands of dollars from the team, however, the court ultimately denied the motion.

McCook received 10 years in prison for a first embezzlement charge with eight years and six months suspended, and 10 years for a second embezzlement charge with eight years suspended. He will be under supervised probation for five years once released on both charges.

<https://www.wric.com/news/local-news/henrico-county/former-henrico-youth-baseball-president-sentenced-to-20-years-for-embezzlement/>

Apr. 1, 2024 McEachin - Car Thefts

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

Car thefts are skyrocketing in the city of Richmond, but data shows the thieves are rarely getting arrested and prosecuted. Now, one victim, whose vehicle was targeted in back-to-back incidents, is calling on authorities to do more to stop crimes and hold the perpetrators accountable.

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

see email

Please look at the three videos of the Richmond, Virginia Commonwealth's Attorney Collette McEachin.

In the second video, Collette McEachin says that she will send people to jail after the police have arrested someone 5 times. She is also telling citizens that it's just kids stealing cars, insinuating that she will do nothing to kids who steel cars.

Why should you care?

People are not buying your cars because they don't want to be a victim of grand larceny. I spoke to one car sales guy this week and he said that folks are having a hard time getting their car insured. Sales people are not trying to sell your cars anymore because of the thieves. Because things are so bad, no one wants to buy your cars. This will affect your sales for the next 10 to 15 years. Everywhere I go people are talking about the thefts and how you should never buy these cars.

Maybe if cities actually had District Attorneys and Commonwealth's Attorneys that prosecuted criminals then the car companies would not be in this mess. Maybe you as the big car companies can help save my city buy putting some heat on the Commonwealths office to prosecute grand larceny. I am sure that you don't want people steeling the cars and neither do we..

April 11, 2024 EnRichmond will not be prosecuted

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

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

Apr 11, 2024

RICHMOND, Va. -- The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia declined to prosecute anyone related to the collapse of the EnRichmond Foundation, according to the Acting Public Affairs Specialist for the FBI Richmond Leslie Chappell McLane. McLane said the FBI's Richmond bureau turned over its investigation findings to the Justice Department.

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

Eighty-six non-profit partner groups housed their money with EnRichmond before its collapse. EnRichmond acted as an umbrella organization and allowed the groups to be tax-exempt and fundraise as a non-profit. When EnRichmond dissolved, the partner groups were unable to access nearly \$500,000 of their money.

One of those groups, the Richmond Tree Stewards, lost thousands of dollars.

"We had \$29,000 in our account, \$15,000 of which had been deposited just in the months before EnRichmond closed down," Dana Marshall, President of the Richmond Tree Stewards, said.

EnRichmond partner handbooks reviewed by CBS 6 explicitly said partner funds were not to be commingled with general EnRichmond funds and could not be used for anything other than their intended purpose.

But, according to internal emails reviewed by CBS 6, EnRichmond had commingled the money for years and used partner dollars to make up deficits.

"It's infuriating," Marshall said. "Very clearly lines were crossed."

Both the FBI's Richmond bureau and the Virginia Attorney General's Office launched investigations after the collapse, but a spokesperson for the AG's office said when the FBI took over the AG's office just ended up assisting the FBI and did not do a separate investigation.

"We are disappointed. We would have liked to have seen accountability," Marshall said about the Justice Department's decision not to prosecute.

CBS 6 has tried multiple times over the past year to contact the long-time Executive Director of EnRichmond John Sydnor, as well as the Finance Manager, Beth Captain, to ask them questions about the missing money, but we have not heard back.

At this point, Marshall said the Richmond Tree Stewards are cutting their losses and moving forward.

"We've moved on, and we are still here to do good works for the city," Marshall said.

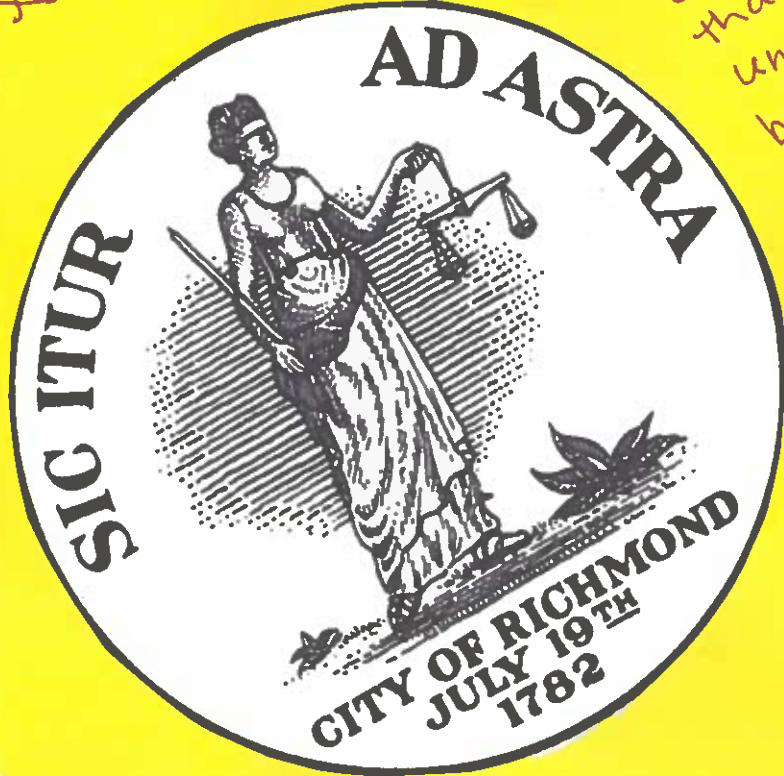
May 6, 2024 Castrinos - Carjacking

'It was surprising for sure': Richmond resident reacts after someone was carjacked at gunpoint in their neighborhood

<https://www.wric.com/news/local-news/richmond/it-was-surprising-for-sure-richmond-resident-reacts-after-someone-was-carjacked-at-gunpoint-in-their-neighborhood/>

Bring back confidence
in our "star" leaders

Reach For
the stars!



I challenge our leaders to
put a stop to the
obstruction of justice
that is taking place
under the color of law,
but instead reach for
the stars, administer
justice, and make
Richmond shine again

Be a
"star" leader!

Make Richmond
shine again