



City of Richmond

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

Meeting Minutes Governmental Operations Standing Committee

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Committee Members and Others in Attendance

The Honorable Katherine Jordan – Chair
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert – Vice Chair
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Member

Susan McKenney, Assistant City Attorney
Joyce Davis, Council Policy Analyst
Rachael Paul, Assistant City Clerk
Paul Van Lenten, Council Budget Analyst
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Katherine Jordan called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m., and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Citizen Speaker Guidelines

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

Electronic Participation

Pursuant to Rule III(D)(4)(b) of Council's Rules of Procedure, Member Stephanie Lynch made a request to participate in the meeting via Microsoft Teams from her home, due to a medical condition that prevented her physical attendance. The Committee members present were required to adopt a motion to approve Member Stephanie Lynch's participation in the meeting by electronic communication means if it appeared to the body that her request complied with Rule III(D) of Council's Rules of Procedure. A motion was solicited from those members physically assembled to approve Member Stephanie Lynch's participation in the meeting by electronic communication means.

Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert moved to allow Member Stephanie Lynch to participate in the meeting by electronic communication means. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Member Stephanie Lynch joined the meeting via Microsoft Teams at 1:05 p.m.

Public Comment Period

Kevin Cianfarini addressed the committee and stated he is concerned about the financial risk for Richmond to own and operate a gas utility. He also stated reasons on why electronic appliances would be safer and less expensive than their gas alternatives. Mr. Cianfarini further stated that the city should look into ways to phase out gas usage.

Tim Sowinski addressed the committee with his concerns regarding Richmond Gas Works. Mr. Sowinski stated that the inefficiency of gas infrastructure was concerning because there are more affordable forms of energy. He informed the committee about gas leaks and DPU staffing issues causing leak repairs to take up to eight months to resolve. Mr. Sowinski encouraged the committee to evaluate more energy options.

Daryl Downing expressed his concern with Richmond Gas Works continued expansion in adjacent counties and how that inflates rate cost for the existing rate base. Mr. Downing informed the committee that the extended miles of pipe to get gas to surrounding counties increased the cost of the distribution rate. He also informed the committee that the majority of city gas fees goes to the distribution cost for residents in surrounding counties.

Approval of Minutes

There were no corrections or amendments to the meeting minutes of Wednesday, February 22, 2023, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

[CD.2023.086](#) February 22, 2023 - Governmental Operations Services Standing Committee Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [20230222 Gov Ops Mins](#)

Presentation(s)

Department of Public Utilities (DPU) Rate Setting Process and Proposed Rates

April Bingham, Director of the Department of Public Utilities, and Billy Vaughan, Deputy of Finance for the Department of Public Utilities, provided the committee a presentation regarding the DPU rate setting process and proposed rates.

Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert expressed gratitude toward Ms. April Bingham and the DPU Cares program. She thanked Ms. Bingham for educating her on why DPU rates were increasing and how to effectively inform her constituents.

Chair Katherine Jordan asked Ms. Bingham and Mr. Vaughan on behalf of a colleague, how many mass cancellations they would estimate by Council District and how many delinquent accounts are in the city vs. the county.

Ms. April Bingham informed the committee that she would provide the requested information. Ms. Bingham advised that DPU is putting together a heat map that includes all the districts and shows where the cancellations are, as well as where they should hold targeted events. She also informed that Promise Pay was added to each account thirty days past due.

The committee had further discussion with April Bingham and Billy Vaughan regarding the DPU rate setting process and proposed rates.

Bob Steidel, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of Operations, stated past councils have requested that all rates should be equitable and that there should not be any subsidization of one rate over another. Mr. Steidel advised the committee that the current council could change that and create a new policy.

[CD.2023.091](#) 20230322 DPU Rate Setting Process and Proposed Rates

Attachments: [20230322 FY24 Proposed Rate Increases](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Overview of City Facilities

Adam Hohl, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Operations Policy Advisor, and Christopher P. Nizamis, Department of Economic Development Real Estate Strategies Manager, provided the committee a presentation regarding city facilities.

Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert requested that a list of proposed surplus properties for each Council District be given to each Council Member.

Chair Katherine Jordan inquired as to the status of land parcels that were too small for building lots and were given back to the city, and the status of the Maggie Walker Land Trust.

Mr. Nizamis stated that he would get more information about the parcels and advised that once a parcel is marked unbuildable, the city would have to decide if the city would want to resolve the issue if possible or pass on the parcel.

Bob Steidel, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of Operations, informed the committee that the city follows Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver directive for all new construction over a certain dollar amount. He also informed that city administration is in the process of rewriting the city's building standards.

Vice Chair Lambert asked for a status and the new location planned for a new John Marshall Courts building.

Lynne Lancaster, Deputy Director of the Department of Public Works, informed the committee that the courts would be relocated to the social services building once social services relocate.

The committee had further discussion regarding city facilities.

[CD.2023.092](#) 20230322 Overview of City Facilities

Attachments: [20230322 Facilities Overview Presentation](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance was considered:

1. [ORD. 2023-069](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a First Amendment to Franchise Agreement by and between the City of Richmond and Waste Management of Virginia, Inc., for the purpose of linking fee adjustments to certain changes in the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2023-069](#)

Dr. Tarron Richardson, Ph.D, Department of Public Works Program and Operations Manager, provided information regarding proposed Ord. 2023-069. Dr. Richardson stated the department is requesting approval from City Council to execute a First Amendment to Franchise Agreement between the city and Waste Management of Virginia, Inc., to raise the Consumer Price Index.

Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert asked if Waste Management of Virginia, Inc. handles recyclables, and she requested more information regarding the Consumer Price Index for future projects.

Dr. Richardson informed Vice Chair Lambert that the Central Virginia Waste Management Authority (CVWMA) handles recycling and advised the Consumer Price Index increase would not exceed 5% of previous years.

There were no further comments or discussions and Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert moved to forward Ord. 2023-069 to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

The following ordinance was considered:

2. [ORD. 2023-085](#) To amend City Code §§ 2-1187, concerning the creation of the History and Culture Commission, 2-1188, concerning composition, 2-1189, concerning qualifications, 2-1191, concerning duties, and 2-1192, concerning administration.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2023-085](#)

Maggie Anderson, Mayor's Chief of Staff, provided the committee with an overview of proposed Ord. 2023-085. Ms. Anderson informed the committee that the History and Culture Commission was established in 2018, and the ordinance would make revisions to the duties and size of the commission.

Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert asked if the Mayor appointing the majority of members to the commission would be the best idea with other commissions struggling to get appointments from the Mayor.

Ms. Anderson stated the Mayor was in the process of trying to fill any outstanding board and commission vacancies, and did not think making appointments would be an issue moving forward.

There were no further comments or discussions and Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert moved to forward Ord. 2023-085 to Council with a recommendation to approve which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Board Vacancies

There were no board vacancies.

Discussion Item(s)

Feedback on Standing Committee Assignments of Boards & Commissions

Joyce Davis, Council Policy Analyst, provided an update and handouts regarding the feedback received from Council Members on standing committee assignments of boards and commissions. Ms. Davis reviewed each proposed amendment to Res. 2011-R64-68 with the committee.

The committee had further discussion regarding standing committee assignments of boards and commissions.

Chair Katherine Jordan stated a resolution would be prepared capturing the reassignments to present to Council.

CD.2023.103 Proposed Amendment to Resolution No. 2011-R64-68

Attachments: 20230322 Proposed Amendment to Resolution No. 2011-R64-68

CD.2023.106 After Item - Proposed Amendments to Resolution No. 2011-R64-68
(Rec for Adoption)

Attachments: 20230322 Proposed Amendment to Resolution No. 2011-R64-68
(Rec for Adoption)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Staff Report

Joyce Davis, Council Policy Analyst, provided the committee with a staff report.

CD.2023.102 Governmental Operations Standing Committee Staff Report - March
22, 2023

Attachments: 20230322 Gov Ops Staff Report

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:52 p.m.