



# City of Richmond

## Council Budget Work Session 2 Minutes

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

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Monday, March 29, 2021

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall  
Virtual Meeting

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### **Councilmembers Present**

The Honorable Cynthia Newbille, President  
The Honorable Andreas Addison (early departure)  
The Honorable Michael Jones (late arrival)  
The Honorable Katherine Jordan  
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert  
The Honorable Kristen Larson (late arrival)  
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch (late arrival)  
The Honorable Reva Trammell

### **Absent**

The Honorable Ellen Robertson, Vice President

### **Staff Present**

Samson Anderson, Council Budget Analyst  
Haskell Brown, Interim City Attorney  
Joyce Davis, Interim Council Chief of Staff  
Bill Echelberger, Council Budget Analyst  
Candice Reid, City Clerk  
Steve Taylor, Council Policy Analyst  
Dominique J. Thaxton, Assistant City Clerk  
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Council President Cynthia Newbille called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m. and presided.

### **ELECTRONIC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT**

Assistant City Clerk Dominique J. Thaxton, in accordance with Ordinance No. 2020-093, adopted April 9, 2020, as most recently amended by Ordinance No. 2020-232, adopted December 14, 2020, announced the work session would be held through electronic communication means, and stated that notice of the session was provided to the public through a public information advisory issued on February 11, 2021, and through Legistar on the city website in accordance with usual practice. She also stated there would be no opportunities for public comment and no public hearings during the session.

*Councilor Michael Jones joined the meeting at 1:10 p.m.*

### **Overview of the Proposed FY22 Budget**

Jay Brown, Department of Budget and Strategic Planning Director, provided an overview of the proposed FY2021-2022 budget. Mr. Brown highlighted the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the city's projected revenue. Mr. Brown also provided a breakdown of the major expenditure and policy changes made in efforts of fostering growth despite the projected loss of

revenue.

*A copy of the material provided has been filed.*

*Councilor Kristen Larson joined the meeting at 1:26 p.m.*

*Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert asked for clarification on the proposed city employee salary increases and the eligibility criteria for receiving said increase.*

Mr. Brown provided clarification on the employee salary increases for eligible employees.

Robin Redmond, Department of Human Resources Division Chief, shared additional information on the eligibility criteria for receiving the proposed pay increase set to bring employees to the midpoint of their salary range.

Lincoln Saunders, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, provided a breakdown of the total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees in the city that are currently making below the midpoint of their salary range. Mr. Saunders also provided information on the recommendations brought forth by the Gallagher study of classification and compensation.

Councilor Kristen Larson requested an analysis of the Council district project requests that are submitted for inclusion in the capital improvement program (CIP) in comparison to those that receive funding. *Councilor Larson expressed concern that none of the CIP requests submitted for the 4<sup>th</sup> Voter District received funding. Ms. Larson noted that many of the CIP requests are the result of recommendations from studies conducted at the city's expense, and noted the fiscal waste of not following through with recommended actions.*

*Councilor Stephanie Lynch joined the meeting at 2:05 p.m.*

Mr. Brown stated that the appropriate staff will work with councilmembers to review CIP requests submitted against the approved list of projects included in the FY2022 budget proposal.

President Cynthia Newbille requested that the appropriate staff coordinate with the administration to review the Council District CIP requests submitted for consideration in the FY2022 budget. President Newbille also requested that a breakdown of the CIP proposals be included as a topic in an upcoming budget work session.

Samson Anderson, Council Budget Analyst, shared that paving and sidewalk related CIP requests submitted for the FY2022 were grouped into the "complete streets" line item, whereas in prior budget cycles, each project was listed separately.

Bill Echelberger, Council Budget Analyst, stated that he and Mr. Anderson will work with the administration to incorporate the analysis of the Council district CIP requests in a forthcoming budget work session.

*Councilor Larson requested a breakdown of the year to date utilization of the Richmond Public Schools (RPS) CIP funds.*

Jay Brown, Department of Budget and Strategic Planning Director, stated that his office will provide the requested breakdown of RPS' use of CIP funds. Mr. Brown also stated that his department has quarterly meetings with RPS and tracks spending.

*Councilwoman Reva Trammell requested clarification on the proposed creation of new departments and positions in the midst of a hiring freeze. Councilwoman Trammell expressed concern regarding freezing public safety officer positions and reducing the funding for the Richmond Ambulance Authority (RAA). Ms. Trammell reiterated the request for an analysis of Council district*

*CIP proposals and stated that project requests in the 8<sup>th</sup> Voter District have gone unfunded for an inordinate amount of time.*

Mr. Brown stated that in order to ensure that there was available funding for phase two of the compensation and classification adjustments recommended by the Gallagher study, vacant positions across many departments are proposed to be frozen. Mr. Brown also stated that the very few new positions in the proposed budget are dedicated to the newly created offices.

Mr. Saunders provided clarification on the RAA funding reduction and stated that the administration has been working with the RAA to explore avenues to maximize expenditure effectiveness with their reduced budget.

*Councilor Andreas Addison inquired if there have been any eligible projects and initiatives identified for potential funding by the forthcoming American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021. Councilor Addison stated that the ARP funds have the potential to serve as a supplement to the budget shortage that the city is facing. Mr. Addison requested information on when revenue projection forecasts can be anticipated to reflect economic recovery.*

Mr. Brown stated that staff is awaiting guidance from the United States Department of the Treasury on the permitted use of the ARP funds. Mr. Brown also stated that the administration is working on a breakdown of the various federal relief funds that the city has received over the last year and for what the respective funds were allocated. Mr. Brown further stated that revenue forecasting is projecting the city to recover from the revenue lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic by FY 2022-2023, but that the surge in the vaccination of citizens may allow for recovery sooner.

*President Newbille stated that Council leadership has been in conversation with the administration on collaborative use of the ARP funds and will present more information before the full Council body when federal guidance is provided.*

Mr. Saunders stated that the administration looks forward to a collaborative process for identifying the best uses for the ARP funds when federal regulatory guidance becomes available.

*Councilor Katherine Jordan requested that Council receive a presentation detailing the complete streets CIP investments as outlined in the budget proposal. Councilor Jordan also inquired about the progress made toward the RVAgreen 2050 goal, and if the goals of becoming a climate conscious city is incorporated in the various complete streets CIP proposed plan.*

*Councilor Andreas Addison left the meeting at 2:30 p.m.*

Mr. Brown stated that he will coordinate with the appropriate staff to bring forth a presentation on the transportation portion of the proposed CIP budget, and a review of how the FY2022 proposed budget impacts the RVAgreen 2050 goal.

*Councilor Michael Jones expressed concern for the lack of CIP investment in the 9<sup>th</sup> Voter District and the need for continued increase in investment in districts that have been historically disenfranchised. Councilor Jones requested a meeting with the administration to discuss the latent impact that annexation by the city has had on the 9<sup>th</sup> Voter District.*

*Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert inquired about the types of risk management claims being filed against the city and the rate of approved claims being paid.*

Mr. Brown stated that he will work with the appropriate staff to provide a comprehensive list of the types of claims but that some of the claims include sidewalk injuries and damages due to the civil unrest during the summer of 2020.

Mr. Saunders expanded that worker's compensation for COVID-19 and other related factors presented an influx of the risk management claims for the past year.

*Councilwoman Reva Trammell requested that \$1 million be allocated to the Hickory Hills Community Center for the next five years.*

Mr. Saunders confirmed that the administration will coordinate with Councilwoman Trammell to have a meeting relative to funding requests.

Bill Echelberger, Council Budget Analyst, provided context of the timeline for delivery of the ARP funds.

*Councilor Kristen Larson requested an update from Chip Decker, Richmond Ambulance Authority Chief Executive Officer, to discuss how the proposed budget decrease of \$1 million would impact RAA.*

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.

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CITY CLERK