



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
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DRAFT Special Meeting Minutes Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee

Thursday, March 6, 2025

1:00 PM

2nd Floor Large Conference Room – City Hall

Special Meeting

Committee Members Present

The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Chair
The Honorable Nicole Jones – Vice Chair (late arrival)
The Honorable Sarah Abubaker – Alternate Member (Via Microsoft Teams)

Absent

The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Committee Member

Others in Attendance

Meghan Brown, Director of Budget and Strategic Planning
Sharon Ebert, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Planning and Economic Development
Rachel Hightman, Project Development Manager for Housing and Community Development
Sabrina Joy-Hogg, Interim Chief Administrative Officer
Nahdiyah Muhammad, Assistant City Clerk
Michelle Brown Peters, Deputy Director of Housing and Community Development
Will Perkins, Senior Council Legislative Services Manager
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Jessica Singer, Senior Policy Advisor for the Department of Finance
Matthew Slaats, Interim Council Chief of Staff
Daniel Wagner, Deputy Interim Council Chief of Staff
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk
Matthew Welch, Acting Director of Economic Development
Shelia White, Director of Finance

Call to Order

Chair Ellen Robertson called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. and presided.

Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement

Upon the Chair's request, Assistant City Clerk Nahdiah Muhammad provided information on the appropriate way to evacuate the room in an emergency.

Discussion Item(s)

Proposed Themes and Schedule for Calendar Year 2025 Presentations

Chair Ellen Robertson provided a summary of the work session agenda and an overview of the Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee, and she presented the proposed Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee agenda topics for 2025.

Vice Chair Nicole Jones arrived at 1:08 p.m., and was seated.

[CD.2025.040](#) Finance and Economic Development Special Planning Meeting Presentation

Attachments: [Finance and Economic Development Planning Session Proposed Schedule](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Background and Scope

Chair Ellen Robertson provided responsibilities of, and the boards, commissions and city departments, that report to the Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee.

Chair Robertson requested that all reports given to the Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee be evaluated to ensure that the reports fit the current objective of the committee.

Proposed Presentation Themes

Proposed agenda items for the Wednesday, March 19, 2025, Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting

Members of the committee, city administration and Council staff discussed major themes for anticipated committee presentations.

Chair Ellen Robertson stated the Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee receives a substantial number of pieces of legislation regarding subject matter that applied to multiple standing committees. Chair Robertson also stated that she has had discussions with Vice Chair Nicole Jones about collaborating with the Land Use, Housing and Transportation Standing Committee.

Chair Robertson stated she would like to see more collaboration regarding economic development. Chair Robertson also stated more revenue diversification was needed to end the city's dependency on real estate tax revenue.

Sabrina Joy-Hogg, Interim Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), stated that city administration and Council had been working to create an updated plan regarding housing and economic development.

Sharon Ebert, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Planning and Economic Development, stated that city administration was looking for other economic development opportunities.

Interim CAO Joy-Hogg stated that due to limited time and staffing, the proposed presentations for the upcoming March 19, 2025, Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting would be difficult to provide.

Chair Robertson stated that it was important to the work of the committee that city administration be more responsive to the committee's requests.

Interim CAO Joy-Hogg stated that a presentation regarding collective bargaining and increased staffing costs would be presented to Council during the scheduled budget work sessions.

Sheila White, Director of Finance, stated that the finance department was working with the city auditor to present the collective bargaining and staffing costs to the Audit Committee.

Interim CAO Joy-Hogg stated that due to the upcoming budget process, city administration could provide the committee with a presentation after the adoption of the FY 26 budget.

Chair Robertson asked city administration for the best time to provide the committee with a presentation regarding collective bargaining agreements

Interim CAO Joy-Hogg stated that the collective bargaining agreements were already presented to Council during last year's budget approval process.

Vice Chair Nicole Jones stated the purpose of the committee was to provide a more concise understanding of city operations, so that the public could easily follow city spending.

Interim CAO Joy-Hogg stated that city administration could provide the committee with a presentation regarding regional competitiveness, and an update on collective bargaining and increased staffing costs at the March 19, 2025, Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting.

Vice Chair Jones asked if the confirmed budget work session schedule had been sent to Council.

Members of city administration and the committee continued to discuss the scheduling of presentations for the upcoming March 19, 2025, Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting.

Proposed agenda items for the Wednesday, April 16, 2025, Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting

Daniel Wagner, Deputy Interim Council Chief of Staff, stated the proposed budget work session meeting schedule would be sent to Council once the schedule had been finalized.

DCAO Ebert stated she could provide the committee with a presentation regarding city of Richmond economic indicators at the Wednesday, April 16, 2025, Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting.

Chair Robertson stated that a well thought out economic strategy needed to be in place due to a limited budget. Chair Robertson also stated that more economic strategies would help assist with future budget cycles.

City administration and the committee continued to discuss the scheduling of presentations for the Wednesday, April 16, 2025, Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting.

Proposed agenda items for the Wednesday, May 21, 2025, Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting

Chair Robertson asked if the FY 26 budget would be adopted by May 21, 2025.

Interim DCAO Joy-Hogg stated the budget was expected to be adopted before May 21, 2025.

Chair Robertson asked if presentations regarding revenue projection methodology and economic development plans would be ideal after the budget is approved.

DCAO Ebert stated that presentations regarding revenue projection methodology and economic development plans would be a beneficial after budget adoption because the city would more detailed data to work from.

Proposed agenda items for the Wednesday, June 18, 2025, Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting

City administration stated that presentations regarding risk management and settlements, and a disparity study follow-up could be presented to the committee at the June 18, 2025, committee meeting.

Proposed agenda items for the Wednesday, July 16, 2025, Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting

Sheila White, Director of Finance, stated that the finance department would be busy conducting collections for delinquent taxes in July.

Chair Robertson asked if a presentation regarding delinquent collections and the RVA Pay billing system could be presented at the September 17, 2025, committee meeting.

Ms. White stated that a presentation regarding delinquent collections and the RVA Pay billing system could be presented to the committee its September meeting.

Matthew Welch, Acting Director of Economic Development, stated that it would not be ideal for a presentation to be delivered to the committee on July 16, 2025, due to events that had been scheduled. Mr. Welch stated that September would be more ideal for a presentation regarding RVA Tourism and the Economic Development Authority (EDA).

Interim CAO Joy-Hogg stated that it would be best to have a presentation regarding the fiscal year surplus at the October 15, 2025, committee meeting. Interim CAO Joy-Hogg also suggested a presentation regarding tax relief at the September committee meeting.

Ms. White and city administration stated they would provide the committee with a presentation regarding delinquent collections, the RVA Pay billing system, and tax relief program performance in September.

Proposed agenda items for the Wednesday, October 15, 2025, Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting

Chair Robertson asked that a presentation regarding the fiscal year surplus be presented to the committee during the October 15, 2025, committee meeting. Chair Robertson inquired about when the budget amendment for the fiscal year surplus would be provided to Council.

Interim CAO Joy-Hogg stated that if there was a budget year surplus, the amendment would be delivered to Council next January. Interim CAO Joy-Hogg also stated that the audit would be filed by December 15, 2025.

Ms. White stated that by December, the finance department and city administration would have more insight to what the budget year surplus would look like. Ms. White also stated the budget year surplus would not be finalized by October, and she could provide the committee with trends regarding the surplus. Ms. White further stated that November 15th was the deadline set by City Code to provide an estimate of the budget year surplus.

Chair Robertson asked that a presentation regarding RVA Tourism be presented to the committee during the September committee meeting.

Ms. White stated that a presentation regarding the budget year surplus could be presented to the committee during its November meeting.

Interim CAO Joy-Hogg stated that administration could bring in experts to provide a presentation regarding the global internet hub and data centers to the committee.

Chair Robertson stated the presentations would be delivered at committee meetings and separate work sessions would be scheduled.

City administration continued to discuss the 2025 proposed presentation schedule with the committee.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:04 p.m.