



City of Richmond

Budget Retreat Minutes

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
www.richmondgov.com/cityclerk

Monday, November 20, 2017

8:00 AM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Richmond City Council convened in budget work session on Monday, November 20, 2017, in the Council Chamber, located on the second floor of City Hall, 900 East Broad Street.

Councilmembers Present

The Honorable Cynthia Newbille, Vice President
The Honorable Andreas Addison (*Late arrival*)
The Honorable Parker Agelasto
The Honorable Kim Gray
The Honorable Michael Jones (*Late arrival*)
The Honorable Kristen Larson
The Honorable Ellen Robertson (*Late arrival*)
The Honorable Reva Trammell (*Late arrival*)

Absent

The Honorable Chris Hilbert, President

Staff Present

Lou Ali, Council Chief of Staff
Debra Bowles, Assistant City Clerk
Haskell Brown, Deputy City Attorney
Meghan Brown, Deputy Council Chief of Staff
Allen Jackson, City Attorney
Charles Jackson, Council Budget Analyst
Debra Shaw, Council Administrative Project Analyst

Vice President Cynthia Newbille called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. and presided.

Upon the Vice President's request, Assistant City Clerk Debra Bowles provided information on the appropriate manner in which the Council Chamber is to be evacuated in the event of an emergency.

Discussion Items

Budget Priorities

Council Chief of Staff (CCOS) Lou Brown Ali provided a brief overview of the meeting process and stated that Council will determine the method being used for the FY19 final budget adoption.

Councilor Michael Jones arrived and was seated.

Council Budget Analyst Charles Jackson reviewed the FY19 budget priorities that Council has expressed over the past year. Mr. Jackson stated that the priorities include public safety, quality schools, infrastructure, land use, traffic and transportation, code enforcement, information technology, capital maintenance, youth services, and economic and community development. Mr. Jackson also stated that, within each of these priorities, are specific areas of concern.

Councilor Andreas Addison arrived and was seated.

Councilor Kim Gray requested that permits and inspections, Department of Public Works funded positions, historical data relating to police positions and the funding for the new network plan of Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC), be reviewed prior to the beginning of the FY19 budget meetings.

Councilor Parker Agelasto requested an assessment of city-wide personnel needs and salaries as a result of the review conducted by Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. and revising the language of the traffic and transportation priority to possibly read as “assess the traffic on how it will be impacted with updates to the city-wide master plan and rezoning.” Mr. Agelasto further stated that Code Enforcement is establishing cross-training of field personnel to represent more than one function of code inspection.

Vice President Cynthia Newbille requested a review of multi-modal transportation within the city and its connection with the region, a city-wide housing plan and its impact on public housing and the development of affordable mixed use housing, poverty reduction and education equality in city schools.

Councilor Michael Jones expressed concern regarding the order of the budget priority listing and stated that there should be a focus on poverty being driven to a particular section of the city.

Councilor Gray made a request that the budget be reviewed based on city-wide priorities as opposed to district specific priorities.

Councilor Ellen Robertson arrived and was seated.

Councilor Andreas Addison stated that, based on the ten priorities that have been provided by staff, he believes that there are larger themes that will encompass what Council is working to complete. Mr. Addison expressed the themes as a 21st century city that encompasses land and planning, economic development within housing and its alignment within the city, a safe neighborhood approach with crime reduction, fire prevention and strong futures for children, and a strategic infrastructure investment.

Councilor Ellen Robertson stated that the priorities need to be more focused; moreover, she expressed that the groupings should focus on economic and community development, workforce and education development, infrastructure, operational policy relating to staffing, and education. Ms. Robertson also stated that the presentations should include outcome expectancies.

Councilor Kristen Larson expressed a need for parks and recreation expansion, the protection and preservation of structures and updates to the park facilities plan.

Vice President Newbille requested that an inventory of city parks be compiled to confirm that the parks are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the conditions of the parks and equipment to implement a strategic work plan.

Councilor Agelasto requested that Council receive information from the City Attorney’s Office regarding the tax sale of city properties as this program reduces blight and increases tax revenue.

Councilor Gray requested that Parks and Recreation include information regarding the trimming of trees within the parks due to safety issues and a plan to address the irresponsibility of citizens trashing the parks, within their strategic plan. Ms. Gray also requested the need to address the homeless and disadvantaged citizens that stay within the parks.

Councilor Reva Trammell arrived and was seated.

Councilor Addison stressed that Human Resources (HR) should be more aggressive in staffing vacancies and stated that a three month hiring process is much more acceptable than the current lengthy process as the city is losing quality applicants. Mr. Addison also stated that procurement needs to act quickly to complete purchases of needed equipment.

After further discussion, Vice President Newbille requested that staff consolidate their priority listing and the requests of councilors to broader headers that will include specific sub-categories under each header. Ms. Newbille stated that, after staff has completed this task, staff will then provide Council with the listing for review.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Proposed Budget Work Sessions/Amendments

Deputy Council Chief of Staff (DCCOS) Meghan Brown provided Council with a proposed FY19 budget work schedule stating that the mornings would allow for presentations and the afternoons would include an actual budget work session to allow for the consideration of amendments to the morning's presentations. Ms. Brown stressed that this process would not include Capital Improvement Projects (CIP). Ms. Brown also stated that each Council member would be allowed a maximum of two amendment increases and an unlimited amount of reduction amendments per agency group. Ms. Brown stated further that the increase amendments could only be made on that specific day, each Councilor would have two minutes to propose each amendment, after which a consensus would be called; if the amendment is accepted it will be added to the working list of amendments.

Councilor Robertson addressed her concern on the limitation of amendments.

Vice President Newbille requested that finalization of the proposed FY19 budget process be presented to Council at the December 4th Organizational Development (OD) Standing Committee meeting. Ms. Newbille requested that Council members review the proposed budget process and forward their concerns or requests for clarity to Ms. Brown prior to the OD meeting.

Councilor Robertson requested that the proposed FY19 budget process be discussed at the November 30th Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting, prior to finalization of the budget process discussion at the OD meeting.

Budget Calendar

CCOS Ali stated that staff has generated the proposed FY19 budget calendar around standing committee meetings, the request to consider that Councilor Robertson is charged with attending the City Planning Commission meetings on the first and third Mondays of each month, and a request to not schedule meetings on Wednesdays or Fridays. Ms. Ali stated that, upon review, the only day that does not have a committee meeting is Wednesday.

DCCOS Brown provided information related to the staff's budget calendar proposal.

Councilor Jones questioned the need of 40 minutes for department presentations to which Vice President Newbille responded that the time allowed covers the time of the presentation and the question and answer portion of Council.

Councilor Addison requested that presentations be informative and direct as it relates to operations, staffing, departmental needs and challenges.

Vice President Newbille requested that staff prepare a presentation template for review based on the comments of Councilors Jones and Addison, and includes a timeline prior to departmental distribution. Ms. Newbille also requested that staff propose a time limit for each councilor's question(s). Ms. Newbille stated that Councilors should email staff with budget questions prior to the beginning of the budget sessions in March, as the questions could assist in the formulation of departmental presentations.

Councilor Gray stated that Council should utilize the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) as a resource to generate questions and review departmental vacancy rates.

Councilor Trammell proposed that the budget sessions be scheduled for Mondays and recommended that, on the first and third Mondays, the morning session be held from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., and the afternoon sessions held from 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

It was the consensus of Council to accept Councilor Trammell's recommendation for the first and third Mondays of the budget sessions, and members also agreed that the remaining Mondays would be from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. with a break for lunch.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

INTERIM CITY CLERK