



City of Richmond

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

Draft Meeting Minutes Governmental Operations Standing Committee

Wednesday, May 28, 2025

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Committee and Other Council Members in Attendance

The Honorable Katherine Jordan - Chair
The Honorable Sarah Abubaker - Vice Chair
The Honorable Kenya Gibson - Committee Member

Staff in Attendance

Maria Garnett, Council Policy Analyst
Susan McKenney, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Kimberly Morris, Assistant City Clerk
William Perkins, Council Senior Legislative Services Manager
Candice Reid, City Clerk
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Katherine Jordan called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m., and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Public Speaker Guidelines

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

Public Comment Period

There were no public comment speakers.

Discussion Item(s)

Boil Water Advisory Update

Scott Morris, Director of Public Utilities, provided an update regarding the boil water advisory.

Member Kenya Gibson asked Director Morris to describe the general maintenance of the city's water and filtration system. She also asked if there were any anomalies within the system.

Director Morris stated periodic maintenance on the filters was important for the water system to run effectively. He also stated sediment and debris were the cause of clogged filters, and servicing them caused a delay in production.

Member Gibson asked why the oxidation system was off line, and if it was a common occurrence.

Director Morris stated he would have to research the exact cause, however, he added if filters were operating properly, interruption in water service could have been avoided. He also stated it is not uncommon for a system to go off line.

Member Gibson asked was the Ginter Park water tank operating at a higher capacity to compensate for Byrd Park's water tank operating at a lower capacity while under construction. She also asked if there was a connection between the fluoride issue and the boil water advisory.

Director Morris stated the amount of water in Ginter Park's water tank did not offset the amount of water in Byrd Park's water tank.

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker asked if staff identified why the turbidity of the water had a greater impact this year compared to previous years. She also asked if the four filters in question were currently undergoing maintenance.

Director Morris stated his staff and the Virginia Department of Health were performing a root cause analysis, and he would report the findings back to the committee. He also stated that the four filters were out of service and currently undergoing maintenance.

Vice Chair Abubaker asked for the factors that caused the boil water advisory south of the James River, and for the standard operating procedures (SOPs) that would result from this incident.

Director Morris stated the boil water advisory for south of the James River was a precautionary measure for the health of residents.

Chair Katherine Jordan asked if the boil water advisory could have been prevented if the reservoirs were at full capacity.

Director Morris stated the water boil advisory most likely could have been avoided if the water tanks were at full capacity.

Chair Jordan asked what could be done to augment capacity at the reservoir to prevent another advisory, and whether the construction process be accelerated.

Director Morris stated his staff would have to cycle and monitor water levels, and to keep it safe for drinking. He also stated it was usually a lengthy process, and he would continue to investigate the root cause and report back with the results.

Chair Jordan asked for the estimated time of completion of the root cause analysis.

Director Morris stated he would commit to responding to the root cause analysis in the next few weeks.

Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of March 26, 2025, and April 23, 2025, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

[CD.2025.181](#) March 26, 2025 Governmental Operations Meeting Minutes

[CD.2025.182](#) April 23, 2025 Governmental Operations Meeting Minutes

Presentation(s)

Gas Works Capital Improvement Plan and Staffing

[CD.2025.183](#) Richmond Gas Works Operations

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Daniel Rifenburgh, Director of Richmond Gas Works, provided a presentation regarding Richmond Gas Works Capital Improvement Plan and staffing.

Vice Chair Abubaker asked why there was a significant increase in operating reserves outside of the bond rating, and why is there no investment in a safe infrastructure.

Mr. Rifenburgh stated utility revenue bonds, wastewater and gas were tied together to appear strong for bond ratings. He also stated contractors do not have enough man power to build properties.

Member Kenya Gibson asked what the Henry Hub chart in the presentation represented for Richmond Gas Works.

Mr. Rifenburgh stated it was a public commodities website for purchases of natural gas.

Chair Katherine Jordan stated Gas Works was of great interest to the residents in the city for hot water and heat, and there was also a concern about climate change. She also stated she would like to transition to renewable energy.

Capital Maintenance Program Update

[CD.2025.184](#) Generalized Capital Maintenance

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Gail Johnson, Director of General Services, provided a presentation regarding the capital maintenance program.

Chair Katherine Jordan asked how much maintenance work was done in-house versus contracted out.

Director Johnson stated thirty percent of the maintenance was provided by in-house staff.

Vice Chair Abubaker asked how much of the maintenance cost for the John Marshall Court building could be deferred while exploring the cost of construction for a new courthouse.

Director Johnson stated her department is evaluating all needs of the courthouse before making any investments.

Member Kenya Gibson asked what were some of the items associated with the \$295,000.000 estimated deferred maintenance.

Director Johnson stated City Hall needed repairs to its riser valves, replacement of the chiller, security upgrades, and escalator and elevator repairs. She also stated the age of the building drives up costs, and that the other city buildings would require an evaluation to estimate their maintenance costs.

Urban Forestry Program

[CD.2025.185](#) Urban Forestry Program Presentation

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Dr. Tarron Richardson, Operations Manager, Urban Forestry, provided a presentation regarding the urban forestry program.

Chair Katherine Jordan asked what would be the role of the Beautification Superintendent.

Torrence Robinson, Deputy Director of Operations with the Department of Public Works, stated that position would consist of gardeners and landscapers that would maintain roundabouts and gateways in the city.

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker asked if there would be any consideration in reference to arbor service zones.

Mr. Richardson stated they do split the work at times where there was a robust request for tree service.

Member Kenya Gibson asked how much of the budget was spent on outsourced tree services.

Mr. Robinson stated the majority of the budget was spent on tree removal by contractors.

Michael Webb, Urban Forester, and Sam Lilly, Urban Forestry Operations Superintendent, were in attendance to answer additional questions of the committee.

Paper(s) for Consideration

There were no papers for consideration.

Board Vacancies

There were no board vacancies.

Staff Report

Council staff provided the committee with the May Governmental Operations Standing Report Standing Committee staff report.

[CD.2025.197](#) Government Operations Standing Committee May 28, 2025
Staff Prep Document for Councilmembers

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:58 p.m.