



City of Richmond

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

DRAFT Meeting Minutes Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – City Hall

Committee Members and Other Council Members in Attendance

The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Chair
The Honorable Nicole Jones – Vice Chair
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Member

Staff in Attendance

Tori Cotman, Assistant City Attorney
Maria Garnett, Council Policy Analyst
Kiley Kesecker, Deputy City Clerk
Kimberly Morris, Assistant City Clerk
Candice Reid, City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Ellen Robertson called the meeting to order at 2:08 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 way to evacuate the Council Chamber in an emergency along with public speaker guidelines.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comment speakers.

Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes for approval.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance was considered:

1. [ORD. 2025-246](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$3,817.00 from the National Recreation and Park Association and to appropriate the increase to the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities' Grant - Mentoring Opportunities for Youth Initiative Special Fund by \$3,817.00 for the purpose of providing services to youth impacted by and at risk for substance misuse.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2025-246](#)

Deborah Morton, Deputy Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities, provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed ordinance. Ms. Morton stated that the proposed ordinance would increase the amount of money received from the National Recreation and Parks Association for the youth mentoring program.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

There were no further comments or discussions and Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to forward ORD. 2025-246 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Lynch, Jones, Roberson. Noes None.

The following ordinance was considered:

2. [ORD. 2025-247](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$15,000,000.00 from the Commonwealth of Virginia, and to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by creating a new special fund for the Department of Economic Development called "CoStar Special Fund," and appropriating the increase to the Department of Economic Development's CoStar Special Fund by \$15,000,000.00, for the purpose of funding the development of infrastructure at CoStar Realty Information, Inc.'s existing and planned facilities located at 501 South 5th Street and 600 Tredegar Street in the city of Richmond.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2025-247](#)

Katie McConnell, Deputy Director of the Department of Economic Development, provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed ordinance. Ms. McConnell stated that the proposed ordinance was regarding the CoStar Special Fund.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

There were no further comments or discussions and Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to forward ORD. 2025-247 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Lynch, Jones, Roberson. Noes None.

The following ordinance was considered:

3. [ORD. 2025-248](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to accept funds in the amount of \$25,000.00 from AARP, to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by creating a new special fund for the Department of Public Works called the “AARP Community Challenge Special Fund,” and to appropriate the increase to the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Department of Public Works’ “AARP Community Challenge Special Fund” by \$25,000.00, for the purpose of funding the planning, design, construction, and implementation of a bus boarding platform.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2025-248](#)

Dironna Clark, Deputy Director, Department of Public Works, provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed ordinance, which was intended to create a new special fund for the Department of Public Works called the AARP Community Challenge Special Fund.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

Vice Chair Nicole Jones asked if there was a permanent project, and how it would benefit seniors.

Ms. Clark stated both projects were temporary, however, the lighter, quicker, cheaper project was testing the temporary infrastructure until permanent infrastructure was installed. She stated a temporary platform would be created in a parking spot to help prevent accidents and serve those waiting to board.

Chair Ellen Robertson asked where the platform would be located and why it was chosen. She also asked if there was a timeline for the temporary project, a budget for permanent placement, and requested more information about the project in general.

Kathleen Murphy, Management Analyst with the Department of Public Works, stated the platform would be located on 2nd Street, north of Broad Street and south of Marshall Street, and that location was chosen because the area had a high percentage of citizens age 50 and over within a five minute walking radius to the platform.

Ms. Clark stated the \$25,000 would fund the whole project, and the infrastructure was temporary.

There were no further comments or discussions and Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to forward ORD. 2025-248 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Lynch, Jones, Roberson. Noes None.

The following ordinance was considered:

4. [ORD. 2025-249](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to enter into the Twenty-Eighth Commercial Area Revitalization Effort Program Cooperation Agreement between the City of Richmond, Virginia, and the Economic Development Authority of the City of Richmond for the purpose of providing for the operation of the Commercial Area Revitalization Effort (“CARE”) Program.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2025-249](#)

Jacquelyn Teemer, Programs Administrator with the Department of Economic Development, provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed ordinance. Ms. Teemer stated that the ordinance was an agreement between the city and the Economic Development Authority for the administration of the Commercial Area Revitalization Program (CARE).

Vice Chair Nicole Jones asked if there was any specific area of focus for the corridor project, and how citizens obtain information about the program.

Ms. Teemer stated anyone in the 14 corridors they have selected can apply. She also stated a marketing effort from the department would be implemented to make citizens aware of the program.

Member Stephanie Lynch asked if Enterprise Zone and CARE programs could be used together.

Ms. Teemer stated that there was an overlap between the Enterprise Zone and the CARE programs, and where there was a CARE program, there was an Enterprise Zone. She also stated both programs could be used together, however, the CARE program provided a rebate for improvements to the structure, while the Enterprise Zone focused on the operational needs of a business.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

Chair Ellen Robertson requested a presentation on the Economic and Development plan.

There were no further comments or discussions and Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to forward ORD. 2025-249 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Lynch, Jones, Roberson. Noes None.

The following ordinance was considered:

5. [ORD. 2025-250](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$18,319.00 from the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, and to appropriate the increase to the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services' State Fire Programs Special Fund by \$18,319.00 for the purpose of providing funding for training, training centers, equipment, and protective clothing for firefighters.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2025-250](#)

Greg Irving, Management Analyst with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed ordinance, which supports basic fire suppression, equipment, operations, training, and personnel expenditures.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

There were no comments or discussions and Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to forward ORD. 2025-250 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Lynch, Jones, Roberson. Noes None.

The following ordinance was considered:

6. [ORD. 2025-251](#) To amend Ord. No. 2025-057, adopted May 12, 2025, which adopted the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 General Fund Budget and made appropriations thereto, by transferring \$284,175.00 from the Council Chief of Staff, and appropriating such transferred funds to the Chief Administrative Offices for the purpose of supporting the participatory budgeting process.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2025-251](#)

Meghan Brown, Director of Budget and Strategic Planning, provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed ordinance. Director Brown stated the ordinance would transfer funds from the Council Chief of Staff to the Chief Administrative Offices for the purpose of supporting the participatory budgeting process.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

There were no comments or discussions and Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to forward ORD. 2025-251 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Lynch, Jones, Roberson. Noes None.

The following resolution was considered:

7. [RES. 2025-R043](#) To request that the Chief Administrative Officer cause the Department of Finance and Department of Housing and Community Development, in coordination with other relevant City departments, to conduct an inventory of existing City programs and initiatives that mitigate displacement, to assess their effectiveness, and to report findings and recommendations to the Council [within 120 days]. (As Amended)

Patrons: Ms. Robertson, Ms. Lynch, Ms. Jones, Vice President Jordan and President Newbille

Attachments: [Res. No. 2025-R043 - Amended 20260112](#)

Merrick Malone, Director of Housing and Community Development, provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed resolution. Mr. Malone stated that administration was asking for a timeline extension to respond to incorporated comprehensive studies, market value data, and the affordable housing plan.

Vice Chair Nicole Jones asked what the timeline was for the extension.

Director Malone stated they were originally given 120 days, and they were requesting an additional 60 days, to be delivered by June 2026.

Chair Robertson requested a brief summary on a bi-monthly basis to ensure progress was being made in order to grant the extension. She also asked if the meeting with Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) would allow enough time to present the potential critical path.

Director Malone stated he could honor both requests.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

There were no further comments or discussions and Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to forward Res. 2025-R043 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Lynch, Jones, Robertson. Noes None.

The following resolution was considered:

8. [RES. 2025-R050](#) To request that the Mayor (i) propose an annual budget for Fiscal Year [2026-2027] 2027-2028 that recommends a real estate tax levy of \$1.16 per \$100 of assessed value as a means of tax relief for residents who pay real estate taxes and as affirmation of the City's commitment to live within its fiscal means, and (ii) provide estimates of additional revenue and planned expenditures if the real estate tax levy for Fiscal Year 2027-2028 were \$1.20 per \$100 of assessed value. (As Amended)

Patrons: Ms. Lynch, Ms. Trammell and Ms. Abubaker

Attachments: [Res. No. 2025-R050 - Amended 20251215](#)

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

Meghan Brown, Director of Budget and Strategic Planning, stated the Mayor would submit a balanced budget.

Member Stephanie Lynch provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed resolution intended to start a dialogue to sufficiently build the operating budget.

Chair Ellen Robertson stated she was unsure of the potential liability and impact of the proposed resolution without further comment from administration.

Odie Donald II, Chief Administrative Officer, stated if the tax rate were \$1.16 versus \$1.20, the level of service and the number of employees would decrease. He also stated that if a recession comes, the city could be unprepared without the \$1.20 tax base.

Chair Robertson asked if administration would honor the request in the resolution if passed by Council.

CAO Donald stated that they would not.

There were no further comments or discussions and Member Stephanie Lynch moved to forward Res. 2025-R050 to Council with no recommendation , which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Lynch, Jones, Roberson. Noes None.

Presentation(s)

There were no presentations.

Board Vacancies

There were no board vacancies.

Discussion Item(s)

ARPA Quarterly Update

[CD.2025.358](#) ARPA Quarterly Update

Attachments: [ARPA Obligation and Expenditure Dashboard](#)

Meghan Brown, Director of Budget and Strategic Planning, provided the committee with an overview and update regarding American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, which included funding allocated to projects, obligated funds, expenditure deadlines, and appropriations.

Vice Chair Nicole Jones asked if 100% fund expenditures indicated completed projects or 100% of funds spent. She also asked if there was a process for analysis.

Director Brown stated that 100% of expenditures mean the funds were spent, not the project was completed, however, more investment may be needed. She also stated the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget would be analyzed for the coming year.

Chair Ellen Robertson asked how many homeowners were assisted with the First Time Home Buyers program, and if the program could be better.

Director Brown stated two applicants completed the whole process, and the program dwindled because of strict application requirements.

Member Stephanie Lynch asked if the program could expand to citizens outside of the scope of City of Richmond employees.

Director Brown stated they would be open to expand the program as long as it was within ARPA guidelines.

Chair Robertson requested a report analyzing how funds were being used for programs.

Fiscal Year Surplus

Odie Donald II, Chief Administrative Officer, provided the committee with an overview and update regarding the fiscal year surplus, which included a surplus estimate, delay of year end close out, accounting standards, compliance, fund balance, tax rates, surplus and benchmarking, and strong financial management.

Chair Ellen Robertson asked if a recommendation for use of expenditures was for one time funding.

CAO Donald stated if the surplus increases, other expenditures could be reviewed.

Vice Chair Jones stated she would like total transparency in reference to financial goals, and would like Council and administration to work together with the budget process.

Member Lynch stated it would be beneficial to educate citizens on the budgeting process, and Council and administration should work together to build trust among the public. She also suggested diligence in making corrections to the Department of Finance.

Staff Report

There was no staff report.

[CD.2025.365](#) Finance & Economic Development Standing Committee Staff Report
November 19, 2025

Attachments: [01 Council Staff Prep Memo - Nov. '25 Finance](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Chair Robertson left the meeting at 3:54 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:01 p.m.