



City of Richmond

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

Meeting Minutes Governmental Operations Standing Committee

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Committee and Other Council Members in Attendance

The Honorable Katherine Jordan - Chair
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch - Committee Member
The Honorable Kristen Nye - Council President (Early Departure)
The Honorable Ellen Robertson - Council Member
The Honorable Reva Trammell - Council Member

Absent

The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert - Vice Chair

Staff in Attendance

Joyce Davis, Council Policy Analyst
Laura Drewry, City Attorney
Susan McKenney, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Kimberly Morris, Assistant City Clerk
Pamela Nichols, Council Management Analyst
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Steve Taylor, Council Policy Analyst
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Katherine Jordan called the meeting to order at 1:03 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.

Board Vacancies

Pamela Nichols, Council Management Analyst, reviewed board vacancies and applications for the committee's consideration.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

[CD.2024.314](#) October 23, 2024 - Governmental Operations Board Vacancy Report

Attachments: [20241023 Gov Ops Board Report](#)

Member Stephanie Lynch moved to forward the following board reappointment applications to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved:

Clean City Commission:
Markita Allen (reappointment)
George Dahlman (reappointment)

Public Comment Period

There were no public comment speakers.

Approval of Minutes

[CD.2024.326](#) September 25, 2024 Governmental Operations Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [20240925 Gov Ops Mins](#)

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of September 25, 2024, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

Presentation(s)

There were no presentations.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance was considered:

1. [ORD. 2024-271](#) To amend ch. 11 of the City Code by adding therein a new div. 9, consisting of §§ 11-198.1-11-198.4, for the purpose of establishing Sustainable Design Standards as part of the City of Richmond RVAgreen 2050: Climate Equity Action Plan 2030.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2024-271](#)

Laura Thomas, Director of the Office of Sustainability, provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed ordinance.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

There were no comments or discussions and Member Stephanie Lynch moved to forward ORD. 2024-271 to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

The following ordinances were considered:

2. [ORD. 2024-272](#) To amend ch. 16, art. I, of the City Code by adding therein a new section 16-3, concerning a gap grant program for income-based housing grants.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney, Ms. Newbille, President Nye, Vice President Lambert, Ms. Jordan, Ms. Robertson, Ms. Lynch, Ms. Trammell and Ms. Jones

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2024-272](#)
[20241023 RVA Stay Gov OPS Committee](#)
[2025 Preliminary Land Book Gov Ops Handout](#)

3. [ORD. 2024-273](#) To amend City Code §§ 26-364, concerning tax relief for elderly persons and evaluation of the exemption or freeze program, and 26-365, concerning tax relief for qualified permanently and totally disabled persons and evaluation of the exemption or freeze program, for the purpose of increasing certain income and financial net worth requirements and calculated benefit of the Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities Real Estate Tax Freeze Program.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney, President Nye, Ms. Newbille, Vice President Lambert, Ms. Jordan, Ms. Robertson, Ms. Lynch, Ms. Trammell and Ms. Jones

Attachments: [20241023 RVA Stay Gov OPS Committee](#)
[2025 Preliminary Land Book Gov Ops Handout](#)
[Ord. No. 2024-273](#)

4. [ORD. 2024-274](#) To amend Ord. No. 2024-099, adopted May 13, 2024, which adopted the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 General Fund Budget and made appropriations pursuant thereto, by increasing estimated revenues from real estate taxes by \$12,000,000.00 and appropriating the increased revenues to new line items within the “Non Departmental & Central Appropriations” budget and various departments.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney, President Nye, Vice President Lambert, Ms. Jordan, Ms. Robertson, Ms. Lynch, Ms. Trammell, Ms. Newbille and Ms. Jones

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2024-274](#)
[20241023 RVA Stay Gov OPS Committee](#)
[2025 Preliminary Land Book Gov Ops Handout](#)

5. [ORD. 2024-275](#) To create a new reservation of fund balance called the 2024 Real Estate Tax Relief Reserve, intended to be categorized as an assigned fund balance and used to return surplus real property tax revenues to taxpayers through a one-time, four-cent rebate.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney, President Nye, Vice President Lambert, Ms. Jordan, Ms. Robertson, Ms. Lynch, Ms. Trammell, Ms. Newbille and Ms. Jones

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2024-275](#)
[20241023 RVA Stay Gov OPS Committee](#)
[2025 Preliminary Land Book Gov Ops Handout](#)

6. [ORD. 2024-276](#) To return surplus real estate tax revenues to taxpayers pursuant to Va. Code § 15.2-2511.1.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney, President Nye, Vice President Lambert, Ms. Jordan, Ms. Robertson, Ms. Lynch, Ms. Trammell, Ms. Newbille and Ms. Jones

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2024-276](#)
[20241023 RVA Stay Gov OPS Committee](#)
[2025 Preliminary Land Book Gov Ops Handout](#)

7. [ORD. 2024-277](#) To amend Ord. No. 2024-099, adopted May 13, 2024, which adopted the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 General Fund Budget and made appropriations pursuant thereto, to (i) re-appropriate up to \$16,000,000.00 of the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 fund balance excess assigned to the 2024 Real Estate Tax Relief Reserve established by

Ord. No. 2024-275, adopted November 12, 2024, (ii) create a new line item entitled "Real Estate Tax Relief - Department of Finance" in the Central Appropriations budget, and (iii) appropriate up to such \$16,000,000.00 to such new line item in the Central Appropriations budget for the purpose of returning surplus real property tax revenue to real estate taxpayers in the city of Richmond pursuant to Va. Code § 15.2-2511.1 through a one-time, four-cent rebate.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney, Ms. Newbille, President Nye, Vice President Lambert, Ms. Jordan, Ms. Robertson, Ms. Lynch, Ms. Trammell and Ms. Jones

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2024-277](#)
[20241023 RVA Stay Gov OPS Committee](#)
[2025 Preliminary Land Book Gov Ops Handout](#)

Sabrina Joy-Hogg, Senior Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Finance and Administration, provided the committee with additional information and a presentation regarding the proposed ordinances.

A copy of material provided has been filed.

Public Hearing

Bonnie Atwood spoke in opposition to the city maintaining the \$1.20 real estate tax rate, and she stated her concerns about affordability as a homeowner.

Paul Goldman spoke in opposition to the city maintaining the \$1.20 real estate tax rate, and he stated his concerns about tax assessment increases.

Member Stephanie Lynch inquired why the housing gap grant program was assigned to the Department of Social Services, and if the program's work requirement was eliminated.

DCAO Joy-Hogg stated by law, the tax relief program cannot be implemented unless it is through the Department of Social Services. She also stated flexibility will be offered regarding the program's workforce development and financial literacy requirements.

Member Lynch asked for clarification on changes to elderly tax relief program exemptions.

DCAO Joy-Hogg replied substantial changes have been made to the program, however, because of tracking difficulties, administration will need more time to identify the impact.

Member Lynch stated senior citizens are having difficulty accessing the elderly tax relief program, and she also asked if the city is willing to mail the necessary documents to eligible seniors.

DCAO Joy-Hogg stated more is being done on outreach regarding the elderly tax relief program marketing campaign.

President Kristen Nye stated she supports the simplification of the application process for the elderly tax relief program.

Chair Jordan inquired about residents who have highly assessed homes, and if there is any way to cap the rebate amount to ensure that targeted relief is going to the residents who need it most.

DCAO Joy-Hogg stated everyone has to be taxed equally.

Council Member Reva Trammell asked which schools are included in the budget amendment based on the \$1.20 tax rate for after-school programming.

DCAO Joy-Hogg stated the elementary schools that will receive funding for the after-school program are Cardinal, Francis, Reid, Munford, Holton and Fox. She also stated the programs are already in session, however, additional funds are needed.

Councilor Trammell stated that schools in the 8th District also need funding for after-school programs.

Dominic Barrett, Strategic Projects and Grants Advisor for Human Services, provided the committee with information about after-school programming.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Lincoln Saunders stated it is the Mayor's goal to have after-school programming in all elementary and middle schools across the city, in partnership with the YMCA, NextUp and other entities.

Councilor Trammell stated that the land value is going up in each district, and she provided members with a draft land book handout.

A copy of material provided has been filed.

Councilor Ellen Robertson asked what portion of the land book is completed prior to the budget adoption in May. She also stated the twelve-month projected land book had a projected revenue increase, and she inquired if the land value book changed based on completed assessments.

President Kristen Nye left the meeting at 2:05 p.m.

DCAO Joy-Hogg stated when the Mayor presents the budget in March, it contains a projected increase in assessments. She also stated the City Assessor starts his assessments in January, which causes the misalignment between the budget and the assessment cycles.

Councilor Robertson stated the city will need to find an effective strategy to cut the cost of living in the city to make it more affordable for residents.

Chair Jordan asked when will the proposed tax relief programs, if approved, go into effect.

CAO Saunders stated the programs will go into effect January 1, and the rebate will be distributed in February.

Chair Jordan asked if homeowners' tax bills are split into two, will they pay the first bill and then receive a rebate for the whole amount.

CAO Saunders stated an effort will be made to streamline the application process to apply for the Guaranteed Asset Protection (GAP) and Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities (OAPD) Real Estate Tax Freeze programs.

Chair Jordan asked what would happen if the committee moved the ordinances forward without knowing which tax rate is being adopted.

CAO Saunders stated if the tax rate is reduced, and the programs are approved, then the programs will be unfunded and unadministered.

Chair Jordan stated if the tax rate of \$1.20 is adopted, there will be an available surplus of \$12,610,753. She also stated if the tax rate of \$1.16 is adopted, then there will be no surplus, resulting in a deficient budget and Council would have to deliberate to determine projected tax cuts.

Councilor Trammell asked what the city is doing to collect back taxes.

CAO Saunders stated the city is doing everything possible to collect, and many of the individuals who are in delinquency are the same individuals who applied for enhanced relief. He also stated the city is working hard to collect without displacing residents.

Chair Jordan stated Council members should continue to meet with administration with specific questions, and she asked what the timeline is for Council to figure out what to do with the surplus funds.

CAO Saunders stated the timeline is based on the letter of intent with Altria, regarding the use of surplus funds to purchase a 100 acre parcel. CAO Saunders also stated the agreement with Altria requires the city to demonstrate funding. He further stated more time is left on decision making to administer the tax relief programs.

Councilor Robertson asked for the demolition figures and the source of money for the Altria property acquisition.

CAO Saunders stated that the \$5,500,000 coming from the \$10,000,000 was allocated for southside economic development and the demolition must be with cash funding.

Member Lynch stated the proposed programs will help the most vulnerable residents and that the committee could benefit from having a separate work group in reference to the budget.

There were no further comments or discussions and Member Stephanie Lynch moved to forward ORD. 2024-272, ORD. 2024-273, ORD. 2024-274, ORD. 2024-275, ORD. 2024-276, and ORD. 2024-277 to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Discussion Item(s)

There were no discussion items.

Staff Report

[CD.2024.335](#) October Staff Report

Attachments: [Governmental Operations Staff Report October](#)

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:49 p.m.