



City of Richmond

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

Meeting Minutes Governmental Operations Standing Committee

Wednesday, March 26, 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

Laura Drewry, City Attorney
Susan McKenney, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Kimberly Morris, Assistant City Clerk
William Perkins, Senior Council Legislative Services Manager
Candice Reid, City Clerk
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Katherine Jordan called the meeting to order at 1:00 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 amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of January 22, 2025, and February 26, 2025, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

[CD.2025.092](#) January 22, 2025 Governmental Operations Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [20250122 GovOps Minutes \(DRAFT\)](#)

[CD.2025.098](#) February 26, 2025 Governmental Operations Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [20250226 GovOps Minutes \(DRAFT\)](#)

Presentation(s)

Urban Forestry Commission Six Month Status Report

Whit Clements, Vice Chair of the Urban Forestry Commission, provided a presentation regarding the Urban Forestry Commission six-month status report.

[CD.2025.091](#) Richmond Urban Forestry Commission 2024 Six-Month Report
Published March 2025

Attachments: [UFC Report FINAL](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Chair Katherine Jordan stated the Urban Forestry Commission's work was incredibly important, and that member attendance at boards and commissions meetings should be a citywide discussion led by the Governmental Operations Standing Committee.

Member Kenya Gibson stated she was looking forward to hearing commission recommendations regarding updates to the city's zoning ordinance.

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker asked about outreach to unrepresented districts.

Mr. Clements stated there were three mayoral appointees with expiring terms, and it would be beneficial for future Mayoral appointees to be from unrepresented districts.

Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) System Update and Open Audit Recommendations

Scott Morris, Director of Public Utilities, provided a presentation regarding updates to the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) System.

[CD.2025.094](#) Combined Sewer System Program Update

Attachments: [2025-0326-RCSO Program Update for GovOps](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Chair Katherine Jordan asked was there an anticipated rate increase in the mayor's upcoming budget.

Mr. Morris stated currently, the proposed rate increase was not incorporated with the Combined Sewer Overflow projects.

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker asked what would happen if a wastewater utility rate increase was needed. She also asked if a two percent increase was a hard ceiling.

Mr. Morris stated two percent was not a hard ceiling and it was based off the Environmental Protection Agency's validation of increased threshold. He also stated ultimately the goal was to stay at or below two percent.

Vice Chair Abubaker asked was there any anticipation of rates to decrease once CSO projects were completed.

Mr. Morris stated as long as funding was available from state and federal sources, he did not anticipate any CSO related rate increases. He also stated he did not foresee any decreases.

Vice Chair Abubaker stated storage was the most cost effective CSO control method, however, separation was the highest quality but most expensive.

Mr. Morris stated full separation was more expensive, however, if the storage volume was cost effective, it could be less expensive than treatment.

Vice Chair Abubaker asked as the population shifts in the 4th District, would the CSO control methods remain safe.

Mr. Morris stated he does not predict an issue with expansion in sanitation capacity, however, high rain events could cause issues.

Member Kenya Gibson asked was the interim plan fully funded and would the timeline be achieved. She also asked for the amount of funds that was coming from additional sources to cover the overall budgeted amount of \$575,000,000.

Mr. Morris stated the interim plan was fully funded with \$50,000,000, and that the timeline would be met. He also stated the city would continue to advocate for funding from the Virginia General Assembly to reduce the cost.

Member Gibson asked would the completion of the interim plan and final plan cause any additional changes to operating cost. She also asked what were the consequences if the funds are not available.

Mr. Morris stated there would always be a component of additional operational cost, and that the city was working to identify any additional costs. He also stated there were penalties associated with non-compliance.

Ms. Gibson asked how could residents advocate and support the project.

Mr. Morris stated residents could support the project by contacting state representatives and expressing the need for water quality.

Open Audit Recommendations

Scott Morris, Director of Public Utilities, provided a presentation regarding the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) open audit recommendations.

Member Gibson asked were the wholesale water contracts with neighboring municipalities.

Mr. Morris stated that the wholesale water contracts were with regional partners Henrico, Chesterfield and Hanover Counties.

Member Gibson asked what was the overall cost for the size of related DPU contract compliance, and what were the contracted services.

Mr. Morris stated he did not have that information but that he would provide it at a subsequent time. He also stated contractors were used for water distribution and repairs.

Vice Chair Abubaker asked were there plans to create inventory software, and if there was a progress report on the physical state of the warehouse.

Mr. Morris stated there were existing systems that managed and reconciled inventory counts and that DPU was developing policies for better maintenance management.

Chair Jordan stated that at future meetings, the Governmental Operations Standing Committee would like to hear about the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) reports. She also requested DPU update the committee on staff changes that were assisting with the audit improvements.

Mr. Morris introduced new hire Lee Crowell, Deputy Director of the Department of Public Utilities.

Human Resources 2024 Vacancy and Overtime Reports

Robin Redmond, Senior Deputy Director of Human Resources, provided a presentation regarding the Human Resources 2024 vacancy and overtime reports.

[CD.2025.093](#) Staffing, Vacancy, Turnover and Overtime Report

Attachments: [2025.03.26-HR-GovOps - Final Vacancy Turnover and Overtime Report](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Chair Katherine Jordan asked did the number of employees that exceed 50 percent of the overtime threshold decrease by the end of 2025.

Ms. Redmond stated they were hoping zero employees would exceed the 50 percent threshold by the end of 2025.

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker asked what was the city's strategies regarding high employee turnover rates and if there was a consistent exit interview.

Ms. Redmond stated exit interviews were done online and in-person.

Vice Chair Abubaker asked what was the city's approach to validating overtime, and the cost compared to more retention and recruitment.

Ms. Redmond stated overtime was voluntary.

Ms. Abubaker asked was there any validation or auditing of the overtime hours.

Ms. Redmond stated the timecards for overtime hours were approved by managers.

Member Kenya Gibson stated high turnover costs the city more and that collective bargaining was saving taxpayers money. She also stated the distribution of overtime had a level of subjectivity that encouraged favoritism, and she encouraged the Department of Human Resources to create policy regulations to ensure less potential for favoritism.

Ms. Redmond stated Human Resources worked with departments to streamline processes.

Waste Reduction and the Circular Economy

Tara Worden, Sustainability Manager for the Office of Sustainability, provided a presentation regarding waste reduction and the circular economy.

[CD.2025.095](#) Waste Reduction Policies

Attachments: [03.26.25 Gov Ops - Waste Reduction 2](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Chair Katherine Jordan stated she understood the charge of service on plastic bags in stores, and that she was aware of the effects micro plastics had on the environment.

Member Kenya Gibson asked if additional staff was necessary to ensure the bag tax program was successful. She also asked how would the policy impact the upcoming budget.

Ms. Worden stated the administration of the tax would be done through self-reporting to the state on a ST-9 Retail Sales and Use Tax form.

Member Gibson asked how was single plastic bag use being measured in Richmond and in the school system.

Ms. Worden stated the waste was measured through reports from the Department of Public Works residential recycling program.

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker asked how were other retailers in other localities ensuring accurate reported numbers.

Ms. Worden stated larger retailers have point of sale systems that self-report and smaller retailers may have another way of reporting.

Chair Katherine Jordan left the meeting at 3:02 p.m.

Paper(s) for Consideration

There were no papers for consideration.

Board Vacancies

There were no board vacancies.

Discussion Item(s)

Rebate Check Issuance Error Update

Jamie Atkinson, Director of Revenue Administration for the Department of Finance, gave the committee an update about the rebate check issuance error.

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker asked why was the January or February 2025 planned distribution of checks delayed.

Sheila White, Director of Finance, stated the year was abnormal with the rolling out of a new business portal and lack of staff contributed to the delay.

Member Kenya Gibson asked how many checks were distributed and were there 2,000 errors.

Ms. Atkinson and Director White stated the total checks printed was 22,000, the total checks to be distributed is 59,673, and the total number of errors was 6,000.

Member Gibson asked Director White how many people were involved in the rebate check distribution process and how timely was the process.

Director White stated four people from the Department of Finance and components from the Department of Information Technology, the Assessor's office and outside vendors. She also stated the process is simple but can be timely.

Member Gibson asked Director White what was done to support the department during the check distribution process.

Director White stated her goal was to hire and retain good employees and assist current employees with the tools they needed to effectively do the job.

Member Gibson asked were there any conversations with administration regarding employee turnover and the ability to manage and execute the task of the rebate check distribution.

Director White stated the timeline was efficient, however, issues with training and other events that took place caused a delay with the process.

Member Gibson asked were there documented standards of procedures (SOPs) that existed for the issuance of the rebate check process and was there anyone on the Finance team who focused on the SOP process.

Director White stated she was not certain if there were SOPs. Ms. Atkinson stated she was not able to find any, and that going forward SOPs will be created.

Vice Chair Abubaker stated if issues were not corrected, there was the potential for repeated errors. She also asked why the process was not updated.

Director White stated the Department of Finance was in the process of making updates.

Staff Report

[CD.2025.099](#) Government Operations Standing Committee Staff Report March 26, 2025

Attachments: [Gov Ops Mtg Prep - March 2025](#)

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker gave an overview of the agenda for the next Governmental Operations Standing Committee meeting scheduled for Wednesday, April 23, 2025. She also stated the next Public Utilities and Service Commission meeting was be held on Thursday, April 10, 2025.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:26 p.m.