



City of Richmond

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

City Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 19, 2022

5:00 PM

5th Floor Conference Room - City Hall

Council Budget Work Session

Councilmembers Present

The Honorable Cynthia Newbille, President
The Honorable Ellen Robertson, Vice President
The Honorable Kristen Nye
The Honorable Reva Trammell

Absent

The Honorable Andreas Addison
The Honorable Michael Jones
The Honorable Katherine Jordan
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch

Call to Order

Council President Cynthia Newbille called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m., and presided.

Conference Room Evacuation Plan Announcement

Upon the President's request, City Clerk Candice Reid provided information on the appropriate manner in which the conference room is to be evacuated in the event of an emergency.

Discussion Item

Richmond Ambulance Authority

A copy of materials provided at the work session have been filed.

[CD.2022.177](#) Richmond Ambulance Authority Documents

[CD.2022.180](#) Work Session Presentations

President Cynthia Newbille provided a welcome to individuals in attendance, and she noted that former Richmond City Manager Robert Bobb, The Robert Bobb Group, LLC, President and Chief Executive Officer, was in attendance to facilitate the work session.

Chip Decker, Richmond Ambulance Authority (RAA), Chief Executive Officer, proceeded with a presentation that provided information regarding RAA's subsidy request from the city.

Facilitator Robert Bob stated that RAA needed to provide more statistical analysis to justify RAA's \$7,500,000 subsidy request from the city.

Laura Ritenour, RAA Director of Reimbursement, addressed questions raised in the discussion, and she provided additional information related to RAA's reimbursement and collection processes.

Councilwoman Reva Trammell stated that residents participating in the RAA's LifeSaver Program could have impacted RAA's revenue, due to the program offering lower costs for transports.

Mr. Decker provided more information regarding RAA's LifeSaver Program and its impact. Mr. Decker stated that the program does not create a budget deficit.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Lincoln Saunders proceeded with a presentation that provided information regarding city's response to the RAA's \$7,500,000 subsidy request. CAO Saunders stated that the city administration believed an independent review was needed to review financial operations and budgeting principles, adherence to the higher service delivery targets of the public utility model (PUM), and the overall emergency service model.

Mr. Robb stated that the RAA model was established with the city 30 years ago, and that the relationship may be due for an evaluation. Mr. Robb also stated that he believed the independent review suggested by city administration may be necessary. Mr. Robb further stated that RAA should embrace an independent review, because it could provide confirmation of the RAA's need for the subsidy increase.

Councilor Kristen Nye stated her concerns with the decrease in subsidy funding the RAA had received in recent years. Councilor Nye also stated her concerns with what she believed was a lack of communication between the city and RAA.

CAO Saunders stated that city administration previously recommended that RAA lease emergency vehicles, rather than purchase. CAO Saunders also stated that he believed the lease approach would have lessened the need for an increased subsidy. CAO Saunders further stated that he believed it would be beneficial for the city to review RAA finances monthly rather than quarterly, to better understand RAA finances.

RAA Board Chair Matthew Conrad stated that the RAA Board would welcome the city reviewing RAA finances monthly. Mr. Conrad also stated that he believed it would improve communication between RAA and the city. Mr. Conrad further stated his appreciation for the work performed by the RAA during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that he did not believe RAA could continue the same service with the current subsidy funding proposed by the city.

RAA CEO Chip Decker stated that the increased subsidy was necessary to hire and retain skilled workers required to provide RAA services.

RAA Chief Human Resources Officer Michael Dixon provided information regarding RAA's analysis on staffing and employment finances.

RAA Director of Finance Brian Aud stated that the RAA Finance Office submitted to city administration a subsidy request that provided information regarding RAA's anticipated financial needs to help hire and compensate RAA staff. Mr. Aud also stated that the subsidy request also provided more details regarding the change to RAA staff work hours and salary increases.

Sabrina Joy-Hogg, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Finance and Administration, stated her concerns with RAA's subsidy request and finances. DCAO Joy-Hogg also stated that the city was uncomfortable increasing the city's subsidy until an independent review was conducted. DCAO Joy-Hogg further stated that she believed RAA could do more to maximize collections. DCAO Joy-Hogg noted that the city would support RAA as needed, but that additional understanding of RAA finances was necessary before agreeing to an increase.

Mr. Bobb stated that the city could possibly provide the requested funding or place the additional subsidy in a lock-box until a review was completed. Mr. Robb also stated that placing the request in a lock-box would ensure that the funds would be available if RAA needed the resources to provide residents with essential services.

President Cynthia Newbille confirmed that Robert Bobb would try to provide Council with feedback regarding an independent review of RAA finances by Friday, April 22, 2022.

Councilor Kristen Nye requested more detailed information from RAA regarding its finances and subsidy request. Councilor Nye stated that the information would help Council better understand RAA's needs during its review of proposed Fiscal Year 23 (FY23) budget amendments.

President Newbille stated her appreciation for individuals that participated in the work session, and she suggested similar conversations take place more frequently throughout the year.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

CITY CLERK