



## City of Richmond

### Meeting Minutes

#### Public Safety Standing Committee

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Tuesday, June 22, 2021

12:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – Virtual Meeting

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#### Committee Members and Staff in Attendance

The Honorable Reva Trammell – Chair  
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert – Vice Chair  
The Honorable Katherine Jordan – Council Member  
Lisa Braxton, Council Management Analyst  
Joyce Davis, Interim Council Chief of Staff  
Jamie Isley, Assistant City Clerk  
Greg Lukanuski, Deputy City Attorney  
Pamela Nichols, Senior Assistant City Clerk  
Candice Reid, City Clerk  
Steven Taylor, Council Policy Analyst  
Dominique Thaxton, Assistant City Clerk  
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

#### Absent

The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Member

#### Call to Order

Chairwoman Reva Trammell called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m., and presided.

#### Electronic Meeting Announcement

Assistant City Clerk Jamie Isley, in accordance with Ordinance No. 2020-093, adopted April 9, 2020, as amended by Ordinance No. 2020-183, adopted August 20, 2020, announced the meeting would be held through electronic communication means. Assistant City Clerk Isley stated notice of the meeting was provided to the public through a public information advisory issued on June 16, 2021, and through Legistar on the city website in accordance with usual practice. She also stated members of the public were encouraged to provide comments in writing prior to the meeting and all comments received prior to 10:00 a.m., on Tuesday, June 22, 2021, were provided to committee members. Ms. Isley indicated that members of the public who signed up to speak and provide comment would be called to speak at the appropriate time.

#### Citizen Speaker Guidelines

Assistant City Clerk Jamie Isley provided the citizen speaker guidelines.

#### Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of Tuesday, May 25, 2021, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

## Presentation(s)

There were no presentations.

## Papers for Consideration

**The following ordinance was considered:**

### ORD. 2021-179

To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute an Agreement Between The City of Richmond and The Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority for the purpose of providing for a Program Manager position within the Department of Police to implement certain prevention and intervention strategies aimed at reducing criminal activity in public housing communities.

**Patrons:** Mayor Stoney

*There were no representatives present to introduce the paper.*

*Chairwoman Reva Trammell inquired about funding and the duties assigned to the proposed Program Manager position.*

*Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert requested more information regarding the role, qualities sought in the candidate, and salary range for the proposed Program Manager position. Vice Chair Lambert also suggested that a candidate from a Richmond Redevelopment Housing Authority community might be better suited for the proposed position.*

There were no further comments or discussions and **Chairwoman Reva Trammell moved to continue ORD. 2021-179 to the July 27, 2021, Public Safety Standing Committee meeting, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

## Discussion Item(s)

### Concerns on Courthouse Safety and Proposals of Future Placement

T. O'Connor Johnson, Esquire, President – Bar Association of the city of Richmond, provided an overview of safety and access concerns regarding the current and proposed new location of the John Marshall Court building. Mr. Johnson stated that several John Marshall Court building stakeholders were not informed of a city administration committee created to facilitate a potential new building location.

*Robert "Bob" Steidel, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer – Operations, discussed the facilities plan for the city going forward and informed the committee of a city administration steering group which will meet in July to begin discussions. Mr. Steidel advised that the process to evaluate all facilities had just begun and that the John Marshall Court building would require 18.7 million dollars in improvements. He also stated that the building will be recommended for replacement as it utilizes an inordinate amount of energy, is valued at 74 million dollars, and was built in 1972. He informed the committee that security updates for the John Marshall Court building are currently underway as a part of the five-year Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Steidel further outlined the space utilization process of which included a meeting with John Marshall Court building judges.*

*Mr. Johnson referenced the Virginia Courthouse Facility Guidelines from the Supreme Court of Virginia, which outlines which stakeholders should be notified of changes to courthouses.*

*Mr. Steidel committed to improving communication between city administration, City Council and John Marshall Court stakeholders regarding future changes to the John Marshall Court building. Mr. Steidel also stated that the Department of General Services will receive the information required from the Virginia Courthouse Facility Guidelines, and potentially review it before the next committee meeting.*

*Chairwoman Reva Trammell requested a presentation regarding vandalism, vandalism arrests and costs associated with securing the John Marshall Court building. She also requested the committee be allowed to tour the court building and view the previously mentioned safety concerns.*

*Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert requested a list of all of the stakeholders regarding the John Marshall Court building.*

*Mr. Steidel advised the committee that a discussion of certain safety and security concerns would need to be had within a closed session meeting.*

*Councilor Katherine Jordan requested engagement with citizens who utilize the building concerning access, safety, security and the potential new location of the John Marshall Court building.*

### **Public Safety Concerns in the Vicinity of 2013 Albany Ave**

Marion Cake, project: HOMES vice president of affordable housing development, discussed the ongoing criminal activity in the area surrounding the 301 Express convenience store located at 2012 Maury Street. Mr. Cake stated that project: HOMES is partnering with the Richmond Department of Housing and Community Development to produce 7 affordable homes in the 2000 block of Maury and Albany Streets.

*Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert stated several issues with 24-hour convenience stores in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Voter District, and suggested that stores closing at midnight might provide some relief.*

*Acting Major Rick Edwards, Richmond Police Department 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Precincts, advised the committee that the Richmond Police Department (RPD) is aware of the numerous complaints and arrests made at and around the convenience store. Major Edwards further stated that the convenience store is a hub for the neighborhood, and that concerned parties should continue to notify the RPD to ensure that policing data will reflect the need for additional resources in the area.*

*Vice Chair Lambert suggested the implementation of a different approach to address the underlying mental health and substance abuse issues that she believes fuels criminal activity in the area. She further suggested the city increase community policing efforts.*

*Chairwoman Reva Trammell stated that the issues found at 301 Express are germane to convenience stores city wide. Chairwoman Trammell also asked the RPD to ensure that the convenience stores located within the city are operating legally.*

*Police Chief Gerald Smith reiterated and affirmed statements made by Acting Major Edwards. Police Chief Smith also mentioned resuming the Community Assisted Public Safety program.*

Chairwoman Reva Trammell allowed speakers who were not present for the initial public comment period to speak before the last item for discussion.

### **Public Comment Period**

***Bill Pantele, Richmond Coalition of Police (RCOP) representative***, expressed support for the Community Assisted Public Safety program and its benefits to the community and public safety officers in the city. Mr. Pantele provided an overview of the timeline regarding RCOP's proposed public safety pay plan.

*Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert discussed personnel changes and communication issues during the height of the COVID-19 virus. Vice Chair Lambert assured Mr. Pantele that City Council will work towards a comparable compensation plan to that of the surrounding jurisdictions.*

## **Richmond Police Department Staffing Levels and Performance Concerns**

Police Chief Gerald Smith informed the committee of the methods utilized by the Richmond Police Department (RPD) to address morale and compensation issues within the department.

*Chairwoman Reva Trammell requested the RPD resume community policing efforts within the city. Chairwoman Trammell requested a discussion of the proposed public safety pay plan and a report on the issues surrounding the 301 Express convenience store and that of convenience stores city wide. She also requested an update on RPD police officer morale.*

*Police Chief Smith stated that the RPD is actively working to improve morale amongst police officers in the city of Richmond. He further stated that continued voiced public support from officials and the community, as well as additional funding, would help the RPD achieve morale goals.*

*Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert emphasized the importance of rebuilding trust between the community and the RPD. She highlighted several complaints regarding officer interactions with the residents of Gilpin Court.*

*Victoria Pearson, RPD – Office of Professional Accountability deputy chief, requested reconsideration of ORD. 2021-179, due to concerns regarding federal grants and fiscal year conflicts which are time-sensitive.*

*Deputy City Attorney Greg Lukanuski informed the committee that a motion to reconsider and vote would be necessary to reconsider ORD. 2021-179.*

**Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert moved to reconsider ORD. 2021-179, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

### **The following ordinance was considered:**

#### ORD. 2021-179

To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute an Agreement Between The City of Richmond and The Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority for the purpose of providing for a Program Manager position within the Department of Police to implement certain prevention and intervention strategies aimed at reducing criminal activity in public housing communities.

**Patrons:** Mayor Stoney

*Victoria Pearson, Richmond Police Department (RPD) – Office of Professional Accountability deputy chief, introduced ORD. 2021-179, which establishes a community liaison to work within Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) communities, in conjunction with the RPD to build community relationships and increase public safety.*

*Deputy Chief Pearson informed the committee that the salary range for the proposed civilian position is \$57,830 – \$92,370. She listed requirements, duties and responsibilities and the reporting structure for the proposed position. Deputy Chief Pearson further explained that the proposed position would be a liaison to the RRHA as a city employee working in the RPD.*

*Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert voiced concern regarding the potential for confusion given the history of Memorandums of Understanding between the city and the RRHA.*

There were no further comments or discussions and **Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert moved to forward ORD. 2021-179 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

**Board Vacancies**

Senior Assistant City Clerk Pamela Nichols reviewed board applications for consideration by the committee. Ms. Nichols informed the committee of Member Robertson’s request for the continuance of the applicants to the Community Criminal Justice Board and the Citizen Advisory Commission on Alternatives to Incarceration.

**Member Ann-Frances Lambert moved to continue consideration of the following appointment applications to the Citizen Advisory Commission on Alternatives to Incarceration and the Community Criminal Justice Board, to the October 26, 2021, Public Safety Standing Committee meeting, which was seconded and unanimously approved:**

<b>Board Name</b>	<b>Criteria for Appointment</b>	<b>Applicant Name</b>
<b>Citizen Advisory Commission on Alternatives to Incarceration</b> (15 members)	At-Large Resident	Rebecca Davidson 2 <sup>nd</sup> District Resident
		Dr. Brian Maiden 7 <sup>th</sup> District Resident
		Andre W. Tolleris 5 <sup>th</sup> District Resident
		Lawrence West 2 <sup>nd</sup> District Employment
		Michael D. Williams 4 <sup>th</sup> District Resident
		Kimberly Young 7 <sup>th</sup> District Resident
	(1 vacancy)	

<b>Board Name</b>	<b>Criteria for Appointment</b>	<b>Applicant Name</b>
<b>Community Criminal Justice Board</b> (15 members)	Citizen Representative – Reside or work in the city	Jewel Gatling 7 <sup>th</sup> District Resident
		Dr. Brian Maiden 7 <sup>th</sup> District Resident
		Gina L. Lyles 2 <sup>nd</sup> District Resident
		Dr. Michon Moon 1 <sup>st</sup> District Employment
		Nathan Sable 1 <sup>st</sup> District Resident
		Janet VanCuyk 5 <sup>th</sup> District Resident
		Lawrence West 2 <sup>nd</sup> District Employment
	(1 vacancy)	

*A copy of the material provided has been filed.*

*Chairwoman Reva Trammell requested Chip Decker, Richmond Ambulance Authority (RAA) chief executive officer, provide the committee with an overview of staffing issues resulting from COVID-19 and recent budget cuts.*

*Mr. Decker informed the committee that compensation competition has recently increased hiring and retention difficulties for Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedic positions. Mr. Decker explained how the RAA is categorized within the budget, and that grant applications are required to fund the service annually. He stated that the RAA is working to improve working conditions by reducing the number of workweek hours. Mr. Decker further explained current staffing numbers, vacancies, the RAA emergency/non-emergency response process and the starting salary pay scale. He also informed the committee of recruitment efforts for high school and college students in the area.*

*Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert requested a .jpeg image of RAA's job announcement to be shared online.*

*Mr. Decker provided information regarding operating costs for the RAA, recent budget cuts and the need for additional funding going forward.*

*Chairwoman Trammell requested a presentation comparing RAA calls for service to that of the surrounding jurisdictions and the total number of calls for service per day.*

*Mr. Decker informed the committee that pre-COVID-19 the RAA received upwards of 200 calls per day as one of the busiest EMS systems in the country, and that there are numerous non-emergency calls due to many individuals using RAA for home health care.*

## **Staff Report**

Steve Taylor, Council policy analyst, provided the committee with the June staff report. Mr. Taylor offered a review of member requests from previous committee meetings. He also suggested Mr. Decker confer with Council budget analysts regarding Richmond Ambulance Authority budgetary concerns.

*Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert requested an increased focus on gun violence prevention city wide and suggested the matter take precedence over RAA budgetary concerns.*

*Chairwoman Reva Trammell requested RAA provide a report at the next committee meeting. She also requested information on felonious gun violence offenders and a report at the next committee meeting regarding staff retention plans from the Richmond Police Department.*

*A copy of the report provided has been filed.*

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 1:51 p.m.