



City of Richmond

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

Minutes

Governmental Operations Standing Committee

Wednesday, October 27, 2021

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor

Committee Members and Staff in Attendance

The Honorable Katherine Jordan – Vice Chair
The Honorable Michael Jones – Member

Debra Bowles, Assistant City Clerk
Haskell Brown, Interim City Attorney
Joyce Davis, Interim Council Chief of Staff
Bill Echelberger, Council Budget Analyst
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Absent

The Honorable Kristen Larson - Chair

Call to Order

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m. and presided.

Evacuation Announcement

Upon the Vice Chair's request, Assistant City Clerk Debra Bowles provided information on the appropriate manner in which the Council Chamber is to be evacuated in the event of an emergency along with citizen speaker guidelines.

Public Comment

There were no public comment speakers.

Citizens were provided an opportunity to offer comments in writing prior to the Governmental Operations Standing Committee meeting. All written comments received by the Office of the City Clerk were provided to members of the committee prior to the meeting and are included as an attachment to the October 27, 2021 Governmental Operations Standing Committee meeting minutes, which can be accessed at <https://richmondva.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5256652&GUID=502C1EBD-3169-4A3E-A52A-211258CC7B77>

Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes for approval.

Presentation(s)

Update of the City's Green Vehicle Plan

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Operations, Robert Steidel provided background information regarding the city's Green Vehicle Plan which began in 2019. DCAO Steidel stated that there are two plans, one referencing the city's fleet and the other, facilities.

Management Analyst, Senior, for Operations, Adam Hohl, stated that the presentation was regarding a vehicle fleet that would be dominated by electric vehicles and that future discussions will be needed. Mr. Hohl provided a brief background of the fleet unity program specifying that there are currently approximately 2000 fleet vehicles within the city. Mr. Hohl informed the committee that a data driven approach has begun to plan for and prioritize replacement vehicles. Mr. Hohl also stated that the plan is in alignment with City Council initiatives, recommendations of the City Auditor and RVA Green 2050, and industry best practices. Mr. Hohl further stated that the first draft of plan initiatives was provided to departmental stakeholders for review at the beginning of October. Mr. Hohl noted that the Fleet Unity Plan is modeled after the Richmond 300 Plan, and the purpose of the plan is to outline priorities and strategies, and assist with current and future decision making regarding the municipal fleet. Mr. Hohl stated further that the plan is organized into seven areas, and that an assessment of the current fleet will be completed to determine the immediate needs of the city. Mr. Hohl stated that a mix of financial strategies will assist in completing the desired outcome and enhancing city services.

DCAO Steidel discussed the financial aspect of the Green Vehicle Plan. Mr. Steidel stated that the current fiscal year budget for fleet is approximately \$5,000,000, and for budget year 2023, the budget would need approximately \$29,000,000 followed by approximately \$22,000,000 for budget year 2024. Mr. Steidel stated that additional funds will be needed to build the vehicle charging infrastructure. Mr. Steidel also stated that the proposed budget, which only includes vehicles that meet the business needs of citizens, does not include possible grant funded vehicles.

Member Michael Jones inquired about tracking devices for current and future vehicles to locate vehicles that are being used inappropriately or are outside of city limits.

Mr. Steidel stated that a vehicle might be seen in Chesterfield County due to Richmond Gas Works servicing part of the county. Mr. Steidel noted that the technology for future vehicles will allow supervisors to know the location of vehicles at all times.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan questioned if there is only one fleet manager to oversee the city's entire fleet, including the Richmond Police Department (RPD). Ms. Jordan also stated that the Richmond Ambulance Authority (RAA) has been integrating solar powered vehicles since 2016, and that RAA has had greater reliability, lower maintenance costs and fuel savings. Ms. Jordan further inquired on the impact of remote working and right sizing. Ms. Jordan asked how fleet distribution will impact the parking utility that is being reviewed by Council.

Mr. Steidel responded by stating that currently, fleet management is decentralized; however, all fleet management will be centralized through the progression of the Green Vehicle Plan. Mr. Steidel stated that RAA is approximately five years ahead with its incorporation of electric vehicles. Mr. Steidel also stated that city directors will determine vehicle disbursement within their departments, which will assist in fleet balancing. DCAO Steidel further stated that space saving data, learned information during COVID-19, and departments adapting to fleet usage or smaller fleets is important. Mr. Steidel stated that micro mobility will be a solution for many tasks within the city that larger vehicles are not needed to complete. Mr. Steidel also stated that fleet usage will assist in the number of parking spaces within the city that will generate revenue. Mr. Steidel further stated it is important that the city use the fewest fleet vehicles that it can, and that moving forward, the city will not be purchasing gas or diesel vehicles.

A copy of the material has been filed.

Board Vacancies

Jamie Isley, Boards and Commissions Administrator, reviewed board vacancies for consideration by the committee.

Member Michael Jones moved to forward the following board reappointment to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved:

<u>Board Name</u>	<u>Criteria for Appointment</u>	<u>Applicant Name</u>
Sister Cities Commission (13 members)	Live or work in the City (1 vacancy)	Norman Washington 7 th District Resident (reappointment)

Member Jones noted that having boards and commissions making recommendations to Council's standing committees eliminates the need for a standing committee to review and discuss applicants prior to voting on recommendations. Mr. Jones also stated that district requirements should be placed on several boards and commissions to allow for more diversity, and it would be beneficial to advertise vacancies throughout the entire city.

Paper(s) for Consideration

There were no papers for consideration.

Discussion Item(s)

Charter Review Process Update

Council Budget Analyst Bill Echelberger reviewed recommended City Charter amendments with the committee that had a consensus between administration and Council. He stated the list of items would be forwarded for consideration to the Organizational Development Standing Committee on Monday, November 1st. The items that Mr. Echelberger covered were:

- Item 13 – Request for City Council members to serve fulltime and be paid accordingly;
- Item 18 – Allows Council to modify the Master Plan before it is adopted as an ordinance;
- Item 37 – Cost of making improvements to walkways and traffic calming measures;
- Item 38 – Allows for updating language related to Public Works utilities and property;
- Item 39 – Allows for updating language related to Public Works utilities and property;
- Item 40 – Allows for updating language related to Public Works waterworks, gas and electric plants;
- Item 41 – Allows for updating language related to public transportation;
- Item 42 – Allows for a new sub-section related to preservation of peace.

Member Michael Jones noted that a study should be done regarding the demographic that could be targeted for traffic violations, prior to forwarding item 42 for consideration with a mandatory fine of \$200.00.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Lincoln Saunders stated that his understanding from the work session would be that administration would determine mandatory verses non-mandatory violations and that the fine would be worded as "no greater than \$200.00", in addition to providing photo speed enforcement.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan asked who schedules the penalty cost.

Interim City Attorney Haskell Brown stated that traffic infractions are governed by a schedule that the

court develops and the judge of court determines the specific fine. Interim City Attorney Brown stated that he does not recommend changing this item in the City Charter.

CAO Saunders requested that item 42 be delayed in forwarding until further discussion is complete.

Mr. Echelberger continued with an overview of the following recommendations for consideration:

- Item 43 – Allows for updating language related to permits for streets, alleys and various entities;
- Item 44 – Allows for preventing obstruction or encroachment on streets, alleys, sidewalks and other public places;
- Item 45 – Allows for regulating the operation of motor vehicles;
- Item 46 – Relates to the removal of weeds from private and public properties, and snow from sidewalks;
- Item 47 – Is a duplicate of item 42;
- Item 48 – Relates to the preparation of the annual budget for Council and to enter into appropriate agreements with the Commonwealth of Virginia and other entities;
- Item 49 – Allows for less street congestion;
- Item 50 – Relates to property used by the public that includes sidewalk, trail, and shared use path;
- Item 53 – Relates to the Mayor submitting the Capital Improvement Plan Budget for Council's review.

Director of Budget and Strategic Planning Jason May stated that item 53 needs additional work and conversation prior to being moved forward for consideration.

Mr. Echelberger also reviewed the following items:

- Item 55 – Relates to electricity as a utility;
- Item 56 – Changes the City Charter to remove the sale or lease of the electricity assets from the referendum;
- Item 57 – Relates to creating a parking utility;
- Item 58 – Relates to city and state agreements not needing an ordinance for execution on a project that was previously approved.

Interim City Attorney Brown stated that through discussion with Public Works, it has been determined that item 58 is not a charter change but a change by way of an ordinance.

Mr. Echelberger further reviewed the following items:

- Item 59 – Strikes marijuana from a particular section of the City Charter;
- Item 60 – Relates to the cost of improving sidewalks and traffic calming measures on existing streets.

Interim City Attorney Brown informed the committee that item 60 does not pertain to developers, but it does relate to special assessments in service districts.

CAO Lincoln Saunders submitted a memo regarding possible changes in the City Charter. Mr. Saunders reviewed a possible change to § 6.16 of the City Charter regarding the transfer of funds between departments. Mr. Saunders stated that the threshold would be \$250,000.00, and it would be a one-time transfer.

Vice Chair Jordan expressed her concern regarding transferring of funds between departments, stating the approval transfers between departments allows Council to be more engaged in the business of the city.

CAO Saunders stated that allowing internal transfers between departments allows for trust between administration and Council. Mr. Saunders also stated that Richmond is the only location in Virginia that does not allow internal transfers without approval by Council.

Member Jones responded by stating transfers are not about trust but accountability of business

process and practice.

CAO Saunders also discussed possible options regarding change within the City Charter that references § 4.17 regarding the City Attorney. Mr. Saunders stated that the memo provides three options for consideration. Option A would move the City Attorney under the direction of the Mayor. Option B allows the Mayor the opportunity to appoint general counsel for administration which would enhance the responsiveness of administration and would allow counsel to engage in debate and dialogue as a representative for administration. Option C does not allow enough authority to counsel to address concerns. CAO Saunders stated that Option B allows for reasonable accommodation for administration.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan stated further discussion on internal transfers of departmental funds and the City Attorney should be continued at the Organizational Development Standing Committee meeting, on Monday, November 1, 2021.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.