



Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

Office of the Council Chief of Staff

Finance & Economic Development Standing Committee

June 17, 2026

Prep Document for Committee Members

Previous Meeting: May 20, 2026

Next Meeting: July 15, 2026

Agenda Overview:

- Ten papers for consideration:
 1. [Ord. 2026-081](#) (Mayor's proposal to amend existing payment register ordinance/code) – *patron has requested continuance until July*
 2. [Ord. 2026-130](#) (accept \$69.9k in state funds for preservation, maintenance, and stewardship activities at historically African American cemeteries)
 3. [Ord. 2026-131](#) (accept \$611.8k in opioid settlement funds for approved abatement and remediation strategies)
 4. [Ord. 2026-132](#) (accept \$1 million from the National Park Service Land and Water Conservation Fund to improve access and amenities at Broad Rock Creek Park)
 5. [Ord. 2026-133](#) (authorize right-of-entry agreement for donated tree improvements in Byrd Park)
 6. [Res. 2026-R019](#) (authorize OD standing committee to investigate failure to publish a monthly payment register as required by City Code § 12-16 and application of FOIA exclusions)
 7. [Ord. 2026-148](#) (accept \$150k from Virginia DCJS to support Richmond Recovery Court)
 8. [Ord. 2026-149](#) (amend definitions related to public procurement to conform with state definition of prevailing wage rate)
 9. [Ord. 2026-150](#) (conform city's cooperative procurement laws to newly added optional provisions in state Code)
 10. [Ord. 2026-151](#) (extend commercial tax abatement program by one year)
- One presentation: Rene Almaraz, Director of Procurement Services – P-card program relaunch

Preview of July 2026 meeting (subject to change):

- Presentation: Department of Economic Development – plans, pipelines, and metrics
- Presentation: DCAO of Finance & Admin or designee – delinquent real estate taxes and tax sale program relaunch

1. Ordinance No. 2026-081 (requested continuance to July)

Patron Mayor Avula

Title: To amend City Code § 12-16, concerning publication of the City's payment register, for the purpose of promoting transparency and accountability in the expenditure of public funds by providing public access to information regarding payments made by the City to vendors for goods and services and reimbursements to employees, while protecting confidential and personal information as required by law.

Council Staff Notes:

- Ord. 2014-257-2015-9 (adopted January 2015) established Sec. 12-16 requirement to post monthly payment register. The city has been out of compliance since 2019.
- The Administration's proposal has been described as chiefly designed to protect the privacy of individuals, though they have also suggested that the revised payment register data fields would reduce the amount of manual review needed prior to publication.
- Key changes in this proposal include:
 - New definition of "payment": (i) a disbursement by the City to **a vendor for goods or services provided to the City pursuant to a contract, purchase order, procurement, grant agreement, or other authorized operational expenditure and (ii) reimbursements to employees for authorized expenses paid.**
 - Exclusion of the following types of payments: payments to city employees, excluding reimbursements; payments to individuals receiving refunds or assistance payments; tax refunds or tax-related payments; payments made pursuant to legal settlements or claims; payments protected by state or federal privacy laws; and any payment that would disclose personally identifiable information protected by law
 - Removal of most required data fields
- The City Auditor is conducting a review of the city's accounts payable function, the results of which may be important to consider before making significant changes to the legal requirement to publish payment register data.

Council Staff Questions:

- Please explain the justification for excluding legal settlements altogether rather than publishing settlement or risk management claim payments with names redacted.
- When can the committee and Council expect to receive the FY25 payment register data using the proposed changes to the ordinance?
- Is there a plan to review and publish the FY26 payment register data?
- Has the Administration developed an implementation plan for this ordinance?

2. Ordinance No. 2026-131

Patron Mayor Avula

Title: To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$69,920.00 from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources' African American Cemetery and Graves Fund and to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by creating a new special fund for the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities called the "Historic African American Cemeteries Special Fund," and appropriating the increase to the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities' "Historic African American Cemeteries Special Fund" by \$69,920.00 for the purpose of providing funding for preservation, maintenance, and stewardship activities at historically African American cemeteries.

Council Staff Notes:

- These funds will reimburse the city for preservation, maintenance, and stewardship activities at three historically African American cemeteries: Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground (\$38.3k), Mt. Olivet Cemetery (\$23.6k), and Barton Heights cemeteries (\$8k).
- In addition to maintenance, reimbursable activities include documentation, assessment, mapping, and preservation planning.
- This state program is expected to continue, with the city able to receive reimbursement for eligible activities per grant agreements in future years.

Council Staff Questions:

- How does the total funding amount compare to the city's expenditures on preservation, maintenance, and stewardship activities at these cemeteries in recent years? (Will the state funding enable the city to *increase* its efforts or support of efforts carried out by third parties such as academic researchers?)

3. Ordinance No. 2026-131

Patron Mayor Avula

Title: To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$611,807.50 from the National Opioid Settlement Fund, resulting from settlement agreements with Settling Distributors, Walgreens, Walmart, Distributor, CVS, Allergan, Teva, and Kroger, and to amend Ord. No. 2025-057, adopted May 12, 2025, which adopted a Special Fund Budget for the fiscal year 2025-2026 and made appropriations thereto, by increasing revenues and the amount appropriated to the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services' National Opioid Settlement Special Fund by \$611,807.50, for the purpose of funding opioid abatement and remediation strategies to combat the opioid crisis.

Council Staff Notes:

- These funds are being distributed to participating political subdivisions after payment to legal counsel (i.e., more was set aside for that purpose than was ultimately paid to the attorneys representing participants).
- No city match is required.

Council Staff Questions:

- What is the running total of opioid settlement funds received by the city to date, and at what point (if ever) is the funding stream expected to significantly decrease or end?
- How is the city ensuring the long-term fiscal sustainability of its opioid remediation and abatement efforts, assuming opioid settlement funds will decrease or end at some point in the future?

4. Ordinance No. 2026-132

Patron Mayor Avula

Title: To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$1,000,000.00 from the National Park Service Land and Water Conservation Fund and to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by creating a new special fund for the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities entitled "Broad Rock Creek Park Grant Special Fund," and appropriating the increase to the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities' "Broad Rock Creek Park Grant Special Fund" by \$1,000,000.00 for the purpose of providing funding for improving access to and installing amenities at Broad Rock Creek Park.

Council Staff Notes:

- The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation is the primary recipient of these federal funds, and the city is the named subrecipient via grant pass-through.
- Director Frelke has noted that this federal grant was tied up due to DOGE activity in 2025, which explains the lag between the city's set-aside of the required \$1 million match in FY24 and the receipt of the funds now.
- Per the O&R, "In partnership with Virginia Community Voice, youth and parents from surrounding neighborhoods have played an active role in identifying priorities and recommending the amenities they would like to see included."

Council Staff Questions:

- Given the total project cost is noted on the attached grant agreement as \$2 million (equally split between the city and the federal government), is it accurate to interpret this as a one-time grant?
- What is the expected completion timeline for activities funded by the project?

5. Ordinance No. 2026-133

Patron Mayor Avula

Title: To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Right-of-Entry Agreement between the City of Richmond and Capital Trees for the purpose of performing tree improvements in Byrd Park located at 1401 Pump House Drive, 2601 Police Memorial Way, and 2301 Amelia Street in the city of Richmond.

Council Staff Notes:

- The right-of-entry agreement will facilitate the work valued at \$32k previously accepted as a donation of services by Capital Trees through [Ord. 2026-054](#).
- Per the O&R, “Tree improvements include structural pruning, removal of dead and dying trees, and stump grinding.”

Council Staff Questions:

- What does 311 data indicate about complaints or concerns raised about trees in Byrd Park covered by the agreement for donated services with Capital Trees?

6. Resolution No. 2026-R019

Patron Councilor Gibson, Councilor Trammell

Title: To authorize the Council's Organizational Development Standing Committee to investigate the City's failure to publish a monthly payment register as required by City Code § 12-16 and application of exclusions allowed under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

Council Staff Notes:

City Code § 12-16 – Publication of Payment Register

- Established via Ord. 2014-257-2015-9
- Sub-section (b) of the existing requirement in Sec. 12-16 includes the following related to redactions:

“The Director of Finance may redact particular fields for particular payments only if and to the extent required by law or permitted by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Code of Virginia, §§ 2.2-3700—2.2-3714, provided that nothing in this section shall require the Director of Finance to redact any of the information in the register simply because the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Code of Virginia, §§ 2.2-3700—2.2-3714, so permits.”

Charter § 4.16. - Powers of investigation

(a) The council, or any committee of members of the council when authorized by the council, shall have power to make such investigations relating to the municipal affairs of the city as it may deem necessary, and shall have power to investigate any or all departments, boards, commissions, offices and agencies of the city government and any officer or employee of the city, concerning the performance of their duties and functions and use of property of the city.

(b) The mayor, the chief administrative officer, the heads of all departments, all boards and commissions whose members are appointed by the council, the city auditor, and the inspector general shall have power to make such investigations in connection with the performance of their duties and functions as they may deem necessary, and shall have power to investigate any officer or employee appointed by them or pursuant to their authority concerning the performance of duty and use of property of the city.

(c) The council, or any committee of members of the council when authorized by the council, the mayor, the chief administrative officer, the heads of departments, boards and commissions whose members are appointed by the council, the city auditor, and the inspector general, in an investigation held by any of them, may order the attendance of any person as a witness and the production by any person

of all relevant books and papers. Any person, having been ordered to attend, or to produce such books and papers, who refuses or fails to obey such order, or who having attended, refuses or fails to answer any question relevant or pertinent to the matter under investigation shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction shall be punished by a fine not exceeding \$100.00 or imprisonment in jail not exceeding 30 days, either or both. Every such person shall have the right of appeal to the Circuit Court of the City of Richmond, Division I. The investigating authority shall cause every person who violates the provisions of this section to be summoned before the general district court criminal division for trial. Witnesses shall be sworn by the person presiding at such investigation, and they shall be liable to prosecution or suit for damages for perjury for any false testimony given at such investigation.

7. Ordinance No. 2026-148

Patron Mayor Avula

Title: To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$150,000.00 from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, and to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by creating a new special fund for the Richmond Recovery Court entitled "Byrne State Criminal Justice Improvement Program (SCIP) Grant Special Fund," and to appropriate the increase to the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Richmond Recovery Court's "Byrne State Criminal Justice Improvement Program (SCIP) Grant Special Fund" by \$150,000.00 for the purpose of providing funding to combat the public health crisis caused by escalating substance use, opioid use disorders, and opioid-related overdose.

Council Staff Notes:

- Per the O&R, "The award will allow the Richmond Recovery Court to expand clinical supervision, integrate peer recovery support, strengthen recovery-supportive housing partnerships, and enhance participant monitoring."

Council Staff Questions:

- The attached grant award letter from DCJS indicates that the award, which has a project period of February 2026 through June 2027, was granted by DCJS via approval letter in February. What accounts for the delay in accepting and appropriating the funds?
- Given the timing of this ordinance, it appears that all activities to be supported by this grant will take place in FY27. Do you anticipate any negative impacts from the delay in accepting and appropriating the funds?

8. Ordinance No. 2026-149

Patron Mayor Avula

Title: To amend City Code § 21-4, concerning definitions related to public procurement.

Council Staff Notes:

- This change is to conform the city’s definition of “prevailing wage rate” to changes enacted by the state during the 2026 General Assembly session (Va. Code § 2.2-4321.3(A)).

Council Staff Questions:

- Could you provide a plain-language explanation of the actual change being made to the prevailing wage rate definition and what impact the change is likely to have on the city’s procurement processes and costs?
- The fiscal impact portion of the O&R notes that “Impact to specific project costs is not possible to calculate.” What is the expected *direction* of fiscal impact (i.e., do we expect the change to result in higher costs or lower)?

9. Ordinance No. 2026-150

Patron Mayor Avula

Title: To amend City Code § 21-40, concerning joint and cooperative procurement, for the purpose of conforming the City's cooperative procurement laws to the optional provisions of Va. Code § 2.2-4304.

Council Staff Notes:

- This change would remove the city's existing prohibition on using "cooperative procurement" (i.e., "piggybacking" on another locality's procurement arrangement as allowable by Virginia law) for "roofing maintenance, repair, restoration, and component replacement of existing facilities that do not involve modification to the structure," per the O&R.

Council Staff Questions:

- Why were these roofing-related activities excluded from the city's cooperative procurement provisions in the first place?
- The fiscal impact portion of the O&R notes that the change should not impose any *costs* on the city, but the narrative portion of the O&R suggests that the city may save money on relevant procurement activities by being able to "piggyback" on other localities' contracts. Do you have a sense for the amount of those possible savings?

10. Ordinance No. 2026-151

Patron Mayor Avula

Title: To amend City Code § 26-610, concerning the evaluation and expiration of the partial exemption of certain rehabilitated commercial or industrial structures from real estate taxation, for the purpose of extending the expiration date from June 30, 2026, to June 30, 2027.

Note: The O&R transmittal for this ordinance includes a detailed program evaluation of the commercial tax abatement program, as required by Sec. 26-610 of city Code. However, Economic Development staff have indicated that a more thorough presentation and discussion of the program evaluation would be more appropriately timed with the future ordinance they plan to bring forward to make modifications to the program, in part based on the results of the evaluation.

Council Staff Notes:

- As explained in the O&R, “The City is requesting a one-year, instead of a five-year, extension because it intends to bring for Council consideration additional updates to further tailor the program to encourage the redevelopment of small mixed-use buildings and properties on the City’s derelict building list, support the inclusion of affordable housing in mixed-use projects, and improve program efficiency.”
- Highlights of the evaluation conducted by the consulting firm are as follows:
 - 34 applications submitted since 2021: 19 completed, 12 within rehabilitation period, 3 expired
 - The median construction year of rehabbed properties is 1923, which far exceeds the program criterion that a building be at least 20 years old.
 - One-third of participating properties are in downtown Richmond, and the program has recently been tapped for conversion of vacant downtown office buildings.
 - Projected net revenue from the program is substantial in terms of future property tax revenues for participating buildings (\$10.1 million net present value over 30 years) and total future tax revenue (from sales, meals, and hotel taxes) generated by associated activity (\$63.1 million net present value over 30 years).

Council Staff Questions:

- What is the anticipated timeframe for the ordinance that would further tailor the program?
- How will the recently adopted changes to the Enterprise Zone program affect the commercial tax abatement program, specifically the number of and potential net revenues from newly eligible properties? (See evaluation slide 6.)

Presentation: Procurement Services P-Card Program Overhaul Update – Rene Almaraz,
Director of Procurement Services

Council Staff Notes:

- Slide 2: The City Auditor (OCA) report issued in [June 2025](#) featured “16 complex recommendations [including] 58 action items” to address findings spanning five categories (control failures, oversight/leadership gaps, policy deficiencies, system weaknesses, and understaffing).
- Slides 5-10 include status updates for the 16 recommendations from the OCA report.
 - Submitted for closure: 3 (19%)
 - Closed: 12 (75%)
 - Pending submission: 1 (6%)
- The recommendation pending submission (slide 8): Recommendation #12: *“We recommend that the Chief Administrative Officer, in coordination with Director of Procurement Services and the Director of Human Resources, take steps to strengthen the enforcement of existing conflict of interest policies and enhance employee accountability.”*
- Slides 15 and 16 describe key policy changes implemented through the program overhaul and audit recommendation closure process. These include stronger approval authorities/standards and a requirement to check whether an existing contract with a vendor exists and use the standard requisition process instead of a P-card if so.
- Slides 16-18 focus on the training standards and modules that have been developed to strengthen procedures and controls for the 73 active P-cards and ensure a smooth and accountable path to P-card expansion.

Council Staff Questions:

- Slide 2: “Understaffing” – For how long prior to the City Auditor’s review was only one staff person responsible for reviewing “over 40,000 transactions with minimal oversight”?
 - Was that the permanent structure in place at the time or was it due to temporary circumstances such as one or more staff members being out on leave?

- Slide 4: “Data Analytics” – How much is the city spending on the contract with Card Integrity supporting the risk dashboards, and what has been calculated as the return on that investment in actual dollar terms?
- Slide 13: Please provide more detail about the “AI-powered reports, dashboards, and audit software both internally and through Card Integrity.” What specifically is being done using AI and at what cost?
- Slide 15: How is DPS planning to ensure Approvers only oversee a maximum of three cards?
- Slide 19: What are examples of the “robust business justifications for any new cards”?
- Slide 20: How were the specific performance thresholds (90% each for cardholder reconciliation and approver timeliness; 5% max policy violation rate) selected?