



# City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
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## DRAFT Meeting Minutes Public Safety Standing Committee

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Tuesday, February 24, 2026

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – City Hall

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### Committee Members and Other Council Members in Attendance

The Honorable Reva Trammell – Chair  
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Vice Chair (early departure)  
The Honorable Sarah Abubaker – Member  
The Honorable Cynthia Newbille – President (early departure)

### Staff and Others in Attendance

Greg Lukanuski, Deputy City Attorney  
Kiley Kesecker, Deputy City Clerk  
Pamela Nichols, Council Management Analyst  
Candice Reid, City Clerk  
Steve Taylor, Council Policy Analyst

### Call to Order

Chair Reva Trammell called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m., and presided.

### Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Public Speaker Guidelines

Assistant City Clerk Nahdiah Muhammad provided information on the appropriate way to evacuate the Council Chamber in an emergency along with public speaker guidelines.

### Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of October 28, 2025, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

[CD.2025.367](#) October 28, 2025 Public Safety Standing Committee Meeting Minutes

**Attachments:** [20251028 Public Safety Minutes - DRAFT](#)

## Public Comment Period

Penny Page addressed the committee regarding the city's contract with Flock Security, emphasizing that her position is not anti-police and that she values law enforcement's work. However, she raised concerns about repeated data misuse and the lack of clear evidence that the technology improves public safety.

Morgan Hafer addressed the committee regarding the city's bicycle and pedestrian planning, arguing that despite significant spending, it has failed to improve safety or produce meaningful results. He called for stronger oversight, better coordination with police on traffic enforcement, and structural changes.

Mike Wyche addressed the committee regarding the need for Flock cameras, noting that crime had already been declining before their installation. He raised concerns about potential misuse, including immigration related searches.

Almonte Canselo addressed the committee regarding cancelling the city's Flock Safety contract, stating that the cameras only help solve crimes after they occur and do not prevent them. He expressed concerns about mass surveillance, potential abuses in other jurisdictions, and the risks of third party control over data servers.

Juan Braxton, Criminal Justice Chair for Richmond branch NAACP, and Liaison for Shockoe Bottom Night Life and RPD, spoke in support of keeping the city's Flock contract, stating that it is a valuable tool for solving crimes and supporting victims' families. He argued that the cameras can help deter crime over time and hold offenders accountable.

Jackie Bishop-Wells addressed the committee regarding extending police hours in Shockoe Bottom to 11 p.m.– 4 a.m., designating it as an entertainment district, and increasing late night enforcement. She stated that ongoing safety issues are harming businesses and leaving empty storefronts.

Ezaddin Alasad, President of the Yemeni American Association of Virginia, addressed the committee regarding non-emergency business closures affecting immigrant owned stores. He called for fairness in enforcement, asking the city to allow time to correct minor issues and work collaboratively on a better framework to support both public safety and small businesses.

Eight convenience store owners from the Yemeni community addressed the committee to express concern regarding the closure of over 60 stores due to code violations. They expressed their willingness to rectify the identified issues but asserted that their establishments should not remain closed during this process, as such closures jeopardize their livelihoods and capacity to support their families.

Christine Gibson addressed the committee regarding taxes and public safety. She expressed concern that rising city taxes are placing a heavy burden on residents, particularly seniors and those on fixed incomes, and urged consideration of tax relief. She also voiced support for Flock cameras, stating that while some may have privacy concerns, the cameras can help law enforcement investigate crimes and improve community safety.

Mike Burns addressed the committee regarding ongoing safety issues in Shockoe Bottom. He stated that a lack of law enforcement and enforcement of existing ABC laws and regulations are contributing to increased violence. He urged the city to focus on enforcing current rules rather than relying solely on an increased police presence.

Charles Willis, Executive Director of United Communities Against Crime, addressed the committee regarding Flock cameras. He stated that the cameras have helped law enforcement identify and apprehend suspects in recent shootings. He expressed support for their use as a tool to help solve crimes and bring justice to victims' families.

## Board Vacancies

Pamela Nichols, Council Management Analyst, reviewed board vacancies and applications for consideration by the committee.

[CD.2026.049](#) February 24, 2026 - Public Safety Standing Committee Board Vacancy Report

**Attachments:** [20260224 - Public Safety Board Vacancy Report](#)

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

**Member Sarah Abubaker moved to forward the following reappointment and appointment applications to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

Community Criminal Justice Board:  
Crystal Fitzgerald (reappointment)

Richmond Ambulance Authority:  
Nicole Riley

## Paper(s) for Consideration

**The following ordinance was considered:**

1. [ORD. 2025-287](#) To amend City Code § 27-131, concerning the traffic signal enforcement program, for the purpose of establishing the manner in which civil penalties are allocated.

**Patrons:** Mayor Avula

**Attachments:** [Ord. No. 2025-287](#)

Chief of Police Rick Edwards provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed ordinance. He stated that the legislation would amend the city code to designate funding to sustain the Safety Camera Program and to support the implementation of Vision Zero Action Plan strategies.

Member Sarah Abubaker asked where the funds would be allocated under the ordinance and inquired about where the money was directed before being designated for Vision Zero.

Chief Edwards stated that the funding would be derived from fines collected through red light camera enforcement.

### **Public Hearing**

There were no public hearing speakers.

Vice Chair Stephanie Lynch asked whether the special fund could support staff and personnel or if it is solely for Vision Zero initiatives.

Chief Edwards stated that allocating staff to review each camera's footage is costly and would require adding two police officers or retired law enforcement personnel to manage the program.

**There were no further comments and Vice Chair Stephanie Lynch moved to forward ORD. No. 2025-287 to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

### **Presentation(s)**

#### **Richmond Police Department 2026 Crime Statistics Review**

Chief of Police Rick Edwards presented the Richmond Police Department's 2026 crime statistics, reporting a 12% overall reduction in major crimes, including murder, robbery, and aggravated assault. He also highlighted the department's use of Flock cameras, which capture vehicle information without personal identifiers and are strictly limited to specific investigations, emphasizing compliance with House Bill 2724 and internal policies. Chief Edwards noted that data is restricted to Virginia law enforcement, federal agencies are excluded, and any policy violations are subject to both criminal and internal disciplinary action.

[CD.2026.060](#) Richmond Police Department 2026 Crime Statistics Review

**Attachments:** [Richmond Police Department 2026 Crime Statistics Review](#)

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

Member Sarah Abubaker asked whether Henrico and Chesterfield counties also use Flock camera technology.

Chief Edwards stated that Henrico publicly uses a license plate recognition (LPR) system but declined to comment on other agencies, as that information is not publicly available.

Member Abubaker asked about the terms of use in the city's Flock contract and whether agencies in other states can access the Virginia Flock database.

Chief Edwards stated that nothing has substantively changed regarding the contract. He clarified that, since July 1, 2025, agencies outside Virginia cannot access the city's Flock database, and the rules for other states do not apply.

President Cynthia Newbille acknowledged the recent tragic loss of life and injuries in Shockoe Bottom, offering condolences by those affected. She stated that there were upcoming meetings with local businesses to discuss immediate and long-term strategies, including additional cameras, increased officer presence, exploratory substation options, and community programs to improve safety in the area.

Vice Chair Lynch asked whether establishing an outdoor entertainment or outdoor refreshment area, similar to an event permit, could legally allow the city to restrict firearms and control access points.

Chief Edwards stated that the outdoor entertainment permit is intended for one-time use, and using it regularly could be considered invalid. He noted that ongoing firearm restrictions in such areas would likely require legislation from the General Assembly.

*President Cynthia Newbille departed the meeting at 2:41 p.m.*

Chair Reva Trammell expressed concerns regarding public safety in the Shockoe Bottom area.

Chief Edwards continued to discuss RPD 2026 crime statistics review with the committee.

### **Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response Hagerty Report Follow-up**

*Member Stephanie Lynch departed the meeting at 3:03 p.m.*

Stephen Willoughby, Director of the Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness, and Response (DECPR), provided an update on the implementation of recommendations from the Hagerty incident response assessment following the January 2025 weather and water emergencies. He reported that the city has formalized emergency operations procedures, strengthened coordination within the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), improved communication systems, and updated the emergency operations plan. Key actions include clarifying departmental emergency management responsibilities, enhancing resource tracking, implementing Everbridge for emergency alerts, and establishing a permanent multi-agency coordination center.

[CD.2026.055](#) DECPR Hagerty Report Follow-up Presentation

**Attachments:** [Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response Hagerty Report Follow-up](#)

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

The committee inquired and requested information on the following matters:

- Lessons learned from the most recent winter weather event
- Hagerty's consultant status with the city
- Hagerty's initial recommendations
- Actions to increase Richmond Ready alert subscriptions
- New staff members hired or joining DECPR
- The total number of staff in DECPR
- Hagerty's cost and total recommendations provided to the department

Director Willoughby stated that the city is conducting an after action review of the recent winter weather event, noting early findings including challenges with incident tracking software, the need to pre-identify city drivers with four wheel drive vehicles to transport critical staff, and opportunities to improve communication regarding emergency shelters and warming centers.

He confirmed that Hagerty remains engaged as a consultant, assisting with updates to the city's emergency operations plan and the development of the emergency cost recovery and recovery planning framework, and creation of a city wide incident management team.

Director Willoughby stated that the city is promoting Richmond Ready via social media and a local TV partnership. He explained that 2:00 a.m. alerts are automatic triggers from the National Weather Service and noted that residents can now register in writing, with a Richmond Ready help desk available to assist with subscriptions and questions.

He reported that the office of emergency management added a Training and Exercise Manager. DECPR has approximately 130 employees, with the Office of Emergency Management currently staffed by five individuals, though reports recommend seven to ten based on the city's population, special events, and status as the state capital.

### **Discussion Item(s)**

There were no discussion items.

### **Staff Report**

Council staff provided the committee with the February Public Safety staff report.

[CD.2026.061](#) February 24, 2026 - Public Safety Staff Report

**Attachments:** [20260224 Public Safety Staff Report](#)

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

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:23 p.m.