



Richmond City Council

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

Budget Work Session Minutes

Monday, April 7, 2025

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Budget Work Session

Councilmembers Present

The Honorable Cynthia Newbille, President
The Honorable Katherine Jordan, Vice President
The Honorable Andrew Breton
The Honorable Kenya Gibson
The Honorable Nicole Jones
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch (late arrival and early departure)
The Honorable Ellen Robertson
The Honorable Reva Trammell

Others in Attendance

Lisa Braxton, Council Management Analyst, Principal
Myrtle Brown, Council Budget Analyst
LaTanja Davenport, Council Budget Analyst
Laura Drewry, City Attorney
Tamiya Lunsford, Council Budget Analyst
William Perkins, Council Senior Manager
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Tabrica Rentz, Deputy City Attorney
Debora Shaw, Council Management Analyst
Matthew Slaats, Interim Council Chief of Staff
Steven Taylor, Council Policy Analyst
Daniel Wagner, Interim Deputy Council Chief of Staff
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Council President Cynthia Newbille called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement

Upon the President's request, Council Management Analyst Lisa Braxton provided information on the appropriate way to evacuate the Council Chamber in an emergency.

Prior to the presentation, Mayor Danny Avula addressed Council and thanked Interim Chief Administrative Officer Sabrina Joy-Hogg, Budget Director Meghan Brown and their team for their hard work crafting the city's proposed fiscal year 2026 budget plan. Mayor Avula mentioned the inclusion of certain policy changes within the proposed budget and expressed support regarding their removal if Council chose to do so.

Overview of Operating Budget

Interim Chief Administrative Officer Sabrina Joy-Hogg provided the fiscal year 2026 (FY26) proposed budget presentation, focusing on the following:

- Anticipated revenues
- Economy changes and forecast
- Operational expenditures
- Personnel compensation
- Suggested policy changes

A copy of the presentation has been filed.

[CD.2025.113](#) FY 2026 Proposed Revenue and Operating Budget Presentation

[CD.2025.114](#) After Items - Budget Work Session Handouts

Councilor Stephanie Lynch arrived at 1:11 p.m. and was seated.

Councilor Kenya Gibson expressed disappointment with the current budget process and stated that the mayor's budget presentation should occur sooner than the current adopted timeline, which will provide Council additional opportunities to review the budget proposal. Councilor Gibson also stated that the proposed budget should be shared with councilmembers prior to its introduction.

Councilor Sarah Abubaker reiterated Councilor Gibson's concerns regarding the current budget process. Councilor Abubaker inquired regarding the proposed salary increases for city employees and suggested a different compensation approach.

Councilor Nicole Jones inquired regarding the citywide strategy for youth investment included in the FY26 proposed budget.

Councilor Ellen Robertson recommended that the FY26 budget review schedule be revised to include specific information regarding each budget work session, which she stated will allow councilors an opportunity to better prepare for the session.

Councilor Abubaker made an inquiry concerning active city contracts.

Councilor Stephanie Lynch sought information pertaining to the Virginia Retirement System transition and its correlation to the proposed FY26 budget, methodology behind the proposed employee salary increases, public safety overtime expenditures, inclement weather shelter budget, evaluation of human services programs, and a family crisis fund analysis.

Councilor Reva Trammell inquired regarding funding for the John Marshall Courts Building, the Richmond Public Schools' system, and a cost-of-living allowance for city retirees.

Councilor Stephanie Lynch departed the meeting at 2:58 p.m.

Vice President Katherine Jordan reminded her colleagues that due to the late land book closure, legislation was adopted to delay the mayor's proposed budget presentation until the new real estate assessment process cycle is implemented. Vice President Jordan inquired regarding potential cuts to federal funding.

Councilor Andrew Breton asked about redundancies in city processes and requested city administration's assistance with finding savings within the proposed FY26 budget.

Shunda Giles, Social Services director, was available to answer questions pertaining to the FY26 proposed general fund budget and potential federal cuts to city funding.

Interim Council Chief of Staff Matthew Slaats informed Council that additional work sessions will be added to the budget review schedule, and Council staff will compile their additional questions regarding the FY26 proposed budget for responses. Mr. Slaats reminded councilors of the next budget work session scheduled April 14, 2025, at 1 p.m.

President Cynthia Newbille stated that she will be conversing with Councilor Ellen Robertson, Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee chair, and Vice President Katherine Jordan regarding changes to next year's budget review process.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:19 p.m.

CITY CLERK