



Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

Office of the Council Chief of Staff

Government Operations Standing Committee

November 12, 2025

Staff Prep Document for Councilmembers

Previous Meeting: October 22, 2025

Next Meeting: December 10, 2025

Legistar Link: [City of Richmond - Meeting of Governmental Operations Standing Committee on 11/12/2025 at 2:00 PM](#)

11/12 Agenda Overview:

Presentations:

- Public Utilities and Services Commission Annual Report
- Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) System Update

Ordinances & Resolutions:

1. Ord. 2025-209 (Gibson + Abubaker + Lynch, amend § 2-772 on Bd/Comm. disclosures)
2. Ord. 2025-210 (Gibson + Abubaker + Lynch, add § 2-1361 on establishing FOIA library)
3. Ord. 2025-211 (Gibson + Abubaker + Lynch, add § 2-1360 on procurement open data)
4. Ord. 2025-240 (Avula, add § 2-1361 on establishing FOIA library)

Wed, 12/10 Agenda Overview:

Presentations:

- DIT on Cybersecurity and Protection of Data

Ordinances & Resolutions for Consideration

1. Ordinance No. 2025-209

Patrons CMs Gibson, Abubaker, Lynch

Title: To amend City Code § 2-772, concerning the filing of statements of economic interests, for the purpose of requiring more detailed disclosure forms of boards and commissions with the power to issue bonds or expend funds in excess of \$10,000 in any fiscal year.

Staff Notes on Monday, 11/10 Amended Version:

- Developed in consultation with the City Clerk.
- In Sec. 2-772 (a):
 - Changed “non-salaried” to “citizen” to include salaried members as well.
 - Clarified that Mayoral appointees also included
 - Changed deadline for filing to February 1st (State Code due date)
 - Added Affordable Housing Trust Fund Supervisory Board to list of boards and commissions required to file “long-form” disclosure.
- Added Sec. 2-772 (d) to remove requirement that appointees to advisory boards and commissions file financial disclosure forms.

2. Ordinance No. 2025-210

Patrons CMs Gibson, Abubaker, Lynch

Title: To amend City Code § 2-1351, concerning definitions related to open data and a transparency program, and to amend ch. 2, art. VII, div. 4 of the City Code by adding therein a new section 2-1361, concerning a Freedom of Information Act request library, for the purpose of establishing an online Freedom of Information Act library.

Staff Notes on Tuesday, 10/14 Amended Version:

- Removed the following agencies from the FOIA Library:
 - Richmond Police Department
 - Richmond Fire Department
 - Department of Social Services
 - Richmond 911 (Dept. of Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response)
- Clarified that requests made by attorneys and/or about minor dependents are also to be treated as if they're submitted by the person requesting them.

Staff Notes on Monday, 9/8 Introduced Version:

- FOIA Library is defined as a “publicly available webpage to publish public records requests, provided documentation, and associated costs.”
- Requires publication of all public records requests online (including requests made of the City Council, Mayor, city departments, and boards and commissions).
- The FOIA library is required to include the following for each request:
 - The receipt date for each request;
 - The completion date for each request, if applicable;
 - A copy or summary of each request;
 - The department or departments responsible for fulfilling each request;
 - Any fees or costs assigned for fulfilling each request; and
 - Access to any materials produced in response to each request.
- If someone requests materials about themselves (ex: old pay stubs) the Open Data Manager may withhold materials from publication online.

3. Ordinance No. 2025-211 (as amended)

Patrons CMs Gibson, Abubaker

Title: To amend City Code § 2-1352, concerning general requirements of the open data portal, to prohibit charging fees for requesting information required to be posted in the open data portal pursuant to section 2-1360 and to amend ch. 2, art. VII, div. 4 of the City Code by adding therein a new section 2-1360, concerning required datasets, for the purpose of requiring publication of certain datasets in the open data portal.

Staff Notes on Monday, 11/10 Amendment:

- Allows for publication to “an internet accessible location with a link in the open data portal” as alternative to requiring all materials be uploaded to the open data portal itself.
- Developed in consultation with administration to align with recently announced [Procurement Transparency Dashboard | Richmond](#).

Staff Notes on Tuesday, 10/14 Amendment:

- Removed requirement to post data from FY23 and FY24 (still includes FY25)
- Extended timeline for requirement to post FY25 data to 180 days after adoption (up from 90 days originally)

Staff Notes on Monday, 9/8 Introduced Version:

- This ordinance requires the publication of certain required datasets related to purchase contracts awarded by the City.
- Currently, the [Open Data Portal’s “City Contracts” page](#) publishes the following:
 - Agency/Department
 - Contract Number
 - Contract Value
 - Supplier name
 - Procurement Type
 - Description
 - Type of Solicitation
 - Effective from/to dates
- This paper codifies the existence of this open data page and adds the following required datasets:
 - The dollar amount of each contract award (**added to Open Data website since this paper was introduced*)
 - Minority Business Enterprise or Emerging Small Business status
 - For Invitations for Bids, information on unsuccessful bidders including supplier names and bid amounts
 - RFP or IFB numbers, if applicable
- Further, this paper states that the City shall not charge fees for FOIA requests for data required to be published from this paper.

4. Ordinance No. 2025-240

Patrons Mayor Avula

Title: To amend City Code § 2-1351, concerning definitions related to open data and a transparency program, and to amend ch. 2, art. VII, div. 4 of the City Code by adding therein a new section 2-1361, concerning a Freedom of Information Act request library, for the purpose of establishing an online Freedom of Information Act library.

Staff Notes on Monday, 11/10 Amendment:

- Sec. 2-1351 adds definition for a “Library Notice” to determine which requests to publish online via the FOIA library (no longer referred to as a rubric).
- Sec. 2-1361 (a) and (b) replaces references to an approved rubric with “Library Notice.”
- Sec. 2-1361 (c) requires Library Notice to be posted on the city’s website with examples of requests that may or may not be posted online in a FOIA library.
- Sec. 2-1361 (d) establishes contents of the Library Notice including when and when not to post requests online, as well as an appeals process for requesters who believe their request should have been posted online.
- Sec. 2-1361 (e) establishes an annual report requirement for the FOIA Library.

Potential Questions on Monday, 11/10 Amendment:

- Sec. 2-1361 (d)(2) and (4) establish which requests will and will not be posted to the FOIA library, each with several sub-criteria.
 - Does a request need to meet all criteria in (2) to be posted, or does it just need to hit one of the five criteria mentioned?
 - Similarly, does a request need to meet all three criteria in (4) to NOT be posted?
- How will the FOIA Manager interpret the following terms?
 - Contribute to public understanding of the City’s operations, policies or decision-making activities (Sec. 2-1361 (d)(2)(b))
 - Expose wrongdoing or misconduct of a public official, government employee or member of the public (Sec. 2-1361 (d)(2)(c))
 - Relevant to the evaluation, performance, or accountability of City programs or functions (Sec. 2-1361 (d)(2)(d))
 - Otherwise sufficient public interest to warrant proactive disclosure in order to promote transparency, public understanding, or accountability in City operations (Sec. 2-1361(d)(2)(e))
 - The record contains strong privacy, security or compromise a minor (Sec. 2-1361(d)(4)(a))
 - The record contains information that otherwise jeopardizes the privacy or reputation of a member of the public who is not a City employee or elected official (Sec. 2-1361(d)(4)(b))
- The requirements for appealing an omission of the FOIA Library are quite detailed (ex: need a copy or summary of the request itself, etc.). Is the expectation that only requesters themselves will be able (or interested) in contesting publication decisions?
- Is there a due date for the annual report required under Sec. 2-1361(e)?
- Please elaborate on plans to pilot the FOIA library in FY26 before full adoption in FY27 (July 1, 2026). Is there a plan to evaluate this year’s pilot?

Exemptions from mandatory disclosure: [link to list from VA Freedom of Information Advisory Council](#):

- Personnel information is exempt from mandatory publication (§ 2.2-3705.1 (1))
- Security systems are exempt (§ 2.2-3705.2 (2))
- Public safety, critical infrastructure, surveillance techniques are exempt (§ 2.2-3705.2 (14))
- Scholastic records are exempt (§ 2.2-3705.4 (1))
- Health records are exempt (§ 2.2-3705.5 (1))
- Working papers and correspondence are exempt (§ 2.2-3705.7 (2))

Public Utilities and Services Commission (PUSC) Annual Report – PUSC Chair, Kevin Cianfarini

Staff Notes:

- Commission established in November 2023 ([Ord. 2023-315](#)) with eight explicit duties:
 1. Reviewing reports and information concerning the operations or change in policies or services of the Department of Public Utilities and Department of Public Works.
 2. Making recommendations to Council and the Mayor relating to the operations of natural gas, clean drinking water, sanitary sewers, stormwater management, utility billing issues, sanitation, refuse and recycling.
 3. Assisting the Mayor, Council, and City employees with the review of any issues requiring study and utilization of best practices to enhance performance without impact to regulatory compliance standards.
 4. Creating subcommittees to study specific topics or initiatives. The Commission shall maintain five standing subcommittees: Water Utility Operations Subcommittee, Stormwater Utility Operations Subcommittee, Wastewater Utility Operations Subcommittee, Solid Waste Utility Operations Subcommittee, and Natural Gas Subcommittee. The Commission may create ad-hoc subcommittees, which shall consist of members of the Commission, to study other topics or utility related initiatives.
 5. Increasing public engagement to create transparency and to inform the public of future city planning related to stormwater, energy conservation, clean drinking water, wastewater utilities, solid waste and refuse projects, and operations.
 6. Conducting research and request access to interview city administrators, residents, subject matter experts, municipality leadership, and other stakeholders to discern the scope of issues and problems related to service delivery, quality of service, or other performance and operational related topics to create recommendations for improvement.
 7. Providing advice on how the City may facilitate a transition of the gas utility in accordance with the City's climate and ecological emergency declaration, as set forth in Resolution No. 2021-R049, adopted September 13, 2021, and the City's master plan.
 8. Making recommendations on ways that the City may ensure the fiscal integrity and viability of each of the City's utilities.
- Staff support provided by Office of Council Chief of Staff with significant additional staff time provided by DPU, Office of Sustainability, and City Attorney's Office.
- Report chapters on water (p. 8-12), natural gas (p. 14-36), and waste/stormwater (p. 38-40).
- Recommendations include establishing an energy efficiency program, requiring new customers pay upfront costs for distribution system, and that the City analyze cost-effective leak-prone pipe replacements as well as a draft ordinance to eliminate gas line extension allowances (LEAs).

Potential Questions:

- How did the PUSC review the January water crisis? What recommendations do you have for preventing or reacting to other emergency situations like that in the future?
- Duty #4 requires the commission to establish five standing subcommittees. Unfortunately, it sounds like you struggled, at times, to maintain quorum for that many meetings. Should we amend the ordinance to allow for more flexibility on which subcommittees to form?
- Duty #7 requires the commission to advice the city on a transition of the gas utility. Please describe how you approached this task and what you recommend we do to achieve it.
- Please outline the ordinance to eliminate gas line extension allowances (LEAs) on p. 34-35.
- What is the PUSC planning to review next year?

Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) System Update – DPU Director, Scott Morris

Staff Notes:

- CSO system website here: [CSO/Stormwater | Richmond](#)
- Combined Sewer System (CSS) serves 12,000 acres with 25 active outfalls
- Goal is to reduce combined sewage volume and bacteria discharged to improve James River water quality.
- Final Plan established in 2024: [Final Plan Report 2024 0530.pdf](#) in response to 2020 CSO law (SB1064), with complete construction due by July 1, 2035.
- Plan is likely to cost > \$500 million and reduce CSO by > 180 million gallons annually.

Potential Questions:

- Given the August 2024 Final Plan approval and the long-term nature of the work, how confident are we in meeting the mandated 2035 goal, and what are the top three factors that pose the greatest threat to that timeline?
- What is our local funding commitment in the current CIP for these projects?
- The Final Plan relies on "increased financial support" to meet the 2035 goal. What is the current estimated total cost of the Final Plan projects, and what specific funding mechanism (e.g., utility rate increases, bonds, grants) is proposed to secure the necessary funding stream?
- Can you provide the year-over-year data on the total volume and frequency of CSO discharge events for the past three fiscal years? How do these figures compare to the reduction targets set in the Interim and Final Plans?
- What is the current process for notifying the public when a CSO event occurs, and what specific measures are being taken to ensure that the burden of system upgrades (e.g., construction impacts, rate increases) is distributed equitably across all affected Richmond neighborhoods?
- On financial capability, will we need to increase wastewater rates for residents if we don't get additional state grant funds to pay for these projects? If so, how much of an increase might that require?