



City of Richmond

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

Draft Meeting Minutes Governmental Operations Standing Committee

Wednesday, January 22, 2025

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Committee and Other Council Members in Attendance

The Honorable Katherine Jordan - Chair
The Honorable Sarah Abubaker - Vice Chair
The Honorable Kenya Gibson - Committee Member
The Honorable Andrew Breton - Alternate Member (late arrival)

Staff in Attendance

Laura, Drewry, City Attorney
Susan McKenney, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Kimberly Morris, Assistant City Clerk
Pamela Nichols, Council Management Analyst
William Perkins, Council Legislative Services Manager
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Matthew Slaats, Interim Council Chief of Staff
Steven Taylor, Council Policy Analyst
Daniel Wagner, Interim Deputy Chief of Staff
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Katherine Jordan called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m., and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Public Speaker Guidelines

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

Public Comment Period

There were no public comment speakers.

Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes to be approved.

Presentation(s)

Water Outage Response

[CD.2025.017](#) Councilmember Questions January 2025 DPU Water Emergency

Attachments: [Questions from Council January 2025 DPU Water Emergency](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Megan Field, Senior Policy Advisor for the Chief Administrative Officer, provided information regarding the water outage crisis. She also introduced Scott Morris as the new Interim Director of the Department of Public Utilities.

Councilor Andrew Breton joined the meeting at 1:08 p.m.

Scott Morris, Interim Director of Public Utilities, addressed the committee and informed members about his prior background. Mr. Morris stated that he was excited about the opportunity to join city administration and share his abilities with the department. He also gave an update on the current conditions of the water treatment plant.

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker asked about plans to bring the water treatment plant to optimal operation.

Interim Director Morris stated the most critical repairs will be done first and that minor repairs will be done incrementally before the spring and summer.

[CD.2025.090](#) Councilmember Questions Jan 2025 DPU Water Emergency

Attachments: [Questions from Council January 2025 DPU Water Emergency - 1.17.2025](#)

Member Kenya Gibson asked about the cost of the materials purchased during the water crisis.

Mr. Morris and Ms. Fields stated that they will update the committee on purchases at a later date.

Chair Katherine Jordan asked what are the existing levels of regulatory oversight of the city's water treatment plant.

Mr. Morris stated the water treatment plant would be operating under the authorities of the Virginia Department of Health and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, which facilitate clean water and the financing of clean water, water planning and water permitting.

Chair Jordan asked what oversight is needed to ensure a water outage does not reoccur.

Mr. Morris stated state and federal oversight will ensure water is safe. He also stated he plans to enhance resiliency of the city's water system.

Member Gibson asked about recommended needs that exist for the water treatment plant concerning capital infrastructure, staff and material expenses.

Mr. Morris stated he is analyzing priorities and the city's capital improvement plan (CIP) for long-term planning perspectives.

Vice Chair Abubaker asked when the results from the third-party investigation will be presented.

Ms. Field stated that the priority is the water treatment plant and its stability. She also provided how city administration plans to address different aspects of the water crisis and respond at specific standing committee meetings.

Member Gibson addressed the opportunity for a third-party investigation to help improve city services. She also stated it would be helpful to see documentation between the city and the contractor in reference to the scope of work and the associated cost.

Mr. Morris stated the initial focus will be on improvements and ways to minimize risk at the water treatment plant. He also stated planning and procedures should be implemented to minimize risk.

Jason Hoff, HNTB Corporation Associate Vice President and Water Department Manager, provided an introduction and background information about the scope of work HNTB will provide regarding the review of the water crisis.

Vice Chair Abubaker asked if HNTB will interview former Department of Public Utilities Director April Bingham.

Mr. Hoff stated they are still working through details regarding potential interviews.

Member Gibson asked if there is a designee from Council that will work with HNTB.

Chair Jordan stated she expects that the Audit Committee will work with administration and HNTB.

Stephen Willoughby, Director of Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response, provided the committee with information regarding disaster recovery and the city's emergency response.

Vice Chair Abubaker asked will the proposed integrated public alert and warning system reach anyone in the geographical bounds of the city. She also asked if the department previously used Hagerty Consulting.

Director Willoughby stated signals will reach anyone within the geographical area and that Hagerty has assisted with prior consulting and review of aspects of the Office of Emergency Management.

Member Gibson asked what are the expected results and cost of the study of the city's emergency management conducted by Hagerty Consulting.

Director Willoughby stated the enhancement of recovery plans, training and community engagement and preparedness is the anticipated outcome, and that the cost is estimated at \$400,000.00.

Public Utilities and Services Commission Report and Update

[CD.2025.020](#) Public Utilities and Services Commission 2024 Report

Attachments: [Public Utilities and Services Commission 2024 Report](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Kevin Cianfarini, Public Utilities and Services Commission Chair, provided the committee with an update regarding the commission and its work.

Chair Katherine Jordan stated the Public Utilities and Services Commission can serve as a regional partner and can possibly assist in reviewing the role of Richmond Gas Works as an energy provider in the region.

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker asked if there is any staff support needed to assist the commission.

Mr. Cianfarini stated additional staff in the City Auditor's office could possibly assist with the review of fraud, waste and abuse. He also stated staff can possibly assist with meeting the public's needs with communication, services and billing.

Member Kenya Gibson asked if there is any legal or scope changes that need to be made to support the commission.

Mr. Cianfarini stated specifics are in the process of being created, and that the goal of the commission is to be more proactive than reactive.

Council Honorary Street Sign Policy

[CD.2025.013](#) Honorary Street Sign Survey Results

Attachments: [Gov Ops Update on Council Honorary Street Signs Policy](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Will Perkins, Council Senior Legislative Manager, provided a presentation regarding a possible Council Honorary Street Sign Policy.

Member Kenya Gibson suggested that honorary street sign designations be reflective of the interests of the district.

Mr. Perkins stated the limit on designations could possibly be per district, and that it is a grassroots effort to honor members of the community. He also stated the cost is estimated at \$700.00 per sign.

Bobby Vincent, Director of Public Works, stated he would like to request a separate budget for street naming signs to ensure ceremonies are performed properly and to ensure it does not become cumbersome for employees. He also asked the committee to be cognizant of the amount of street sign requests.

Chair Katherine Jordan stated the goal of the committee and the street naming process is to find a balance and to find a clear and appropriate process with a budget. Chair Jordan and the committee also agreed to work together to develop legislation.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance were considered:

[ORD.
2025-011](#)

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 the Virginia Department of General Services for the purpose of permitting the City access to and use of the parking garage located at 311 North 7th Street to make certain repairs to the City owned property located at 730 East Broad Street. (6th District)

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2025-011](#)

Forwarded to the January 27, 2025 Council meeting with recommendation to approve

Gail Johnson, Interim Director for the Department of General Services, provided an introduction and background information regarding the proposed ordinance.

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker asked if the city is paying the state a fee to access the building for repairs.

Interim Director Johnson confirmed the fee, and she stated that the city will be utilizing the top portion of the building.

There were no further comments or discussions and Member Kenya Gibson moved to forward ORD. 2025-011 to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Board Vacancies

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

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

[CD.2025.012](#) Governmental Operations Board Vacancy Report

Attachments: [20250122 Gov Ops Board Report](#)

Member Kenya Gibson moved to forward the following applications for appointment to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Audit Committee:
Kristen Nye
George Sibley, III

Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker moved to forward the following application for appointment to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Central Virginia Waste Management Authority:
Taylor Booker

Member Kenya Gibson moved to forward the following applications for appointment to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

City Personnel Board:
Stephanie Robertson
Knight Williams

Member Kenya Gibson moved to forward the following application for appointment to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Clean City Commission:
Beatrice Bracey

Member Kenya Gibson moved to continue consideration of applications for appointment to the Sister Cities Commission to the April 23, 2025 Governmental Operations Standing Committee meeting, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Discussion Item(s)

There were no discussion items.

Staff Report

Will Perkins, Council Senior Legislative Services Manager, stated the report distributed to members focused on preparations for speakers and presentations for the committee meeting.

[CD.2025.090](#) Councilmember Questions Jan 2025 DPU Water Emergency

Attachments: [Questions from Council January 2025 DPU Water Emergency - 1.17.2025](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Chair Katherine Jordan stated a subsequent meeting will be held to talk about the goals and priorities of the Governmental Operations Standing Committee.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:46 p.m.