



City of Richmond

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

Draft Meeting Minutes Organizational Development Standing Committee

Monday, October 7, 2024

4:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Members Present

The Honorable Kristen Nye – Chair
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert – Vice Chair (early departure)
The Honorable Andreas Addison – Member (late arrival)
The Honorable Nicole Jones – Member
The Honorable Katherine Jordan – Member
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Member
The Honorable Cynthia Newbille – Member
The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Member (late arrival)
The Honorable Reva Trammell – Member (early departure)

Others in Attendance

Laura Drewry, City Attorney
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Tabrica Rentz, Deputy City Attorney
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Kristen Nye called the meeting to order at 4:09 p.m., and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement

Upon the Chair's request, Deputy City Clerk RJ Warren provided information on the appropriate manner in which the Council Chamber is to be evacuated in the event of an emergency.

Approval of Minutes

There were no corrections or amendments to the minutes of the Tuesday, September 3, 2024 Organizational Development Standing Committee meeting, at 4:00 p.m., and the minutes were approved as presented.

[CD.2024.297](#) September 3, 2024 - Organizational Development Meeting Minutes

Discussion Item(s)

Civilian Review Board Update

Pamela Nichols, Council Management Analyst, and Joseph Lowery, Civilian Review Board Manager, provided the committee with an update regarding the process for selecting and appointing members to the city's Civilian Review Board.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

[CD.2024.339](#) Civilian Review Board Applications

Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert addressed the timeline for staff to provide Council with appointment recommendations.

Mr. Lowery informed members that Council staff would provide recommendations to Council by mid-November.

Reports from City Administration, Council Staff and Other Parties

Legislative Updates

Kathy Burcher, City Lobbyist, Advantus Strategies Senior Director, Government Relations, provided the committee with a presentation that outlined Council's legislative priorities for the upcoming 2025 Virginia General Assembly session.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

[CD.2024.302](#) Legislative Updates - Documents

Member Ellen Robertson arrived at 4:16 p.m., and was seated.

Member Cynthia Newbille confirmed that the city and city lobbyists would work to increase state school funding.

Chair Kristen Nye informed members about the legislative process for Council to establish its legislative priorities for the 2025 Virginia General Assembly Session.

Tax Relief Presentation

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Lincoln Saunders provided the committee with a presentation that addressed the city's real estate tax rate. CAO Saunders informed members about the impact of lowering the tax rate to \$1.16, and he also provided information on the city's proposed tax relief programs. CAO Saunders also informed members that the tax relief programs would require that the city's real estate tax rate remain at \$1.20.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

[CD.2024.310](#) Tax Relief Presentation

Member Reva Trammell stated her concerns about the affordability of living in the city, and she informed members that she believed the city needed to lower the real estate tax rate to \$1.16. Member Trammell also stated that the city should lower the real estate tax, rather than fund tax relief programs.

CAO Saunders stated that the proposed tax relief programs would provide more assistance to residents who have the greatest need for relief. CAO Saunders also stated a lower real estate tax rate would mostly benefit the city's wealthier residents.

Member Stephanie Lynch confirmed that the city would inform Council of the city's projected revenue surplus in December 2024.

Member Ellen Robertson stated that a large portion of city residents are finding it difficult to afford living in the city. Member Robertson also stated that the current real estate tax rate in combination with rising real estate assessments, will force city residents and city employees to live outside the city.

CAO Saunders stated that the planned tax relief programs would help the residents that Member Robertson referenced experiencing an affordability burden.

Member Katherine Jordan requested that city administration provide examples of how the tax relief programs would assist current residents in the city. Member Jordan also requested that the examples be provided at the upcoming Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting.

Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert stated that she was concerned the proposed tax relief programs would be too complicated for residents to utilize.

Member Andreas Addison arrived at 5:21 p.m., and was seated.

Member Nicole Jones stated that she wanted more information on how residents can interact with the city to participate in the tax relief programs. Member Jones also requested more information on how the programs would transition under the city's new mayor in 2025. Member Jones further stated she was concerned about the sudden impact on participating residents when the tax relief programs end.

Member Andreas Addison stated that the city will benefit once the real estate assessment and budget calendars are aligned. Member Addison also stated that the city needed to review methods to increase revenue to offset the need for real estate tax revenue, and he noted his belief that the city should review how it taxes land use value.

CAO Saunders stated he agreed with the need to align the real estate assessment and budget calendars, and he provided information about the process for freezing assessments for a year to initiate that alignment.

Member Cynthia Newbille reminded members that the proposed real estate tax rates would be reviewed in greater detail at the upcoming October 10, 2024 Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting.

Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority (RRHA) Update

Steven Nesmith, RRHA Chief Executive Officer (CEO), provided the committee with a presentation that addressed RRHA's Last Chance Repayment Agreement program and RRHA's requirement to enforce lease agreements.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

[CD.2024.305](#) RRHA CEO Presentation

Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert inquired if RRHA planned to proceed with eviction proceedings against the 272 residents that failed to pay rent and did not agree to a repayment plan.

Tonise Webb, RRHA Associate Lead Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer, confirmed that RRHA would proceed with lease enforcement, and she provided the committee with details about the eviction process.

Member Reva Trammell left the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Member Nicole Jones asked about the responsibilities of the RRHA lease support specialists.

Pam Kearney, RRHA Assistant Vice President for Management Operations, stated that the lease support specialists are RRHA staff that will provide support to RRHA residents to ensure residents remain in compliance with their lease or rental repayment agreements.

Member Ellen Robertson discussed RRHA inventory, the use of housing choice vouchers, and the percentage of household income used on rent by RRHA residents.

Member Stephanie Lynch inquired about the process and asked for available data related to RRHA residents participating in the Last Chance Repayment Agreement program.

Member Lynch also requested information about repayment agreement requirements.

Pam Kearney provided the committee with data on the number of residents participating in the repayment program, and she also addressed the process of rent enforcement if participating residents fail to submit agreed repayments.

CEO Nesmith informed the committee about job training programs RRHA offers to help residents increase wages and health clinics that will help residents experiencing health issues.

Member Lynch stated her concerns about RRHA's role in the community, and she informed RRHA that she believed RRHA should be reviewing different solutions to provide last-chance housing options to the city's most vulnerable residents.

Member Cynthia Newbille stated her appreciation for RRHA's efforts to enroll residents in the repayment program, and she also stated that more lease support agents should be retained to assist RRHA residents meet their rental obligations and avoid eviction.

Chair Kristen Nye inquired about RRHA's plan to proceed with lease enforcement involving residents that owe late rent and did not enroll in the repayment program.

Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert left the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

Ms. Kearney stated that RRHA would continue to engage with the residents regarding repayment solutions, but if residents do not participate in the repayment program, then RRHA would move forward with lease enforcement.

CEO Nesmith stated that RRHA must proceed with rent enforcement to adhere to United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirements. CEO Nesmith informed the committee that RRHA could lose federal funding for not meeting requirements.

Reports of Standing Committees

City Council standing committee chairs provided members with an update regarding committee action.

Paper(s) for Consideration

There were no papers for consideration.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.