



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
www.richmondgov.com/cityclerk

Minutes

Governmental Operations Standing Committee

Thursday, October 22, 2020

12:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – Virtual Meeting

Committee Members and Staff in Attendance

The Honorable Andreas Addison – Chair
The Honorable Michael Jones – Vice Chair (*late arrival*)
The Honorable Cynthia Newbille – Member
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Councilor
The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Councilor
Lawrence Anderson, Council Chief of Staff
Samson Anderson, Council Budget Analyst
Meghan Brown, Deputy Council Chief of Staff
Haskell Brown, Interim City Attorney
Joyce Davis, Council Policy Analyst
Jamie Isley, Assistant City Clerk
Pamela Nichols, Assistant City Clerk
Candice Reid, City Clerk
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Andreas Addison called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m., and presided.

Electronic Meeting Announcement

Assistant City Clerk Jamie Isley, in accordance with Ordinance No. 2020-093, adopted April 9, 2020, as amended by Ordinance No. 2020-183, adopted August 20, 2020, announced the meeting would be held through electronic communication means. Assistant City Clerk Isley stated notice of the meeting was provided to the public through a public information advisory issued on October 15, 2020, and through Legistar on the city website in accordance with usual practice. She also stated members of the public were encouraged to provide comments in writing prior to the meeting and all comments received prior to 10:00 a.m., on Thursday, October 22, 2020, were provided to committee members. Ms. Isley indicated that members of the public who signed up to speak and provide comment would be called to speak at the appropriate time.

Citizen Speaker Guidelines

Upon the Chair's request, Assistant City Clerk Jamie Isley provided the citizen speaker guidelines.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of Thursday, September 24, 2020, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

Vice Chair Michael Jones arrived at 12:05 p.m.

Board Vacancies

Assistant City Clerk Pamela Nichols reviewed board applications for consideration by the committee.

Member Cynthia Newbille moved to forward the following appointment and reappointment board applications to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved:

Board Name	Criteria for Appointment	Applicant Name
Sister Cities Commission (13 members)	Applicants must either reside or work in the city*	Julianne Condrey (reappointment) (3 rd District Resident)
		Darren Green (reappointment) (1 st District Resident)
		Shirl Rhoades
	(3 vacancies)	

*Applicants must either reside or work in the city

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Presentation(s)

There were no presentations.

Paper for Consideration

The following ordinance was considered:

ORD. 2020-220

To amend and reordain City Code §§ 2-927, concerning the general powers and duties of the Personnel Board, and 2-1264, concerning the creation of the personnel system, for the purpose of conforming the classes protected from discrimination under the City's personnel system to Va. Code §§ 2.2-3904 and 2.2-3905.

Patron: Mayor Stoney

Brenda Henderson, Department of Human Resources principal management analyst, introduced ORD. 2020-220.

Mona Adkins-Easley, Department of Human Resources interim director, informed the committee that ORD. 2020-220 will ensure that Richmond City Code is in compliance with the Code of Virginia.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Vice Chair Michael Jones moved to forward ORD. 2020-220 to the November 9, 2020, Council meeting with recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

Discussion Items

Fund Balance Allocation Regarding COVID-19

Chair Andreas Addison stated that the committee will discuss prioritizations and recommendations regarding the surplus fund balance allocation to the COVID-19 Relief Special Fund, and hear from city administration and other members of Council.

Councilor Stephanie Lynch informed the committee of the positive feedback received from the city's previous one-time emergency relief payment of \$500.00 to residents in need through Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding. She stated that such funds provide assistance in areas uncovered by other benefits programs. Councilor Lynch discussed low-income workers who are struggling and further informed the committee of the increase in persons seeking affordable housing within The Greater Richmond Continuum of Care (GRCoC). She further stated that a large GRCoC population increase is expected upon the expiration of the Center for Disease Control's moratorium on residential evictions. Councilor Lynch also discussed emergency relief models for housing, transportation, and childcare.

Reginald Gordon, Human Services deputy chief administrative officer, informed the committee that following the activation of the Family Crisis Fund, the city administration partnered with the Robins Foundation to provide relief by means of a one-time direct cash payment to families in crisis. He further highlighted the success of the partnership and indicated the city's plans to continue such initiatives in the future. Mr. Gordon also informed the committee that the \$500,000.00 in CARES Act funding must be spent by December 31, 2020, and that the Office of Community Wealth Building (OCWB) is utilizing case files to find, train and pay residents to enter communities and seek feedback regarding stressors due to virtual student learning and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councilor Lynch stated that the additional \$500,000.00 General Fund surplus has no deadline, which could help fund initiatives into 2021.

Chair Andreas Addison inquired whether there is a need for additional funding to continue the emergency assistance initiatives in the future.

Mr. Gordon expressed hope that Council and city administration would consider emergency relief funding in future budget negotiations to assist those with unexpected or classic challenges.

Vice Chair Michael Jones supported allocating surplus funds to the Department of Human Services as the department's strategy will be in need of funding to continue into 2021. He also expressed concern for how the information will be disseminated to those who need it most.

Member Newbille asked if family crisis funds were made available to residents city-wide and whether an extension had been granted for the CARES Act expenditure requirements. She also asked whether there will be greater flexibility in terms of addressing the needs of families in the city with regards to access restrictions.

Mr. Gordon informed the committee that family crisis funds were made available to residents city-wide. He also stated that the OCWB will continue to assist low-income workers and those who are no longer receiving public benefits but have seen a reduction in work hours.

Acting Chief Administrative Officer Lenora Reid advised the committee that no confirmation has been received regarding an extension for CARES Act expenditure requirements.

Vice Chair Jones discussed methods of disseminating information regarding emergency assistance to the public in a comprehensible format city-wide. He also suggested utilizing religious institutions to disseminate information to increase the reach of city services.

Chair Addison asked the following questions received from several councilors concerning the General Fund balance allocation regarding COVID-19:

- How many individuals has the city sheltered in hotels, which hotels have the city partnered with, and what is the total amount of expenditures for hotel stays? How many people have been assisted by the Eviction Diversion Program and what can be done to make the program more accessible?
- How much funding has gone to restaurants and what is the possibility of expanding funding to new restaurants?
- What is the true effect of no longer having a cold-weather shelter, and how is the city meeting the needs of those who require assistance?

Member Cynthia Newbille suggested utilizing case management services to ensure critical wraparound support for individuals in need.

Chair Addison asked Dr. Danny Avula to provide feedback on the best method to ensure the maternal child health and doula funding is sustainable past the initial allocation of funds.

Danny Avula, MD, Richmond City and Henrico County Health Districts director, stated that the execution of the doula program depends on the total funds available to the program. Dr. Avula informed the committee that the County of Henrico has allocated roughly \$75,000.00 to provide doula services to Henrico based pregnant women and expressed hope to do the same in Richmond. He further stated that a long term fund that can accept multiple streams of income would be best so that doula services may be provided on an ongoing basis in the future.

Councilor Stephanie Lynch cited issues with the Commonwealth of Virginia's Medicaid program and state-level obligations to assist in reducing health disparities. She stated that utilizing foundation dollars is the correct approach and that state funds may soon be allocated for doula programs.

Member Cynthia Newbille asked for additional information regarding funding sources, the amount of funding available, and any access restrictions for the doula program.

Dr. Avula stated that there is currently no funding available to provide doulas for low-income pregnant women other than with local funds. He further stated that funding from the Commonwealth of Virginia or other sources may be more than a year from materializing. Dr. Avula discussed the community's request for the doula program and highlighted the importance of funding and implementing the program going forward.

Chair Addison stated the importance of ensuring funds are allocated in the most efficient manner, making preparations for the upcoming year, and requested more information regarding the city's CARES Act spending.

Fire Chief Melvin Carter provided more information about the white paper document provided to members of the committee, which included details regarding the ongoing CARES Act expenditures. Chief Carter further stated that the CARES Act expenditures document will be made available to Council by October 30, 2020.

Chair Addison requested additional information regarding CARES Act spending under the categories discussed.

Vice Chair Michael Jones requested staff keep track of unfunded budget priorities and to provide Councilors with the unfunded priorities when surplus funding is available going forward.

Councilor Stephanie Lynch agreed with Vice Chair Jones's request and suggested allocating funds to items that are established and in need of funding such as the Homelessness Strategic Plan 2020-2030. She further stated that Council should re-examine the full surplus and decide whether there are additional funds available to add to the surplus of \$500,000.00.

Chair Andreas Addison stated that making decisions about budget priorities should follow the 2020 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and CARES Act white paper to ensure that funds are used efficiently.

It was the consensus of the committee to continue discussing the fund balance allocation regarding the COVID-19 Relief Special Fund at the November Governmental Operations Standing Committee meeting.

November & December Governmental Operations Standing Committee Meeting

It was the consensus of the committee to hold the November Governmental Operations Standing Committee Meeting on November 18, 2020, at 12:00 p.m., and to discuss the December committee meeting in November.

Staff Report

Joyce Davis, Council policy analyst, provided the committee with the October staff report.

A copy of the report provided has been filed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:11 p.m.