



## City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
[www.rva.gov/index.php/office-city-clerk](http://www.rva.gov/index.php/office-city-clerk)

### Minutes

#### Education and Human Services Standing Committee

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Thursday, January 7, 2021

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – Virtual Meeting

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#### Committee Members and Staff in Attendance

The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Chair  
The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Vice Chair  
The Honorable Katherine Jordan – Committee Member

Meghan Brown, Interim Council Chief of Staff  
Joyce Davis, Council Policy Analyst  
M. Janet Palmer, Deputy City Attorney  
Candice Reid, City Clerk  
Dominique J. Thaxton, Assistant City Clerk  
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

#### Call to Order

Chair Stephanie Lynch called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m., and presided.

#### Electronic Meeting Announcement

Assistant City Clerk Dominique J. Thaxton, in accordance with Ordinance No. 2020-093, adopted April 9, 2020, as most recently amended by Ordinance No. 2020-232, adopted December 14, 2020, announced the meeting would be held through electronic communication means. Assistant City Clerk Thaxton stated notice of the meeting was provided to the public through a public information advisory issued on December 30, 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, January 7, 2021, were provided to committee members. Ms. Thaxton 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 Dominique J. Thaxton provided citizen speaker guidelines.

#### Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes to be approved.

#### Public Comment

There were no public comments.

## Board Vacancies

There were no board vacancies.

## Presentation

There were no presentations

## Paper for Consideration

**The following resolution was considered:**

### RES. 2020-R072

To express support for stronger protections and inclusive policies at local shelters for the care and protection of LGBTQ+ people experiencing homelessness in compliance with the Virginia Values Act.

**Patrons:** Mayor Stoney and Ms. Lynch

Maggie Anderson, Office of the Mayor Acting Chief of Staff, provided an overview of RES. 2020-R072.

### Public Hearing

**Vee Lamneck, Equality Virginia Executive Director**, spoke in support of RES. 2020-R072, and underscored the positive impact of the Virginia Values Act. Vee Lamneck also stated the importance of providing equity in homeless service accommodations to members of the LGBTQ+ community.

**William A. Harrison, Diversity Richmond Executive Director**, spoke in support of RES. 2020-R072, and expressed the dire circumstances faced by LGBTQ+ individuals experiencing homelessness. William Harrison stated that homeless service providers need training and education to adequately accommodate the LGBTQ+ community.

**Ted Lewis, Side by Side Executive Director**, spoke in support of RES. 2020-R072, and expressed that LGBTQ+ individuals are reluctant to utilize shelter services out of fear of discrimination. Ted Lewis stated that the global pandemic has exacerbated the number of LGBTQ+ individuals experiencing homelessness and the desperate need for support from the community.

**Jennifer Gallienne, Virginia League for Planned Parenthood Transgender Health Service Program Coordinator and Social Worker**, spoke in support of RES. 2020-R072, and provided information on the correlation between housing access and health among LGBTQ+ individuals. Jennifer Gallienne shared that patients will often choose not to use homeless shelter services for fear of discrimination or assault.

**James R. Millner II, Virginia Pride Interim Director**, spoke in support of RES. 2020-R072, and expressed that current homeless shelter operations do not provide adequate support for LGBTQ+ individuals. James Millner stated that policies and procedures should be in place to protect the unique needs of LGBTQ+ individuals.

*Member Katherine Jordan expressed support for RES. 2020-R072, and requested to be added as a co-patron.*

*Vice Chair Ellen Robertson expressed support for RES. 2020-R072, and emphasized the need for protective human services and affordable housing for residents of the city. Vice Chair Robertson requested information on how the services outlined in RES. 2020-R072 will be implemented, and that the appropriate staff work with the administration on looking into current fair housing practices.*

*Chair Stephanie Lynch requested that the administration provide information on the path toward*

implementation of RES. 2020-R072 at the February Education and Human Services Standing Committee meeting.

**There were no further comments or discussions and Member Katherine Jordan moved to forward RES. 2020-R072 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

## **Discussion Items**

### **Richmond Public Schools (RPS) Update**

Jason Kamras, Superintendent of Richmond Public Schools, provided an overview of RPS' operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Kamras stated that RPS plans to have classes be completely virtual for the remainder of the 2020-2021 academic year and will provide support to students when returning to in-person classes. Mr. Kamras highlighted that both academic and emotional support is needed for students to mitigate any learning loss during the virtual school year.

### **Richmond Public Schools (RPS) Legislative Advocacy Update**

Matthew Stanley, Richmond Public Schools Director of Advocacy and Outreach, provided an overview of the legislative priorities for RPS and the outcomes of the fall 2020 General Assembly Special Session. Mr. Stanley stated that the RPS legislative focus for the 2021 General Assembly Session will be on equity based funding, and he provided further overview of funding opportunities.

*Chair Stephanie Lynch inquired if the equity fund is included in the proposed fiscal year 2021-2022 state budget. Chair Lynch also asked of the total fiscal impact of the equity fund.*

Mr. Stanley stated that the equity fund is not currently included in the proposed fiscal year 2021-2022 state budget but will be included in the Board of Education recommendations to be introduced by legislators. Mr. Stanley advised that the total request for the equity fund is \$100 million.

*Vice Chair Ellen Robertson inquired if there is a RPS legislative agenda prepared with budget requests to be presented to City Council. Vice Chair Robertson also asked for information regarding the city's student to teacher ratio compared to the state average and if the equity fund incorporates student to teacher ratio among students of lower economic means. Ms. Robertson stated that the varying socioeconomic statuses of the student body in each school district calls for varying needs in the equity fund.*

Mr. Stanley stated that the goal is for state funding streams to be directed across the state with a need based focus to ensure that the varying needs of localities are addressed.

*Vice Chair Robertson asked that the appropriate staff work with the administration and RPS to draft an equity plan.*

Jason Kamras, Superintendent of Richmond Public Schools, stated that RPS is still preparing the budget and policy initiatives for the coming budget cycle and that RPS will have a better picture of needs when federal relief funding is allocated.

*Chair Stephanie Lynch requested that a RPS budget and policy initiative update be addressed at the February Education and Human Services Standing Committee meeting.*

*A copy of the material provided has been filed.*

## **Emergency Childcare Initiative Update**

Eva Colen, Office of the Mayor Senior Policy Advisor, provided the committee with an update of the city's emergency childcare initiative. Ms. Colen provided information on how the emergency childcare initiative has allocated funding for operating costs to childcare partners across the city and how current federal relief funding is projected to provide cost assistance through the end of January 2021.

*Chair Stephanie Lynch stated the importance of the supportive services provided to students and parents during the COVID-19 pandemic through the emergency childcare initiative. Chair Lynch inquired what methods of advertisement of the emergency childcare initiative are used and if the program will be expanded or used beyond the pandemic.*

Ms. Colen provided context regarding the program's extensive waitlist and the shortcomings in staffing needs with the childcare partner centers due to the social-distance guidelines required during the COVID-19 pandemic and difficulty with providing competitive salaries.

*Chair Stephanie Lynch requested that an update on the childcare initiatives enrollment and projected needs be addressed at the February Education and Human Services Standing Committee meeting.*

## **Staff Report**

Cheryl Burke, Chair of the Richmond Public School Board, provided the committee with an update on the Richmond Public School Board's focus.

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

*Vice Chair Ellen Robertson requested that Ms. Davis provide a summary of the recent past legislation and presentations of the Education and Human Services Standing Committee to be presented at an upcoming Council retreat.*

*A copy of the report has been filed.*

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.