



# Richmond City Council

*The Voice of the People*

*Richmond, Virginia*

## Office of the Council Chief of Staff

### Finance & Economic Development Standing Committee

May 21, 2025

### Prep Document for Committee Members

**Previous Meeting:** April 16, 2025

**Next Meeting:** June 18, 2025

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#### **Agenda Overview:**

- Eleven papers for consideration:
  1. Ord. 2025-032 (Performance Grant for 5015 Snead Road, 9<sup>th</sup> District)
  2. Ord. 2025-097 (Accept \$25,000 grant for Partnering with Prosecutors to Reduce Racial Disproportionalities project)
  3. Ord. 2025-098 (Accept \$160,000 for tree maintenance in East End and Evergreen Cemeteries)
  4. Ord. 2025-099 (Plastic Bag Tax)
  5. Ord. 2025-100 (Agency-level budget request documents)
  6. Ord. 2025-107 (Accept \$75,000 grant and \$25,000 local match for Sheriff fleet vehicle cameras)
  7. Ord. 2025-108 (Accept \$1.5 million for Wastewater improvements)
  8. Ord. 2025-109 (Execute financing agreement re Wastewater infra)
  9. Ord. 2025-110 (RAA grant agreement for Peer Recovery Specialists)
  10. Ord. 2025-111 (Health Brigade grant agreement for Peer Recovery Spec.)
  11. Res. 2025-R019 (Study of increased wages for janitorial and custodial contractors)
- One presentation:
  - Economic Development Plans and Pipeline (DCAO P&ED, Sharon Ebert)

## **Ordinances & Resolutions for Consideration**

### **1. Ordinance No. 2025-032**

**Patron** Mayor Avula

Title: To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Grant Agreement between the City of Richmond, Refuge Apartments, LP, and the Economic Development Authority of the City of Richmond for the purpose of facilitating the construction of an affordable housing development located at 5015 Snead Road, 5009 Rear Snead Road, and 5015 Rear Snead Road, or a site resulting from any such consolidation of the aforementioned parcels. (9th District)

TO BE CONTINUED to June 18, 2025, Finance Meeting

## **2. Ordinance No. 2025-097**

**Patron** Mayor Avula

Title: To amend Ord. No. 2024-099, adopted May 13, 2024, which adopted the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 General Fund Budget and made appropriations pursuant thereto, by increasing anticipated revenues from certain funds granted to the City of Richmond from The Regents of the University of California in the amount of \$25,000.00 and appropriating such increased estimated revenues to the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office for the purpose of the Partnering with Prosecutors to Reduce Racial Disproportionalities project.

### Notes:

- University of California (\$25,000) grant for research into prosecutorial decision-making related to racial disproportionalities
- Reimbursement for the Commonwealth's Attorney, services previously provided

### Staff Questions:

- Do we have any findings available to share from this research?
- How stable is this and other funding sources coming from universities?
- What are some of the outcomes of this program?
- Are we planning to apply for funding again in the future?

### 3. Ordinance No. 2025-098

**Patron** Mayor Avula

Title: To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$160,000.00 from the Virginia Department of Forestry and to amend the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Special Fund Budget by creating a new special fund for the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities called the "Tree Maintenance Team for East End and Evergreen Cemeteries," and to appropriate the increase to the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Special Fund Budget by increasing the estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities' "Tree Maintenance Team for East End and Evergreen Cemeteries Special Fund" by \$160,000.00 for the purpose of funding a tree maintenance team and ongoing care for East End and Evergreen Cemeteries.

#### Notes:

- Parks Department, FY25 Special Fund increase by \$160,000 after applied for and awarded grant from VA Department of Forestry
- New line item for "Tree Maintenance Team for East End and Evergreen Cemeteries"
- "The initial property assessment and inventory revealed that there is great need to maintain and protect the mature tree canopy in these inactive cemeteries from invasive species overgrowth and years of deferred maintenance."

#### Potential Questions:

- Why are we creating this specific tree maintenance team for these specific cemeteries? Are there others owned by the city?
- What portion of our broader tree maintenance budget does this represent?
- How will Parks leverage its outside partners (Friends Groups, Descendants Councils, etc.) for tree maintenance in cemeteries?
- Does Parks Department have urban forestry expertise like DPW?

#### 4. Ordinance No. 2025-099

**Patron** Mayor Avula, CM Trammell

Title: To amend ch. 26 of the City Code by adding therein a new article XIX, consisting of §§ 26-1288-26-1292, for the purpose of establishing a disposable plastic bag tax.

#### Notes:

- Effective 1/1/26, five-cent tax imposed “for each disposable plastic bag provided by a grocery store, convenience store, or drugstore to a consumer of tangible personal property” to be paid regardless of whether the bag is provided for free.
  - Collected at point of sale and remitted to City pursuant to [Code of Virginia § 58.1-1748](#) – a new item on an existing form, per OOS staff
  - Retailers retain one cent (deducted from sales tax return)
- Exemptions: durable, reusable plastic bags at least 4 mm thick; plastic bags solely used for packaging of perishable items (e.g., meat, ice cream); plastic bags used for dry cleaning or prescription drugs; and “multiple plastics bags sold in packages and intended for use as garbage, pet waste, or leaf removal bags”
- Permissible uses of revenue collected by this tax:
  - environmental cleanup
  - education programs aimed at reducing environmental waste
  - mitigating pollution and litter
  - providing reusable bags to SNAP and WIC recipients
  - any other purpose expressly authorized by applicable state law

#### Potential Questions:

- What is the anticipated total revenue from this program in its first year and how are those anticipated revenues distributed throughout the City?
- What stakeholder outreach has been conducted to date, with both retailers and consumers, and how has stakeholder feedback (if any) been considered in the drafting process?
- How have other Virginia localities that have implemented this tax planned for and mitigated the likely disproportionate impact on low-income communities?

## **5. Ordinance No. 2025-100**

**Patron:** Lynch, Breton, Jordan, Gibson, Jones

Title: To amend City Code § 12-12, concerning the form of the budget submitted to Council, to require publication of a side-by-side comparison with the mayor's proposed budget submission with agency-level budget request documents and to amend ch. 12, art. I of the City Code by adding therein a new section 12-25, concerning publication of agency-level budget requests, for the purpose of requiring submission of agency-level budget request documents.

### Notes:

- Amends City Code 12-12 (budget submission requirements) to require electronic spreadsheet of budget shared along with printed copies, as well as side-by-side comparison of agency-level budget requests vs. mayor's proposed amounts.
- Adds Section 12-25 requiring publication of agency-level budget request documents no later than January 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.
- Modeled after state-level requirements for agencies to publish request documents sent to the governor in formulating his budget.

### Potential Questions:

- How does this compare to what's required at the state level?
- Why require publication by January 15<sup>th</sup> of each year?
- What's the goal of this paper? What are we trying to solve for?
- What are some of the benefits and drawbacks of publishing these?

## **6. Ordinance No. 2025-107**

**Patron** Mayor Avula

Title: To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$75,000.00 from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, and to designate funds in the total amount of \$25,000.00 in the City Sheriff General Fund Budget as the required local match; to amend the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Special Fund Budget by creating a new special fund for the City Sheriff called the "DCJS JAG - Vehicle Cameras Special Fund;" and to amend the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Special Fund Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the City Sheriff's "DCJS JAG - Vehicle Cameras Special Fund" by the total amount of \$100,000.00, all for the purpose of equipping the City Sheriff's fleet vehicles with camera equipment.

### Notes:

- Accept \$75,000 grant from VA Dept of Criminal Justice Services, plus Move \$25,000 from FY25 Sheriff general fund budget = total \$100,000.
- Create "DCJS JAG – Vehicle Cameras Special Fund"
- No cameras currently on Richmond City Sheriff's Office vehicles
- Funds support 22-25 vehicles with camera equipment

### Potential Questions:

- Why no cameras currently on sheriff's office vehicles?
- What is the plan for access and storage of footage recorded with cameras? What are the SOPs for this?
- How long will the cameras last?
- Are there any other ongoing costs associated with the cameras?

*[Recommend hearing #7-8 in a block]*

**7. Ordinance No. 2025-108**

**Patron** Mayor Avula

Title: To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$1,500,000.00 from the Virginia Resources Authority and to amend the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Wastewater Utility Budget which appropriated the estimated receipts of the wastewater utility, by increasing estimated receipts and the amount appropriated for the wastewater utility by \$1,500,000.00, for the purpose of funding the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant Thickening and Dewatering Facilities Improvements project.

**8. Ordinance No. 2025-109**

**Patron** Mayor Avula

Title: To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Financing Agreement between the City of Richmond and the Virginia Resources Authority for the purpose of funding the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant Thickening and Dewatering Facilities Improvements project.

Notes:

- Accept \$1.5 million from VA Resources Authority for wastewater treatment plant "Thickening and Dewatering Facilities Improvements" project.
- Background: "The City's WWTP treatment of wastewater solids utilizes solid bowl centrifuges for sludge dewatering and thickening. The centrifuges were installed in the 1980s and have undergone continual servicing since their installation. The existing centrifuges are nearing their end of life and downtime for maintenance has become excessive, lasting 6 months to a year to undergo repairs. Maintenance costs associated with these repairs have increased to as high as \$840,000 in 2015 and \$256,000 in 2016"

Potential Questions:

- What does "Thickening and Dewatering" mean?
- Does this relate to the city's ongoing replacement of CSO facilities?
- Are there any local funds being expended on this work?
- Will this project increase costs for ratepayers?
- Will there be any interruptions of service during construction?



*[Recommend hearing #9-10 in a block]*

**9. Ordinance No. 2025-110**

**Patron** Mayor Avula

Title: To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Richmond Ambulance Authority Grant Agreement between the City of Richmond and the Richmond Ambulance Authority for the purpose of funding a Peer Recovery Specialist project to combat the opioid crisis in the City of Richmond.

**10. Ordinance No. 2025-111**

**Patron** Mayor Avula

Title: To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Health Brigade Grant Contract between the City of Richmond and Health Brigade for the purpose of funding the creation and implementation of a substance use disorder treatment program to combat the opioid crisis in the City of Richmond.

Notes:

- \$67,770 to RAA
- \$508,857 to Health Brigade (sub-grant) for comprehensive substance use disorder treatment program (harm reduction)

Potential Questions:

- We received several similar requests last month to fund work in foundations and area non-profits. Are these for the same work?
- What expertise do these organizations have with peer recovery work?
- How will these organizations work together to combat the opioid crisis and other substance use treatment needs?
- How do these grants fit into our larger anti-opioids' strategy?

## 11. Resolution No. 2025-R019

**Patrons** Robertson, Newbille, Jordan, Trammell, Breton, Lynch and Jones

Title: To request that the Chief Administrative Officer cause to be conducted a study of the fiscal, operational, and other considerations associated with requiring janitorial and security contractors under contract to provide services to the City to pay the City's minimum wage, currently \$20.00 per hour, to their employees who are performing work under City contracts, and to provide the Council with any recommendations for implementing such a requirement by no later than Nov. 1, 2025

Notes:

- Co-patroned by 7 of 9 Councilmembers
- Follows upon efforts to accomplish this in the FY26 budget
- Study requested to include the following:
  - Consideration of the fiscal impacts of requiring janitorial and security contractors under contract to provide services to the City to pay the City's minimum wage to their employees who are performing services under those City contracts;
  - Consideration of the operational or other concerns related to implementing such a requirement in existing agreements with janitorial and security contractors under contract with the City to provide services at City facilities;
  - Consideration of fiscal, operational, or other impacts of bringing janitorial and security services for City facilities "in house," to be performed by City employees in the future; and
  - A proposal for implementing, as soon as possible, the requirement that janitorial and security contractors under contract to provide services to the City must pay the City's minimum wage to their employees who are performing services under those City contracts.

Potential Questions:

- What is the goal of this study?
- Is the timeline (due by November 1, 2025) reasonable?
- What kind of impact will this have in terms of negotiations with unions?
- What other questions are we seeking to answer with this study?

## **Economic Development Plans & Pipeline** (DCAO P&ED, Sharon Ebert)

### Potential Questions:

- Slide 5, what should we take away from recent trends in business and consumption taxes?
- Slide 6, what is our strategy for promoting retail and industrial development growth?
  - I'm particularly interested in attracting investment to the City's southside ...
- Slide 7-8, can you elaborate on how performance grants are "tailored to the specific project needs"? What sort of levers are we talking about changing for each project?
- Slide 8, can you share why three performance grants were cancelled?
- Slide 9, what's your strongest argument in favor of performance grants as a tool for promoting economic development and revenue growth?
- Slide 14, can you say more about pursuit of a Main Street program for corridor revitalization?
- Slide 14, what's the timeline for evaluating the Empowerment Zone Program boundaries? I see that some areas on here (ex: Scott's Addition) already get a lot of investment ...
- City Code Sec. 2-304(h) requires DED to produce "An analysis and timeline showing the projected revenues that are expected to be generated as a result of the City's expenditure of public funds" and an annual progress report on actual revenues collected by December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.
  - What's the status of these analyses?