



City of Richmond

Work Session Minutes

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

Monday, September 20, 2021

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Councilmembers Present

The Honorable Cynthia Newbille, President
The Honorable Ellen Robertson, Vice President
The Honorable Michael Jones (late arrival)
The Honorable Katherine Jordan
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert
The Honorable Kristen Larson

Absent

The Honorable Andreas Addison
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch
The Honorable Reva Trammell

Staff Present

Lisa Braxton, Council Management Analyst
Haskell Brown, Interim City Attorney
Joyce Davis, Interim Council Chief of Staff
Candice Reid, City Clerk

Council President Cynthia Newbille called the work session to order at 1:15 p.m. and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan

Upon the President's request, City Clerk Candice Reid provided information on the appropriate manner in which the Council Chamber is to be evacuated in the event of an emergency along with masking requirements.

Discussion Items

Review the Composite Project List from the September 7, 2021 Work Session

Interim Council Chief of Staff Joyce Davis provided members with an overview of Council's composite list of priorities and goals to be discussed amongst members during the work session. Ms. Davis informed members that Council still needed to address Infrastructure, as well as Parks and Community Centers.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Martha Marshall, Work Session Facilitator, led members through a review of Council's composite list of priorities to be addressed by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, which were broken down into eight categories. The categories with projected projects and estimated costs were as follows:

- Other/Miscellaneous
- Recovery of Revenue Loss
- Health
- Economic Instability
- Housing
- Education and Information Technology Infrastructure
- Infrastructure
- Parks and Community Centers

Councilor Kristen Larson requested that a detailed list of city administration's proposed ARPA funded projects be provided to Council.

Acting Chief Administrative Officer Lincoln Saunders stated a document providing city administration's ARPA spending plan by priority area was available and that city administration would provide the document to Council.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Councilor Michael Jones arrived at 1:23 p.m. and was seated.

Councilor Michael Jones provided additional information regarding his request for certain infrastructure projects.

Amy Robins, Liaison to Councilor Stephanie Lynch, provided information regarding Councilor Lynch's request for certain infrastructure projects.

Councilor Jones provided background information regarding the Southside Community Center, and he also provided information regarding his requests for improvements of the facility.

Councilor Kristen Larson provided background information regarding requests to improve the Westover Hills Community Center, and she also addressed the use of the surrounding area.

Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert stated her support for improving sports complexes in the city.

President Cynthia Newbille stated it was a priority of Council to address heat islands in the city.

Councilor Larson provided additional information regarding her requests to improve parks, river access and public spaces.

Review Cross Walk from the Council Composite Projects to the Mayor's Plan

Martha Marshall, Work Session Facilitator, and Interim Council Chief of Staff Joyce Davis led members through a discussion regarding similarities and differences between Council's composite list of priorities to be addressed by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and priorities identified by the Mayor.

President Cynthia Newbille informed members that Council would seek from city administration, more specific information regarding employee qualification for premium pay.

Councilor Kristen Larson stated her support for the Health Equity Trust Fund, so long as certain conditions are met. Councilor Larson also inquired about the ability to provide eviction protections for citizens unable to pay real estate taxes due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert stated she was working with city administration to address the tax relief issues that Councilor Larson raised.

Discussion of a Collaborative Plan

Acting Chief Administrative Officer Lincoln Saunders discussed with Council the Mayor's proposed priority spending plan funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Vice President Ellen Robertson discussed the importance of addressing affordable housing in the city with APRA funding. Vice President Robertson also stated her belief that a dedicated source of revenue was necessary for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF), and inquired if city administration would be open to establishing a \$10,000,000 annual revenue requirement within the city budget through legislation. Vice President Robertson further inquired if city administration planned to include funding for the Regional Housing Framework within the Mayor's housing plan.

Councilor Kristen Larson inquired about staffing within Department of Parks and Recreation for certain facilities, and about plans for community centers in the 4th Voter District.

Councilor Katherine Jordan inquired about steps to be taken to assist local businesses and restaurants.

Acting Chief Administrative Officer Lincoln Saunders informed Council that steps taken by city administration to assist local businesses and restaurants included expedited permit requests for expanded outdoor seating, and future steps included outdoor beautification efforts to enhance the outdoor dining experience.

Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert stated her belief that more steps were necessary to assist local businesses and restaurants than just beatification efforts.

Vice President Ellen Robertson and Councilor Michael Jones requested that city administration plan to adequately address flash flooding in the city.

Councilor Lambert stated it was important for the city to request from the Commonwealth of Virginia, the authority to install speed enforcement cameras to improve public safety in the city.

Mr. Saunders confirmed that speed enforcement cameras were now permissible in school zones, and that the city was awaiting the completion for a state procurement process before purchasing speed enforcement cameras.

President Cynthia Newbille informed members that another work session of Council was likely regarding ARPA funding and spending.

Community Engagement Presentation

Sam Schwartzkopf, Office of Public Information and Engagement, Communications and Marketing Analyst, provided Council with a presentation regarding city administration's strategic engagement plan for soliciting citizen feedback on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) spending proposal.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Councilor Kristen Larson inquired how city administration planned to incorporate Council's spending plan priorities, discussed with city administration throughout the work session, into the engagement plan. Councilor Larson stated it was important that citizens were aware that Council had plans for ARPA spending that may not be included within the Mayor's proposed plan being discussed within city administration's strategic engagement plan. Councilor Larson also stated her

concerns about being asked to promote the Mayor's plan before any priorities of Council were included.

Acting Chief Administrative Officer Lincoln Saunders stated that the Mayor's intention was to have feedback on priorities from Council prior to the introduction of any ordinances that would allocate ARPA funding.

Councilor Michael Jones noted that city administration planned to use the Southside Community Center for public engagement regarding the strategic engagement plan. Councilor Jones requested that the Department of Parks and Recreation allow the use of the same facility for 9th Voter District meetings. Councilor Jones informed members that currently, in-person meetings are prohibited at the facility by the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Vice President Ellen Robertson stated it was important that citizens view the ARPA spending plan as a collaborative effort between the Mayor and Council.

Councilor Jones stated his concerns with the difference in the dollar amount and priority list between Mayor and Council. Councilor Jones also stated his concerns with amount of time allowed for ARPA spending to be addressed with the best interest of citizens in mind.

Mr. Saunders provided Council with a timeline regarding the allocation of ARPA funding. Mr. Saunders stated that the goal was to have legislation related to ARPA spending introduced in October 2021. Mr. Saunders also stated his concerns regarding any delays to the engagement plan, consideration of legislation, and recovery spending.

Councilor Kristen Larson stated her concerns with the amount of time proposed for review of legislation between introduction and a final vote by Council.

Mr. Saunders informed members that city administration would provide Council with a draft copy of the engagement plan survey in order to receive feedback from Council.

President Cynthia Newbille noted that Special meetings of Council may be necessary to address ARPA spending within the proposed timeline. President Newbille stated her request that members be prepared to act quickly to address the needs of the city.

Councilor Michael Jones informed members of his concerns with the operation hours of early voting sites in certain locations of the city.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the work session adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

CITY CLERK