



City of Richmond

Work Session Minutes

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

Thursday, November 18, 2021

4:30 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall
(Virtual Meeting)

Councilmembers Present

The Honorable Cynthia Newbille, President
The Honorable Ellen Robertson, Vice President
The Honorable Andreas Addison (late arrival)
The Honorable Katherine Jordan
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch

Absent

The Honorable Michael Jones
The Honorable Kristen Larson
The Honorable Reva Trammell

Staff Present

Haskell Brown, Interim City Attorney
Joyce Davis, Interim Council Chief of Staff
Candice Reid, City Clerk
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Council President Cynthia Newbille called the work session to order at 4:34 p.m. and presided.

Electronic Meeting Announcement

City Clerk Candice Reid, in accordance with Ordinance No. 2020-093, adopted April 9, 2020, as most recently amended by Ordinance No. 2021-181, adopted June 28, 2021, announced the meeting would be held through electronic communication means. City Clerk Reid stated notice of the meeting was provided to the public through a revised public information advisory issued on November 17, 2021, and through Legistar on the city website in accordance with usual practice. She also stated there would be no opportunities for public comment and no public hearings during the meeting.

Discussion Items

Council Legislative Priorities and City Charter Amendment Recommendations for the 2022 Virginia General Assembly Session

Council Lobbyist Ron Jordan provided members with an update regarding Council's legislative agenda for the 2022 General Assembly session, legislative requests by Councilmembers, legislative requests not recommended by Council lobbyists, prior and potential General Assembly action, and recommended amendments to the City Charter. Mr. Jordan informed members that he was able to follow up with Councilor Stephanie Lynch regarding the James River Master Plan, and he addressed a request regarding inclusionary zoning authority.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

It was the consensus of Council to include the request for inclusionary zoning authority within the City of Richmond Legislative Proposals for the Virginia General Assembly 2022 Regular Session.

Vice President Ellen Robertson requested additional information regarding certain Council legislative requests and priorities that were recommended for deferral by the Council's lobbyists.

It was the consensus of Council to include a policy statement noting support for the authority of local governments to abate or exempt non-profit and for profit housing coalitions of real estate taxes on affordable housing up to 30 years, within the City of Richmond Legislative Proposals for the Virginia General Assembly 2022 Regular Session.

Councilor Stephanie Lynch inquired if the city should remove requests from the legislative agenda regarding combined sewer overflow (CSO) and lead service line replacement funding, and instead concentrate infrastructure efforts on the James River Master Plan.

Mr. Jordan recommended keeping the CSO request within the legislative agenda due to the necessary funding of the project. Mr. Jordan stated that city administration put forward the request regarding lead service line replacement funding.

Maggie Anderson, Office of the Mayor Acting Chief of Staff, informed Council that lead line replacement funding was a priority for the Mayor and city administration.

Mr. Jordan confirmed that lobbying efforts would continue for CSO, lead service line replacement, and the James River Master Plan.

Councilor Andreas Addison joined the meeting at 4:52 p.m.

Vice President Robertson inquired about efforts to provide broadband internet service to residents throughout the city.

Mr. Jordan stated that the Commonwealth of Virginia had indicated that two billion dollars would be committed to broadband expansion and access. Mr. Jordan also stated that additional funding would be received from the federal government for infrastructure spending related to broadband expansion. Mr. Jordan further stated that the city would have sufficient funding for broadband expansion, but the execution of the task would be the issue to resolve.

Councilor Andreas Addison stated his concerns about a digital divide in the city and the lack of internet access experienced by city residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councilor Katherine Jordan referenced RES. 2021-R079, and inquired if similar requests for a study regarding the implementation of a homestead tax exemption was possible for small businesses, and not just certain qualified homeowners.

Mr. Jordan stated that he was unaware of any pending relief discussions related to businesses. Mr. Jordan also provided Council with feedback received from the Richmond City General Assembly delegation regarding amendment requests to the City Charter. Mr. Jordan informed Council that the delegation noted the risk of additional amendments being implemented that were not requested by the city.

Councilor Stephanie Lynch stated that she believed the city needed to conduct additional research prior to submitting City Charter amendment requests.

Vice President Ellen Robertson stated her support for deferring submission of City Charter amendment requests from the upcoming General Assembly session, to the following year. Vice

President Robertson noted her concern with members of the General Assembly making unwanted amendments, and she also stated the delay would allow time for a more comprehensive review of amendment requests.

Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert stated her support for deferring submission of City Charter amendment requests.

Councilor Addison stated he did not believe it was bad policy to make requests for amendments to the City Charter in consecutive years. Councilor Addison informed Council of his support to move forward with submitting City Charter amendment requests at the upcoming General Assembly session.

Maggie Anderson, Office of the Mayor Chief of Staff, informed Council that the Mayor recommended deferring submission of City Charter amendment requests due to the recent change of membership in the General Assembly.

President Cynthia Newbille informed members of her preference that the city defer submission of City Charter amendment requests. President Newbille stated that a commission would be established to review and compile a comprehensive list of City Charter amendment requests for the following General Assembly session.

It was the consensus of Council to not proceed with submitting City Charter amendment requests during the Virginia General Assembly 2022 Regular Session.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the work session adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

CITY CLERK