



City of Richmond

Meeting Minutes

Public Safety Standing Committee

Tuesday, July 27, 2021

12:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – Virtual Meeting

Committee Members and Staff in Attendance

The Honorable Reva Trammell – Chair
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert – Vice Chair
The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Member (*early departure*)
The Honorable Kristen Larson – Council Member (*late arrival, early departure*)
Lisa Braxton, Council Management Analyst
Jamie Isley, Assistant City Clerk
Greg Lukanowski, Deputy City Attorney
Pamela Nichols, Senior Assistant City Clerk
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Steven Taylor, Council Policy Analyst
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chairwoman Reva Trammell called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m., and presided.

Electronic Meeting Announcement

Assistant City Clerk Jamie Isley, 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. Assistant City Clerk Isley stated notice of the meeting was provided to the public through a public information advisory issued on July 21, 2021, 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 Tuesday, July 27, 2021, 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

Assistant City Clerk Jamie Isley provided the citizen speaker guidelines.

Public Comment Period

Brenden Leavy, Richmond Coalition of Police (RCOP) president, discussed the Richmond Police Department's average attrition rate, and what he believes to be an ongoing public safety crisis in the city.

Mr. Leavy informed the committee that RCOP is waiting for specific information regarding officer attrition rates from city administration, and that the committee is welcome to discuss specific numbers with RCOP in the future.

William “Bill” Pantele, RCOP representative, discussed police officer training and difficulties obtaining the appropriate training to ensure officers are well-informed of best practices. Mr. Pantele asked that the committee keep RCOP informed of updates regarding the public safety pay plan and pay plan study.

Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of Tuesday, June 22, 2021, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

Presentation(s)

Richmond Fire Department (RFD) 2nd Quarter Report

Fire Captain Steven Hall Jr. presented the committee with information regarding RFD calls for service, 2021 fire incidents, neighborhood canvassing efforts, turnout times, mutual aid, safety inspections, fire training, train derailments, hiring and attrition, and facilities updates.

Councilor Kristen Larson joined the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Deputy Fire Chief Elmond Taylor confirmed that once reopened, the fire training academy offered to city employees will be expanded to citizens. He also discussed methods used to reach citizens who are not at home during canvassing efforts.

Councilwoman Reva Trammell requested additional information about the smoke detector program installation and distribution efforts. Councilwoman Trammell also inquired about new hires and lateral transfers from the surrounding jurisdictions to the RFD.

Assistant Fire Chief Andrew Snead stated that the RFD is working towards the creation of a more diverse department that is representative of the community.

Fire Captain Hall agreed to follow-up regarding RFD overtime statistics.

Member Ellen Robertson inquired about the impact of opioid related incidents on city emergency services. Member Robertson also asked which city sectors and demographics require more emergency resources for particular incidents.

Deputy Fire Chief Taylor stated that the accreditation and planning section of the RFD works to identify trends within the data that can be used to ascertain areas for development.

Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert inquired about the recent closure of several state mental health facilities and the resulting impact on public safety in the city. Vice Chair Lambert requested the committee examine the cross-section of mental health and public safety issues in the near future.

Police Chief Gerald Smith explained that the shortage of mental health facilities will have an impact on public safety and emergency services within the city. He further explained that Richmond Police Department (RPD) officers receive Crisis Intervention Team training, and that there is currently a back log of officers in line to receive the training due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Deputy Fire Chief Taylor discussed recommendations from a recent audit and plans for implementation. Deputy Chief Taylor agreed to follow-up with the committee regarding additional questions about the audit recommendations.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance was considered:

ORD. 2021-199

To amend and reordain City Code § 10-81, concerning advanced life support services, for the purpose of providing for the dispatch of certain basic life support services in addition to advanced life support services.

Patrons: Ms. Larson

Councilor Kristen Larson introduced ORD. 2021-199.

Chip Decker, Richmond Ambulance Authority (RAA) chief executive officer, informed the committee of RAA call response practices. He stated that ORD. 2021-199 would reserve paramedic trucks for critical patients, which must be changed via ordinance. Mr. Decker also stated that the impact of the proposed ordinance would provide more opportunity to respond to other lower priority illness, injury or assistance calls. He further stated that the proposed ordinance would assist with paramedic response to higher priority calls for service.

Member Ellen Robertson requested to confer with Mr. Decker regarding call prioritization and response.

Mr. Decker stated that Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Basic Life Support (BLS) trucks can only handle prescheduled calls for service such as hospital visits and dialysis. Without ORD. 2021-199, the EMT and BLS trucks cannot respond to low priority calls of which they are equipped to handle. He further stated that ORD. 2021-199 will assure that the system will be tiered, which he believes would provide for a more efficient use of resources.

Councilor Larson advised the committee that the purpose of ORD. 2021-199, is to equip Mr. Decker with the authority to run the RAA more efficiently, and that the proposed ordinance is a procedural change unanimously approved by the RAA Board.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert moved to forward ORD. 2021-199 to the September 13, 2021, City Council meeting with recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

Councilor Kristen Larson departed the meeting at 1:12 p.m.

The following ordinance was considered:

ORD. 2021-202

To authorize the CAO, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Richmond and the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice to provide for the terms and conditions by which the City's Department of Justice Services will undertake certain intake services for the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney

Dawn Barber, Department of Justice Services director, introduced ORD. 2021-202, and stated that the Memorandum of Agreement is to provide support services to families and certain intake services prior to a juvenile's transfer to a state facility.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Member Ellen Robertson moved to forward ORD. 2021-202 to the September 13, 2021 City Council meeting with recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

Discussion Item(s)

Richmond Police Department (RPD) Update: Gun violence prevention citywide, gun violence trends by felonious offenders and RPD officer retention plans

Acting Police Major Rick Edwards presented the committee with an update regarding recent homicide incidents, weapons seizures, and other violent incidents citywide.

Vice Chair Ann-Frances Lambert suggested a joint meeting between the Public Safety and Education and Human Services Standing Committees to address mental health and public safety.

Acting Police Major Edwards explained the strain on resources caused by emergency custody orders and temporary detention orders, which often require officers to spend a significant amount of time in hospitals with patients.

Police Chief Gerald Smith discussed ongoing crime issues at local convenience stores and highlighted several RPD mitigation efforts. Police Chief Smith also discussed the implementation of a new video game outreach program for the city’s youth.

Chairwoman Reva Trammell described issues observed during judicial arraignment hearings in Richmond, and stated they needed to be addressed. Councilwoman Trammell also requested city leadership to show support for RPD officers.

Police Chief Smith discussed officer morale and the inclusion of factors that distinguish RPD from the surrounding jurisdictions within the public safety pay plan study. He stated that the Federal Bureau of Investigations has not informed him of any RPD employee’s presence at the January 6, 2021, insurrection in the United States Capitol. Police Chief Smith further discussed outreach and community engagement efforts to build trust between the RPD and the greater Richmond community.

It was the consensus of the committee to consider board vacancies prior to the second discussion item.

Board Vacancies

Senior Assistant City Clerk Pamela Nichols reviewed board applications for consideration by the committee. She informed the committee of its discretion in the application of RES. 2017-R071, which limits the number of years of continued service allowed for members of independent entities. She further stated that reappointment applicant Elizabeth Matish, had reached eight years of consecutive service on the Richmond Ambulance Authority.

Member Ellen Robertson requested a discussion with Chip Decker, Richmond Ambulance Authority chief executive officer, regarding Ms. Matish’s application.

Member Ellen Robertson moved to forward the following reappointment applications to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved:

Board Name	Criteria for Appointment	Applicant Name
Richmond Ambulance Authority (11 members)	Reside or work in the city	Matthew Conrad 7 th District Resident (reappointment)
		Julia Hammond 6 th District Employmnt
		Brandon Mencini 9 th District Employment (reappointment)
		Kirk Roberts 4 th District Resident (reappointment)
	(5 vacancies)	

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Staff Report

Steve Taylor, Council policy analyst, provided the committee with the July staff report.

A copy of the report provided has been filed.

Member Ellen Robertson departed the meeting at 2:01 p.m.

Discussion Item(s)

Vandalism, Arrests, and Cost of Enhanced Security for the John Marshall Court Building

Richmond City Sheriff Antionette Irving informed the committee that the Department of Public Works is responsible for the enhancement of security at the John Marshall Court building. She also stated that the Sherriff's Office provides staffing for security within the interior of the John Marshall Court building.

Steve Taylor, Council policy analyst, discussed several inquiries regarding security at the John Marshall Court building.

Sheriff Irving discussed day-to-day safety measures within the court building and staffing protocols for emergency situations.

Kenneth Hill, DPW–Facilities Management operations manager, informed the committee that the Department of Risk Management has funded the repair of the twenty-two vandalized John Marshall Court building windows at a cost of roughly \$252,000. He further stated that the current construction seen at the court building is slated for extension of the lobby.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:06 p.m.