



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
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Meeting Minutes Public Safety Standing Committee

Tuesday, February 25, 2025

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – City Hall

Committee Members and other Councilmembers in Attendance

The Honorable Reva Trammell – Chair
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Vice Chair
The Honorable Sarah Abubaker – Member (electronic participation)

Staff and Others in Attendance

Greg Lukanuski, Deputy City Attorney
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Steve Taylor, Council Policy Analyst
Will Perkins, Senior Council Legislative Services Manager
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Reva Trammell called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m., and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Public Speaker Guidelines

Upon the Chair's request, Deputy City Clerk RJ Warren provided information on the appropriate way to evacuate the Council Chamber in an emergency along with public speaker guidelines.

Electronic Participation

Pursuant to Rule III(D)(4)(b) of Council's Rules of Procedure, Member Sarah Abubaker made a request to participate in the meeting via Microsoft Teams from a friend's residence, as she was on personal travel. The committee members present were required to adopt a motion to approve Member Sarah Abubakers's participation in the meeting by electronic communication means if it appeared to the body that her request complied with Rule III(D) of Council's Rules of Procedure. A motion was solicited from members physically assembled to approve Member Sarah Abubakers's participation in the meeting by electronic communication means.

Chair Reva Trammell moved to allow Member Sarah Abubaker to participate in the meeting by electronic communication means. The motion was seconded and approved: Ayes 2, Lynch, Trammell. Noes None. Abubaker was awaiting approval to participate by electronic communication means.

Public Comment Period

Dream Boyd, Member of the Richmond Transparency and Accountability Project (RTAP), addressed the committee regarding alleged racial discrimination during traffic stops. Ms. Boyd stated in December of 2020, herself, as well as her brother, were handcuffed and had their vehicle searched. Ms. Boyd also stated that since the incident, she has dealt with anxiety concerning police officers. Ms. Boyd further addressed the committee, and requested a call for action to address racial disparities during traffic stops.

Lauren McGarry, RTAP Member, addressed the committee regarding racial disparities in traffic stops in Richmond. Ms. McGarry provided the committee with data and personal stories from city residents that have experienced alleged racial disparities in traffic enforcement.

Yohance Whitaker, RTAP Member, addressed the committee regarding alleged racial disparities during traffic stops in Richmond. Mr. Whitaker stated the Richmond Police Department (RPD) broke down the city into 29,000 micro zones to target high crime areas. Mr. Whitaker further stated that micro zones add to additional racial disparities in the city.

Kayla, RTAP Member, addressed the committee regarding racial disparities during traffic stops in Richmond. Kayla provided the committee with her personal experience involving an interaction with a RPD officer during a traffic stop.

Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of January 28, 2025, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

[CD.2025.049](#) January 28, 2025 - Public Safety Standing Committee Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [20250128 Public Safety Minutes - DRAFT](#)

Presentation(s)

Richmond Ambulance Authority (RAA) 2024 Annual Report

Chip Decker, RAA Chief Executive Officer (CEO), presented the committee with the 2024 RAA annual report.

[CD.2025.041](#) February 25, 2025 - Richmond Ambulance Authority (RAA) 2024 Annual Report

Attachments: [20250225 RAA 2024 Annual Report](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Vice Chair Stephanie Lynch asked if the number of dropped calls transferred from the call center are being tracked.

Mr. Decker stated that the city stopped transferring emergency calls to RAA and began operating the emergency medical dispatch. Mr. Decker also stated that the Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response (DECPR) monitors and provides dispatch for emergency medical calls.

Vice Chair Lynch asked how RAA would be dispatched to medical emergencies if RAA no longer takes incoming emergency medical calls.

Mr. Decker stated that the DECPR uses the same call intake system that is used by RAA.

Stephen Willoughby, Director of DECPR, stated when an emergency call is received, RAA will get the information simultaneously to dispatch emergency medical services, and DECPR collects the emergency data and information.

Vice Chair Lynch asked about the number of dropped calls from callers that were on hold for extended periods of time.

Director Willoughby stated that if a call is dropped by the caller who is on hold, the system will automatically call back that individual. Director Willoughby also stated that DECPR does have a log of dropped calls and will provide that data to the committee at a later date.

Vice Chair Lynch asked how common it is for localities to switch dispatch call centers.

Mr. Decker stated that the previous administration considered it a bad customer service practice for RAA to be added onto the emergency medical calls. Mr. Decker stated that it is time to reexamine DECPR taking over the dispatch calls from RAA to optimize the best medical services.

Chair Reva Trammell stated that emergency medical dispatch operations by DECPR needs to be reevaluated due to numerous complaints from the community. Chair Trammell also stated that DECPR does the best it can with handling the call volume for dispatch services, but every minute counts in medical emergencies.

Mr. Decker continued to discuss the 2024 RAA annual report with the committee.

Paper(s) for Consideration

There were no papers for consideration.

Board Vacancies

There were no board vacancies.

Discussion Item(s)

Richmond Police Department (RPD) Planning and Practices In Shockoe Bottom

Chief of Police Rick Edwards, discussed RPD planning and practices in Shockoe Bottom with the committee.

[CD.2025.058](#) After Item - Richmond Police Department (RPD) Planning and Practices In Shockoe Bottom

Attachments: [20250225 RPD Public Safety Standing Committee](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Chair Reva Trammell expressed her appreciation for the work that Chief Edwards and RPD have done for the city.

Vice Chair Stephanie Lynch asked about preventive measures and specialized zones that ban firearms in the city.

Chief Edwards stated specialized zones where firearms are banned have been discussed with Mayor Avula. Chief Edwards also stated that there are concerns about certain dates and times where gun activity might be higher.

Vice Chair Lynch asked why the crime rate in Shockoe Bottom did not decrease as a result of closed night clubs.

Chief Edwards stated that most of the clubs have a no firearm policy so guns are now left in cars. Chief Edwards also stated that Shockoe Bottom is a great hangout spot for people, and that the concern is the amount of firearms brought in by individuals from surrounding counties.

Chair Trammell asked about the history of police enforcement in Shockoe Bottom.

Chief Edwards stated that Shockoe Bottom always had RPD officers that were required to work overtime in the area, due to large crowds. Chief Edwards also stated RPD officers are now mandated to work the Shockoe Bottom area after increased criminal activity. Chief Edwards further stated that RPD is working closely with its union to ensure fairness amongst the officers.

Chair Trammell asked for more details regarding recent cases dismissed by a Richmond judge.

Chief Edwards provided the committee with additional information regarding a recent case cited by the Richmond Times Dispatch (RTD).

Chair Trammell asked about the Constitutional Law training RPD officers receive.

Chief Edwards stated that all RPD officers receive training on the Constitution in the academy and during in service work. Chief Edwards also stated that RPD officers, a part of specialized units, receive additional training from the Commonwealth's Attorney.

Chief Edwards continued to discuss the RPD planning and practices in Shockoe Bottom.

Juan Braxton, Criminal Justice Chair for the Richmond National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), addressed the committee regarding complaints received from business owners in Shockoe Bottom concerning crime in the area.

Staff Report

Council staff provided the committee with the February Public Safety staff report.

[CD.2025.056](#) February 25, 2025 Public Safety Staff Report

Attachments: [20250225 Public Safety Staff Report](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.