



# City of Richmond

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## Meeting Minutes Governmental Operations Standing Committee

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Wednesday, February 26, 2025

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

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### Committee and Other Council Members in Attendance

The Honorable Katherine Jordan - Chair  
The Honorable Sarah Abubaker - Vice Chair  
The Honorable Kenya Gibson - Committee Member  
The Honorable Nicole Jones - Council Member (late arrival)

### Staff in Attendance

Laura Drewry, City Attorney  
Susan McKenney, Senior Assistant City Attorney  
Kimberly Morris, Assistant City Clerk  
William Perkins, Council Senior Legislative Services Manager  
Candice Reid, City Clerk  
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

### Call to Order

Chair Katherine Jordan called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., and presided.

### Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Public Speaker Guidelines

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

*Member Nicole Jones joined the meeting at 1:07 p.m. and was seated.*

### Public Comment Period

There were no public comment speakers.

## Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of December 11, 2024, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

[CD.2025.039](#) December 11, 2024 Governmental Operations Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [20241211 Gov Ops Mins DRAFT](#)

## Presentation(s)

### Preliminary Findings from HNTB Investigation of January 2025 Water Outage

[CD.2025.055](#) Preliminary Findings from HNTB Investigation of January 2025 Water Outage

Attachments: [HNTB Prelim Presentation GovOps 02.26.2025 2](#)

*A copy of the material provided has been filed.*

Scott Morris, Director of Public Utilities, provided a presentation regarding preliminary findings from the HNTB investigation of the January 2025 water outage.

*Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker asked if it is standard practice to have electrical panels at lower levels in water treatment plants. She also asked when the panels will be reinstalled on a higher level of the city's water treatment facility.*

Director Morris stated that it is not best practice to install electrical panels at a lower level, and that the best practice is at a higher level. He also stated that he does not know when they will be reinstalled.

*Vice Chair Abubaker asked if there are any table top exercises for emergency procedures planned.*

Director Morris stated standard operating procedures will be developed and implemented and that table top exercises will then be practiced.

*Vice Chair Abubaker asked when will the next report be submitted from HNTB, and will HNTB be coming back before the committee to answer more questions.*

Director Morris stated the intention is for HNTB to share the findings of a preliminary report soon and then a final report within the next month.

*Chair Katherine Jordan requested that the next level of reporting from HNTB occur at a Council meeting or an Organizational Development Standing Committee meeting.*

*Member Kenya Gibson suggested that HNTB reports be attached to meeting agendas for public access. She also asked what type of city communications has HNTB received regarding systematic issues of the water utility.*

Director Morris stated HNTB has access to all interviews, documentation and information they may need for reporting.

*Member Gibson asked why the information about the back up generator is missing from the report.*

Director Morris stated pre-storm checks were done, however, the backup generators were not engaged.

*Member Gibson asked if April Bingham has been contacted to participate in the report.*

Director Morris stated Ms. Bingham had been contacted, however, she declined to participate in the report.

*Member Gibson inquired as to what actions occurred after the governor and mayor declared a state of emergency during the water crisis.*

Director Morris stated actions taken related to a state of emergency will be addressed in a future report.

*Member Gibson asked if HNTB reviewed the list of questions submitted by Council, and when the committee will receive an overview of costs resulting from the water crisis.*

Director Morris stated the questions have been submitted and city administration is still reviewing the process to provide an interim summary of costs to Council possibly in April, and that a final comprehensive summary will be provided in November.

*Chair Jordan expressed gratitude to all who assisted with the water crisis. She also asked how well did the city respond to previous disasters, and what was the city's response to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) report.*

Director Morris stated his department is in the process of incorporating master plans, and is committed to adjusting recommendations. He also stated a large amount of the items and recommendations in the report have been addressed.

*Chair Jordan inquired if the city's water infrastructure is prepared should a similar event occur in the future.*

Director Morris stated his vision for the Department of Public Utilities is to be prepared for anything to implement standard operating procedures (SOPs), table top training exercises and improve overall accountability.

*Vice Chair Abubaker asked if there is an estimated amount of upcoming budget funds that will be invested into the water facility.*

Director Morris stated he is not expecting anything in the short-term or in the upcoming budget season.

*Member Gibson asked if the Department of Public Utilities can provide reliable drinkable water and what could have been done to prevent the water outage.*

Director Morris stated operating the treatment plant in summer mode is more stable in the event of a crisis than operating in winter mode.

*Member Gibson stated she hopes administration will be able to support operating the plant in summer mode year-round.*

Sabrina Joy-Hogg, Interim Chief Administrative Office, introduced Scott Morris formally as the new permanent Director of Public Utilities.

### **Overview of RVA 311**

Peter Breil, Director of Citizen Service and Response, provided a presentation regarding an overview of 311.

[CD.2025.052](#) Overview of RVA311

Attachments: [Overview of RVA311](#)

*A copy of the material provided has been filed.*

*Chair Katherine Jordan stated it is best to contact 311 for customer service documentation.*

*Vice Chair Sarah Abuaker asked what can Council do to support RVA 311.*

Director Breil stated that ensuring that all requests are placed in 311 and to allow normal processing time before escalating to administration.

*Member Kenya Gibson asked what services as well as software are outsourced versus the services that are done internally. She also asked if the number of customer inquiries is tracked.*

Director Breil stated all customer service supports are done internally.

*Member Gibson asked if citizen usage is being tracked and if there are any changes in usage over time.*

Director Breil stated a slight increase was identified, however, it is stable.

*Member Gibson inquired if the increase in customer inquiries in 2025 is due to the water crisis.*

Director Breil stated there has been an increase in customer inquiries since January, and the department is still determining the reason for the increase in calls.

### **Paper(s) for Consideration**

There were no papers for consideration.

## Board Vacancies

There were no board vacancies.

## Discussion Item(s)

### Governmental Operations Standing Committee Calendar Year 2025 Proposed Presentation Schedule

[CD.2025.047](#) Governmental Operations CY2025 Proposed PPT Schedule

Attachments: [Gov Ops Final 2025 Presentation Schedule \(1\)](#)

Will Perkins, Council Senior Legislative Services Manager gave the committee an overview of the proposed Governmental Operations 2025 presentation schedule.

*A copy of the material provided has been filed.*

City Auditor, Riad Ali, gave information regarding the Audit Committee and the Office of the City Auditor.

*Member Kenya Gibson asked as a regular practice, can an audit report stating outstanding items be included with presentations from departments that are on the agenda at Governmental Operations Standing Committee meetings.*

City Auditor Ali agreed it can be a good practice.

*Vice Chair Sarah Abubaker stated the report will increase transparency.*

*Member Gibson asked that all committee members be provided a copy of the monthly overtime report. She also requested that the vacancy report be paired with the overtime report to discuss before budget season begins. She also asked that overtime reports be added to monthly agendas.*

City Auditor Ali stated that it is on the audit plan to identify the causes that are occurring with overtime.

Adam Hohl, Senior Policy Advisor for the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of Operations, gave information regarding the vacancy and overtime reports.

## Staff Report

Will Perkins, Council Senior Legislative Services Manager, stated the next Public Utilities Commission meeting will be held Wednesday, March 5, 2025, at the Main Library, and that a list is being provided of boards and commissions that report to committees. He also stated they are tracking questions related to the water outage and Council will be provided with documents in reference to 311 data.

## Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:38 p.m.