



Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

Office of the Council Chief of Staff

Finance & Economic Development Standing Committee

March 16, 2026

Prep Document for Committee Members

Previous Meeting: February 18, 2026

Next Meeting: April 16, 2026

Agenda Overview:

- Five papers for consideration:
 1. [Ord. 2025-282](#) (create real estate tax deferral program for certain owner-occupied properties)
 2. [Ord. 2026-052](#) (accept and appropriate state funds for firefighter PPE)
 3. [Ord. 2026-054](#) (accept donation of landscaping services for tree improvements at specific locations in Byrd Park)
 4. [Ord. 2026-055](#) (expand eligibility for ARPA-funded first-time homebuyer assistance grant to RPS employees)
 5. [Res. 2026-R013](#) (request that CAO modify the city's leave policy, via Administrative Regulation 4.8, concerning maximum carry-forward and vacation leave payout and submit report detailing operational and fiscal impacts by 6/30)
- One presentation:
 - HCD on inventory of anti-displacement programs and tools

1. Ordinance No. 2025-282 Patrons Councilor Abubaker, Councilor Trammell, Councilor Breton, Councilor Lynch

Title: To amend ch. 26, article V, div. 2 of the City Code by adding therein a new section 26-370, concerning a deferral program for certain real estate taxes pursuant to and in accordance with Code of Virginia § 58.1-3219.

Council Staff Notes:

- The O&R includes an attachment detailing the analysis of fiscal impact. The amount of potentially, temporarily foregone real estate tax revenue would likely be higher beginning with tax year 2028 because of the time between general assessments associated with the “freeze.”

Council Staff Questions:

- None.

2. Ordinance No. 2026-052

Patron Mayor Avula

Title: To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$69,015.00 from the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, and to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by creating a new special fund for the Department of Fire and Emergency Services called the "Virginia Fire Services PPE Grant Special Fund," and increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services' "Virginia Fire Services PPE Grant Special Fund" by \$69,015.00 for the purpose of providing funding for firefighter turnout gear and personal protective equipment.

Council Staff Notes:

- Per the O&R, these funds – for which the city does not need to provide a match – derive from a new state program that “provides funding to fire services in Virginia localities that the [Virginia Department of Fire Programs] deems to be ‘fiscally distressed’ to help fund their PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) needs.”
- The documentation in the O&R also states that the funds needed to be accepted by January 16, 2026 or they would be forfeited.

Council Staff Questions:

- Will these funds continue to be offered in future years (e.g., when the equipment to be purchased using the grant needs to be replaced)?
- Does accepting funds designated for “fiscally distressed” localities, regardless of intended use, have potential implications for the city’s perceived creditworthiness in the bond market?
- Did the city receive an extension on the January 16 acceptance deadline, or did the CAO or a designee submit the acceptance paperwork before the corresponding ordinance could be considered in committee and by the full Council?

3. Ordinance No. 2026-054

Patron Mayor Avula

Title: To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept a donation of landscaping services from Capital Trees valued at approximately \$32,000.00, for the purpose of performing tree improvements in Byrd Park located at 1401 Pump House Drive, 2601 Police Memorial Way, and 2301 Amelia Street in the city of Richmond. (5th District)

Council Staff Notes:

- The O&R states that “The Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities is excited to partner with Capital Trees to increase the safety of Park users as well as improve the health and aesthetics of trees in and around Byrd Park. Tree improvements include structural pruning, removal of dead and dying trees, and stump grinding.”

Council Staff Questions:

- What has been the 311 ticket history (if any) related to the trees that will be pruned or removed through these donated landscaping services?
- Did DPR consult at all with risk management about this donation and service proposal?

4. Ordinance No. 2026-055

Patron Mayor Avula

Title: To amend City Code § 2-1213, concerning the employee first-time homebuyer's assistance program, for the purpose of expanding the program to include employees of the School Board of the City of Richmond as authorized by Code of Virginia, ?15.2-958.2(A).

Council Staff Notes:

- Per the O&R and prior submissions to the committee for quarterly ARPA updates, as of December 2025, only four participants successfully closed on a home purchase with the down payment assistance offered by the program (with one closing pending as of that time). This left \$1.2 million of the \$1.3 million obligated ARPA funds remaining.
- The O&R notes that “expanding eligibility to Richmond School Board employees, along with other administrative changes, could support more first-time homebuyers while complying with state code,” which is consistent with a memo by CAO Donald dated January 30 and shared with the committee ahead of its February meeting.
- All ARPA funds had to be obligated by December 31, 2024 and must be expended by the end of this calendar year, with any unspent funds returned to the federal government.

Council Staff Questions:

- What is the estimated number of RPS employees who will be eligible for and able to successfully close on a home thanks to the expansion of the program?
 - How much of the remaining \$1.2 million do we hope to spend assisting this new group?
- CAO Donald’s January memo about the first-time homebuyer assistance program stated that two “viable adjustments” could be implemented immediately: removing the Qualified Census Tract requirement and raising the income eligibility threshold to \$175,000.
 - Have those changes been implemented?
 - If so, what is the expected impact on program uptake and successful closings?

5. Resolution No. 2026-R013

Patron Councilor Robertson

Title: To request that the Chief Administrative Officer amend Administrative Regulation 4.8, concerning the City's leave policy, to modify the maximum carryforward policy and procedures for paying out vacation leave balances for unclassified employees as a one-time occurrence during the transition to implement a maximum carryforward procedure and to request that the Chief Administrative Officer submit a written report of the operational and fiscal impacts of implementing such amendments and any additional proposed amendments no later than June 30, 2026.

Council Staff Notes:

- Prior to Administration Regulation 4.8, unclassified employees were allowed to carry forward an unlimited number of vacation leave hours, but that regulation created a five-year window closing July 1, 2028 to draw down excess leave above the maximum carryforward amount.
- As noted in the resolution text, as of December 31, 2025, 110 unclassified employees had vacation leave balances above their respective maximum carryforward limits.

Council Staff Questions:

- None.

Presentation: Anti-Displacement Inventory: A Comprehensive Catalog of the City of Richmond’s Existing Programs and Initiatives That Mitigate the Displacement of Residents

*Note: This presentation provides a high-level overview of the more detailed information contained in “**An Inventory of Programs and Initiatives That Mitigate the Displacement of Residents,**” a 41-page document that includes the following key indicators for each program identified through the review process in response to Res. 2025-R043:*

- *Program category*
- *Program name and administering unit within city government*
- *Program description*
- *Population served (relative crisis level and number)*
- *Current resource commitment, both funding and FTEs*
- *Additional considerations*
- *Program website*

Council Staff Summary and Notes:

- Topline indicators of programs and resource commitments:
 - 30 programs spanning 12 departments and staffed by more than 77 employees
 - Over \$36 million in funding (federal, state, and local)
 - Serving more than 18,000 households (see next bullet for caveats)
- The most anti-displacement programs (11) of the 30 total are within the “Housing Stability for All Richmonders” category. Across other categories:
 - Utilities & Billing Assistance: 7 programs
 - Community Development and Planning: 7 programs
 - Assistance for Homeowners: 5 programs
- Nearly half (49%) of the city’s displacement mitigation programs serve the highest-need populations (23% “in crisis” – homeless or threatened with eviction or foreclosure and 26% “at risk” – in transitional, temporary or substandard housing and/or current housing payment is unaffordable at 30% of income).

Council Staff Questions:

- What did the program inventory process reveal or suggest about what the city ISN’T currently doing, but should be, to fight displacement?
- How much of the >\$36 million in identified funding is exclusively city dollars?

- Have you estimated the amount of funding and staffing resources allocated to serving the 11% of “thriving” households served by the city’s anti-displacement programs?
 - If the city were to reallocate those resources to provide more services to the “in crisis” and “at risk” categories, what would that look like?
- Questions with FY27 budget implications:
 - The presentation notes a need for additional staff and funding “to improve processing times, implement efficiency measures, and expand the reach of programs.” **How does the Mayor’s FY27 budget proposal specifically provide additional staff and funding for these programs (i.e., more than the FY26 base identified through this process)?**
 - What specific improvements are needed for data collection and reporting; what would it cost to implement them; and how, if at all, are those costs already included in the budget proposal?
- Please provide more detail about plans for updating the city’s equitable affordable housing plan by December.