



Richmond City Council

Budget Work Session Minutes

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

Monday, April 28, 2025

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Council Members Present

The Honorable Cynthia Newbille, President
The Honorable Katherine Jordan, Vice President
The Honorable Sarah Abubaker (late arrival)
The Honorable Andrew Breton
The Honorable Kenya Gibson (via Microsoft teams)
The Honorable Nicole Jones (late arrival)
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch
The Honorable Ellen Robertson
The Honorable Reva Trammell

Others in Attendance

Laura Drewry, City Attorney
Kimberly Morris, Assistant City Clerk
Will Perkins, Council Senior Legislative Services Manager
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Tabrica Rentz, Deputy City Attorney
Matthew Slaats, Interim Council Chief of Staff
Daniel Wagner, Interim Deputy Council Chief of Staff
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Council President Cynthia Newbille called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement

Upon the President's request, Assistant City Clerk Kimberly Morris provided information on the appropriate manner in which the Council Chamber is to be evacuated in the event of an emergency.

Electronic Participation

Pursuant to Rule III(D)(4)(b) of Council's Rules of Procedure, Member Kenya Gibson made a request to participate in the meeting via Microsoft Teams from her home, due to a medical condition that prevented her physical attendance. The Council members present were required to adopt a motion to approve Member Kenya Gibson'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 Kenya Gibson's participation in the meeting by electronic communication means.

Councilor Andrew Breton moved to allow Councilor Kenya Gibson to participate in the meeting by electronic communication means. The motion was seconded and approved: Ayes 6, Breton, Robertson, Lynch, Trammell, Vice President Jordan, President Newbille. Noes, None. Gibson was awaiting approval to participate through electronic communication means.

Councilor Sarah Abubaker arrived at 1:15 p.m. and was seated.

Councilor Nicole Jones arrived at 1:16 p.m. and was seated.

Discussion of Proposed Amendments to the FY 2026 Budget

Matthew Slaats, Interim Council Chief of Staff (CCOS), provided Council with a presentation that addressed Council's proposed amendments for the FY 2026 Budget.

A copy of material provided has been filed.

[CD.2025.155](#) April 28, 2025 Budget Work Session Documents

Attachments: [42525-FY26 Council Enhancements Slate](#)

[Balancing Strategy v2 4.22.25](#)

[042125 FY26 Richmond City Council Budget Capital Work Session](#)

[42825 Council enhancements-FY26 - Administration Responses](#)

[42525-FY26 Council Reductions Slate](#)

[42525-FY26 Council Enhancements Slate](#)

[Submitted reductions w-Admin response-FY26 Budget](#)

Revenue Review

Richie McKeithan, City Assessor, provided Council with an update on the budget forecast related to taxable real estate.

Councilor Stephanie Lynch inquired about the city's benchmark compared to other localities and the six percent anticipated increase to real estate assessments.

Mr. McKeithan stated the city was behind some other localities, and that changes would be made to become more comparable. He also stated the city should be close to the six percent increase.

Councilor Kenya Gibson stated her concerns about the feasibility of a four cent tax reduction based on current budget numbers. She asked what the six percent increase was based on.

Mr. McKeithan stated it was based on what was historically done for projections.

Ordinance Finalization

Will Perkins, Senior Council Legislative Services Manager, provided Council with information regarding budget ordinance amendments.

Vice President Katherine Jordan stated changes to the overall budget process would be discussed at a later date.

Capital Funding

Daniel Wagner, Interim Deputy Council Chief of Staff, provided Council with information regarding capital and operating enhancements.

Councilor Reva Trammell stated her concerns regarding Animal Care and Control and Richmond Ambulance Authority funding.

Sabrina Joy Hogg, Interim Chief Administrative Officer, stated administration would work with the Richmond Ambulance Authority through the lease purchase program.

Gail Johnson, Director of General Services, stated there were plans to acquire additional trucks for Animal Care and Control.

Councilors discussed and gave consensus to proceed with capital reduction proposals and the capital enhancement proposals.

Operating Reductions

Daniel Wagner, Interim Deputy Council Chief of Staff, provided Council with information regarding capital and operating reductions.

Councilor Ellen Robertson inquired about the Richmond Resilience Initiative, and if the city is in a contract agreement with an organization. She also asked if it was a one-time source of funding.

Mr. Wagner stated the contract organization was UpTogether.

Brian Bills, Research and Policy Analyst with the Office of Community Wealth Building (OCWB), stated UpTogether had offered \$60,300.00 in matching grants.

Shunda Giles, Director of Social Services, stated the contract with UpTogether was for two fiscal years.

Councilor Robertson requested confirmation of all vacancies in the OCWB.

Bernadine Doggett, OCWB Program and Operations Supervisor, stated all four positions proposed to be eliminated were vacant.

Councilor Nicole Jones inquired what neighborhood signs would be replaced across the city. Councilor Jones also requested information on Hull Street signage.

Bobby Vincent, Director of the Department of Public Works, stated banner type signs were put up in public right-of-ways.

Councilor Sarah Abubaker stated her reasons for opposing a proposed reduction of a 3.2% raise on salaries over \$175,000.00.

Councilors discussed and agreed not to proceed with a raise reduction for employees with salaries over \$175,000.00.

Councilor Reva Trammell expressed her concern in regarding park rangers.

Sabrina Joy Hogg, Interim Chief Administrative Officer, stated only one park ranger position is to be reduced, and that there were four vacancies available citywide.

Councilor Abubaker stated her concerns regarding a proposed reduction of a park ranger position.

Chris Frelke, Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities gave additional information regarding park rangers.

Councilor Jones and Gibson expressed concerns about city job vacancies and recruitment.

Councilors discussed and consensus was given to proceed to discussing operating enhancement.

Operating Enhancements

Daniel Wagner, Interim Deputy Council Chief of Staff, provided Council with information regarding operating enhancements.

Councilor Stephanie Lynch expressed her concerns regarding the New Life Deliverance Tabernacle program.

Councilor Reva Trammell requested to be added as a patron to the Black History Museum enhancement.

Councilor Robertson requested to be added as a patron to the Black History Museum, Next Up, and OAR enhancements. She also expressed her concerns with the New Life Deliverance Tabernacle program.

Councilor Kenya Gibson expressed her concerns pertaining to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and the Richmond Public Schools (RPS) budget.

Councilor Andrew Breton asked about the process of co-patronage, documentation, amendments, and voting.

Laura Drewry, City Attorney, stated Councilors names would not be reflected on amended ordinances.

Councilor Ellen Robertson expressed her concerns about critical funds for non-profits.

President Newbille asked if funds would remain available for the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services once the budget is approved.

Sabrina Joy-Hogg, Interim Chief Administrative Officer, stated the money would remain with Neighborhood and Community Services.

Meghan Brown, Director of Budget and Strategic Planning, stated an option was to reduce the Department of Neighborhood Services, and then increase the Non-Departmental category.

Councilor Nicole Jones expressed requested clarity on how to obtain budget review assistance from Council staff.

Final Discussion

Councilors discussed \$50,000.00 remaining in unallocated funds, and agreed to proceed with previously decided operating enhancements. They also agreed that the \$50,000.000 in unallocated funds would be decided at a later date.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

CITY CLERK