



City of Richmond

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

Meeting Minutes Organizational Development Standing Committee

Monday, March 3, 2025

4:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Members Present

The Honorable Cynthia Newbille – Chair
The Honorable Katherine Jordan – Vice Chair
The Honorable Sarah Abubaker – Member
The Honorable Andrew Breton – Member (late arrival)
The Honorable Kenya Gibson – Member
The Honorable Nicole Jones – Member
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Member (late arrival)
The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Member (late arrival)
The Honorable Reva Trammell – Member (late arrival)

Others in Attendance

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

Call to Order

Chair Cynthia Newbille called the meeting to order at 4:01 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.

Agenda Review and Amendments

Member Nicole Jones moved to amend the agenda as follows:

1. [RES. 2025-R010](#) To establish the Civilian Review Board's policies and procedures pursuant to Va. Code § 9.1-601(D) and City Code § 2-1202.4(f).

Patrons: Ms. Trammell

To be continued to the April 7, 2025 Organizational Development
Standing Committee

[CD.2025.033](#) Organizational Development Board Vacancy Report - March 3, 2025

To be continued to the April 7, 2025 Organizational Development
Standing Committee

The motion was seconded and approved: Ayes 5, Gibson, Jones, Abubaker, Jordan, Newbille. Noes None. Breton, Robertson, Lynch, and Trammell had not yet arrived.

Approval of Minutes

There were no corrections or amendments to the minutes of the Monday, February 3, 2025 Organizational Development Standing Committee meeting, at 4:00 p.m., and the minutes were approved as presented.

[CD.2025.060](#) February 3, 2025 - Organizational Development Meeting Minutes

Reports from City Administration, Council Staff and Other Parties

HNTB Interim Report

Scott Morris, Director of Public Utilities, and Robert Page, HNTB Vice President, provided the committee with a presentation that addressed HNTB's interim after-action assessment report regarding the city's loss of water service in January 2025. The report outlined the investigation process, water treatment plant overview, event description, investigation findings, and recommendations.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

[CD.2025.063](#) HNTB Interim Report

Members Andrew Breton arrived at 4:03 p.m, and was seated.

Members Stephanie Lynch arrived at 4:03 p.m, and was seated.

Members Reva Trammell arrived at 4:04 p.m, and was seated.

Member Ellen Robertson arrived at 4:05 p.m. and was seated.

Chair Cynthia Newbille confirmed that city administration was drafting a matrix that would outline findings, recommendations, and implementation statuses.

Member Kenya Gibson stated that the public wanted an understanding of the systemic issues that led to the loss of water crisis. Member Gibson also stated it was important that HNTB have full access to all internal communications to provide a full understanding of causes, specifically why certain recommended equipment replacements did not occur in 2012. Member Gibson further stated that if her concerns are not within the scope of the HNTB investigation, then Council should consider implementing its own investigation.

Mr. Page stated HNTB has not received any redacted information. Mr. Page also stated that the HNTB report would not examine the reason why equipment was not purchased in 2012, but would identify recommendations that were not implemented. Mr. Page addressed the purpose of the report and stated the report is an after-action report, and not an investigation report.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan addressed the report and possible recommendations. Vice Chair Jordan also stated that she appreciated that the interim report provided more information on employee experiences during the loss of water crisis.

Member Stephanie Lynch stated that she believed the final report could benefit from HNTB interviewing former Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Operations, Robert Steidel.

Member Sarah Abubaker stated that the after-action report was necessary, but that a review of the long-term factors that led to the loss of water crisis was important. Member Abubaker noted that the interim report addressed deferred maintenance, and she asked if the city was planning for upcoming budget requests to address needed maintenance.

Director Morris stated that the city planned to review upcoming capital improvement projects (CIPs) to ensure needed maintenance is prioritized and funded.

Member Ellen Robertson stated her hope that the final HNTB report provides more information about who was interviewed, and that it addresses recommendations on necessary training and emergency planning.

Member Reva Trammell stated that the interim report did not address outstanding questions. Member Trammell also stated that Southside residents still do not trust the quality of public water.

Director Morris stated that city administration had identified necessary employee training to implement, and that certain areas of the city may require additional pipe flushing to remove water still impacted by the water crisis. Director Morris also addressed water treatment plant updates and associated costs that have occurred since the loss of water crisis. Director Morris further addressed possible CIP improvements and funding planned for the future.

Member Nicole Jones asked if deferred maintenance improvements was the leading cause of rising utility rates. Member Jones also stated that the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) needed to review and change the city's utility billing methods.

Director Morris stated the city's water facilities are very old and that it is expensive to maintain and upgrade water facilities. Director Morris also stated DPU was reviewing billing and customer service processes.

Member Andrew Breton asked about DPU's use of payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT), and how much of that funding is expected to be used for water service infrastructure improvements. Member Breton asked if the city directed PILOT funding towards utility improvements, would it help lower rate costs on customers.

Director Morris stated that PILOT revenue is deposited into the city's general fund and not mandated for DPU improvements. Director Morris also stated that certain utility bill funds received are designed to pay for DPU needs. Director Morris further stated that the use of the general fund to address utility improvements would have to be addressed during the city's fiscal year budget review process.

Richmond People's Budget

Leidiana Delgado, Civic Engagement Coordinator for the Office of the Council Chief of Staff, Brittany Keegan, Ph.D., Director of Research and Outreach, Center for Public Policy at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, and Victor Tan Chen, Ph.D., VCU Department of Sociology Associate Professor, provided the committee with a presentation that provided an update on the city's participatory budgeting process, and also feedback from participants and residents.

A copy of material provided has been filed.

[CD.2025.061](#) Richmond People's Budget Documents

Member Andrew Breton asked about the process of narrowing recommended uses of participatory budget funds.

Leidiana Delgado stated that Council staff did an initial selection of eligible projects, and then Participatory Budgeting Commission budget delegates began to review and discuss finalizing projects with community members.

Member Ellen Robertson stated that she had requested an organizational chart related to participatory budgeting to better understand the staffing and budget associated with the initiative. Member Robertson stated she wanted to know the amount of the allocated budget directed towards funding participatory budgeting staff.

Leidiana Delgado stated that she was the only staff person primarily responsible for supporting participatory budgeting, and that other Council staff assist, but that it is not their primary assignment as Council staff. Ms. Delgado also stated that the initiative is further supported by volunteer advocates. Ms. Delgado further stated that administrative costs were \$150,000, and that only one employee was receiving salary from that funding allocation, and remaining support staff are compensated by Office of the Council Chief of Staff budget.

Member Robertson addressed the amount of project funding allocated to certain Council districts and the need to ensure that investments are made where the need is greatest. Member Robertson also stated her concerns about the amount of public participation in the participatory budgeting process from residents from certain areas of the city. Member Robertson further inquired about the request for stipend funding.

Leidiana Delgado stated that the stipend request was for previous services provided by budget delegate volunteers

Member Kenya Gibson stated her support for participatory budgeting and inclusionary efforts to involve residents in the city budget process. Member Gibson also stated that she would advocate for funding participatory budgeting in the upcoming fiscal year budget.

Member Andrew Breton asked for more clarity on staff budgeting. Member Breton stated that more fiscal details would help Council understand the administrative burden put on staff.

Leidiana Delgado stated that only one staff member's salary was directly supported by the \$150,000 allocation, and that the remaining funds go to administrative costs such as computer software.

Member Stephanie Lynch stated that participatory budgeting can be seen as an extension of Council's efforts to improve communities.

Member Nicole Jones stated her appreciation of staff to working with residents outside of City Hall.

Chair Cynthia Newbille stated she viewed participatory budgeting efforts as a form of authentic community engagement.

Council Chief of Staff Recruitment Process Update

Shaletha Dyson, Department of Human Resources Deputy Director, Senior, provided the committee with an update on the Council Chief of Staff recruitment process. Ms. Dyson stated that the goal is to have a candidate chosen with a start date no later than May 1, 2025. Ms. Dyson also stated more details would be provided at a future closed session of Council.

Consideration of Appointments to Boards, Commissions and Similar Entities

There were no appointments for consideration.

Paper(s) for Consideration

There were no papers for consideration.

Reports of Standing Committees

City Council standing committee chairs provided members with an update regarding committee action.

Discussion Item(s)

There were no discussion items.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.