



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
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Meeting Minutes Organizational Development Standing Committee

Monday, April 7, 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
The Honorable Kenya Gibson – Member
The Honorable Nicole Jones – Member (early departure)
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Member (late arrival)
The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Member
The Honorable Reva Trammell – Member (early departure)

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 4:05 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 Ellen Robertson moved to amend the agenda as follows:

2. [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 May 5, 2025 Organizational Development
Standing Committee

[CD.2025.066](#) Organizational Development Board Vacancy Report - April 7, 2025

To be continued to the May 5, 2025 Organizational Development
Standing Committee

The motion was seconded and approved: Ayes 8, Breton, Gibson, Jones, Robertson, Trammell, Abubaker, Jordan, Newbille. Noes None. Lynch had not yet arrived.

Approval of Minutes

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

[CD.2025.078](#) March 3, 2025 - Organizational Development Meeting Minutes

Reports from City Administration, Council Staff and Other Parties

HNTB Final Report

Scott Morris, Director of Public Utilities, and Robert Page, HNTB Vice President, provided the committee with a presentation that addressed HNTB's final after-action assessment report regarding the city's loss of water service in January 2025. The report outlined the scope of the investigation, investigation process, causes of the failure, investigation findings, recommendations, and corrective actions in progress.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

[CD.2025.111](#) HNTB Presentation

Member Sarah Abubaker asked when will Hagerty Consulting finish its review of the city's emergency communication systems, and when will the city be provided the results.

Interim Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Sabrina Joy-Hogg stated that Hagerty Consulting is scheduled to conclude its review by May 9, 2025. Interim CAO Joy-Hogg also stated that Hagerty is reviewing the city's future response to emergencies to coincide with an after-action report on the city's emergency response to the January 6, 2025 water crisis.

DPU Director Scott Morris confirmed that he was preparing a matrix that would address HNTB's preliminary, interim, and final reports.

Member Kenya Gibson asked why the final report did not address internal communications that occurred prior to January 6, 2025. Member Gibson also asked about Council receiving details about how the necessary \$5,000,000 in water crisis recovery costs were spent.

Mr. Page stated that the report was an after-action review, and that HNTB did not review communications prior to the event because of the potentially large scope of a necessary search.

DPU Director Morris stated DPU has a list of current costs and certain projects still being planned. Director Morris informed the committee that he was hopeful to have a more detailed breakdown provided to Council by the middle of April 2025.

Member Andrew Breton asked how will Council know the infrastructure and employee training efforts recommended by the HNTB final report are being fulfilled.

DPU Director Morris stated that DPU would keep Councilmembers informed through direct communication or committee updates about corrective actions taken by DPU.

Member Ellen Robertson discussed with Mr. Page and DPU Director Morris the mechanical and human errors that created the loss of water crisis. Member Robertson also asked about how the upcoming city budget would fund needed DPU staffing positions.

DPU Director Morris stated that DPU had made organizational restructuring at the water treatment facility, and that an additional staff person would be added to each shift throughout the entire 24 hours of a day.

Member Abubaker asked about staffing positions within DPU and inquired about what positions were most needed to either operate the water treatment facility or implement new DPU standard operating procedures.

Member Stephanie Lynch arrived at 4:59 p.m., and was seated.

DPU Director Morris stated that the staff restructuring at the water treatment facility would be in response to staffing needs highlighted by the loss of water crisis.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan asked about the city partnering with surrounding counties on regional water service efforts.

DPU Director Morris stated that DPU is meeting more frequently with surrounding county utility leadership to discuss capital improvement projects and service quality.

Interim CAO Joy-Hogg stated that any transition to a regional collaborative water service entity would take several years of discussion and work. Interim CAO Joy-Hogg also stated that the city was inviting utility partners to have more involvement and opportunities for oversight and input related to the city's water service.

Member Stephanie Lynch asked if DPU customer service would be impacted by proposed staffing changes.

DPU Director Morris stated customer service would not be impacted as staffing structure was reorganized to improve customer service.

Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR)

Sheila White, Director of Finance, provided the committee with an update on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. Sean Walker, Principal, with the city's external accounting firm Clifton Larson Allen (CLA), was also present and provided additional information to the committee regarding CLA's audit of the city's finances.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

[CD.2025.110](#) FY 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report

Member Kenya Gibson asked about the impact and process of amending the city's budget throughout the fiscal year. Member Gibson also stated it would be helpful to have the ability to review the history and current status of the FY 2025 city budget as Council reviews the mayor's proposed FY 2026 city budget.

Interim Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Sabrina Joy-Hogg addressed the process of budget amendments being reviewed by City Council through ordinances.

Member Gibson asked additional questions about specific budget amendments related to allocations to non-departmental agencies.

Interim CAO Joy-Hogg stated city administration would provide more details regarding Members Gibson's questions, and she noted that some of the budget amendments related to non-departmental agencies was the result of the city receiving American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

Finance Director Sheila White provided additional details about the process for administering the ACFR and the reported results. Ms. White stated that the city was in a strong and stable financial position.

Member Ellen Robertson informed city administration that additional discussion regarding the ACFR would occur at the April 16, 2025, Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting.

Member Stephanie Lynch discussed with city administration the importance and impact of bond ratings on the city's financial abilities. Member Lynch also asked about certain financial concerns such as tax collection and pension liability. Member Lynch requested information about the city's tax collection rate compared to surrounding counties.

Finance Director White stated that the city took necessary steps to address the pension liability concern.

Member Sarah Abubaker asked about Richmond Retirement System (RRS) contribution amounts from previous city budgets and why certain years had larger amounts.

Finance Director White stated that the large increase noted by Member Abubaker was when the city initiated pension obligation bonds and then transferred received revenue to the RRS.

Member Reva Trammell asked about action taken to increase tax collection efforts.

Finance Director White stated she would provide information about cigarette and delinquent real estate tax collection efforts.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan asked about the Gas Utility Enterprise Fund. Vice Chair Jordan stated that Council does not get to review contracts related to the fund, and she requested that Council be provided a presentation or report on the matter.

Consideration of Appointments to Boards, Commissions and Similar Entities

There were no appointments for consideration.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance was considered:

1. [ORD. 2025-051](#) To amend City Code §§ 2-1199, concerning the duties of the Participatory Budgeting Steering Commission, and 2-1200 concerning administration, for the purpose of providing a stipend to Commission members and allowing the Commission to create ad hoc committees.

Patrons: President Newbille

Chair Cynthia Newbille and Interim Council Chief of Staff Matthew Slaats provided an introduction and additional information regarding the proposed ordinance.

Member Kenya Gibson asked about the budget impact of the ordinance, and she also asked about compensation provided to members of other boards and commissions.

Chair Newbille stated that members of certain boards, commissions and authorities are provided compensation. Chair Newbille also stated that additional review of compensation should occur to help with recruitment, specifically the recruitment of city youth.

Member Trammell stated her concerns about certain boards and commissions receiving compensation rather than others.

Member Stephanie Lynch stated her concerns about the duplication of public engagement efforts throughout city government. Member Lynch also stated that, if adopted, the funding to accommodate Participatory Budgeting Steering Commission stipends should be transferred from city administration's budget for public engagement.

Chair Newbille stated that the Governmental Operations Standing Committee would be tasked with reviewing boards and commissions membership compensation.

Member Ellen Robertson inquired about Participatory Budgeting Steering Commission structure, budget, and membership.

Interim Council Chief of Staff Matthew Slaats provided information about the commission creating an ad hoc committee to review budget proposals, and he addressed Participatory Budgeting Commission operational costs.

Member Reva Trammell stated she supported participatory budgeting but noted her concerns about the process and alleged public misinformation.

There were no further comments or discussions and Vice Chair Katherine Jordan moved to forward ORD. 2025-051 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 8, Breton, Gibson, Jones, Lynch, Trammell, Abubaker, Jordan, Newbille. Noes None. Robertson was excused.

Reports of Standing Committees

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

Chair Cynthia Newbille informed members that Council staff previously drafted a informative summary of Council Standing Committee actions, which was previously provided to members.

Will Perkins, Council Senior Legislative Manager, provide more information about the purpose of summary, and he stated that printed copies would be provided at the next Organizational Development Standing Committee meeting.

Member Nicole Jones left the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Education and Human Services Chair Stephanie Lynch provided members with a summary of the March 26, 2025 Education and Human Services Special meeting.

Member Reva Trammell left the meeting at 6:23 p.m.

Discussion Item(s)

There were no discussion items.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.