



City of Richmond

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Richmond, VA 23219
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DRAFT Meeting Minutes Education and Human Services Standing Committee

Thursday, April 11, 2024

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Committee and Other Council Members in Attendance

The Honorable Stephanie Lynch - Chair
The Honorable Cynthia Newbille - Vice Chair
The Honorable Nicole Jones - Member
The Honorable Ellen Robertson - Councilmember (early departure)
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert - Council Vice President (late arrival and early departure)

Staff and Others in Attendance

Joyce Davis, Council Policy Analyst
Greg Lukanuski, Deputy City Attorney
Nahdiyah Muhammad, Assistant City Clerk
Pamela Nichols, Council Management Analyst
Adam Poser, Deputy Council Chief of Staff
Candice Reid, City Clerk
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Stephanie Lynch called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m., and presided.

Evacuation Announcement and Public Speaker Guidelines

Upon the Chair's request, Assistant City Clerk Nahdiyah Muhammad provided information on the appropriate manner in which the Council Chamber is to be evacuated in the event of an emergency along with public speaker guidelines.

Electronic Participation

Pursuant to Rule III(D)(4)(b) of Council's Rules of Procedure, Member Nicole Jones 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 committee members present were required to adopt a motion to approve Member Jones' 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 those members physically assembled to approve Member Jones' participation in the meeting by electronic communication means.

Vice Chair Cynthia Newbille moved to allow Member Nicole Jones to participate in the meeting by electronic communication means. The motion unanimously approved.

Public Comment Period

Omari Al-Qadaffi, Legal Aid Justice Center, addressed the committee regarding miscalculations made with Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) tenant repayment agreements.

Jacob Thompson addressed the committee regarding homelessness in the city and the lack of a sufficient inclement weather shelter. Mr. Thompson also addressed his current experience with homelessness.

Aanu-Oluwapo Adewusi, WoMen of Connections Ministry Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Founder, addressed the committee regarding a lack of assistance for homeless individuals experiencing developmental disabilities.

Nancy Williams, Three Gifts to You Ministries, gave thanks to Council for addressing shelter needs. Ms. Williams stated that there is a need for more services that offer showers for the unhoused population and individuals with mental disabilities.

Susan Rivers, Blessing Warriors volunteer, addressed the committee regarding homelessness in the city. Ms. Rivers stated that issues with homelessness continue to grow with little to no resources available.

Lorraine Chew addressed the committee regarding the impending closing of the inclement weather shelter. Ms. Chew also stated her concerns with the recent increase of evictions and the resources that will be available to individuals facing homelessness.

Brian Bills addressed the committee and stated his concerns regarding the impact of RRHA evictions on residents and city services.

Rhonda Sneed, Blessing Warriors Executive Director, addressed the committee regarding the impact of the impending closing of the inclement weather shelter. Ms. Sneed also addressed the committee regarding her concerns about RRHA evictions.

Bridgette Whitaker stated appreciation to Council for moving forward with addressing homelessness in the city, and she stated her concerns about the proper calculations of the homeless population in the city.

Committee members requested an update from Steven Nesmith, RRHA Chief Executive Officer (CEO), regarding impending evictions of RRHA residents.

Chair Stephanie Lynch stated that RRHA families are facing potential evictions, and she requested an update from RRHA regarding impending evictions.

Vice Chair Cynthia Newbille stated that she had previous meetings with RRHA and city administration regarding the potential evictions of RRHA families, and how to stop or reduce the number of families facing evictions.

Steven Nesmith, RRHA Chief Executive Officer (CEO), addressed the committee regarding the running balance of owed rent from RRHA residents and pending evictions.

Marilyn Olds, President of the Richmond Tenants' Organization and President of RRHA Creighton Court Council, addressed the committee about the efforts made to encourage RRHA residents to comply with rental agreements.

Chair Lynch provided the committee with statements from current RRHA residents that are facing eviction. Chair Lynch inquired about the current \$3 million debt that has accumulated.

CEO Nesmith stated that one of RRHA's goals is to settle the current \$3 million debt owed by RRHA residents.

Chair Lynch stated that there are questions regarding the accuracy of the amount owed due to concerns with rent calculations.

Kenyatta Green, RRHA Senior Vice President of Affordable Housing, stated the required documents to validate income are reviewed by property management and rental amounts are calculated using gross pay and not net pay. Ms. Green also stated that there are difficulties when RRHA does not obtain all necessary documents to review certain cases.

Chair Lynch stated that the disconnect with residents and property management are hindering the processes needed for proper rental calculations.

Ms. Green stated that an adult's income being considered in rent calculations is not a RRHA rule but an United States Housing and Urban Development (HUD) rule.

Vice Chair Cynthia Newbille stated that the 28 cases of RRHA families facing eviction need to be reviewed to determine the next steps. Vice Chair Newbille also stated that putting a pause on the 28 evictions will allow more time for review.

Council Vice President Ann-Frances Lambert arrived at 3:13 p.m., and was seated.

Ms. Green stated that 24 out of the 28 families identified are still under review.

Member Nicole Jones expressed appreciation to RRHA for their efforts. Ms. Jones also stated that there needs to be a long-term plan that will create sustainability for RRHA families.

Council Vice President Ann-Frances Lambert departed the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

The committee had further discussion with RRHA leadership and administration regarding impending evictions of RRHA residents.

Presentation(s)

There were no presentations.

Discussion Item(s)

Richmond Public Schools (RPS) and Richmond School Board Updates

Jason Kamras, Richmond Public Schools Superintendent, provided the committee with an update regarding RPS.

Chair Stephanie Lynch requested collaboration on identifying and reaching out to families that are affected by possible RRHA evictions.

Superintendent Kamras stated that the Governor vetoed the opportunity for localities to put forward a referendum for a 1% sales tax to support school construction. Superintendent Kamras also stated that amendments were made to the state budget to reduce funds provided by the at risk add-on.

Vice Chair Cynthia Newbille inquired about the loss of funds due to a decrease in state funding and what that could mean for the city.

Superintendent Kamras stated that he is not sure of the impact as the state budget is not finalized but there will be millions of dollars lost.

Update from the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Human Services

Traci DeShazor, DCAO for Human Services, provided the committee with an update regarding Human Services.

Chair Stephanie Lynch inquired about the potential for collaboration with stakeholders.

DCAO DeShazor continued to provide the committee with an update regarding homeless services.

Chair Lynch stated that there are missing components regarding the development of the housing resource center and the lack of an intake process for homeless individuals. Chair Lynch requested a follow up regarding potential partnerships with the city.

Dominic Barrett, Office of Human Services Strategic Projects and Grants Advisor, was available to provide information regarding services provided by non-departmental agencies.

The committee continued review of the FY 23 Non-Departmental presentation.

[CD.2024.111](#) FY 23 Non-Departmental Charitable Grants Summary Report

Attachments: [FY23 Non-Departmental Charitable Grants Summary Report](#)

[CD.2024.112](#) Resource Center Presentation

Attachments: [Resource Center EHS Presentation](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance and resolution were considered:

1. [ORD. 2024-096](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Health Equity Trust Fund Grant Contract between the City of Richmond and the Richmond and Henrico Public Health Foundation for the purpose of continued operations of the Health Equity Trust Fund, which was created to support and strengthen community efforts to address health disparities and the disproportionate burden of adverse health effects.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2024-096](#)

2. [RES. 2024-R013](#) To support an application to the Virginia Department of Transportation's Transportation Alternatives Program for the purpose of funding Safe Routes to School programs at certain Richmond public schools and to commit to the required agreements of the Virginia Department of Transportation's Transportation Alternatives Program.

Patrons: Mayor Stoney and Ms. Lynch

Attachments: [Res. No. 2024-R013](#)

Public Hearing

There were no public hearing speakers.

There were no comments or discussions and Vice Chair Cynthia Newbille moved to forward ORD. 2024-096 and RES. 2024-R013 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Board Vacancies

Pamela Nichols, Council Management Analyst, was available to review board applications for consideration by the committee.

[CD.2024.103](#) Board Vacancy Report

Attachments: [20240411 EHS Board Vacancy Report](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Chair Stephanie Lynch moved to continue consideration of the board vacancies to the May 9, 2024, Education and Human Services Standing Committee meeting. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes

There were no corrections or amendments to the meeting minutes of the Thursday, February 8, 2024 and the Thursday, March 14, 2024 committee meetings, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

[CD.2024.072](#) February 8, 2024 - Education & Human Services Standing Committee Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [20240208 EHS Minutes - DRAFT](#)

[CD.2024.094](#) March 14, 2024 - Education & Human Services Standing Committee Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [20240314 EHS Minutes - DRAFT](#)

Staff Report

Council staff provided the committee with the April Education & Human Services staff report.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.