



City of Richmond

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

DRAFT Meeting Minutes Public Safety Standing Committee

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – City Hall

Committee Members and other Councilmembers in Attendance

The Honorable Reva Trammell – Chair
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Vice Chair (late arrival and early departure)
The Honorable Sarah Abubaker – Member

Staff and Others in Attendance

Laura Drewry, City Attorney
Greg Lukanuski, Deputy City Attorney
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Steve Taylor, Council Policy Analyst
Will Perkins, Senior Council Legislative Services Manager
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Reva Trammell called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m., and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Public Speaker Guidelines

Upon the Chair's request, Assistant City Clerk Nahdiah Muhammad provided information on the appropriate way to evacuate the Council Chamber in an emergency along with public speaker guidelines.

Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of February 25, 2025, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

[CD.2025.083](#) February 25, 2025 - Public Safety Standing Committee Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [20250225 Public Safety Minutes - DRAFT](#)

Public Comment Period

Keith Andes, President of the Richmond Fire Fighters Association Local IAFF 995, addressed the committee regarding non-essential employees that were required to work during a declared state of emergency for a winter storm and did not receive additional pay.

Discussion Item(s)**Conditions of John Marshall Courts Building**

Jacqueline McClenney, Richmond Circuit Court Chief Judge, discussed the conditions of the John Marshall Courts building.

Vice Chair Stephanie Lynch arrived at 1:13 p.m., and was seated.

Chair Reva Trammell asked about safety concerns for staff working in the John Marshall Courts building.

Chief Judge McClenney provided the committee with infrastructure safety concerns, such as the roof's expired life expectancy, HVAC issues, frequent plumbing leaks, sewage overflows, accessibility, a lack of electronic locks installed on all doors, and no interior courtroom cameras.

Chair Trammell asked about safety concerns regarding inmates in the courthouse.

Chief Judge McClenney stated that there was a limited amount of holding cells in the courthouse for inmates. Chief Judge McClenney also stated there was a limited number of sheriffs available to staff the courthouse.

Ed Jewett, Circuit Court Clerk, addressed the committee and stated there was little separation between public and private areas, and that sheriffs would have to occasionally move inmates through the judges' private quarters.

Chief Judge McClenney stated that when the lock up elevators malfunctioned, sheriffs had to use more employee facing elevators to transfer inmates. Chief Judge McClenney also stated that she met with Gail Johnson, Director of General Services, every month to discuss concerns that could be addressed immediately.

Chair Trammell asked about previous mayoral administration agreements to renovate the John Marshall Courts building.

Chief Judge McClenney stated that previous mayoral administrations had agreed to renovate the courthouse as far back as 1994. Chief Judge McClenney also stated that in 2021, there were meetings held with stakeholders to discuss renovations.

Chair Trammell asked about a Department of Homeland Security assessment conducted in 2016, of the conditions of the courts building and if the report was available to the public.

Chief Judge McClenney provided the committee with the findings from a 2016 Department of Homeland Security assessment. Chief Judge McClenney stated 19 vulnerabilities were found, and that she did not know if the report was available to the public.

Chair Trammell asked if there was a report by the state Department of General Services available to the public.

Chief Judge McClenney stated the city should have the report conducted by the state Department of General Services.

Member Sarah Abubaker asked if the John Marshall Courts building would be included in the Downtown Core Transformation assessment grant.

Sabrina Joy-Hogg, Interim Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), stated the John Marshall Courts building would be included in the Downtown Core Transformation grant assessment. Interim CAO Joy-Hogg also stated that there had been an estimate developed and city administration was working on making the assessment more cost effective.

Member Abubaker asked for the estimate to renovate the courthouse.

Interim CAO Joy-Hogg stated the estimate to renovate the courthouse was \$350 million. Ms. Joy-Hogg also stated that the city could not afford the estimate to rebuild the courthouse, and she added that Chief Judge McClenney was open to consolidating the cost of the renovations.

Member Abubaker asked if previous assessment recommendations will be incorporated into the renovations of the courthouse.

Interim CAO Joy-Hogg stated previously addressed safety concerns would be taken into consideration.

Member Abubaker asked was the current location of the courthouse the reason for the \$350 million cost and if its location could be changed.

Chief Judge McClenney stated the location of the courthouse is factored into the cost of the renovations, but the cost itself was largely due to the cost of construction. Chief Judge McClenney also stated that the courthouse needed to remain easily accessible to the public. Chief Judge McClenney further stated that all six judges would have to agree to relocate the courthouse.

Interim CAO Joy-Hogg stated that any courthouse renovations required moving courthouse functions to ensure no disruptions in service.

Member Abubaker stressed the importance of making sure that the future courthouse functioned with increased capacity as the city grew.

Clerk Jewett stated that the location of the courthouse needed to remain in a centralized area to ensure easy accessibility to the public and remain close to other city agencies.

Vice Chair Stephanie Lynch stated there was a \$1.7 million appropriation to conduct a study regarding the conditions of the John Marshall Courts building. Vice Chair Lynch asked about the findings of the study and using unobligated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to renovate the courthouse.

Interim CAO Joy-Hogg stated all but \$50,000 in APRA funding had been obligated and could not be moved from where the funding was previously assigned.

Lynne Lancaster, Deputy Director for the Department of General Services, provided the committee with additional information regarding a study that was conducted to determine a renovation assessment of \$350 million.

Presentation(s)

Emergency Medical Dispatch Compliance

Chip Decker, Richmond Ambulance Authority (RAA) Chief Executive Officer (CEO), presented the committee with information regarding emergency medical dispatch compliance.

[CD.2025.088](#) March 25, 2025 - Emergency Medical Dispatch Compliance

Attachments: [20250325 Emergency Medical Dispatch Compliance Presentation](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

911 EMS Call Processing Times

Jackie Crotts, Technology Director of the Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response (DECPR), and Stephen Willoughby, Director of the Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response (DECPR), presented the committee with information regarding 911 emergency medical services (EMS) call processing times.

[CD.2025.100](#) March 25, 2025 - 911 EMS Call Processing Times

Attachments: [20250325 911 EMS Call Processing Times Presentation](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Member Sarah Abubaker asked why quality assurance scores were not included in the presentation.

Director Willoughby stated DECPR received quality assurance scores from the International Academics of Emergency Dispatch (IAED) and the scores could be provided to the committee. Director Willoughby also stated that DECPR had its challenges and had not experienced calls being sent to voicemail.

Member Abubaker played a constituent 911 call that was placed on hold. Member Abubaker asked about the percentage of 911 calls that were placed on hold and received an automated message.

Director Willoughby stated that he would provide the committee with the requested data at the April Public Safety Standing Committee meeting. Director Willoughby also stated that 90% of calls received were answered within 20 seconds.

Member Abubaker asked about the percentage of emergency calls that were accurately categorized and shared constituent concerns regarding emergency services.

Director Willoughby stated that he needed to review IAED data, and that RAA was responsible for dispatching ambulances.

Member Abubaker asked for strategies that RAA used to improve response times.

CEO Decker stated that emergency calls must be categorized correctly for RAA to promptly dispatch emergency medical services. CEO Decker also stated that employee retention played a key role in ensuring that dispatch services were accurate.

Member Abubaker asked about the staffing for emergency medical technicians (EMTs).

Member Abubaker inquired about the city annual financial commitment to RAA.

CEO Decker provided the committee with further information regarding EMT staffing and dispatch. CEO Decker also stated the city provided \$9 million to RAA on an annual basis and a majority of RAA funding came from federal programs.

Vice Chair Stephanie Lynch asked about the evaluation to determine the transition of emergency medical services calls from RAA to DECPR.

CEO Decker stated that the recommendation was to provide more centralized services for medical dispatch services.

Vice Chair Lynch requested quality assurance metrics and budget information from RAA and DECPR for comparison.

Vice Chair Stephanie Lynch departed the meeting at 2:36 p.m.

CEO Decker continued to discuss emergency medical dispatch compliance with the committee.

Keith Andes, President of the Richmond Fire Fighters Association IAFF Local 995, asked for the committee to allow additional comments from Ryan Clark, E-Board Member of the Richmond Professional Fire Fighters Association Local 995.

The committee allowed for additional comments.

Ryan Clark, Communications Officer for DECPR and E-Board member of the Richmond Fire Fighters Association IAFF Local 995, addressed the committee regarding emergency medical and fire dispatch. Mr. Clark stated that in July of 2024, IAFF members were assigned the responsibility of providing emergency medical dispatch for EMS without proper training. Mr. Clark further addressed the challenges caused by the transitions.

Member Abubaker asked what the current vacancies were for emergency dispatch operators.

Director Willoughby stated DECPR currently had eight emergency dispatch operator vacancies and that eight new dispatch operators would begin on April 7, 2025.

Director Willoughby continued to discuss emergency medical dispatch services with the committee.

Chair Trammell asked about recent incidents that occurred on 4644 Richmond Highway.

Chief of Police Rick Edwards provided the committee with information regarding a recent the incidents.

Paper(s) for Consideration

There were no papers for consideration.

Board Vacancies

There were no board vacancies.

Staff Report

Council staff provided the committee with the March Public Safety staff report.

[CD.2025.096](#) March 25, 2025 - Public Safety Staff Report

Attachments: [20250325 Public Safety Staff Report](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.