



Richmond City Council

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

DRAFT Meeting Minutes Organizational Development Standing Committee

Tuesday, September 2, 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
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch, Member (late arrival via MS Teams)
The Honorable Ellen Robertson, Member
The Honorable Reva Trammell, Member

Others in Attendance

Laura Drewry, City Attorney
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Tabrica Rentz, Deputy City Attorney
Kiley Kesecker, Deputy City Clerk
RJ Warren, Council Chief of Staff

Call to Order

Chair Cynthia Newbille called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Announcement and Public Speaker Guidelines

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

Chair Newbille announced that, pursuant to Rule III (D)(4)(b) of Council's Rules of Procedure, Member Stephanie Lynch requested to participate in the meeting via Microsoft Teams from the Double Tree Hotel located at 4156 Vista Road in Tucker, Georgia, as she is there for work.

Councilor Nicole Jones moved to allow Councilor Lynch to participate in the meeting by electronic communication means. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes

There were no meeting minutes for approval.

Reports from City Administration, Council Staff and Other Parties

1. Regional Water Coordination Update ~ CAO Odie Donald II and Public Utilities Director Scott Morris

[CD.2025.260](#) Regional Water Coordination Update

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Odie Donald II and Director of Public Utilities Scott Morris provided an update on the regional water coordination efforts, including a timeline and next steps in the process.

Member Stephanie Lynch joined the meeting via Microsoft Teams at 4:42 p.m.

Member Kenya Gibson expressed concerns with a proposed regional data center and the increased demand it would have on the city water supply. She added that such a disproportionately large use of city water could potentially pass undue rate increases on to residential customers.

Director Morris provided information on the acceptable parameters for commercial water use in the city.

Member Gibson stated that she would like to have more substantial materials available for review as well as materials from the city's regional partners.

Member Sarah Abubaker asked for clarification of contractual changes and anticipated state contribution, adding that the latter is contingent on regional contracts and partnerships.

Director Morris stated that they are projecting for all rate models and funding scenarios.

Member Ellen Robertson stated that she is hopeful that a better understanding of the conditions leading to the water crisis will lead to and inform the necessary investments in water systems and infrastructure moving forward. She also stated her concern with ensuring that water infrastructure is safe and the message is transparent.

CAO Donald agreed with Member Robertson and echoed her emphasis on the importance of transparency, adding that the old water system has been functional for 100 years, but is now in need of attention.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan stated that she would like to have an update on all utility rates.

Chair Cynthia Newbille asked when the rate models will be ready.

Director Morris replied that they should be ready within the week.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance was considered:

2. [ORD. 2025-188](#) To amend Ord. No. 2025-057, adopted May 12, 2025, which adopted the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget and made appropriations thereto, by transferring \$5,800,000.00 from the "Delinquent Tax Sales" special fund, and to amend Ord. No. 2025-057, adopted May 12, 2025, which adopted the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 General Fund Budget, by (i) creating a new line item in the Outside Agencies and Central Appropriations agency called "Restitution Payments," and (ii) appropriating such transferred funds to such new line item in the Outside Agencies and Central Appropriations agency for the purpose of providing funding for a restitution payment pursuant to Va. Code § 8.01-195.13.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

CAO Donald provided an update on the funding for restitution payments, why specific funds are being used, and the state requirements related to the restitution payment.

Public Hearing

Steve Saltzberg addressed the Committee, stating his opposition to funds from delinquent tax sales being used for anything other than affordable housing, which is the intended purpose.

Member Kenya Gibson stated that the use of the word "shall" in the language of the law as written is problematic, adding that changes need to be made to policy regarding the affordable housing fund and general fund.

Member Ellen Robertson stated that while she supports giving Mr. Grimm what he is owed, she disagrees with the city being required to match the state restitution payment, the short time frame given in which to make the payment, and the use of funds meant for affordable housing to make the payment.

CAO Donald provided information on the delinquent tax sales process, program administration, accrual process, and competing budget priorities.

Member Reva Trammell stated that City Council is getting blamed for the results of a law passed at the state level, but it has at least started the conversation on affordable housing.

Member Sarah Abubaker stated that Council agrees on the merits of restitution payments, but has little to do with appropriations, which are handled administratively, adding that she would like Council and City Administration to work together as equal partners. She also asked where the \$9.8 million was back in March.

CAO Donald clarified his previous statements regarding the allocation of funds and stated that the funding process will be made clear during the budget cycle, which he also hoped would be a collaborative partnership between City Administration and Council.

Member Andrew Breton stated that he does not want the narrative to be that money was taken away from affordable housing but noted that the situation has uncovered several issues in the budget related to affordable housing funding.

Member Robertson opined that Council should receive an update on affordable housing at least biennially, and that she would like to see better reporting on the carrying out of legislation.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan stated that the Governmental Operations and other standing committee meetings will be receiving such reports in the near future.

Chair Cynthia Newbille stated that the legislation needed to be fixed, and a work group established as soon as possible to begin working towards a solution to provide more reliable, ongoing funds for affordable housing moving forward.

Member Gibson stated that she will be voting “no” on the paper and would like to see alternative funding sources identified.

There was no further discussion and Vice Chair Katherine Jordan moved to forward ORD. 2025-188 to Council with the recommendation to approve. The motion was seconded and approved: Ayes 6, Breton, Lynch, Trammell, Abubaker, Jordan, Newbille. Noes 3, Gibson, Jones, Robertson.

The following resolution was considered:

1. [RES. 2025-R020](#) To establish the Civilian Review Board’s policies and procedures pursuant to Code of Virginia, § 9.1-601(D) and City Code § 2-1202.4(f).

Patrons: Ms. Trammell

Forwarded to the September 8, 2025 Council meeting with recommendation to approve

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Joseph Lowery, Civilian Review Board Manager, provided a brief overview of the establishment and functions of the Civilian Review Board.

Public Hearing

There was no one present who wished to speak.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan moved to forward RES. 2025-R020 to Council with the recommendation to approve. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Consideration of Appointments to Boards, Commissions and Similar Entities

[CD.2025.228](#) Organizational Development Board Vacancy Report

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Civilian Review Board Manager Joseph Lowery provided an overview of the board interview and selection process, and listed the individuals recommended for appointment to the Civilian Review Board as follows:

Angela Fontaine
Jannie Hawkins
Evan Feinman
Rafaella Sale

Council Management Analyst Pamela Nichols noted that Mayor Avula has identified four individuals for mayoral appointment, which Council will be notified of following formal Council action.

Member Ellen Robertson left the meeting at 6:07 p.m.

Member Reva Trammell requested that the appointments be continued to allow more time for the review of applications and information provided.

Member Andrew Breton stated that the Civilian Review Board is charged with tasks that are too important to delay any longer, and he would prefer to make the appointments as soon as possible.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan clarified the staggered term lengths of new board members.

In acknowledgement of the concerns of both Member Trammell and Member Breton, Chair Cynthia Newbille suggested that consideration be continued to the September 8 informal meeting, before making the decision at the formal meeting the same night.

Vice Chair Katherine Jordan moved to continue the appointment consideration for the Civilian Review Board to the September 8, 2025 Informal Council meeting and then consideration of final appointments at the September 8, 2025 Formal meeting with the recommendation to approve. The motion was seconded and approved: Ayes 8, Breton, Gibson, Jones, Lynch, Trammell, Abubaker, Jordan, Newbille. Noes 0. Robertson was absent.

Reports from City Administration, Council Staff and Other Parties

2. Budget Review Task Force Recommendations ~ Council Chief of Staff RJ Warren

[CD.2025.261](#) Budget Review Task Force Final Presentation

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Council Chief of Staff RJ Warren presented an overview of the Budget Review Task Force recommendations. The presentation highlighted early collaboration, efficient work sessions, standardized amendments, enhanced engagement, an annual review, and a restructured timeline to include an additional 16 days for review of the mayor's proposed budget.

Member Kenya Gibson expressed concerns that the newest members of Council were not included in the Budget Review Task Force and would like more clarity on exactly what cuts are being made and more transparency with the public. She added that she would like to discuss non-departmental requests at the next Organizational Development meeting.

Member Sarah Abubaker agreed that new members should have been on the task force and emphasized the importance of open, regular communications. She also stated that the notion of district priorities is harmful, and those priorities need to be established as Council priorities.

Member Nicole Jones stated that the budget process still needs work, and it is important to consider the bigger picture when making decisions that everyone is accountable for.

Member Andrew Breton emphasized the importance of the earlier phases of collaboration and their benefits.

Member Reva Trammell stated that Council needs to know exactly how much money it will have coming from the Mayor's Office.

Chair Cynthia Newbille stated that the restructured timeline is beneficial and will allow for strategic intentionality.

Member Trammell left the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

There were no further questions or comments.

Reports of Standing Committees

There were no reports of standing committees.

Discussion Item(s)

There were no discussion items.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.