



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
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Minutes

Education and Human Services Standing Committee

Thursday, October 1, 2020

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – Virtual Meeting

Committee Members and Staff in Attendance

The Honorable Kristen Larson – Chair
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Committee Member (early departure)
The Honorable Andreas Addison – Alternate Member
The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Councilmember (late arrival and early departure)
The Honorable Kimberly Gray – Councilmember (early departure)
Samson Anderson, Council Budget Analyst
Joyce Davis, Council Policy Analyst
Pamela Nichols, Assistant City Clerk
M. Janet Palmer, Deputy City Attorney
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Dominique J. Thaxton, Assistant City Clerk
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Absent

The Honorable Chris Hilbert – Vice Chair

Call to Order

Chair Kristen Larson called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m., and presided.

Electronic Meeting Announcement

Assistant City Clerk Dominique J. Thaxton, in accordance with Ordinance No. 2020-093, adopted April 9, 2020, as amended by Ordinance No. 2020-183, adopted August 20, 2020, announced the meeting would be held through electronic communication means. Assistant City Clerk Thaxton stated notice of the meeting was provided to the public through a public information advisory issued on September 24, 2020, and through Legistar on the city website in accordance with usual practice. She also stated members of the public were encouraged to provide comments in writing prior to the meeting and all comments received prior to 10:00 a.m., on Thursday, October 1, 2020, were provided to committee members. Ms. Thaxton indicated that members of the public who signed up to speak and provide comment would be called to speak at the appropriate time.

Citizen Speaker Guidelines

Upon the Chair's request, Assistant City Clerk Dominique J. Thaxton provided citizen speaker guidelines.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comment speakers.

Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of Thursday, September 3, 2020 and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

Board Vacancies

Pamela Nichols, Assistant City Clerk, reviewed board applications for consideration by the committee.

Councilor Ellen Robertson joined the meeting at 2:08 p.m.

Chair Kristen Larson requested that consideration of board applications be continued to the November 5, 2020 Education and Human Services Standing Committee meeting, to allow the committee additional time to review the applications.

Member Stephanie Lynch concurred with the request for further time to review the applications.

Alternate Member Andreas Addison moved to continue consideration of the following board applications to the November 5, 2020 Education and Human Services Standing Committee meeting, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

<u>Board Name</u>	<u>Criteria for Appointment</u>	<u>Applicant Name</u>
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College Board (5 members)	Must be residents of the region that is served by the community college and should include residents from various businesses, industries, and professions being served by the community college (1 vacancy)	Dr. Brian Maiden (7th District Resident) Joshua Lee Mathews-Ailsworth (3rd District Resident)
	City Resident (1 vacancy)	Dr. Brian Maiden (7th District Resident) Joshua Lee Mathews-Ailsworth (3rd District Resident)
Richmond Behavioral Health Authority (15 members)	*	Dr. Brian Maiden (7th District Resident)
		Dr. Andrew Ramsey (3rd District Resident)
Social Services Advisory Board (9 members)	Resident (1 vacancy)	Dr. Brian Maiden (7th District Resident)
		Gerry Rawlinson (4th District Resident)

**Applicant must work or reside in the city*

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Presentations

Annual Report of J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

Dr. Paula P. Pando, President of J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, presented the committee with an overview of the annual report and the state of the community college. Dr. Pando provided committee

members with information regarding Reynolds Community College's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and plans for the 2020 academic year.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Richmond Public Schools (RPS) Legislative Advocacy Update

Jason Kamras, Superintendent of Richmond Public Schools and Matthew Stanley, Richmond Public Schools Director of Advocacy and Outreach, provided an overview of the legislative priorities for RPS and how COVID-19 has impacted the school system's goals.

Alternate Member Andreas Addison stated the importance of tracking revenue generated from online sales since the beginning of the pandemic to ensure that proceeds are directed to the RPS budget. Mr. Addison also stated that while the construction of three new schools is a wonderful accomplishment, the needs of the 41 previously existing schools should still be a priority. Alternate Member Addison inquired about what RPS is doing to support at-home learning resources for students.

Mr. Kamras shared the methods in place to support virtual learning for students and that every student that expressed need for tablets or wifi hotspots have received one. Superintendent Kamras noted the success of the meal delivery system, which serves to provide food to students facing food insecurity. Mr. Kamras expressed his gratitude to teachers and educators for their efforts in making virtual learning a seamless transition for students.

Chair Kristen Larson stated that typically City Council and RPS will compare legislative priorities to determine if there are any overlaps in goals. Chair Larson requested that the appropriate staff reach out to Matthew Stanley to collaborate on legislative priorities.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance was considered:

ORD. 2020-170

To change the use of the City-owned real estate known as the Annie Giles Community Resource Center and located at 1400 Oliver Hill Way so that such City-owned real estate will be used as an inclement weather shelter for homeless persons in the city of Richmond when the outdoor or wind chill temperature falls to 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below and when the outdoor temperature rises to 92 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, when there is a forecast of accumulation of one inch or more of rain, snow, sleet or other precipitation within a 24-hour period, or when there is a forecast that includes a warning for a hurricane, tornado or high winds.

Patron: Ms. Gray

Councilor Kimberly Gray provided an overview of ORD. 2020-170.

Citizens were provided an opportunity to offer comments in writing regarding proposed legislation on the agenda, prior to the Education and Human Services Standing Committee meeting. All written citizen comments received by the Office of the City Clerk were provided to members of the committee prior to the meeting, and are included as an Appendix to the October 1, 2020 Education and Human Services Standing Committee meeting.

Public Hearing

Lawrence Williams, President of Eastview Civic League, spoke in opposition of ORD. 2020-170 and expressed the need for the facility to be used as an occupational training center. Mr. Williams voiced concern over the lack of community input in the decided use of the resource center.

Bridgette Whitaker, Blessing Warriors RVA, Inc., spoke in support of ORD. 2020-170 and expressed concern for the fiscal implications of housing unsheltered individuals temporarily in hotels. Ms. Whitaker stated that the current non-congregate hotel method causes a reduction in the number of hotel rooms available for Richmond tourists.

Marta Leon, Blessing Warriors RVA, Inc., spoke in support of ORD. 2020-170 and the proposed use of the Annie Giles Community Resource Center. Ms. Leon stated that due to the pandemic, most vocational training events are happening virtually and it would be better for the resource center to serve the homeless population rather than remain empty.

Rhonda Sneed, Blessing Warriors RVA, Inc., spoke in support of ORD. 2020-170 and expressed the importance of inclusion of all forms of inclement weather proposed in the ordinance. Ms. Sneed shared accounts of homeless individuals who lost their lives due to exposure to inclement weather.

Chair Kristen Larson expressed support for the efforts outlined in ORD. 2020-170 but stated that the legislation may need to be amended to incorporate the strategic plans of the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care (GRCoC) providers.

Sharon Ebert, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of Economic and Community Development, presented an update of the Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan and plans for newly awarded funds. Ms. Ebert expanded by outlining the expenditure requirements of CARES Act funds and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Chair Larson inquired about how information on various service efforts for unsheltered individuals are being shared with the community.

Kelly King Horne, Executive Director of Homeward, presented an update on the action plans of the network of homeless service providers. Ms. King Horne expanded that due to the pandemic, the current strategy is to continue using non-congregate accommodations and to increase rapid rehousing.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Councilmember Gray inquired about the length of stay restrictions of the non-congregate hotel model and what other accommodations are being funded.

Ms. King Horne stated that those who are leaving the non-congregate hotel housing are typically referred to emergency housing services for case management.

Member Stephanie Lynch expressed the need for additional case management and implementation of a 24-hour homeless crisis-line. Member Lynch stated that while the efforts in ORD. 2020-170 need addressing, they are not in harmony with the strategic plans of the administration and GRCoC network.

Councilmember Gray inquired if all individuals who need housing services are receiving services and if some individuals are being discharged from the non-congregate hotel housing without additional assistance. Ms. Gray expanded by asking what measures are in place for inclement weather and emergency crisis-line management.

Member Lynch stated that some individuals cycle back through the network of emergency housing services after discharge from the hotel housing.

Chair Larson stated that the COVID-19 pandemic along with the updated strategic plans of the homeless service providers, are cause for the reevaluation of ORD. 2020-170.

Councilmember Gray expressed reluctance for withdrawing ORD. 2020-170, but offered support for continuing ORD. 2020-170 until there is more developed legislation.

Member Lynch expressed the need for new legislation that incorporates the efforts of the homeless service providers and a 24-hour crisis-line.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Alternate Member Andreas Addison moved to continue ORD. 2020-170 to the December 3, 2020 Education and Human Services Standing Committee meeting, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

Councilors Ellen Robertson and Kim Gray exited the meeting at 3:36 p.m.

The following ordinance was considered:

ORD. 2020-211

To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to accept funds in an amount up to \$3,900,000.00 from Advantage Richmond Corporation, and to assign such accepted funds to the Reserve Fund for Permanent Public Improvements established pursuant to City Code § 12-4.

Patron: Mayor Stoney

John Wack, Department of Finance Director, provided an overview of ORD. 2020-211.

Member Stephanie Lynch inquired if the funds were derived from a federal grant.

Mr. Wack stated that the funds are not derived from a federal grant and provided additional context on the function of the Advantage Richmond Corporation.

Chair Kristen Larson asked for additional information regarding the dissolution of the Advantage Richmond Corporation. Chair Larson inquired if the funds named in ORD. 2020-211 were being directed towards improvements and plans for relocating the Department of Social Services.

Mr. Wack confirmed that the funds in ORD. 2020-211 would be appropriated to the Reserve Fund for Permanent Public Improvements.

Chair Larson asked for clarification on the third party entity hired to operate the building outlined in ORD. 2020-211.

Shunda Giles, Department of Social Services Director, provided that now that the property will be city-owned, the property management contracts will be shifting from a third party entity to the Department of Public Works.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Alternate Member Andreas Addison moved to forward ORD. 2020-211 to the October 12, 2020, City Council meeting with recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

The following resolution was considered:

RES. 2020-R058

To approve the extension of the Richmond Behavioral Health Authority's performance contract for Fiscal Year 2019 and Fiscal Year 2020.

Patron: President Newbille

Member Stephanie Lynch departed the meeting at 3:46 p.m.

There were no comments or discussions and **Alternate Member Andreas Addison moved to forward RES. 2020-R058 to the October 12, 2020, City Council meeting with no recommendation, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

Discussion Item

Chair Kristen Larson requested each committee member to follow-up with individuals scheduled to address discussion items after the meeting.

A copy of the materials provided has been filed.

Staff Report

Joyce Davis, Council Policy Analyst, provided the committee with the October staff report. *A copy of the report has been filed.*

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:49 p.m.

Eastview Civic League
Allison Davis



The Honorable Mayor Levar Stoney and the Richmond City Council,

The temporary Cold Weather Shelter, previously located in the Annie Giles Center, has served its purpose for the previous two winters. As an Eastview resident, I have graciously supported the usage of our community resources to assist those in need. However, the community resources sharing did not include individuals bathing in my yard, breaking the water spicket in my back yard, resulting in higher water and sewage charges, and paying a plumber to repair the problems. Though my yard is completely fenced, I needed the assistance of RPD to remove an uninvited homeless female from inside of my fenced-in front yard, who stated that she lost something in my yard. The Eastview residents were assured by various entities that vagrancy would not be an issue in our community.

The amount of transient foot traffic, the debris left on the streets, the increase of substance usage, and the types of mental illness behaviors that I observed near my home was alarming. It is evident that despite the reassurance from city officials and organizations, the Eastview Community would not be adversely affected by allowing individuals requiring shelter during cold weather to use the Annie Giles Center, we were adversely affected. As we continue to utilize our limited resources to help build our marginalized indigenous community into a self-sustaining community by providing the needed empowerment opportunities and programs, the Annie Giles Center must return to its original purposes of supporting educational and employment improvement for unemployed and underemployed Eastview residents. It is imperative that Richmond City select a different location for appropriate and permanent housing and mental health services for individuals who are homeless to end seasonal housing shelters.

Allison Davis