



Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

Office of the Council Chief of Staff

Government Operations Standing Committee

October 22, 2025

Staff Prep Document for Councilmembers

Previous Meeting: September 24, 2025

Next Meeting:

10/22 Agenda Overview:

Ordinances & Resolutions:

1. Ord. 2025-209 (Gibson + Abubaker, amend § 2-772 on Bd/Comm. disclosures)
 - a. *To be continued*
2. Ord. 2025-210 (Gibson + Abubaker, add § 2-1361 on establishing FOIA library)
3. Ord. 2025-211 (Gibson + Abubaker, add § 2-1360 on procurement open data)
4. Ord. 2025-240 (Avula, add § 2-1361 on establishing FOIA library)

Presentations:

- Joint Energy Team (JET) Overview and Sustainable Design Standards ~ Dawn Oleksy, Program and Operations Manager, Office of Sustainability
- Green Fleet Plan Update ~ Gail Johnson, Director of the Department of General Services and Jason Arndt, Program and Operations Manager, Department of General Services

November Agenda Overview:

Presentations:

- Public Utilities & Services Commission (PUSC) Annual Report
- DPU on Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Update

Availability for Rescheduled November and December Meetings: (*) = likely best date/time)**

- Wed, 11/12 at 1pm (works for 2 of 3 members, plus alternate) ***
- Wed, 11/12 at 2pm (works for 2 of 3 members, plus alternate)
- Wed, 11/19 at 10am (works for 1 of 3 members)
- Wed, 11/19 at 10am (works for 1 of 3 members)
- Wed, 12/10 at 10am (works for 2 of 3 members)
- Wed, 12/10 at 11am (works for 1 of 3 members)
- Wed, 12/10 at 1pm (works for 3 of 3 members, plus alternate) ***
- Wed, 12/10 at 2pm (works for 3 of 3 members, plus alternate)

Ordinances & Resolutions for Consideration

1. Ordinance No. 2025-209

Patrons CMs Gibson, Abubaker

Title: To amend City Code § 2-772, concerning the filing of statements of economic interests, for the purpose of requiring more detailed disclosure forms of boards and commissions with the power to issue bonds or expend funds in excess of \$10,000 in any fiscal year.

To be continued

2. Ordinance No. 2025-210

Patrons CMs Gibson, Abubaker

Title: To amend City Code § 2-1351, concerning definitions related to open data and a transparency program, and to amend ch. 2, art. VII, div. 4 of the City Code by adding therein a new section 2-1361, concerning a Freedom of Information Act request library, for the purpose of establishing an online Freedom of Information Act library.

10/14 Amendment:

- Removed the following agencies from the FOIA Library:
 - Richmond Police Department
 - Richmond Fire Department
 - Department of Social Services
 - Richmond 911 (Dept. of Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response)
- Clarified that requests made by attorneys and/or about minor dependents are also to be treated as if they're submitted by the person requesting them.

Staff Notes:

- FOIA Library is defined as a “publicly available webpage to publish public records requests, provided documentation, and associated costs.”
- Requires publication of all public records requests online (including requests made of the City Council, Mayor, city departments, and boards and commissions).
- The FOIA library is required to include the following for each request:
 - The receipt date for each request;
 - The completion date for each request, if applicable;
 - A copy or summary of each request;
 - The department or departments responsible for fulfilling each request;
 - Any fees or costs assigned for fulfilling each request; and
 - Access to any materials produced in response to each request.
- If someone requests materials about themselves (ex: old pay stubs) the Open Data Manager may withhold materials from publication online.

3. Ordinance No. 2025-211 (as amended)

Patrons CMs Gibson, Abubaker

Title: To amend City Code § 2-1352, concerning general requirements of the open data portal, to prohibit charging fees for requesting information required to be posted in the open data portal pursuant to section 2-1360 and to amend ch. 2, art. VII, div. 4 of the City Code by adding therein a new section 2-1360, concerning required datasets, for the purpose of requiring publication of certain datasets in the open data portal.

10/14 Amendment:

- Removed requirement to post data from FY23 and FY24 (still includes FY25)
- Extended timeline for requirement to post FY25 data to 180 days after adoption (up from 90 days originally)

Staff Notes:

- This ordinance requires the publication of certain required datasets related to purchase contracts awarded by the City.
- Currently, the [Open Data Portal's "City Contracts" page](#) publishes the following:
 - Agency/Department
 - Contract Number
 - Contract Value
 - Supplier name
 - Procurement Type
 - Description
 - Type of Solicitation
 - Effective from/to dates
- This paper codifies the existence of this open data page and adds the following required datasets:
 - The dollar amount of each contract award (**added to Open Data website since this paper was introduced*)
 - Minority Business Enterprise or Emerging Small Business status
 - For Invitations for Bids, information on unsuccessful bidders including supplier names and bid amounts
 - RFP or IFB numbers, if applicable
- Further, this paper states that the City shall not charge fees for FOIA requests for data required to be published from this paper.

4. Ordinance No. 2025-240

Patrons Mayor Avula

Title: To amend City Code § 2-1351, concerning definitions related to open data and a transparency program, and to amend ch. 2, art. VII, div. 4 of the City Code by adding therein a new section 2-1361, concerning a Freedom of Information Act request library, for the purpose of establishing an online Freedom of Information Act library.

Staff Notes:

- Uses same definition of FOIA Library as Ord. 2025-210 (a “publicly available webpage to publish public records requests, provided documentation, and associated costs.”)
- Adds definition for “FOIA Manager” as the “CAO or the designee thereof.”
- Codifies use of a public rubric approved by the CAO to decide which documents to post online.
- The rubric itself is not included in the ordinance or the O&R cover page memo, but was shared in a press release published on Fri, 10/10/25:

Avula Administration Proposed FOIA Library Rubric

Category	Description
Include in FOIA Library	Releasable responsive records (some may include legally determined redactions) that are: Requested by two or more requesters; Of public interest; Central to government operational accountability.
Not Eligible for Inclusion	Records containing strong privacy, security, or confidential information that could: Endanger an individual’s safety; Compromise a minor. Records will not be posted if redaction is insufficient to protect from misuse.

Potential Questions

- Is the rubric going to be codified or posted online? Can a future administration change it?
- How will the FOIA Manager decide which requests are of public interest or central to government operational accountability?
- How will the FOIA Manager decide which requests contain strong privacy, security, or confidential information that could endanger an individual’s safety?
- Why does the proposed rubric require two or more requesters to public documents online?
- Please elaborate on plans to pilot the FOIA library in FY26 before full adoption in FY27 (July 1, 2026). Is there a plan to evaluate this year’s pilot?

Exemptions from mandatory disclosure: [link to list from VA Freedom of Information Advisory Council](#):

- Personnel information is exempt from mandatory publication (§ 2.2-3705.1 (1))
- Security systems are exempt (§ 2.2-3705.2 (2))
- Public safety, critical infrastructure, surveillance techniques are exempt (§ 2.2-3705.2 (14))
- Scholastic records are exempt (§ 2.2-3705.4 (1))
- Health records are exempt (§ 2.2-3705.5 (1))
- Working papers and correspondence are exempt (§ 2.2-3705.7 (2))

Joint Energy Team (JET) Overview & Sustainable Design Standards

Dawn Oleksy, Program and Operations manager, Office of Sustainability

Staff Notes:

- Purpose: coordinate clean energy and operational efficiency initiatives across departments.
- JET was established in FY24 and is led by OOS Energy Program Manager.
- Utility costs in FY25 = \$23 million (up from < \$18 million in FY21)
- The City's Energy Management Policy for Municipal Operations ([A.R. 7.8](#)) bans the use of personal space heaters in the workplace, due to excess demand for electricity and safety hazards.
- Oct. 2024 Sustainable Design Standards (SDS) – [link to 64-page PDF here](#)
 - Establishes planning, design, construction, and operations and maintenance (O&M) targets that move Richmond's sustainability vision from broad goals into concrete strategies.
 - Certain projects are exempt included new buildings/renovations < 10,000 square feet
 - Separate requirements for vertical and horizontal projects

Potential Questions:

- What strategies have been most effective at reducing our energy usage as a city?
- Which city departments are the primary drivers of energy use in the City?
- In which types of energy use (electric, water, natural gas) are we seeing the most reductions?
- How many streetlights are in City of Richmond? Please elaborate on plan to reach 100% conversion by 2029.
- Elaborate on the City's curbside EV policy and timeline for a policy/permitting process.
- Please elaborate on the implementation of Sustainable Design Standards (SDS) and how they relate to the city's ongoing Zoning Refresh efforts.
- Do the SDS apply to private-market developments? If not, why not?

Green Fleet Plan Update, Department of General Services (DGS)

Gail Johnson, DGS Director

Jason Arndt, DGS Program and Operations Manager

Staff Notes:

- DGS Fleet team provides for maintenance, acquisition, and repair of city fleet.
- EV fleet includes police, fire, and DPW vehicles.
- Prioritize purchase of electric vehicles, followed by hybrids then alternative fuels before gas.
- Fuel usage is down significantly from FY22 to FY25, especially in regular unleaded gas.

Potential Questions:

- What is total fleet for the city – both EV and non-EV?
- Do EV's cost more to acquire and/or maintain? If so, please elaborate.
- How do we ensure our fleet team is trained to maintain and repair EVs?
- Please elaborate on how the City tracks spending on third-party EV charging (like the use of gas cards for gas-powered vehicles).
- Please elaborate on how the loss of federal EV incentives will impact plans for future conversion.

Additionally, staff received two reports from H.R. that aren't on the agenda but are summarized below for your convenience:

HR FY26 Q1 Vacancy Report

Staff Notes:

- Vacancy Rate as of 9/19/2025 = 13.5% (586 of 4,353 positions vacant)
 - Inspector General = 44.4% vacant (4 of 9 positions vacant)
 - Finance Dept. = 39.1% vacant (60 of 151 positions vacant)
 - Procurement = 31.6% vacant (12 of 38 positions vacant)
- Projected Turnover Rate = 10.6% (up slightly from 10.3% in FY25, but down significantly from 18.9% in Q1 of FY22).

Potential Follow-up Questions:

- Please explain the difference between “established positions” and “established funded positions” in this dataset.
- What specific efforts are underway to fill vacancies in the City’s Finance Department?

HR September 2025 Overtime Report

Staff Notes:

- 38,498 overtime hours worked in September 2025 (by 1,672 of 4,012 employees)
 - 43 employees exceeded 50% threshold (over two pay periods, worked 80+ overtime hours for most employees or 106+ if fire employees) primarily from Police (20 employees) and Fire (15 employees) + DPU (5 employees).
- 461,668 overtime hours to date (January – September 2025)
 - Most overtime by one employee = A Fire & Emergency Services employee has worked 1,463 overtime hours (\$111,243.56 in pay) in CY25.

Potential Follow-up Questions:

- What is the administration’s strategy to reduce excessive overtime?
- What is the plan to reduce police & fire overtime usage?