



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
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Minutes

Education and Human Services Standing Committee

Thursday, May 7, 2020

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - Virtual

Committee Members and Staff in Attendance

The Honorable Kristen Larson – Chair
The Honorable Chris Hilbert – Vice Chair (*late arrival, early departure*)
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Committee Member
The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Council Member
Lisa Braxton, Council Administrative Project Analyst
Joyce Davis, Council Policy Analyst
Jamie Isley, Assistant City Clerk
M. Janet Palmer, Deputy City Attorney
Candice Reid, City Clerk
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

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

Electronic Participation

Assistant City Clerk Jamie Isley, in accordance with Ordinance No. 2020-093, adopted April 9, 2020, announced the meeting would be held through electronic communication means. Assistant City Clerk Isley stated notice of the meeting was provided to the public through a public information advisory issued on May 4, 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, May 7, 2020, were provided to committee members and would be included in the record of the meeting. Ms. Isley 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 Jamie Isley provided citizen speaker guidelines.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of Thursday, March 5, 2020, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

Board Vacancies

There were no board vacancies for review.

Vice Chair Chris Hilbert joined the meeting at 2:08 p.m.

Presentation(s)

There were no presentations.

Papers for Consideration

The following resolution was considered:

RES. 2020-R030

To request that the Mayor amend the Administrative Regulations of the City, to the extent permitted by law, to exclude from substance detection testing the testing of City employees and applicants for employment with the City, except for public safety personnel and applicants for public safety positions, for marijuana use.

Patron: Ms. Lynch

Member Stephanie Lynch introduced RES. 2020-R030 and stated that city policy should coincide with Virginia Senate Bill 2, adopted by both chambers of the Virginia General Assembly during its 2020 session.

Mary Jane Sharp, Human Resources manager, and Mona Adkins-Easley, Human Resources interim director, informed the committee that city administration is agreeable to amending the Administrative Regulations. Ms. Sharp stated that while commercial motor vehicle drivers and pipeline operators must follow United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) regulations regarding drug and alcohol testing, the city is working to amend its zero tolerance policy to allow for steps and substance abuse counseling as opposed to immediate termination.

Vice Chair Chris Hilbert inquired about how RES. 2020-R030 would interact with subsection C of section 3.04.1 of the Charter of the City of Richmond regarding the removal of a Council member or mayor and forfeiture of office for court convictions involving moral turpitude, felonies, or any misdemeanor involving possession of marijuana or any controlled substances. Vice Hilbert expressed his support for RES. 2020-R030.

Deputy City Attorney M. Janet Palmer advised the committee that Council would need to come to a consensus regarding how RES. 2020-R030 should apply to employees and elected officials.

Chair Kristen Larson requested any associated Charter of the City of Richmond changes be added to the list of requests for the next Virginia General Assembly legislative session. Chair Larson also inquired about Code of the City of Richmond and personnel rule changes that would need to occur in response to RES. 2020-R030 and the process regarding individuals who are found to be intoxicated while working if RES. 2020-R030 is adopted.

Ms. Sharp informed the committee that commercial motor vehicle drivers and pipeline operators are must be tested for marijuana and if detected, current USDOT regulations will consider the results positive. Ms. Sharp stated that the City of Richmond Department of Human Resources utilizes pre-employment, reasonable suspicion, post-accident, return to duty, follow-up and random drug testing methods. Ms. Sharp

indicated that in addition to pipeline operators and commercial motor vehicle drivers, sensitive positions such as public safety, social work and detention center staff also require testing. She also stated that one of the goals germane to RES. 2020-R030 is to enact a process for individuals who test positive to be evaluated and eventually return to duty.

Chair Larson summarized the discussion and stated Council would need to examine if changes are necessary for the City Charter.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Vice Chair Chris Hilbert moved to forward RES. 2020-R030 to the May 11, 2020, City Council meeting with recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

The following resolution was considered:

RES. 2020-R031

To express the Council's support for the adoption of the City of Richmond Strategic Plan to End Homelessness 2020-2030 and any enabling legislation, including any budget amendments, to implement the City of Richmond Strategic Plan to End Homelessness 2020-2030.

Patron: Ms. Robertson

Council member Ellen Robertson introduced RES. 2020-R031 and reiterated the importance of a strategic plan to support those experiencing homelessness or facing eviction, particularly during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Member Stephanie Lynch asked how the city could work to ensure an increase of brick-and-mortar housing options for individuals experiencing homelessness and requested information regarding Council's plan to financially support the housing increase. Member Lynch also requested a running inventory of the number of 0-30% annual median income housing units available city-wide. She asked city administration to provide a biannual update regarding the status of the Homelessness Strategic Plan 2020-2030 to the Education and Human Services Standing committee to keep the issue at the forefront.

Vice Chair Chris Hilbert expressed support for RES. 2020-R031.

Sharon Ebert, Economic and Community Development deputy chief administrative officer, stated that the Department of Planning and Development Review and city administration are working to produce an ordinance with text amendments to city zoning policy to assist with eliminating roadblocks to building housing opportunities. She informed the committee that updates to the Homelessness Strategic Plan 2020-2030 included information regarding the eviction diversion program, statistical reports from Home, Inc. concerning individuals helped by local assistance programs, an increase in the number of proposed emergency housing units from 150 to 250, and terminology changes to ensure that everyone is a part of the continuum of care network for the efficient use of local resources.

Chair Kristen Larson requested that Council and city administration work with regional partners to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding the prevalence of homelessness and affordable housing issues across the region. Chair Larson also requested city administration include Ms. Ebert's Affordable and Equitable Housing Plan as an appendix to the Homelessness Strategic Plan 2020-2030.

Vice Chair Chris Hilbert requested a written update from the Richmond Public Schools (RPS) Vacant/Non-Instructional/Surplus Property Committee to the Education and Human Services Standing Committee prior to June, and requested staff follow up with RPS.

Vice Chair Chris Hilbert departed the meeting at 3:04 p.m.

Councilor Ellen Robertson expressed support for RES. 2020-R031 and the regional MOU regarding homelessness and requested staff draft an additional piece of legislation to outline the particulars of the MOU.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Member Stephanie Lynch moved to forward RES. 2020-R031 to the May 11, 2020, City Council meeting with recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

Discussion Item(s)

There were no items for discussion.

Staff Report

Joyce Davis, Council policy analyst, provided the committee with the May staff report.

A copy of the report has been filed.

Chair Kristen Larson addressed Vice Chair Chris Hilbert's comments about surplus Richmond Public Schools property and asked staff coordinate a written update by the June 4, 2020, Education and Human Services Standing Committee meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:16 p.m.