



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
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Special Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 26, 2023

6:00 PM

Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School Auditorium,
1000 Mosby Street,
Richmond, Virginia 23223

Special Meeting

Councilmembers Present

The Honorable Michael Jones, President
The Honorable Kristen Nye, Vice President
The Honorable Andreas Addison
The Honorable Katherine Jordan
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert (late arrival)

School Board Members Present

Stephanie Rizzi, Chair
Cheryl Burke, Vice Chair
Shonda Harris-Muhammed (late arrival)
Mariah White
Jonathan Young
Dawn Page
Nicole Jones

Absent

The Honorable Stephanie Lynch
The Honorable Cynthia Newbille
The Honorable Ellen Robertson
The Honorable Reva Trammell
Elizabeth Doerr
Kenya Gibson

Others Present

Haskell Brown, City Attorney
Joyce Davis, Council Policy Analyst
LaTasha Holmes, Council Chief of Staff
Jason Kamras, Superintendent
Jonnell Lilly, School Board Attorney
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Patrece Richardson, School Board Clerk
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

President Michael Jones and Chair Stephanie Rizzi called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m., and presided.

President Michael Jones stated that Council wanted to fully work with Richmond School Board to fully fund and build schools. President Jones also stated that Council wanted to collaborate with School Board members to find a path to ensure that children succeed.

Chair Stephanie Rizzi stated that schools and students were still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Chair Rizzi also addressed gun violence and issues impacting children in the city. Chair Rizzi further stated that she hoped Council and School Board would work together to fully fund the future of Richmond children. Chair Rizzi requested that Council respect and trust the funding requests of the School Board.

Presentation

Superintendent Jason Kamras provided a presentation of his proposed Richmond Public Schools (RPS) Budget, and he addressed the need and reasoning for certain budget requests.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert arrived at 6:24 p.m. and was seated.

Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert requested additional information regarding staff funding for RPS's virtual academy.

Superintendent Kamras stated that the Commonwealth of Virginia government administers the city's virtual high school academy, and he noted that kindergarten through eighth grade virtual students are instructed by RPS staff. Superintendent Kamras added that the city pays the cost of the students to be instructed by state employees. Superintendent Kamras further stated he would provide the number of students participating in the virtual academy to Council.

Vice President Kristen Nye inquired if RPS administration planned to update the Dreams4RPS Strategic Plan, and she requested information be provided to Council detailing the results of the strategic plan.

Superintendent Kamras stated that he still believed in the Dreams 4RPS Strategic Plan, but he added that the plan needed to be updated. Superintendent Kamras also stated that the strategic plan and its goals were negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councilor Andreas Addison stated that he wanted to support the city working with Reynolds Community College to provide dual enrollment opportunities for RPS students. Councilor Addison also stated that more programming should be offered to students.

School Board Member Shonda Harris-Muhammed arrived at 6:41 p.m and was seated.

Chair Rizzi stated that the Department of Parks and Recreation needed to provide more programming for the city's youth. Chair Rizzi also stated that the department needed to improve the services and facilities of community centers throughout the city. Chair Rizzi further stated action was needed to keep children away from dangerous situations outside of school.

Councilor Katherine Jordan stated that Council's Governmental Operations Standing Committee would address how the Department of Parks and Recreation can improve facilities and programming for the city's youth.

School Board Member Nicole Jones stated that it was important to identify which systems were not working for RPS students before allocating additional funding.

School Board Member Mariah White stated that the School Board wanted the city's help to address gun violence, student absenteeism, and available social services for children. Member White suggested that Council work with RPS's Chief Wellness Officer to address the issues she raised.

President Michael Jones stated that it was important for Council to understand the reasoning for the requested 30 million in additional funding from school administration.

School Board Member Dawn Page stated that she appreciated the meeting and conversation with Council, but she suggested that the collaboration should have started in September or October to better understand RPS needs.

School Board Member Shonda Harris-Muhammad stated that more data was necessary to support the additional funding requests from school administration.

President Jones noted that Council was currently reorganizing its review of the city's budget, and he stated that Council would include potential meetings with School Board into that process.

School Board Member Cheryl Burke stated that students needed more support from the city's Department of Parks and Recreation. Member Burke also stated it was important that RPS students be provided with safe learning environments both at school and home.

School Board Member Jonathan Young stated that he believed Council was justified to request information to support RPS administration's request for additional funding. Member Young informed his colleagues that he did not believe RPS administration had justified the additional funding.

Councilor Addison stated it was important that the city continue to grow, as it would create more revenue that could be allocated to RPS.

Overview of City Funded Services for Children and Families that Support RPS's Engagement with School-Aged Students

Vice President Kristen Nye provided information related to Council's plans to have a third-party review youth services the city and RPS both provide, to identify duplicated efforts and ways to strengthen services offered. Vice President Nye shared a list provided by city administration that addressed shared services for children and families. Vice President Nye further stated that the review would be targeted in scope to only address certain needs for the city's youth.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

School Board Member Shonda Harris-Muhammad stated her concerns with a third party reviewing school services. Member Harris-Muhammad also stated that RPS administration and the School Board needed to better understand its own services before a third party began a review.

School Board Member Jonathan Young stated his support for the proposed review of shared services.

School Board Member Mariah White stated the third party and Council should work with the RPS Chief Wellness Officer to review youth services and programming.

Chair Stephanie Rizzi supported improving the quality of life for RPS students, and she requested that Vice President Nye provide School Board with documentation that provided additional information of the proposed review.

School Board Member Nicole Jones requested that RPS parents be included in the review of youth services.

Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert stated that Council and School Board should work together to address gun violence and lobby the Virginia General Assembly for more state funding for RPS.

President Michael Jones stated his appreciation for the work of board and noted that he believed the joint meeting was a success.

[CD.2023.042](#) Meeting Documents

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

CITY CLERK