



City of Richmond

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

Meeting Minutes Organizational Development Standing Committee

Tuesday, September 6, 2022

5:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Members Present

The Honorable Cynthia Newbille – Chair
The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Vice Chair (early departure)
The Honorable Andreas Addison – Member (early departure)
The Honorable Michael Jones – Member
The Honorable Katherine Jordan – Member
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert – Member (late arrival)
The Honorable Kristen Nye – Member
The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Member (early departure)
The Honorable Reva Trammell – Member (early departure)

Others in Attendance

Joyce Davis, Interim Council Chief of Staff
Haskell Brown, City Attorney
Candice Reid, City Clerk
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Cynthia Newbille called the meeting to order at 5:09 p.m., and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Citizen Speaker Guidelines

Upon the Chair's request, Deputy City Clerk RJ Warren provided information on the appropriate manner in which the Council Chamber is to be evacuated in the event of an emergency along with citizen speaker guidelines.

Approval of Minutes

There were no corrections or amendments to the minutes of the Monday, July 5, 2022 Organizational Development Standing Committee meeting, at 5:00 p.m., and the minutes were approved as presented.

[CD.2022.297](#) July 5, 2022 Organizational Development Standing Committee Meeting Minutes

Reports from City Administration, Council Staff and Other Parties

Virginia General Assembly Review and Timeline

Kathy Burcher, Council Lobbyist, Advantus Strategies and Laura Bateman, Council Lobbyist, Advantus Strategies provided the committee with a presentation that addressed the timeline for the upcoming Virginia 2023 General Assembly Session. Ms. Burcher stated that she would begin meeting with Council to identify Council legislative priorities for the upcoming General Assembly Session, and she also stated that a draft of Council's legislation priorities would be completed by September 16, 2022.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

[CD.2022.302](#) Timeline for 2023 General Assembly Session Preparation

Member Kristen Nye requested that the development of a casino in the city be included with Council's list of legislative priorities for the upcoming session.

Member Katherine Jordan inquired if efforts were being made to lobby for federal funding and assistance.

Chief Administrative Officer Lincoln Saunders confirmed that the city and Advantus Strategies were working with an additional lobbyist group to address lobbying efforts with the federal government.

Paper for Consideration

The following ordinance was considered:

1. [ORD. 2022-119](#) To determine that the election of the members of the Council to be held on November 5, 2024, shall be conducted by ranked choice voting in accordance with section Va. Code § 24.2-673.1(B).

Patrons: Ms. Jordan, Mr. Addison and Ms. Lynch

Member Katherine Jordan provided an introduction and additional background information regarding the proposed ordinance.

Member Stephanie Lynch provided comments related to the history of the proposed ordinance and stated she supported the ordinance.

Member Andreas Addison stated that ranked choice voting would help address voting rights and equality. Member Addison also stated he understood concerns, but that he believed the concerns could be addressed.

Public Hearing

Sandra Antoine, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) member, spoke in opposition to ORD. 2022-119, and stated that she believed ranked choice voting would not provide every citizen with a voice in an election. Ms. Antoine also stated that automatic restoration of rights should be Council's priority and not changing the method of voting in the city.

Jane Newell, Richmond Metro League of Women Voters president, spoke in support of ORD. 2022-119, and stated that the League of Women Voters supported ranked choice voting. Ms. Newell also stated that she understood the concern regarding ranked choice voting being limited by the Virginia General Assembly to only Council or board of supervisors elections, and that she supported ranked choice voting being expanded in the future.

Taylor Thomas, Fair Vote Virginia lead organizer for ranked choice voting, spoke in support ORD. 2022-119, and stated that ranked choice voting would provide more unity and civility in Virginia elections. Mr. Thomas also stated that citizens support ranked choice voting once the process is understood.

James "JJ" Minor, NAACP Richmond Branch president, spoke in opposition to ORD. 2022-119 and stated that the local Richmond Branch of the NAACP voted to oppose ranked choice voting. Mr. Minor also stated that ranked choice voting was too complicated.

Member Ann-Frances Lambert arrived at 5:39 p.m. and was seated.

Sally Hudson, Virginia General Assembly State Delegate, spoke in support of ranked choice voting, and she provided the committee with additional information regarding the process of the Virginia General Assembly approving the practice of ranked choice voting for certain local elections in the state.

Akhenaton Blye spoke in opposition to ORD. 2022-119, and stated that citizens were not prepared for a change in the voting process for local elections.

Member Reva Trammell stated that she did not support ranked choice voting, and she did not believe it was right that ranked choice voting was limited to only Council elections.

Member Kristen Nye inquired how the order of candidates on a voting ballot would be determined. Member Nye also inquired about the process for expanding ranked choice voting to the election of the mayor or Richmond Public School Board.

Registrar Keith Balmer informed members that the process for determining the order of candidates on the voting ballot would not change from the current process if ranked choice voting was approved.

Delegate Hudson stated that the mayoral election was not included because it would require a change to the City Charter, and she also stated that members of the General Assembly were concerned that school boards would not have enough input on the process to allow the change to occur for school board elections.

Member Michael Jones stated his appreciation for Delegate Hudson being present to address questions. Member Jones also stated that he had concerns with the motives behind ranked choice voting.

Vice Chair Ellen Robertson stated she did not support ranked choice voting, and she also stated that she did not appreciate Richmond City Council being used as a pilot for ranked choice voting in Virginia. Vice Chair Robertson addressed the history of voting suppression in the city, and she further stated that she believed ranked choice voting would harm and divide the city's Black voting population. Vice Chair Robertson informed members that she would vote in opposition to the proposed ordinance.

Member Michael Jones moved to forward ORD. 2022-119 to Council with the recommendation to strike, which was seconded.

Member Jordan addressed concerns raised by members and the public regarding ranked choice voting.

Chair Cynthia Newbille stated her concerns with the city's history of disenfranchising Black voters in the city, and she informed members that she was not comfortable with moving forward with having Councilmember elections serve as a pilot for ranked choice voting.

Member Addison stated that he understood concerns raised by members and citizens, and that expanding ranked choice voting to all local elections, and not just Council, was a valid concern.

There were no further comments or discussions and the motion to forward ORD. 2022-119 to Council with the recommendation to strike was approved: Ayes 6, Addison, Lambert, Trammell, Jones, Robertson, Newbille. Noes 3, Jordan, Nye, Lynch.

Reports from City Administration, Council Staff and Other Parties

Update on Council Executive Appointee Performance Evaluation – Finalization

Member Kristen Nye provided an update regarding the process for Council to evaluate the performance of Council appointees. Member Nye stated that the Governmental Operations Standing Committee would be addressing the process at a future meeting.

Vice Chair Ellen Robertson left the meeting at 6:26 p.m.

Council President Updates

Chair Cynthia Newbille provided an update regarding Council's recruitment to fill the position of Council Chief of Staff. Chair Newbille stated that the Fahrenheit Group was contacted about possible consultation regarding the recruitment process. Chair Newbille informed members that the recruitment process would begin in September and that the position would be filled by December 2022.

Update on Upcoming Work Sessions

Member Reva Trammell stated her concerns regarding a proposed Council retreat, and she also stated that she did not believe the retreat would be beneficial.

Chair Cynthia Newbille stated that the objective of a retreat was to establish more collaboration amongst members and city administration.

Interim Council Chief of Staff Joyce Davis reviewed potential dates for the Council retreat and she addressed additional logistics regarding the retreat and work sessions with city administration.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

[CD.2022.304](#) Joint Council and City Administration - Joint Work Sessions

Member Ann-Frances Lambert informed members of her support for a Council retreat and stated that she hoped to learn more about other Council voter districts from other members during the retreat.

Member Andreas Addison stated he understood Member Trammell's concerns, but he informed members that he believed a retreat and work session were necessary to identify Council's priorities for the future.

Member Michael Jones stated he believed that a Council retreat should occur annually to provide an opportunity for members to build collaboration and to identify priorities for the upcoming year. Member Jones also stated that a resolution should be adopted after any retreat to note and establish the priorities identified by Council for the upcoming year.

Member Katherine Jordan stated her support for the proposed retreat.

Reports of Standing Committees

There were no reports for consideration.

Consideration of Appointments to Boards, Commissions and Similar Entities

There were no appointment/reappointment items for consideration.

Discussion Item(s)

There were no discussion items.

Closed Session

At 6:54 p.m., Member Kristen Nye moved that the Organizational Development Standing Committee hold a closed meeting pursuant to subdivision (A)(8) of section 2.2-3711 of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act discuss the salaries of specific appointees or employees of the City Council as permitted by subdivision (A)(1) thereof; consult with the City Attorney regarding the provision of legal advice concerning the ownership of certain City-owned real estate as permitted by subdivision (A)(8) thereof; and discuss and receive briefings from the Department of Police concerning the Department's plans to protect public safety as it relates to terrorist activity as permitted by subdivision (A)(19) thereof.

The motion was seconded and approved, Ayes 7, Addison, Jordan, Lambert, Nye, Lynch, Jones, Newbille. Noes 1, Trammell.

Member Andreas Addison left the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Member Reva Trammell exited the closed session and left the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

Member Stephanie Lynch exited the closed session and left the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

Member Michael Jones motioned to exit closed session. The motion was seconded and approved: Ayes 5, Jordan, Lambert, Nye, Jones, Newbille. Noes None.

Members reconvened in open session at 8:49 p.m.

Certification of Closed Meeting

WHEREAS, the Organizational Development Standing Committee has convened in closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Organizational Development Standing Committee that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law:

NOW, THEREFORE,
BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Organizational Development Standing Committee hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge (i) only public matters lawfully exempt from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certifying resolution applies; and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Organizational Development Standing Committee.

WITNESS the following vote of committee members, as recorded by Candice D. Reid, City Clerk:

CERTIFYING:

Cynthia I. Newbille, Chair
Katherine L. Jordan
Ann-Frances Lambert
Kristen N. Nye
Michael J. Jones

DECLINING TO CERTIFY:

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.