



City of Richmond

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

Budget Work Session Minutes

Monday, April 10, 2023

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Budget Work Session

Members Present

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

Absent

The Honorable Andreas Addison

Others in Attendance

Myrtle Brown, Council Budget Analyst
LaTanja Davenport, Council Budget Analyst
Joyce Davis, Council Policy Analyst
LaTasha Holmes, Council Chief of Staff
Paul Van Lenten, Council Budget Analyst
Rachael Paul, Assistant City Clerk
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Tabrica Rentz, Deputy City Attorney
Debora Shaw, Council Management Analyst
Steve Taylor, Council Policy Analyst
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

President Michael Jones called the meeting to order at 1:09 p.m., and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement

Upon the President's request, Assistant City Clerk Rachael Paul provided information on the appropriate manner in which the Council Chamber is to be evacuated in the event of an emergency.

Electronic Participation

Pursuant to Rule III(D)(4)(b) of Council's Rules of Procedure, Councilor Stephanie Lynch made a request to participate in the meeting via Microsoft Teams from her home, due to a medical condition that prevented her physical attendance. The Council members present were required to adopt a motion to approve Councilor Stephanie Lynch's participation in the meeting by electronic communication means if it appeared to the body that her request complied with Rule III(D) of Council's Rules of Procedure. A motion was solicited from those members physically assembled to approve Councilor Stephanie Lynch's participation in the meeting by electronic communication means.

Councilor Katherine Jordan moved to allow Councilor Stephanie Lynch to participate in the meeting by electronic communication means. The motion was seconded, and approved: Ayes 6, Jordan, Lambert, Trammell, Newbille, Nye, and Jones. Noes None.

Presentation, Discussion and Preparation of Final Council Proposed FY 2024 Budget Amendments

LaTasha Holmes, Council Chief of Staff (CCOS), provided Council with a presentation to review Council's proposed General Fund and Operating amendments, as well as the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) amendments for the Mayor's proposed budget.

[CD.2023.132](#) 20230410 FY24 Council Presentation - Budget Work Session

Attachments: [20230410 FY24 Council Presentation - Work Session #5](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Councilor Ellen Robertson arrived at 1:19 p.m., and was seated.

Councilor Cynthia Newbille addressed city administration regarding a 5% retiree bonus pay.

Lincoln Saunders, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), informed Council that the 5% retiree bonus pay follow up discussion would be addressed with the city's financial advisors.

Councilor Newbille advised that the other part of her discussion with city administration pertained to surplus spending.

Councilor Ellen Robertson addressed the committee and the administration regarding her General Fund priority amendment requests.

CAO Saunders provided more information regarding Councilor Robertson's budget amendments. He advised that the administration thinks it can accomplish the requests with less funding and he would provide more information at the next meeting.

President Michael Jones had further discussion with CAO Saunders regarding funding for city parks and recreation centers.

CAO Saunders provided information from city administration regarding the Calhoun Center Content Creation Lab funding request from Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert. He advised that he did not believe additional funding would be necessary.

Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert stated that she appreciated the help from the Department of Parks and Recreation with the Calhoun Center. Councilor Lambert also stated she was happy with the allocation provided for the center.

CAO Saunders informed the committee that the proposed amendment for a Climate and Sustainability Grants Manager position was being considered but administration would recommend moving forward with the positions in the planned budget before creating additional positions.

CAO Saunders provided information regarding the OPEB (other post-employment benefits) increase and proposed getting an updated Actuarial Defined Contributions (ADC) analysis before moving forward.

Vice President Kristen Nye inquired about how quickly the administration could get the updated ADC study.

Sabrina Joy-Hogg, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Finance and Administration, informed Council that the study would be completed in the current year.

Lou Lassiter, City Auditor, stated that the recommended Actuarial Required Contributions (ARC) was calculated at \$3.75 million. He also stated that \$1 million was added to retiree health expenses and \$1.4 million was added to the OPEB Trust.

Sheila White, Director of Finance, advised Council that the city's actuaries recommended the city have an annual study done based on the changes that are made.

Vice President Nye stated she would like to proceed with her amendment that \$1.1 million be directed to OPEB.

Robert Bobb, President and Chief Executive Office of the Robert Bobb Group (RBG), informed Council that the RBG had been reviewing the proposed amendments to next year's fiscal budget. Mr. Bobb stated that later in the week, he would have a balanced budget proposal for the Council to review.

Councilor Lambert inquired about the city transitioning to the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) and requested more information regarding the decision to leave the current retirement system.

Mr. Bobb had further discussion with the Council about transitioning to another retirement system.

CCOS Holmes addressed Councilor Ellen Robertson regarding her amendments to the budget.

Councilor Robertson informed Ms. Holmes that she spoke with city administration regarding her amendments and stated that her budget requests regarding Assistant Recreation Supervisor Ann Hardy and the MLK Life Coach Program would be included in the budget.

Vice President Kristen Nye requested more information from Lou Lassiter regarding the OPEB increase.

CCOS Holmes reviewed proposed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) amendments with the members of Council.

CAO Saunders provided context regarding each proposed CIP amendment. He stated that after city administration reviewed the proposed amendments, they discovered that a majority of them was included in the FY24 proposed budget.

Chris Frelke, Director of Parks and Recreation, addressed Councilor Robertson's concern regarding funding for Riverview Community Park and Whitcomb Court Recreation and Sports Park. Mr. Frelke stated that with the funding provided, he believed that the city would be able to complete the Riverview playground and Whitcomb Court basketball court.

Councilor Robertson requested full funding for the Whitcomb Court Recreation and Sports Park with the intent to complete the project.

CAO Saunders stated if it is the will of the Council that city administration can re-prioritize the \$7.0 million funding within the Parks and Recreation list.

President Michael Jones informed Council that further discussion would be necessary regarding Councilor Robertson's request.

Mr. Frelke reviewed Westover Park improvements with Vice President Nye and invited her to take a tour of the facility.

Bobby Vincent, Director of Public Works (DPW), advised Council that DPW is working on a Hull Street traffic congestion and speed reduction plan.

Vice President Nye requested information regarding the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for street beautification.

President Michael Jones left the meeting at 2:52 p.m.

Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert requested a report of the beautification projects for each Council District.

CAO Saunders informed Councilwoman Reva Trammell that city administration believes it can fund Richmond Highway and Hull Street beautification projects with city and ARPA funds.

Councilwoman Trammell inquired about the city providing a street sweeper for the 8th District to help with clean up efforts.

Mr. Vincent and Mr. Saunders provided information regarding the Safe and Clean Neighborhoods CIP amendments.

Councilor Katherine Jordan requested information regarding the \$4.2 million in APRA funds for the Healthy Homes program.

City Council members and CAO Saunders had further discussion regarding CIP amendments.

Councilwomen Trammell stated she would like to add an amendment to the General Fund proposal that would keep the utility bill rates the same for another year.

CCOS Holmes provided information regarding Council's proposed text amendments.

Councilor Newbille requested to add a proposed text amendment for the Ambulance Authority and the Richmond Behavioral Health Authority because they are non-departmental.

Amy Robins, 5th District Council Liaison, provided information to Council concerning Councilor Stephanie Lynch's proposed text amendment regarding new funding for the Public Defender's Office from the state and a request to authorize new positions for case managers and paralegals with existing funds.

Member Stephanie Lynch joined the meeting via Microsoft Teams at 3:32 p.m.

Vice President Nye stated Council, Council staff, and city administration may want to add another budget work session to review the added requested amendments.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

CITY CLERK