



City of Richmond

Minutes

Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee

Thursday, April 15, 2021

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – Virtual Meeting

Committee Members and Others in Attendance

The Honorable Michael Jones – Chair

The Honorable Kristen Larson – Vice Chair

The Honorable Ellen F. Robertson – Committee Member (late arrival)

The Honorable Katherine Jordan – Councilmember (early departure)

Samson Anderson, Council Budget Analyst

Joyce Davis, Interim Council Chief of Staff

Pamela Nichols, Senior Assistant City Clerk

Tabrica Rentz, Acting Deputy City Attorney

Steven Taylor, Council Policy Analyst

Dominique Thaxton, Assistant City Clerk

RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

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

Electronic Meeting Announcement

Assistant City Clerk Dominique J. Thaxton, pursuant to and in compliance with Ordinance No. 2020-093, adopted April 9, 2020, as most recently amended by Ordinance No. 2020-232, adopted December 14, 2020, announced the meeting would be held through electronic communication means. Assistant City Clerk Thaxton stated notice of the meeting was provided to the public through a public information advisory issued on April 8, 2021 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, April 15, 2021, were provided to committee members. Ms. Thaxton 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 Dominique J. Thaxton provided citizen speaker guidelines.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comment speakers.

Approval of Minutes

There were no corrections or amendments to the meeting minutes of the Thursday, March 18, 2021 committee meeting, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

Paper for Consideration

The following ordinance was considered:

ORD. 2021-089

To amend Ord. No. 2020-164, adopted Aug. 10, 2020, as previously amended by Ord. No. 2020-191, adopted Sept. 28, 2020, which authorized the Chief Administrative Officer to submit an amended Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as an application for the receipt of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) funds, Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) funds; accepted funds from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in the total amount of \$14,956,215.00; and appropriated \$14,956,215.00 for various projects, to appropriate \$1,362,346.00 in additional CDBG-CV funds received, reallocate \$337,654.00 in previously appropriated CDBG-CV funds, and authorize the submission of a further amended version of the amended Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan.

Patron: Mayor Stoney

Daniel Mouer, Housing and Community Development Project Development Manager, provided an overview of ORD. 2021-089.

Vice Chair Kristen Larson inquired if ORD. 2021-089 provided program funding for horticultural and landscaping jobs training. Vice Chair Larson also asked for clarification on the total amount of unallocated funds outlined in ORD. 2021-089 and if the funds will be placed into a special fund.

Member Ellen Robertson joined the meeting at 1:14 p.m.

Mr. Mouer confirmed that the funds outlined in ORD. 2021-089 would provide funding for a horticultural, landscaping and tree management program facilitated by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities. Mr. Mouer shared that the total amount of unallocated funds in ORD. 2021-089 is an estimated \$1.4 million and that Housing and Community Development will present Council with a plan for the best potential uses of the funds.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Vice Chair Larson moved to forward ORD. 2021-089 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

The following resolution was considered:

RES. 2021-R023

To adopt budgetary policies under which the City will endeavor to provide operating funds annually for capital maintenance purposes, the City's annual required contribution for other post-employment benefits, and a self-insurance claims reserve.

Patron: Mayor Stoney

Jay Brown, Department of Budget and Strategic Planning director, provided an overview of RES. 2021-R023.

Vice Chair Larson inquired if there are forthcoming recommendations for how the city will handle other post-employment benefits (OPEB) moving forward.

Mr. Brown shared that at the City Auditor's recommendation, a workgroup has been assembled and is currently examining the city's entire benefits process. Mr. Brown stated that the workgroup is in the process of developing recommendations to be presented to Council.

Vice Chair Larson asked if there is a projected timeframe of when the city benefit's workgroup will bring forth recommendations to Council.

Mr. Brown stated that the workgroup does not have a definitive timeline for presenting recommendations but expects a presentation to come before Council by the fall of 2021.

Vice Chair Larson inquired if it is reasonable to expect to have city employee benefits changes included in the FY2023 budget.

Mr. Brown stated that it should be possible to have the recommendations and an implementation plan for changes to city employee benefits incorporated in the FY2023 budget.

Member Ellen Robertson stated that the examination of the commitments of general expenditures for the city is imperative. Member Robertson inquired if RES. 2021-023 outlines new policies and the specific fund amounts needed for implementation. Ms. Robertson asked for the revenue projections and decreased expenditures planned for the next several years to accommodate funding the OPEB liability.

Mr. Brown shared that RES. 2021-R023 outlines new budgetary policies and aims to develop best practices to ensure that the city's financial rating remains satisfactory. Mr. Brown stated that the city is projected to see an increase in revenue by FY2023 and consequently, the city will have more resources to devote to funding obligations and initiatives in future fiscal years.

Member Robertson asked for the annual revenue amount that RES. 2021-R023 is requesting in order to meet funding needs. Member Robertson inquired about the city's annual revenue growth and if the goal of funding the capital maintenance fund at three percent annually is in line with revenue growth trends.

Mr. Brown stated that RES. 2021-R023 does not outline a specific dollar amount because there may need to be flexibility in the annual amount appropriated depending on the city's available resources. Mr. Brown shared that the city's annual revenue growth is roughly three percent.

Member Robertson expressed concern for obligating the city's entire revenue growth percentage for capital maintenance purposes, and stated that further analysis is needed on RES. 2021-R023. Ms. Robertson offered that once analysis is received, an ordinance that secures funding for the liabilities outlined in RES. 2021-R023 may be more appropriate than a resolution.

Mr. Brown shared that a resolution grants flexibility in the event that there is another unexpected circumstance, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, where the city has to change funding priorities.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Member Ellen Robertson moved to continue RES. 2021-R023 to the May 20, 2021 Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

Councilor Katherine Jordan left the meeting at 1:41p.m.

Presentations

Commonwealth's Attorney Annual Report

Colette McEachin, Commonwealth's Attorney for the City of Richmond, presented the committee with an annual report detailing the functions performed by the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney and the FY2022 budget. Ms. McEachin shared various criminal justice reform program results and plans for expansion with the committee.

Vice Chair Kristen Larson asked that Commonwealth's Attorney McEachin provide Council with an update in the future on the progress of the outreach program aimed at informing Richmond Public Schools (RPS) high school students of their rights when interacting with law enforcement, and pathways to law school.

Member Ellen Robertson requested that Commonwealth's Attorney McEachin keep Council informed of the progress of various programs and any expenditure requests needed to invest in crime prevention measures. Member Robertson expressed the importance of conversations between Council and stakeholders surrounding criminal justice reform.

Commonwealth's Attorney McEachin expressed her willingness to have continued dialogue with Council regarding results driven criminal justice reform.

Chair Michael Jones requested additional information on the outreach programs planned for RPS students on pathways and opportunities with law school. Chair Jones asked for clarification on potential budget requests for additional staff positions needed in order to review police body camera footage. Chair Jones also asked for information on the potential allocations for the asset forfeiture funds and the Victim Witness program within the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney's budget.

Beverly Harris, Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney Finance Director, provided information on the guidelines by which the asset forfeiture funds are appropriated and expended.

Commonwealth's Attorney McEachin provided further information on the RPS student outreach programs that are in the planning stage. Commonwealth's Attorney McEachin shared that staff position requests may be forthcoming in the FY2023 budget to accommodate for General Assembly legislative changes, and the review of police body camera footage. Ms. McEachin also provided clarification on asset forfeiture and Victim Witness program budgetary requests.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Update on the C-PACE Program

Alicia Zatcoff, Sustainability Manager, Office of Sustainability, presented the committee with an update on the C-PACE program. Ms. Zatcoff shared the difficulties various localities across Virginia are experiencing with implementing the C-PACE program. Ms. Zatcoff provided information on the cost saving benefits of the city opting into a statewide C-PACE program. Ms. Zatcoff stated that the administration plans to introduce an amendment to ORD. 2019-274, adopted November 11, 2019, that would revise the effective date from March 1, 2021 to July 1, 2022, to allow the city to opt into the statewide C-PACE program that will be administrated by the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Energy.

Vice Chair Kristen Larson expressed concern for the lack of progress in developing a clean energy program since RES. 2016-R020 was originally adopted on March 8, 2016.

Member Ellen Robertson stated that the C-PACE program is invaluable to the city and shared that there is much work needed in order to achieve successful implementation.

Discussion Items

There were no discussion items.

Board Vacancies

Pamela Nichols, Senior Assistant City Clerk, reviewed board applications for consideration by

the committee.

Member Ellen Robertson moved to forward the following board appointment application to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved:

<u>Board Name</u>	<u>Criteria for Appointment</u>	<u>Applicant Name</u>
Minority Business Enterprise and Emerging Small Business Advisory Board (9 members)	Minority Business Enterprise Member - Reside or work in the city (Mayoral nominee, 1 vacancy)	Brittany Rawlinson 5th District Resident

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Staff Report

Samson Anderson, Council Budget Analyst, provided the committee with the April staff report.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:41 p.m.