



City of Richmond

Council Budget Amendment Work Session 3 Minutes

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

Wednesday, April 28, 2021

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall
Virtual Meeting

Councilmembers Present

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

Staff Present

Haskell Brown, Interim City Attorney
Joyce Davis, Interim Council Chief of Staff
Bill Echelberger, Council Budget Analyst
Samson Anderson, Council Budget Analyst
Candice Reid, City Clerk
Steve Taylor, Council Policy Analyst
Dominique J. Thaxton, Assistant City Clerk
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Council President Cynthia Newbille called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. and presided.

ELECTRONIC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

Assistant City Clerk Dominique J. Thaxton, in accordance with Ordinance No. 2020-093, adopted April 9, 2020, as most recently amended by Ordinance No. 2020-232, adopted December 14, 2020, announced the work session would be held through electronic communication means, and stated that notice of the session was provided to the public through a public information advisory issued on February 11, 2021, and through Legistar on the city website in accordance with usual practice. She also stated there would be no opportunities for public comment and no public hearings during the session.

Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert joined the meeting at 1:04 p.m.

Councilor Michael Jones joined the meeting at 1:05 p.m.

Discussion of Proposed Amendments

Bill Echelberger, Council Budget Analyst, provided an analysis of Council's proposed amendments to the FY2021-2022 budget proposal. Mr. Echelberger reviewed budget items for which Council has reached consensus and how revenue changes will impact available resources for remaining amendments.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Councilwoman Reva Trammell asked for clarification as to why a study of the proposed public safety pay plan is needed.

Mr. Echelberger shared that the public safety pay plan request has not been independently verified and a thorough study is needed to ensure that the proposed plan is the best option.

Vice President Ellen Robertson provided clarification on the intent of the \$4 million non-departmental amendment to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Councilwoman Trammell asked for information on the eviction prevention amendment that would provide \$500,000 toward the city's eviction prevention services, and inquired if the city would be duplicating efforts for eviction prevention services being funded by the state.

Mr. Echelberger provided information on the proposed amendment for eviction prevention and stated that a funding source has not yet been identified.

Councilor Kristen Larson joined the meeting at 1:18 p.m.

Councilor Michael Jones inquired if the budget amendment to increase funding for recreation activities is a Third Voter District initiative or if the youth activities are to be offered citywide.

Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert advised that the amendment to increase youth recreation activities is for all public housing communities in the city.

Councilor Katherine Jordan requested that her amendment to increase full-time equivalent (FTE) staff positions within the Department of Planning and Development Review, be changed to also include staffing for the Department of Social Services and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities.

Vice President Robertson asked for information on the prospective duties for the contract investigator position in the Office of the Inspector General.

Councilor Jones inquired about the need for discussion of requested positions within the City Council agencies prior to the budget amendment process.

President Cynthia Newbille provided clarification on the vacant and new positions within the City Council agencies.

Vice President Robertson recommended that City Council agencies present their budget requests in advance so that Council is aware of key priorities and needs.

It was the consensus of Council to proceed with funding the proposed \$191,000 budget increase to the following City Council agencies: Office of the City Clerk, Office of the City Assessor, Office of the City Auditor and Office of the Council Chief of Staff.

James Osuna, Inspector General, provided information on the key duties of the proposed contract investigator of procurement position within the Office of the Inspector General.

Councilor Kristen Larson expressed support for the contract investigator of procurement position within the Office of the Inspector General.

Vice President Robertson expressed concern for how the proposed contract investigator of procurement position with the Office of the Inspector General, may conflict with the duties of the Office of the City Auditor.

Councilor Andreas Addison shared that the duties of the contract investigator of procurement position may be better aligned with the functions of the Office of the City Auditor rather than the Office of the Inspector General.

Councilor Michael Jones suggested that discussion of the contract investigator of procurement position be heard before the Richmond City Council's Governmental Operations Standing Committee.

President Cynthia Newbille requested that the contract investigator of procurement position be discussed at a future budget work session or standing committee meeting.

It was the consensus of Council to proceed with funding the proposed \$300,000 budget increase to the Office of the City Auditor for the purpose of conducting a fiscal review of all city departments including Richmond Public Schools.

Bill Echelberger, Council Budget Analyst, provided information on the general employee compensation and pay plan implementation date change to October 1, 2021, from October 9, 2021 and fiscal impact of said change. Mr. Echelberger also shared information on the recently added 37.3% contingency for unidentified costs of implementing the compensation and pay plan increase.

Lincoln Saunders, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, provided rationale behind the date change for the implementation of the general employee compensation and pay plan adjustment.

Councilor Kristen Larson expressed concern for the 37.3% contingency for unidentified costs of implementing the compensation and play plan increase. Councilor Larson also inquired if there is a way to implement a 5% increase for all general employees rather than the full compensation and pay plan adjustment.

President Newbille shared information on the proposed 3.25% general employee salary increase in addition to the compensation and pay plan adjustment. President Newbille requested the appropriate staff to prepare general employee compensation options to be presented to Council at the next budget work session.

Councilor Stephanie Lynch joined the meeting at 2:13 p.m.

It was the consensus of Council to earmark \$5.8 million from the proposed budget for general employee compensation to be further clarified at a future budget work session.

It was the consensus of Council to have the Office of the Public Defender compensation and supplemental salary amendment discussed at a future budget work session.

Councilor Andreas Addison left the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

It was the consensus of Council to have funding in the amount of \$2,000 to pay for the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) to update the actuarial study to calculate costs of transitioning city employees to VRS, considered at a future budget work session.

Joyce Davis, Interim Council Chief of Staff, advised the committee on the dates of the upcoming budget work session meetings.

Vice President Ellen Robertson cautioned against sending Council budget amendment discussion items to a standing committee because all Councilmembers do not have voting power at a committee level.

Haskell Brown, Interim City Attorney, confirmed that only the members of the committee have voting powers.

President Cynthia Newbille requested that Councilmembers provide availability for additional Council budget work sessions to Council staff.

Vice President Robertson requested information on the potential deficit that funding all Council budget amendments would place on the budget.

Bill Echelberger, Council Budget Analyst, provided information on the budget deficit that funding all Council budget amendments would present.

Vice President Robertson inquired if there is a method by which Council can assure funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP).

President Newbille asked Interim City Attorney to advise on a method for requesting funding for the AHTF through the ARP.

Mr. Brown advised that Council can request AHTF funding with the ARP funds through a resolution.

Councilwoman Trammell asked that funding for public safety be addressed at a future budget work session.

Councilor Michael Jones stated that if there is a resolution to request funding for the AHTF through the ARP, then he will withdraw his Council budget amendment for \$5,990,836 to the AHTF.

President Newbille requested that if a Council resolution to request AHTF funding through the ARP is to be introduced, that it include a full \$10 million for the AHTF.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

CITY CLERK