



City of Richmond

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

Minutes

Governmental Operations Standing Committee

Wednesday, July 28, 2021

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – Virtual Meeting

Committee Members and Staff in Attendance

The Honorable Kristen Larson – Chair
The Honorable Michael Jones – Member
The Honorable Andreas Addison – Council Member (*early departure*)
William Echelberger, Council Budget Analyst
Lisa Braxton, Council Management Analyst
Haskell Brown, Interim City Attorney
Joyce Davis, Interim Council Chief of Staff
William Echelberger, Council Budget Analyst
Jamie Isley, Assistant City Clerk
Pamela Nichols, Senior Assistant City Clerk
Candice Reid, City Clerk
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Absent

The Honorable Katherine Jordan – Vice Chair

Call to Order

Chair Kristen Larson called the meeting to order at 2:08 p.m., and presided.

Electronic Meeting Announcement

Assistant City Clerk Jamie Isley, in accordance with Ordinance No. 2020-093, adopted April 9, 2020, as most recently amended by Ordinance No. 2021-181, adopted June 28, 2021, announced the meeting would be held through electronic communication means. Assistant City Clerk Isley stated notice of the meeting was provided to the public through a public information advisory issued on July 21, 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 Wednesday, July 28, 2021, were provided to committee members. Ms. Isley 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 Jamie Isley provided the citizen speaker guidelines.

Public Comment

There were no public comment speakers.

Approval of Minutes

There were no amendments or corrections to the meeting minutes of Wednesday, June 23, 2021, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

It was the consensus of the committee to consider board vacancies prior to papers for consideration, with presentations to follow.

Board Vacancies

Senior Assistant City Clerk Pamela Nichols reviewed board applications for consideration by the committee.

Member Michael Jones moved to forward the following appointment and reappointment applications to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved:

Board Name	Criteria for Appointment	Applicant Name
Sister Cities Commission (13 members)	Reside or work in the city (2 vacancies)	Nin Asseya Ra-El 3 rd District Resident (reappointment)
		Dr. Patricia W. Cummins 2 nd District Employment

Chair Kristen Larson provided the committee with an overview of the process that created the Participatory Budgeting Steering Commission (PBSC) and announced a slate of applicants developed with Councilor Andreas Addison who she recommended for appointment.

Councilor Andreas Addison delineated efforts made to recruit a diverse slate of applicants and articulated methods to recruit a person with a disability to apply for the vacancy.

Member Michael Jones expressed concern for what he believed was a lack of diversity among the list of applicants provided. He also expressed concern for potential inequities that could occur once the PBSC begins its work.

Chair Larson discussed methods of outreach regarding vacancies for the PBSC.

Councilor Addison discussed efforts made to allow ample time and opportunity for a diverse range of city residents to apply.

Member Michael Jones moved to continue consideration of the following applications for appointment to the Participatory Budgeting Steering Commission, to the September 22, 2021, Governmental Operations Standing Committee meeting, which was seconded and unanimously approved:

Board Name	Criteria for Appointment	Applicant Name
Participatory Budgeting Steering Commission 11 members (7 voting, 4 non-voting)	Reside in a Council district located north of the James River	Scott Castro 1 st District
		James Edge 1 st District

		April Johnson 1 st District
		Hortense Mitchell Liberti 1 st District
		James Pickren 1 st District
		Jerome Legions 2 nd District
		Chris Straus 2 nd District
		Benjamin Barber 3 rd District
		Erica Skylar 5 th District
		Wyatt Gordon 6 th District
		Aaron Linas 6 th District
		Oludare Ogunde 7 th District
		Keokah Saunders 7 th District
	(2 voting members)	
	Reside in a Council district located south of the James River	Erin Kelley 4 th District
		Jeffery Walker 4 th District
Shannon Gonzalez 8 th District		
Resident of public housing (1 voting member)	Sharron Shuler 3 rd District	

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance was considered:

ORD. 2021-200

To amend City Code § 2-1038, concerning the duties of the Participatory Budgeting Steering Commission, for the purpose of delaying the due date of the Participatory Budgeting Steering Commission's first presentation to the Council until the December 6, 2021, Organizational Development Standing Committee meeting.

Patrons: Mr. Addison

Councilor Andreas Addison introduced ORD. 2021-200, and stated that the proposed ordinance will need to be amended to coincide with the appointment of applicants to the Participatory Budgeting Steering Commission.

Chair Kristen Larson confirmed that Councilor Addison was amenable to continuing ORD. 2021-200 to the next committee meeting.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Member Michael Jones moved to continue ORD. 2021-200 to the September 22, 2021, Governmental Operations Standing Committee meeting, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

The following resolution was considered:

RES. 2021-R045

To request that the Chief Administrative Officer cause to be prepared a plan that provides for the achievement of certain objectives for broadband accessibility and affordability within the city of Richmond, including the designation of a coordinator of broadband telecommunications resources for the City.

Patrons: Mr. Addison, Ms. Lynch

Councilor Andreas Addison introduced RES. 2021-R045, and informed the committee that the proposed resolution works to mimic Commonwealth of Virginia best practices regarding broadband telecommunications resources. He further stated that RES. 2021-R045, requests city administration to work towards connecting underserved populations with affordable high-speed internet access.

Member Michael Jones requested additional information regarding coverage issues in the city.

Robert Steidel, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of Operations, informed the committee that the Federal Communications Commission website contains a broadband map that includes provider information, in addition to upload and download speeds for census tracks citywide.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Vice Chair Michael Jones moved to forward RES.2021-R045 to the September 13, 2021, Council meeting with recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

Councilor Andreas Addison left the meeting at 2:53 p.m.

The following resolution was considered:

RES. 2021-R046

To request that the Mayor issue an administrative regulation and the Chief Administrative Officer provide certain financial and activity reports to address certain findings regarding overtime set forth in Audit Report No. 2019-07 concerning a Citywide Payroll audit.

Patrons: Ms. Larson

Chair Kristen Larson introduced RES. 2021-R046.

City Auditor Lou Lassiter discussed city overtime statistics with the committee, informing them that recent audits have identified fifty-seven employees that have worked over seven hundred hours in a calendar year, and twenty-three employees that have worked more than one thousand and forty hours in a calendar year. He further explained that although the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated overtime rates, there is concern for employee and citizen safety regarding the amount of hours worked.

Jeff Gray, Senior Policy Analyst to the Chief Administrative Officer, informed the committee of several mitigating circumstances that have contributed to the city's overtime audit findings.

Gayle O'Neal, Human Resources deputy director, stated that she is currently reviewing outstanding audit issues and that city administration is working towards a policy to address the overtime issue.

City Auditor Lassiter stated that city overtime issues were originally identified in 2019 with recommendations provided. He also mentioned that overtime issues were present in the recent 2020 audit. He further stated that the city does not currently have a policy implemented to address overtime issues.

Member Michael Jones stated that there are likely city employees who rely on the income made from working overtime to cover expenses. He asked whether employee input was considered in the audit or the drafting of the proposed legislation, and whether the overtime worked has a negative fiscal impact.

Chair Larson explained that the overtime findings from both audits exceeds the amount of overtime to

ensure the safety of city employees, which totals half of one working year.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Member Michael Jones moved to forward RES. 2021-R046 to the September 13, 2021, Council meeting with recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

The following resolution was considered:

RES. 2021-R047

To request that the Chief Administrative Officer cause to be prepared and submitted to the Council a plan that provides for the submission of a grant application to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund for the purpose of seeking funding to reduce the impact of flooding in the city of Richmond.

Patrons: Ms. Larson

Chair Kristen Larson introduced RES. 2021-R047.

Robert Steidel, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of Operations, informed the committee that the Department of Public Utilities is preparing a grant application for the funds described in RES. 2021-R047.

Chair Kristen Larson requested a copy of the grant application and a list of the projects to which the funds will be allocated.

Mr. Steidel provided additional information regarding impounding structures and where such structures are located within the city. He also stated that there are limited grant funds available and applications are scored based on alignment with the offering agency's mission. He further informed the committee that city administration is working to locate grants and funding for other stormwater or flood related projects.

Member Michael Jones discussed a Department of Public Utilities study stating that 338 million dollars is needed to begin the mitigation of flooding on the Southside of Richmond. Member Jones expressed hope for additional funding from the state and stated support for RES. 2021-R047.

Mr. Steidel informed the committee of a recent mayoral announcement regarding a 100 million dollar combined sewer project, to which the Commonwealth of Virginia will allocate half of the funds required. Mr. Steidel further stated that the combined sewer project will include flood control as many elements of the project includes the control of combined stormwater collection and sanitary sewage.

Member Jones requested that Council and city administration prioritize flood mitigation efforts in the Southside of Richmond.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Member Michael Jones moved to forward RES. 2021-R047 to the September 13, 2021, Council meeting with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and unanimously approved.**

Presentation(s)

City Auditor's Annual Performance Report

City Auditor Lou Lassiter presented the committee with an update regarding the Office of the City Auditor for the Fiscal Year 2021, to include information on the completion of 2021 audit projects, audit effectiveness trends, implementation trends, audit staff certifications, and plans for the future.

Member Michael Jones requested that the Office of the Inspector General provide a similar presentation at a future meeting.

Chair Kristen Larson commended the Office of the City Auditor for work completed in recent years.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Civilian Review Board (CRB) Task Force Update

Angela Fontaine and Dr. Eli Coston, Task Force on the Establishment of a CRB co-chairs, presented an update regarding work completed by the task force and plans going forward. Ms. Fontaine discussed tasks completed, stakeholder engagement, and current working documents. Dr. Coston reviewed items and goals recommended by the task force to be included in the budget and plans for the finalized CRB.

Member Michael Jones commended the task force on work completed, outreach to the community and coordination with stakeholders. Member Jones suggested that members of other Council boards and commissions consider attending Council district meetings to foster communication and engagement.

Chair Kristen Larson asked whether the committee is in need of an additional member to fill a recent vacancy. She also inquired about the task force's recommendation for outside legal counsel.

Dr. Coston informed the committee that the process is nearly complete and that any new member would have missed critical citizen engagement meetings. Dr. Coston confirmed that the task force has a sufficient number of members to ensure a quorum at meetings. Dr. Coston further informed the committee that outside counsel would be sought when there is a conflict of interest.

Interim City Attorney Haskell Brown stated that the Charter of the City of Richmond mandates that the Task Force on the Establishment of a CRB be represented by the Office of the City Attorney. He informed the committee that the finalized Civilian Review Board would likely have its own legal counsel separate from the local City Attorney's Office per state code. Mr. Brown further stated that his office would further examine whether any changes to the city charter are necessary.

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Discussion Item(s)

Charter Review Process Update

Chair Kristen Larson suggested the committee consider holding an informal work session with city administration to review recommended changes to the Charter of the City of Richmond.

Member Michael Jones agreed to an informal committee meeting and asked that councilor compensation be considered in future discussions.

Chair Larson suggested the meeting be held in early September.

It was the consensus of the committee to cancel the August Governmental Operations Standing Committee meeting.

Staff Report

Bill Echelberger, Council budget analyst, provided the committee with the July staff report.

A copy of the report provided has been filed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:02 p.m.