



## City of Richmond

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

### Minutes

#### Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee

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Thursday, September 16, 2021

1:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – City Hall

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#### **Committee Members and Others in Attendance**

The Honorable Kristen Larson – Vice Chair  
The Honorable Ellen F. Robertson – Committee Member  
The Honorable Andreas Addison – Councilmember (early departure)

#### **Absent**

The Honorable Michael Jones – Chair

#### **Staff Present**

Haskell Brown, Interim City Attorney  
Bill Echelberger, Council Budget Analyst  
Candice Reid, City Clerk  
Tabrica Rentz, Acting Deputy City Attorney  
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

#### **Call to Order**

Vice Chair Kristen Larson called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m., and presided.

#### **Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan and Citizen Speaker Guidelines**

Upon the Vice 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 and masking requirements.

#### **Public Comment Period**

There were no public comment speakers.

#### **Agenda Amendments**

**Member Ellen Robertson moved to amend the agenda as follows:**

##### ORD. 2021-235

To amend and reordain City Code § 26-355, concerning the levy of tax on real estate, to establish a tax rate of \$1.20 for the tax year beginning Jan. 1, 2022, pursuant to Va. Code § 58.1-3321(b), and increasing such rate from the Rolled Back Tax Rate of \$1.071 as computed in accordance with Va. Code § 58.1-3321(a).

**Patron:** President Newbille

**To be continued to the October 21, 2021 Finance and Economic Development Standing**

## Committee meeting.

**The motion was seconded and approved:** Ayes 2, Robertson, Larson. Noes None.

## Approval of Minutes

There were no corrections or amendments to the meeting minutes of the Thursday, July 15, 2021 committee meeting, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

## Papers for Consideration

**The following ordinance was considered:**

### ORD. 2021-189

To provide for the crediting of receipts of business, professional, and occupational taxes in excess of \$32,713,958.00 during Fiscal Year 2021-2022 to a special reserve assigned to support the reduction of business, professional, and occupational taxes applicable to certain businesses.

**Patron:** Mr. Addison

*Councilor Andreas Addison provided an introduction and additional information regarding ORD. 2021-189.*

*A copy of the material provided has been filed.*

*Member Ellen Robertson noted her appreciation for the paper, and stated that it was important for the city to identify methods to lower business, professional, and occupational license (BPOL) taxes if possible. Member Robertson also stated her concerns that the city's BPOL taxes were not competitive with surrounding counties, and she further stated that more work than just reducing the tax rate was necessary to address the issue. Member Robertson suggested continuing consideration of ORD. 2021-189, to allow time to receive information from city administration regarding plans to address competitiveness with surrounding counties in attracting businesses.*

*Councilor Andreas Addison shared that immediate action was necessary on ORD. 2021-189, to ensure that any reductions to BPOL taxes would take effect on January 1, 2022.*

*Vice Chair Kristen Larson noted referring the ordinance to Council with no recommendation would allow time for Council to receive additional information regarding ORD. 2021-189 and city administration's plan to increase competitiveness.*

**There were no further comments or discussions and Member Ellen Robertson moved to forward ORD. 2021-189 to Council with no recommendation, which was seconded and approved:** Ayes 2, Robertson, Larson. Noes None.

*Councilor Andreas Addison left the meeting at 1:37 p.m.*

**The following ordinance was considered:**

### ORD. 2021-220

To amend Ord. No. 2021-105, adopted May 10, 2021, which provided that the Director of Finance shall credit all funds received by the City, whether from the United States government, the Commonwealth of Virginia, or otherwise, provided pursuant to the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to a special reserve assigned for purposes authorized by such Act, to instead provide that such funds shall be recorded in the general ledger, to be managed in the Projects and Grants Module in the City's enterprise resource planning system.

**Patron:** Mayor Stoney

Sheila White, Department of Finance, Director, provided an introduction and additional information regarding ORD. 2021-220.

*Vice Chair Kristen Larson stated that she believed the purpose of the ordinance was only to address procedural changes necessary for compliance, and that no significant changes would occur to city policy if adopted.*

Bill Echelberger, Council Budget Analyst, confirmed Vice Chair Larson's statement, and he provided additional information regarding ORD. 2021-220.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Member Ellen Robertson moved to forward ORD. 2021-220 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved:** Ayes 2, Robertson, Larson. Noes None.

**The following ordinance was considered:**

ORD. 2021-221

To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Contract for Donated Goods and Services between the City of Richmond and Abernethy Schwartz Partners, LLC, doing business as BlueConduit, for the purpose of accepting lead service line statistical modeling and support services valued at approximately \$100,000.00 to assist the City's lead service line removal program.

**Patron:** Mayor Stoney

Jeff Gray, Senior Policy Advisor to the Chief Administrative Officer, provided an introduction and additional background information regarding ORD. 2021-221.

There were no further comments or discussions and **Member Ellen Robertson moved to forward ORD. 2021-221 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved:** Ayes 2, Robertson, Larson. Noes None.

**The following ordinance was considered:**

ORD. 2021-222

To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Richmond, Virginia and the Public Defender for the City of Richmond, Virginia for the purpose of providing funds to supplement the salaries of employees in the Public Defender's Office for the City of Richmond, and to repeal Ord. No. 2021-121, adopted May 24, 2021.

**Patron:** Ms. Lynch

Jeff Gray, Senior Policy Advisor to the Chief Administrative Officer, provided information regarding the purpose of ORD. 2021-222.

**Public Hearing**

**Ashley Shapiro, Office of the Public Defender, Deputy Public Defender,** spoke in support of ORD. 2021-222, and stated that the purpose of the ordinance was to amend portions of the memorandum of understanding agreement between the city and the Office of the Public Defender, to direct that supplement payments received by Office of the Public Defender employees be monthly, rather than annually.

*Member Ellen Robertson requested additional information regarding the agreement between*

*the city and the Office of the Public Defender. Member Robertson also requested information regarding other localities in the Commonwealth of Virginia that supplement the salaries of the Office of the Public Defender employees.*

There were no further comments or discussions and **Member Ellen Robertson moved to forward ORD. 2021-222 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved:** Ayes 2, Robertson, Larson. Noes None.

**The following ordinances were considered:**

ORD. 2021-232

To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Performance Agreement between the City of Richmond, Virginia, the Economic Development Authority of the City of Richmond, Virginia, Vytal Companies, LLC, doing business as Vytal Studios, and Manchester Town Center 2, LLC, for the purpose of enabling the Authority to provide an economic development grant to Vytal Companies, LLC, doing business as Vytal Studios, as an incentive to lease, equip, improve, and operate its corporate headquarters, together with studio and production space, in the city of Richmond.

**Patron:** Mayor Stoney

ORD. 2021-233

To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Commonwealth's Development Opportunity Fund Performance Agreement between the City of Richmond, Virginia, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership Authority, the Economic Development Authority of the City of Richmond, Virginia, and Vytal Companies, LLC, for the purpose of enabling the Economic Development Authority of the City of Richmond to provide a performance grant to Vytal Companies, LLC, as an incentive to lease, equip, improve, and operate its corporate headquarters, together with studio and production space, in the city of Richmond.

**Patron:** Mayor Stoney

Leonard Sledge, Department of Economic Development Director, provided an introduction and additional background information regarding ORD. 2021-232 and ORD. 2021-233.

*Member Ellen Robertson requested additional information regarding other development opportunities that have agreements in place with the city and the Office of Community Wealth Building.*

Mr. Sledge stated that he would work to provide performance agreements to Council.

*Vice Chair Kristen Larson stated her support for Council to receive updates regarding performance agreements.*

There were no further comments or discussions and **Member Ellen Robertson moved to forward ORD. 2021-232 and ORD. 2021-233 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved:** Ayes 2, Robertson, Larson. Noes None.

**The following ordinance was considered:**

ORD. 2021-234

To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Virginia Opioid Abatement Fund and Settlement Allocation Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Richmond, Virginia, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and other participating political subdivisions for the purpose of providing for the allocation and use of monies recovered as a result of litigation seeking to recover costs incurred and to be incurred in abating the effects of the opioid addiction epidemic that plagues the city and other Virginia communities.

**Patrons:** President Newbille and Vice President Ellen Robertson

*Member Ellen Robertson provided an introduction and additional background information regarding ORD. 2021-234.*

There were no further comments or discussions and **Member Ellen Robertson moved to forward ORD. 2021-234 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved:** Ayes 2, Robertson, Larson. Noes None.

**The following resolution was considered:**

RES. 2021-R064

To request that the U. S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration provide to the Chief Administrative Officer and other officials of the City's Administration, as appropriate, the information necessary for the Mayor to introduce and for the Council to adopt an ordinance authorizing the Chief Administrative Officer to accept a grant from the U. S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the amount of \$149,437.00 for the purpose of funding the proposed Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities' The Richmond Environment: Students as Teachers in their Watershed program, and that the Mayor introduce such legislation as may be necessary to accept such grant funds for the purpose of funding the proposed Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities' The Richmond Environment: Students as Teachers in their Watershed program, and to amend the General Fund Budget for the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 for the purpose of appropriating \$149,437.00 for the purpose of funding the proposed Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities' The Richmond Environment: Students as Teachers in their Watershed program.

**Patron:** Ms. Lynch

Bill Echelberger, Council Budget Analyst, provided information regarding the purpose of RES. 2021-R064.

Jeff Gray, Senior Policy Advisor to the Chief Administrative Officer, requested that consideration of RES. 2021-R064 be continued to allow for more discussions with the Department of Parks and Recreation.

*Member Ellen Robertson inquired if action was necessary on the proposed resolution due to any deadline requirements related to the receipt of funds.*

Amy Robins, Liaison to Councilor Stephanie Lynch, informed the committee that the city must facilitate the transfer of funds to third party community groups by first adopting the proposed legislation and accepting the funds. Ms. Robins also stated that once accepted, third parties could receive the funds through a transfer from the city.

*Member Robertson stated she wanted to allow city administration more time to review RES. 2021-R064, and she offered to forward the resolution to Council with no recommendation.*

There were no further comments or discussions and **Member Ellen Robertson moved to forward RES. 2021-R064 to Council with no recommendation, which was seconded and approved:** Ayes 2, Robertson, Larson. Noes None.

**The following resolution was considered:**

RES. 2021-R068

To express the Council's support for the City of Richmond to become a "gigabit city" and to request that the Chief Administrative Officer cause to be created a plan to bring reliable and affordable

internet connectivity, with speeds at 1,000 megabits per second, to public spaces and to all residents of the City of Richmond.

**Patron:** Mr. Addison

Daniel Wagner, Liaison to Councilor Andreas Addison, provided an introduction and background information regarding RES. 2021-R068.

*Member Ellen Robertson stated her support for the proposed resolution.*

There were no further comments or discussions and **Member Ellen Robertson moved to forward RES. 2021-R064 to Council with a recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved:** Ayes 2, Robertson, Larson. Noes None.

## **Presentations**

There were no presentations.

## **Board Vacancies**

There were no board vacancies for consideration.

## **Discussion Item**

There were no discussion items.

## **Staff Report**

Bill Echelberger, Council Budget Analyst, provided the committee with the September staff report.

*A copy of the material provided has been filed.*

*Member Ellen Robertson provided information regarding crossover information related to goals established at Council's previous member retreat. Member Robertson stated she would discuss the information with Chair Michael Jones prior to the next Finance and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting.*

*A copy of the material provided has been filed.*

*Vice Chair Kristen Larson stated she wanted staff to review the possibility of providing citizens with real estate tax notices electronically.*

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:34 p.m.