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A Newsletter from City Councilmember Sarah Abubaker Fourth District Fridays

June 27, 2025 | Issue 23



Dear Fourth District Friends,

I am so grateful to all who showed up in the sweltering heat on Tuesday to join us for June's Fourth District Meeting. Getting a chance to connect with you both individually and as a community is one of my favorite parts of this work.

At the meeting, we had a great overview of the City Auditor's Office, including highlights from several of their key reports—most notably, the recent audit on p-card usage (you'll find more details on that below).

A number of attendees asked what happens after the Auditor issues findings. The process begins with a response period, during which the relevant department can address the individual findings and recommendations. Then, the Auditor's Office releases [Quarterly Open Recommendation Follow Ups](#), to track the status of unresolved items. And starting this year, the Council's Government Operations Standing Committee is requiring departments to publicly report on their audit progress during every committee presentation. According to Auditor Riad Ali, this additional accountability has already helped drive more meaningful action.

In some cases, the findings of the auditor are then passed on to be further investigated (and sometimes presented) by the Inspector

In this issue:

- Audit of City's Purchasing Card Program
- City of Richmond-Henrico County Meeting on Future of Water Distribution System
- Overview of Richmond's Constitutional Officers, Part 2 (City Sheriff)
- Upcoming Events
- Ways to Stay Engaged
- City Resources

Constituent Corner:

- Number of Constituent Emails Responded to Last Week: **78**
- Number of PUBLIC 311 tickets in the 4th District Last Week: **44**
- Top Issues from Constituents: **P-card audit, neighborhood gatherings tax**

turner investigated (and sometimes prosecuted) by the Inspector General. I would imagine the more egregious of the p-card violations will be followed up with criminal or civil penalties and the city will do everything in its power to recoup taxpayer money. I will keep you posted as more comes to light, but this certainly emphasizes why these two offices are incredibly important to good governance.

In more serious cases, findings may be referred to the Inspector General for further investigation—and potentially, legal consequences. I expect some of the more egregious p-card violations will be followed up with civil or criminal penalties, and the City will pursue all available means to recover misused taxpayer funds. I'll keep you updated as new developments emerge. This situation is a powerful reminder of the critical role these two offices play in ensuring transparency and good governance.

A huge thank you to Mr. Ali for spending the evening with us, and to Gramophone and Zombie Pizza for providing delicious food, drinks, and raffle prizes. We're lucky to be surrounded by such amazing local businesses!

One final note: We'll be pausing the newsletter next week in celebration of the July 4th holiday. We'll return to your inbox on July 11, then take a brief break in August while Council is in recess. Our next edition after that will be on August 29.

With Fourth District Love,

Sarah

gatherings, tax
bill issues

Quick Notes:

7100 Jahnke Road SUP has been continued to the Planning Commission meeting on **July 15**

No Newsletter next **Friday, July 4 or from August 1-22**

Did someone forward you this message? Subscribe for future updates below.

[Sign Up for this Newsletter](#)

Three Big Things

Trying to keep up with all that is happening in Richmond can be overwhelming. Every week, I will share the three most important things to know for the upcoming week.

1 - City: Audit of City's Purchasing Card Program

On Tuesday, the Office of the City Auditor, which reports to City Council, released its long-awaited audit of the City's purchasing card (p-card) program. As anybody who read the headlines is aware, the results were deeply concerning and demonstrated significant need for increased controls and oversight of the program.

Some key things to know include:

- The audit focused on \$20.7 million in expenses from July 2022-May 2024.

#2 - City: City of Richmond-Henrico County Meeting on Future of Water Distribution System

In last week's newsletter, I shared Mayor Avula's announcement that he had invited our regional partners in Chesterfield, Hanover, and Henrico Counties to join together to form an advisory group to chart the path forward for the future of the region's drinking water system. You can read

- \$5 million was deemed "questionable expenses."
 - While some of these expenses were reported to the Inspector General for further investigation, others were not fraudulent and were even permissible, but were lacking certain required documentation.
- Mayor Avula recently initiated a "reset" of the p-card program, which reduced the number of active p-cards by 80% and drastically limited the expenses that can be made on them.
- The audit included 16 recommendations for how the p-card program could be improved and strengthened.

To be clear - **Richmonders deserve better.** I understand the burden that taxes are placing on so many in our City, so to see a process that failed to use those tax dollars as efficiently as possible is unacceptable.

That being said, p-cards are a best practice nationally and are essential to efficiently operating an organization as large and complex as the Richmond City government. I appreciate Mayor Avula initiating this reset and developing a plan that allows the government to operate efficiently while also better safeguarding taxpayer resources.

Finally, I encourage all of you to read the [Purchasing Card Audit Report](#), which is available on the City Auditor's website along with every other completed audit report. I've also included links to media reports about the audit in the "In The News" section (and you may see a familiar face in the video in the 12 On Your Side story).

#3 - City: Overview of Richmond's Constitutional Officers, Part 1 (City Sheriff)

We started our overview of the City's Constitutional Officers last week with the Commonwealth's Attorney, so we're moving on to the other Constitutional Office that was just on the primary ballot - the City Sheriff.

The mission of the Sheriff's Office is to maintain a secure jail and a safe court system, along with seamless inmate transport and civil process to preserve public safety. The City Sheriff also has a stated goal of partnering with the community to reduce recidivism by providing community-based programming that empowers citizens to become productive members of society.

While many are aware of the Sheriff's responsibilities within the city jail and courts systems, their duties related to the civil process are less known. In Richmond, the duty of serving court documents is professionally handled by the Sheriff's Office. While you can review the full list of civil processes managed by the Sheriff's Office [here](#), some of the highlights include:

- Petitions of complaints (i.e.. serving a lawsuit)

that full update here.

I also shared that the Mayor was specifically seeking to convene a meeting between the City of Richmond and Henrico County for an in-depth conversation on this topic. That meeting has **officially been scheduled**, so I wanted to be sure to share the information so you all can engage with this crucial conversation.

The meeting will take place on **Monday, June 30th at 3:30 p.m.** Participants in the meeting will include Mayor Avula, Richmond City Councilmembers, Henrico County Manager John Vithoulkas, and members of the Henrico Board of Supervisors.

You can watch the [livestream](#) of the meeting on YouTube and the full recording will be posted after the meeting has concluded. As this is a "working session" and not a formal meeting of either legislative body, there will not be opportunities for public comment at this meeting. However, please rest assured this is the first of many conversations on this topic and I will ensure that you have the information needed to fully engage in all of them.

- Writs of Possession (petition to take custody of a listed tangible item or location)
- Subpoenas for witnesses
- Summons to appear in court
- Garnishments
- Evictions
- Administrative Support Orders (for requesting child support)

As I'm sure many of you know, current Sheriff Antoinette Irving won the Democratic nomination for another term last week. With no opponent in the general election, she is highly likely to win a third full term as Sheriff in November, which extend her time in office through 2030. While many Richmonders will never interface with the Sheriff's Office directly, their work is crucial to a safe Richmond and I highly encourage you to learn as much as you can about the Sheriff's Office on their [website](#).

Upcoming Events

June

Sat., June 28, 4 p.m. Stonewall on Stonewall
Pride Parade, 28th and Stonewall Avenue

Mon., June 30, 7 a.m. Friends of JRPS Trash
Pickup @ Pony Pasture

Mon., June 30, 3:30 p.m. Joint Regional
Meeting on Water System (tune in at this [link](#))

July

Fri., July 4 City Offices Closed for July 4th
Holiday

Mon., July 7, 7 a.m. Friends of JRPS Trash
Pickup @ Pony Pasture

Mon., July 7, 4 p.m. Organizational
Development Committee Meeting @ City Hall

Sun., July 13, 6 p.m. Music in the Park ft. DJ
Harrison @ Forest Hill Park

Mon., July 14, 7 a.m. Friends of JRPS Trash
Pickup @ Pony Pasture

Mon., July 21, 7 a.m. Friends of JRPS Trash
Pickup @ Pony Pasture

Mon., July 28, 7 a.m. Friends of JRPS Trash
Pickup @ Pony Pasture

Mon., July 28, 6 p.m. [City Council Meeting](#)
@ City Hall

Council Catch Up

This week:

June 23: Council held our regular monthly meeting. We had a relatively light agenda, mostly consisting of SUPs in other districts and grant agreements for City initiatives. You can watch the recording [here](#).

Jun3 24: The Public Safety Committee held our monthly meetings. We heard presentations regarding RPD's Environmental Officers and Operations and the Code Enforcement Division. You can watch the recording [here](#).

Next week:

June 30: Council will be participating in a joint meeting with Mayor Avula, the Henrico County Board of Supervisors, and the Henrico County manager to discuss a more resilient water distribution system for the region. You can watch the livestream at this [link](#).

In the News

Here's a few news stories from the week to keep you informed:

[Watch the City Council Meeting from June 23](#)

[Audit finds 'significant weaknesses' with Richmond government's purchasing cards](#)
(The Richmonder)

[City Council delays decision on residency requirement as they work out deal with Avula](#)
(Richmond Times-Dispatch)

[Henrico accepts Avula's invitation to talk water infrastructure](#) (Richmond Times-Dispatch)

[Audit: Credit cards used for \\$5 million in 'questionable expenses'](#)
(Richmond Times-Dispatch)

[As Richmonders complain of urban heat, city releases new cooling plan](#) (WTVR)

[RVA Community Fridges offer relief during scorching heat wave](#) (WTVR)

[RACC expresses concerns about the heat's impact on pets](#) (12 On Your Side)

[Audit: City spent \\$5 million in 'questionable transactions' on credit cards](#)
(12 On Your Side)

[Richmond opens cooling stations amid heat wave](#) (VPM)

Important Contact Information



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The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

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Get Updates Fast on Social Media

In fast-paced situations, I will post to my social media channels in real time as I learn new information. It's always a good idea to follow me on Facebook and Instagram and check my stories for quick information.



City Resources

WHO TO CONTACT?



DEPARTMENT OF
CITIZEN SERVICE
AND RESPONSE



EMERGENCY?

- Police
- Fire
- Medical

Call 9-1-1

URGENT?

- Power outage
- Live power wire
- Natural gas and water leaks
- Sinkholes
- Raw sewage
- Downed streetlight
- Tree blocking road
- Tree on power line
- Traffic signal out
- File a police report
- Homeless crisis

Dominion Energy
866-366-4357

Public Utilities
804-646-4646
then press 1

**Non Emergency
Police**
804-646-5100

Continuum of Care
804-972-0813

PERMITS?

- Permits
- Inspections

**Planning and
Development**
804-646-1628

UTILITIES?

- Utilities billing
- Utilities payments

Public Utilities
804-646-4646

SOMETHING ELSE?

- General information
- Social services
- Trash cans and litter
- Finance and tax questions
- Road, alley and sidewalk repairs
- Streetlight repairs
- Street sign repairs
- Storm water and storm drains
- Code enforcement issues
- Zoning issues
- Damaged tree assessments
- Parking issues

RVA 311
Call 3-1-1 or
804-646-7000

RVA311.com

RVA311 mobile app

Contact Citizen Service and Response with questions or concerns.



Richmond Public Schools
4th District School Board Member [Wesley Hedgepeth](#)



Richmond Public Library



Central Virginia Waste Management

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