



CITY OF RICHMOND

Commission On Aging

Friday, January 9, 2026; 10:00am-12:00pm
Richmond Memorial Auditorium, Farallon Room
403 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond, CA 94804

PRESENT: Michelle Hayes, Chair, Myrtle Braxton, Vice Chair, Bryan Harris, Secretary,
Kiran Agarwal, Lorene Holmes-Dees, Gerry La Londe-Berg, Pat Young

ABSENT: Rose Brooks, Bev Wallace (dropped)

COUNCIL LIAISON: Jamelia Brown

STAFF LIAISONS: Kymberlyn Carson-Thrower, Carlette Vigil

GUEST: Cordell Hindler, Sonja Yancey, Manuel Sanchez, Gilbert Pete, Steve Lipson, Laura Hill

This meeting is being held in a wheelchair accessible location. To request disability-related accommodation to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact City Attorney's Office, ADA Coordinator, at 510-620-6509 at least five (5) business days before the meeting date.

RCOA MEETING MINUTES

- A. **Welcome/Meeting Called to Order by Chair Hayes at 10:05 AM**
- B. **Roll Call by Secretary Harris - 8 present, 2 absent** *QUORUM was present.*
- C. **Announcement from Vice-Chair – Myrtle Braxton announced her resignation as vice-chair, effective immediately. She will remain on the Commission and requested that an election be held that day so as new officers could be sworn in immediately.**
- D. **Nominations/Election – Vice-chair Braxton nominated Gerry La Londe-Berg, seconded by Kiran Agarwal. With no opposition voiced, Gerry La Londe-Berg was elected Vice-chair.**
- E. **Swearing In of New Officers – Staff Liaison Kymberlyn Carson-Thrower administered the oath of office to: Gerry La Londe-Berg (Vice-chair) and Pat Young (Treasurer).**
- F. **Words of Inspiration - Commissioners and guests offered appreciation and remarks recognizing Vice Chair Braxton's long service and leadership, including her foundational work supporting senior technology efforts (Elder Tech Academy / West County Senior Coalition).**
- G. **Open Forum – Cordell Hindler shared community announcements: Mayor's City Conference on February 5 (location TBD), Richmond Community Foundation Gala on February 7 at the Berkeley Country Club. Sonja Yancey (Richmond's YouthBuild) introduced herself and her program: they recruit youth ages 16–24 needing a high school diploma and interested in construction careers. She further announced a request to swap dates between the Commission's Transportation Workshop and her planned Trade Fair due to conflicts and alignment with Apprenticeship Week. To swap Auditorium Lobby dates from April 30 to April 29. The Chair and Secretary indicated the date-swap would be finalized under the action items/calendar planning, later in the agenda but otherwise approved the request.**
- H. **Council Liaison Update - Councilmember Jamelia Brown provided updates and materials including color-coded district maps and a neighborhood council contact list (with meeting dates/times and a disclaimer that leadership may change). Key updates included Budget/Finance: Discussion of**

remaining/unspent funds and the importance of identifying Commission needs; Councilmember Brown and Commission leadership planned to meet in February to prioritize needs for presentation and budget discussions. Elections/Senior access & Measure J: Richmond's upcoming primary election includes seats for Mayor and Districts 2, 3, and 4. Measure J: Requires 50%+ to win a seat (impacting June outcomes). Exploration of placing polling locations inside senior sites (I.e. Hacienda) & neighborhood council sites to improve accessibility for the June primary. Neighborhood Councils: Councilmember Brown described neighborhood councils as accessible public forums that elevate community issues to City Council (example: smoke shop moratorium).

- I. **Tech Training** - Steve Lipson provided updates including AB 2449 / online participation: Updates on continued online participation options for public bodies (as described in the meeting). Proposed Older Adult Education / Tech Training: A proposal (described as "SB 2" concept from the California Senior Legislature and picked up by a state senator) to expand older adult education with technology training, intended to reduce isolation and improve access to services. AI Literacy: Plan to resume online tech training with an AI focus; Lipson offered to share links and examples. Dates & times to be shared via email.
- J. **Review & Approve Minutes** Motion: Myrtle Braxton 2nd: Pat Young APPROVED with Correction
- K. **Reviews of Neighborhood Council meetings by Commissioners** - Councilmember Brown and commissioners discussed recent neighborhood meeting activity, including an Iron Triangle Neighborhood Council meeting where time was used for a Chevron settlement strategy & input session and youth perspectives were shared. Discussion included how the Commission should engage: emphasized the need for seniors' voices in citywide input processes. Consensus emerged that the Commission should pursue direct engagement with city leadership while also ensuring seniors are represented at community input sessions.
- L. **Treasurer Report** – No report
- M. **Break at 11:09 AM**
- N. **Report from COA Manual committee** - Vice Chair La Londe-Berg reported on the Manual Committee meeting (Lorene, Pat, Gerry). Topics and preliminary recommendations included converting the Commission manual into an editable Word document. Reviewing and improving documentation structure, agenda management, attendance rules aligned with the ordinance. Attendance ordinance, the committee stated the ordinance requires removal after four absences in 12 months and does not include an "excused absence" category; committee plans to draft proposed amendments for City consideration. Committee restructuring proposals (draft): merge Finance and Executive committees, eliminate Legislative committee and instead make legislative updates a standing agenda item, and continue communications work pending coordination with City IT. Next Manual Committee meeting: January 14, 2026, 10:00 a.m., El Jardin Cafe (informal meeting; attendance guidance discussed to avoid quorum issues).
- O. **RECAP/Input from the commissioners on the Senior Winter Ball** - Commission reviewed questionnaire results (approximately 70 collected; some not tabulated due to Spanish responses, as described). Strengths: the band and music, decorations, commissioner outreach/promotion. Improvements needed: food quality (cold/dry), program spacing, too much speaking, need clearer "Commission on Aging" branding, better communication about photo backdrop and raffle, and clarity about youth service roles and tip solicitation. Commissioner emphasis: restore commissioner greeting and ticketing at the door (including tearing tickets and confirming paid attendance). Continue to use escorts to the tables. Ensure the event is clearly framed as a senior-focused program. Consider

revising the food service approach and vendor selection (e.g., chafing dishes/buffet option). Establish a planning team committee to help distribute the workload and ensure key roles (raffle, ticketing, announcements, vendor coordination) are covered.

P. Action Items:

- 1) **Staff Report (Winter Ball finances and payables)** - Staff and/or commissioners summarized expenses and revenues (as presented in the meeting): Expenses (reported total): \$16,031.43 Included: band (\$4,000), catering (pending), program book design (\$450), printing, marketing, décor reimbursements, bar license, etc. Revenues (reported total): \$12,522 Included: ticket sales (218 tickets / \$10,960), program book ads (\$925), 50/50 raffle (\$197), donation (\$500). Net: deficit discussed (revenue below expenses). Outstanding issue: caterer payment delayed due to insurance/contract compliance requirements in the City's system; reimbursements (including Myrtle and others) were described as in Finance processing.
- 2) **Senior Winter Ball follow-up items** - Improve recognition language so thank-you communications clearly reflect the Commission (not individual-only messaging). Identify a process to recognize donors – create an annual Donor Page (names in program book; future-year recognition plan). Consider safety readiness for large events (discussion of having resuscitation equipment available through Fire/EMS presence).
- 3) **Public communication plan and Senior Survey** - Continued interest in a communication tool/newsletter; Vice Chair shared a draft newsletter concept based on monthly emails.
- 4) **Business cards / name tags / T-shirts** - Discussion continued; commissioners noted interest in consistent business cards and/or name tags and optional purchase of standardized items.
- 5) **Calendar of Events 2026** — Commission reviewed draft calendar and finalized dates (consensus approved):
 - Senior Transportation Workshop: April 30 (date swap approved to accommodate Trades Fair)
 - Senior Line Dance: July 18
 - Senior Safety & Home Safety Workshop: September 16
 - RCOA Annual Retreat: October 2
 - Senior Wellness & Nutrition Workshop: October 7
 - Senior Winter Ball: December 12
- 6) **Follow-ups** - the Secretary and City Staff to proceed with required contracts; commissioners asked to review the event list and identify which event(s) they will lead. Transportation Workshop Event Coordinator will be the transportation chair Secretary Harris.

Q. Announcements

- *Vice Chair La Londe-Berg proposed inviting Uche Uwahina (Center for Elder Independence / PACE) to present at a future meeting (Commission agreed).*
- *Vice Chair shared the draft newsletter concept and offered to try again the following month for evaluation.*
- *Request raised to invite the City's new Finance Director (Emily Cole, as named in meeting) to explain the budget process at a future meeting.*

R. Adjourn at 12:35 PM (meeting extended 30 minutes by commission vote)