

# City of Richmond



LEVAR M. STONEY  
MAYOR

April 25, 2022

Dear President Dr. Newbille, Vice President Robertson, and Esteemed Members of the City Council of the City of Richmond:

Emergency services are something we take seriously in the City of Richmond. We recognize that our first responders are essential, especially those who have the responsibility of caring for and transporting our most vulnerable during times of extreme emergency health situations.

While we have enjoyed a good working relationship with the Richmond Ambulance Authority (RAA), we all know that COVID-19 has impacted our lives and how we navigate activities of daily living. We are forever changed at home and at work. Similarly, our city departments are adjusting their business practices to meet the needs of a “new world”. We should expect no less from our community partners. I believe after 30 years of operating, now is the time to review how we provide emergency ambulatory care for the City of Richmond. We must adapt to meet the expectations of our residents in a post-Covid-19 environment.

Based on financial and budgeting best practices, our administration has raised several concerns about RAA’s FY 2023 budget. In fact, concerns were raised in the FY 2022 budget process. The administration’s apprehension continues to grow given RAA’s considerable proposed funding increase without supporting data. Those concerns were further underscored during a City Council budget work session on April 19 led by Mr. Robert Bobb, former City Manager, who established the RAA using the Public Utility Model (PUM). Over time, the PUM, as it was established, has morphed into an operation that oversees itself. Hence, the higher level of independent scrutiny under a PUM model, guaranteed to ensure a high-performing emergency response service, no longer exists.

With the city’s new approach to working with community partners, we are establishing clear performance expectations and targets. This includes reviewing annual agency audits, examining budget requests, and adopting a mode of continuous monitoring and evaluation. It also requires us to do our due diligence when appropriating money to ensure public funds are being used thoughtfully and equitably.

As elected leaders of the city, it is my responsibility and yours to ensure that taxpayer dollars are accounted for. A sudden decrease in projected revenue for FY 2023—after it was steadily increasing in the prior years **and** it is projected to increase in FY 2024 and beyond—raises questions. To this end, I am requesting a third-party performance and financial audit of the RAA. Currently, we know transports, response times, collections and personnel expenditures have

# City of Richmond



decreased, but the request for city funding has increased. This audit will help answer the questions raised over the past two years and determine if changes are required.

City Council utilizes audits to review city departments. We should apply the same level or a higher level of oversight when appropriating funds to community partners.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. M. Stoney", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Levar M. Stoney  
Mayor