



AGENDA REPORT

Department

DATE:	June 3, 2025
TO:	Mayor Martinez and Members of the City Council
FROM:	Nickie Mastay, Deputy City Manager Internal Services Sharrone Taylor, Director of Human Resources
Subject:	Annual Public Hearing on Vacancies
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	There is no financial impact
PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:	n/a
STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:	Assembly Bill (“AB”) 2561, codified in Government Code section 3502.3, passed in 2024, requires public agencies to hold a public hearing to address the status of job vacancies prior to the adoption of the upcoming final budget.
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	HOLD a public hearing where the City will present information on the status of vacancies and the City’s recruitment and retention efforts in 2024 – Human Resources Department (Nickie Mastay/Sharrone Taylor 510-620-6602)

DISCUSSION:

Assembly Bill (“AB”) 2561 (codified in Government Code section 3502.3) passed in 2024 and requires public agencies to hold a public hearing to address the status of job vacancies prior to the adoption of the upcoming final budget. Staff will present the following required information at the public hearing:

- Information on the City of Richmond’s 2024 recruitment and retention efforts.
- The status of 2024 vacancies at the City of Richmond.
- Obstacles in the City of Richmond’s policies, procedures, and recruitment activities that may create challenges in the hiring process.

In addition, a bargaining unit shall be entitled to make a presentation at the public hearing at which the public agency presents the status of vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts for positions within that bargaining unit.

The hearing will follow the procedures outlined in the Council Rules of Procedure and allow each bargaining unit to present for 10 minutes since Government Code section 3502.3 is silent on the hearing procedures including presentation times, pre-submission of materials, and other related considerations.

Workforce and Recruitment Efforts

As of December 31, 2024, 808 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions were included in the City position control, of which 165 were vacant (20.4%). Notably, in 2024, 55 positions were also added to the position control, which contributed to 33 percent of this vacancy rate. Some of the initiatives that required additional staff were in Public Works - traffic calming, transportation, City beautification, as well as the Community Crisis Response Program. During calendar year 2024, Human Resources staff received and processed 6,437 applications, established 90 employment lists, filled 112 positions through hires, and made 65 promotions.

In addition, the City had previously conducted analyses of calls for service, staffing, and organizational structure, which resulted in reports by Matrix Consulting and Raftelis to inform the City on optimal staffing levels.

Vacancy Information

Bargaining unit vacancy rates were calculated by taking an average of the unit’s vacancy rate at the end of each month in 2024.

Bargaining Unit	2024 Vacancy Rate
	(as of December 31, 2024)
International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE) Local 21 – Executive Management Unit	17.6%

IFPTE Local 21 – Mid-Management Unit	24.6%
Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1021 – General Employees Bargaining Unit	16.4%
SEIU Local 1021 – Part-Time and Intermittent Employees Bargaining Unit	9%
Richmond Police Officers’ Association (RPOA)	18.9%
Richmond Police Management Association (RPMA)	2.1%
International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Local 188	7.3%
Richmond Fire Management Association (RFMA)	28.3%
TOTAL	20.4%

Bargaining units shall be entitled to make a presentation at the public hearing at which the public agency presents the status of vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts for positions within that bargaining unit. SEIU Local 1021 and RPOA have elected to make a presentation at the public hearing.

Retention and Vacancy Creation

Although the City brought on 112 hires, additional position vacancies have been created for several reasons. These include instances when newly budgeted positions are approved, internal movement occurs (such as a promotion or transfer), or when an employee leaves the organization due to retirement, voluntary resignation, or involuntary termination.

In 2024, 179 new vacancies were created for the following reasons:

- Newly added positions: 55
- Internal promotions that caused vacancies: 38
- Transfers that caused vacancies: 1
- Separations: 85
 - Retirement: 24
 - Resignation: 42
 - Involuntary: 16
 - Other: 3

The City’s annual turnover rate was 13%, calculated as 85 separations divided by 635 (the average headcount for the year).

Historical Context: Recruitment Challenges

COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts

Under previous City administrations, recruitment efforts were paused for at least one year and then gradually resumed over the subsequent years, with a focus on filling critical positions.

The Great Resignation

Following the pandemic, there was an unexpected and significant loss of experienced employees, many of whom retired, changed careers, or left for various other reasons.

Unstable Leadership

In the past seven years, the City has had five City Managers, four Human Resources Directors, and the departure of several department heads and key personnel. This instability negatively impacted City operations, necessitating a focus on maintaining service to the community while addressing gaps, restructuring the organization, and swiftly recruiting to fill vacancies.

Rapid Employee Turnover in Human Resources

Over recent years, the Human Resources Department has undergone significant changes due to the loss of essential roles in labor management, benefits administration, training, and recruitment, caused by resignations, layoffs, and retirements. This includes the loss of three in-house City Attorneys who worked in tandem to support the Human Resources Department.

Identified Obstacles

Highly Competitive Market

Richmond is not alone in seeing high employee turnover and difficulty filling positions. According to a 2024 report from NEOGOV¹, “staffing challenges continue to plague the public sector” with 71% of respondents reporting staffing shortages. Recruitment and retention are the top two priorities for government HR in 2024. Identified reasons include a lack of qualified applicants, high employee turnover with employees leaving for higher paid positions, and a “silver tsunami” of retirements. This environment has created a highly competitive market for talent, generally and locally.

The highly competitive market makes it challenging to fill many vacancies, but it is especially difficult to recruit for specialized positions, such as professional engineers. Additionally, societal impacts have led to a considerable reduction in the law enforcement profession, complicating the backfilling of vacant public safety positions.

¹ NEOGOV surveyed 779 Human Resources professionals representing hundreds of thousands of employees across city, county, and state agencies in the U.S. The report can be found at <https://info.neogov.com/resources/2024-trends-report>

Efforts to Address Obstacles

The City regularly reviews applicable policies, procedures, and recruitment activities to identify any potential obstacles in the City's hiring process. Some of the changes made to address obstacles include:

- Launched digital media campaigns for Police, Fire, and Communications Dispatchers and tailored recruitment strategies for other hard-to-fill vacancies.
- Developed new onboarding resources to enhance the new employee experience and integration into the workforce
- Initiated implementation of NEOGOV software to streamline HR processes
- Expanded parental leave benefits and updated key policies, including Family, Medical, and Pregnancy Leave, reasonable accommodation, and equal opportunity, to enhance compliance, accessibility, and employee support.
- Created partnerships with CivicSpark, Richmond Promise through the City's Youth Works Program to hire students to provide mentorship with the ultimate goal to offer employment.
- Instituted inclusive hiring practices by assessing and revising job descriptions to remove barriers, such as the need for a driver's license for positions that do not require driving as a primary function, and expanded minimum qualifications for most roles, thereby increasing opportunities

The City has implemented several retention strategies to retain a motivated and satisfied workforce, enhance overall productivity, and improve service delivery. These include offering competitive salaries and benefits to retain skilled employees, as well as these additional strategies:

- Launched a comprehensive training initiative to enhance professional development and facilitate growth
- Provided opportunities for internal advancement by opening 19 promotional-only recruitments. By tapping into internal talent, the goal is to foster an overall sense of satisfaction and optimism within the workforce.
- Organized facilitation and team building across various departments to create a supportive environment and unified workforce
- Revitalized the wellness program, including an expanded Health and Wellness Fair, webinars, employee engagement events, physical fitness campaigns, complimentary wellness applications, and the establishment of a peer support and critical incident debriefing program for sworn and sworn adjacent personnel
- Initiated employee engagement activities, including employee recognition tools such as the Rosie-Gram, to encourage a workplace culture centered on appreciation and acknowledgment

Additionally, the City recognizes the importance of employee engagement in motivating and retaining staff to continue providing high-quality services to the public. In 2024, we reinstituted the service award program to recognize employee milestone anniversaries at

the All-Employee Recognition Event, which was held again in 2025. We have also held various employee appreciation events throughout the year, such as:

- Italian Ice Truck
- Festive Holiday Sweater Coffee Cart
- Valentine's Day Coffee Cart
- Therapy Dog Visits

In closing, the City has made meaningful progress in strengthening recruitment and retention efforts, and in filling critical vacancies. Continued investment in employee engagement, wellness, professional development, recognition, and open communication will help create a workplace where talent grows—and stays—for the long term.

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED: AB 2561 PowerPoint Presentation