

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON M. SCOTT, Mayor



OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

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HEARING NOTES

City Council Resolution: 21-0052R

Informational Hearing – Baltimore City Employees – Safe Transition to Work After COVID-19

Committee: Health, Environment, and Technology (HET)

Chaired By: Councilwoman McCray

Hearing Date: Wednesday, October 11, 2023

Time (Beginning): 11:00 AM

Time (Ending): 11:45 AM

Location: Clarence "Du" Burns Chamber

Total Attendance: Approx. 12

Committee Members in Attendance:

Danielle McCray John Bullock James Torrence

Marc Conway

Table with 7 rows and 3 columns of checkboxes for tracking hearing completion. Rows include: Bill Synopsis in the file?, Attendance sheet in the file?, Agency reports read?, Video or audio-digitally recorded?, Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file?, Evidence of notification to property owners?, and Final vote taken at this hearing?.

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

- Julia Roche (Baltimore City Health Department)
• Quenton Herbert (Director of Human Resources and Chief Human Capital Officer)
• Chichi Nyagah-Nash (Department of General Services)
• Faith Leech (City Administrator)

## Major Issues Discussed

1. **Safe Transition to Work After COVID-19:** The hearing primarily focused on ensuring a safe transition for city employees back to work after the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing telework, hybrid work environments, and technology use for safety.
2. **Technology and Equipment for Remote Work:** Discussions revolved around the need for technology and equipment to support remote work, including laptops, cell phones, and tools for home-based employees.
3. **Standardization of Telework Policies:** The importance of standardizing telework policies across city agencies to provide clarity and consistency for employees and agency leaders.
4. **Responsiveness and Customer Service:** Maintaining high levels of responsiveness and customer service, even in a remote work environment, to ensure residents' needs are met promptly.
5. **Technology for Return to Work:** Focus on utilizing technology in planning the return to in-person work, including establishing baselines for this transition.
6. **Monitoring Employee Responsiveness:** Concerns about monitoring employee responsiveness, especially for emails and phone calls, and the role of agency leadership and supervisors in managing this aspect.
7. **Customer Service Training:** The significance of customer service and plans to provide specialized training for employees interacting with the public.
8. **Vacancy Information Request:** Councilman Stokes requested data about remote workers, their agencies, and locations.
9. **Mental Health and Return Anxiety:** Strategies to reduce the stigma around mental health, provide resources, and effectively communicate with employees regarding their return to work post-pandemic.
10. **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** The EAP as a resource for addressing anxiety and providing mental health information, alongside other wellness and health provider resources.
11. **Trauma Response:** Highlighting the need for support and resources for agencies dealing with trauma, particularly employee losses, through external partnerships.
12. **Creative Communication of Mental Health Resources:** The call for creative communication of mental health resources to employees, especially considering the pandemic's challenges.

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## Further Study

Was further study requested?

Yes  No

If yes, describe.

1. Chairwoman's McCray proposed a committee request: asking for a list of each agency and the number of vacancies, seeking information about staff shortages.
2. Councilman Stokes requests information about the workers who are working from home, asking for a breakdown by agency or location.
3. Committee request for additional steps taken to support employees' mental health, especially those having difficulty returning to work.

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*Deontre Hayes*

Committee Staff: Deontre L. Hayes

Date: October 24, 2023

Direct Inquiries to: (410) 396-1260

# City of Baltimore

City Council  
City Hall, Room 408  
100 North Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

## Meeting Minutes - Final

### Health, Environment, and Technology

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Wednesday, October 11, 2023

10:01 AM Virtual/Du Burns Chambers, 4th Floor, City Hall, Phone:  
+1-408-418-9388, Access Code: 2349 716 5819, Password:  
Public, Link: [https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/j.php?](https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/j.php?MTID=me3eaed1c8db270739c7596c47a57b714)  
MTID=me3eaed1c8db270739c7596c47a57b714

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21-0052R

#### CALL TO ORDER

#### INTRODUCTIONS

#### ATTENDANCE

**Present** 4 - Danielle N. McCray, John T. Bullock, Mark Conway, and James Torrence

**Absent** 3 - Ryan Dorsey, Phylicia Porter, and Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer

#### ITEM SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING

21-0052R

##### **Informational Hearing - Baltimore City Employees - Safe Transition to Work After COVID-19**

For the purpose of inviting the Baltimore City Administrator, the Director of the Department of Human Resources, the Commissioner of the Baltimore City Health Department, the Director of the Department of General Services, the Director of the Office of Emergency Management, and the Baltimore City Safety Czar to appear before the City Council to discuss the plans and strategies that are being developed to transition Baltimore City employees back to safe physical work environments.

**Sponsors:** Danielle N. McCray, John T. Bullock, Phylicia Porter, Kristerfer Burnett, Robert Stokes, Sr., James Torrence, Odette Ramos, Antonio Glover, Zeke Cohen, Sharon Green Middleton, Mark Conway

Recessed

#### ADJOURNMENT