

Hilbert is likely pick for president of incoming Richmond City Council; Newbille seen as probable vice president

By NED OLIVER Richmond Times-Dispatch | Posted: Thursday, December 22, 2016 4:45 pm

After several weeks of behind-the-scenes wrangling, members of the incoming Richmond City Council appear to have settled on naming longtime Councilman Chris A. Hilbert to serve as the body's president.

A majority of council members told the Richmond Times-Dispatch this week they intend to vote for Hilbert, and he is said to have secured the support of at least seven of his eight colleagues.

The council members, who declined to be named discussing private negotiations, said 7th District Councilwoman Cynthia Newbille is currently the body's most likely pick to serve as council vice president.

The council will formally vote on the appointments at its organizational meeting on Jan. 3.

The vote is typically unanimous and made without discussion — with nearly all of the maneuvering by interested parties undertaken in one-on-one conversations.

The only other council member to make a serious bid for president was 6th District Councilwoman Ellen Robertson.

Robertson told The Times-Dispatch last week that, as someone who has served two terms as vice president, she felt she was in a good position to take on the leadership role.

"I've had the good fortune of serving in a lot of capacities for the city of Richmond and I'd like to be a part of the leadership team to continue that growth," Robertson said.

Hilbert, who represents the 3rd District in North Side and was first elected in 2004, declined to comment. He served alongside outgoing council President Michelle Mosby as vice president.

He was often a swing vote on the council. In the case of the 2012 vote on the Redskins training camp economic development deal, Hilbert initially withheld his support, prompting the administration of Mayor Dwight C. Jones and Bon Secours to agree to concessions to the city school district. During the debate over a baseball stadium in Shockoe Bottom, Hilbert was among a coalition of council members who said they would oppose the plan, prompting Jones to withdraw it.



r1202_reds_hilbert

Hilbert

Under the strong-mayor form of government, the council president's duties are primarily ceremonial: The president is generally responsible for running meetings and assigning members to the council's various committees. The president is also tasked with making sure council rules are followed, serving as a point of contact with the mayor's office and assigning legislation to council committees.