



City of Hampton

22 Lincoln Street
Hampton, VA 23669
www.hampton.gov

Notice of Action City Council Special Session

Mayor Jimmy Gray
Vice Mayor Steven L. Brown
Councilmember Randy C. Bowman, Sr.
Councilmember Carolyn S. Campbell
Councilmember Michelle Taylor Ferebee
Councilmember Hope L. Harper
Councilmember Martha M. Mugler

STAFF: Mary Bunting, City Manager
Courtney R. Sydnor, City Attorney
Katherine K. Glass, MMC, Clerk of Council

Thursday, April 9, 2026

8:30 AM

**Hampton City Hall to
Hanover to Henrico and
Return**

CALL TO ORDER - City Hall

Mayor Gray called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. All members of the City Council were present with the exception of Councilwoman Ferebee who was ill. Staff present were: Mary Bunting, City Manager; Katherine Glass, Clerk of Council; Cory Wolfe, Assistant City Attorney III; Leonard Sledge, Chief Officer for Community & Economic Development; Mike Yaskowsky, Deputy Director of Economic Development; Steven Lynch, Interim Deputy Director of Community Development; McCord Newsome, City Engineer, and David Williams, Chief Information Officer.

Present 6 - Councilmember Randy C. Bowman Sr., Vice Mayor Steven L. Brown, Councilmember Carolyn S. Campbell, Councilmember Hope L. Harper, Councilmember Martha Mugler, and Mayor Jimmy Gray

Excused 1 - Councilmember Michelle T. Ferebee

READING OF THE CALL FOR THE SPECIAL MEETING

Ms. Glass read the call for the special meeting.

This meeting has been called in accordance with Section 3.04 of the City Charter for the purpose of touring two data centers to strengthen the understanding of City Council members and City staff of this emerging technology. Due to the proprietary information that will be voluntarily shared by the private businesses which are being toured, this meeting will contain closed sessions during the actual tours pursuant to a promise of confidentiality. Additionally, City Council and Staff will have a window tour of recent redevelopment projects in the Scott's Addition and Downtown areas of the City of Richmond. Elements of the window tour will include discussion on the implementation of Master Plans/Small Area Plans and strategies used for the implementation of the redevelopment projects.

ROLL CALL

- Present** 6 - Councilmember Randy C. Bowman Sr., Vice Mayor Steven L. Brown, Councilmember Carolyn S. Campbell, Councilmember Hope L. Harper, Councilmember Martha Mugler, and Mayor Jimmy Gray
- Excused** 1 - Councilmember Michelle T. Ferebee

AGENDA

Travel to Hanover County

The bus departed City Hall at 8:35 a.m. Mr. Sledge spoke briefly outlining the day and thanked all those who assisted with the arrangements for the tour. The bus arrived at the Pixel Factory Data Center, 9680 Atlee Commons Drive, Suite 102, in Ashland, VA at 9:52 a.m.

1. [26-0127](#) Closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A) (39) to receive and discuss proprietary information, voluntarily provided by private businesses in the digital infrastructure industry pursuant to a promise of confidentiality and used by the City Council for business, trade, or tourism development, which information is subject to exclusion under the Freedom of Information Act pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3705.6(3).
A motion was made by Councilmember Martha Mugler and seconded by Councilmember Hope Harper, that this Closed Session - Motion be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Councilmember Bowman Sr., Vice Mayor Brown, Councilmember Campbell, Councilmember Harper, Councilmember Mugler and Mayor Gray

The group was greeted by Ried Watkins, Senior Director of S.I.R. who introduced Niki DeSantis and Scott K. Brown of Pixel.

2. [26-0128](#) Resolution Certifying Closed Session

At 11:25 a.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Hope Harper and seconded by Councilmember Carolyn Campbell, that this Closed Session - Certification be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Councilmember Bowman Sr., Vice Mayor Brown, Councilmember Campbell, Councilmember Harper, Councilmember Mugler and Mayor Gray

3. [26-0134](#) Windshield Tour of Recent Development and Redevelopment Projects in Richmond

As the tour departed the first site, Mr. Sledge shared how the City of Richmond is developing the Diamond District. The district is a mixed-used district anchored by a baseball stadium. The stadium was financed through tax-exempt bonds. The Richmond Flying Squirrels baseball team has a 20-30 year lease on the stadium, and the team also served as the developer for the stadium. The project did not hinder the city from achieving a triple A bond rating for the first time. The broader redevelopment project includes a linear park that will connect to the Fall Line Trail. He also shared how the Scott's Addition area in Richmond transformed over the past 20-25 years from a low-rise industrial area to a vibrant residential and entertainment hub. It was driven by historic tax credits and opportunity zones. The area now features breweries, social entertainment, and high-end residential developments. Virginia Commonwealth University is constructing its athletics village on property the university owns across from the Diamond District. The surrounding counties of Henrico and Chesterfield are also creating new large mixed-use districts.

The meeting then recessed for lunch.

LUNCH RECESS - Tazza Kitchen, 1500 Roseneath Road, Richmond, VA 23230

The meeting was recessed from 11:44 a.m. until 12:53 p.m. while at Tazza Kitchen.

Travel to Henrico County

The group departed Scott's Addition at 12:53 p.m. and traveled along Broad Street in Richmond passing through Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), Historic Jackson Ward, the Greater Richmond Convention Center, the VCU Health System Campus, and Shockoe. Mr. Sledge shared opportunities and challenges in the downtown area that are similar to Hampton. He shared the impact of the VCU presence in the city. He shared that Venture Richmond manages the business improvement district in the areas of Downtown, Manchester, and Shockoe Bottom like other downtown areas and functions similarly to the Downtown Hampton Development Partnership, Phoebus Partnership, and Coliseum Central Business Improvement District.

The bus arrived at QTS Richmond, 6000 Technology Boulevard in Sandston, VA at 1:30 p.m. and the group was greeted by Dylan Soh and Justin Montague.

- 4. [26-0132](#) Closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A) (39) to receive and discuss proprietary information, voluntarily provided by private businesses in the digital infrastructure industry pursuant to a promise of confidentiality and used by the City Council for business, trade, or tourism development, which information is subject to exclusion under the Freedom of Information Act pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3705.6(3).

At 1:30 p.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Hope Harper and seconded by Councilmember Carolyn Campbell, that this Closed Session - Motion be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Councilmember Bowman Sr., Vice Mayor Brown, Councilmember Campbell, Councilmember Harper, Councilmember Mugler and Mayor Gray

5. [26-0133](#) Resolution Certifying Closed Session

At 3:17 p.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Martha Mugler and seconded by Councilmember Carolyn Campbell, that this Closed Session - Certification be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Councilmember Bowman Sr., Vice Mayor Brown, Councilmember Campbell, Councilmember Harper, Councilmember Mugler and Mayor Gray

Return to City Hall

Before the bus departed for Hampton, John Martin, President and CEO of S.I.R. (and also the Executive Director of RVA757 Connects), boarded the bus and discussed the importance of digital infrastructure and data centers.

With respect to the challenges and possible solutions in data center development, the importance of cooling systems, especially closed loop systems, addresses water issues. Dominion Energy's constraints in building new substations is also an issue but companies do have the option to build their own substations. There is a challenge in finding suitable sites for data centers and there was a suggestion to rebrand the term Data Center to avoid negative perceptions. Other potential issues are the self-generated power and its associated noise. Someone suggested that you might describe a data center as a landlord with housing services for customers, with each customer being a separate entity and a single data center campus may house multiple clients.

There are employee and workforce considerations also which include that while the direct need for employees is relatively low, there needs to be a supply chain of various skilled trades. The starting salary for technicians at QTS is about \$75,000. One possibility when located data centers is to retrofit existing facilities.

Mr. Martin explained his organization's role in supporting digital infrastructure and data centers which includes the importance of

rebranding data centers as digital infrastructure to avoid negative perceptions. He spoke of a global perspective being needed on digital infrastructure and highlighted the need for reliable power and robust terrestrial networks along with the importance of internet services providers and internet exchanges in creating that robust digital ecosystem.

There are components necessary to support digital infrastructure. Multiple networks are like spider webs and they provide data reliability. Internet services providers are crucial to connect data centers to end-users. There are internet exchanges which connect multiple networks and allow for efficient data transfer. A fiber network ring is also important to ensure efficient data connectivity across regions. Additionally, subsea cables are significant to ensure fast data transfer, especially for international business. Hampton Roads has several subsea cable landings which enhances its digital infrastructure. Additionally, satellite networks, such as Elon Musk's Starlink have a role. Both workforce training and talent development is needed to manage the sophisticated digital infrastructure.

Mr. Martin suggested a concept of Hampton Roads and Richmond being a global internet hub stressing the importance of the digital assets of subsea cables, network rings, and data centers. He also introduced the RVA757 Connects group which is promoting the region as a global internet hub. Their vision includes attracting tech workers and companies, increasing productivity, and ensuring data benefits all.

He explained that when you have a mature digital infrastructure, you attract technology workers and companies. The increase in productivity per worker provides all kinds of advantages to include a stronger tax base.

The five pillars of their vision include data connectivity, empowering data, securing data, transforming data, and ensuring that data benefits all. He then shared an initiative (PCs for People) to provide computers to underserved communities

ensuring everyone has access to computers and reducing the digital divide. Mayor Gray reminded everyone that PCs for People just opened in Hampton.

Mr. Martin concluded by emphasizing the importance of digital infrastructure for Hampton's competitive advances and the need for a world-class digital infrastructure to attract both companies and talent. He encouraged cooperation among localities to create a unified digital infrastructure and a need for action to leverage digital infrastructure to drive economic growth and development.

ADJOURNMENT

The group returned to Hampton City Hall, arriving at 4:54 p.m., and Mayor Gray thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting.