

# 2024 General Assembly Session Legislative Preview

October 25, 2023

Presented by:

Ed Reed, Vice President, Two Capitols Consulting

# Presentation Overview

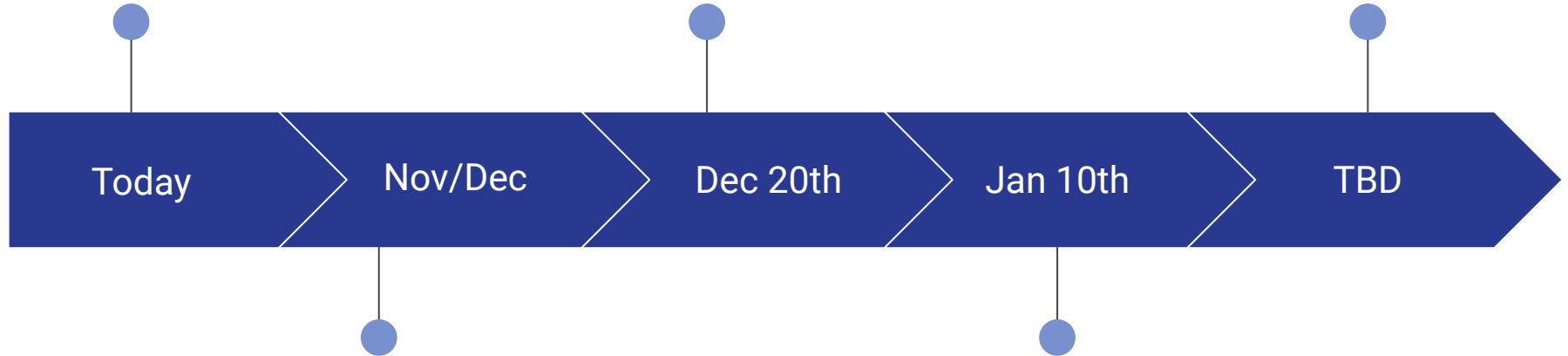
- Session Timeline
- Legislative & Budget Requests
- Priority Positions & Partners
- Q/A



Draft Legislative  
Agenda Presentation

Governor Introduces  
Budget

Local Government Day



Council Approves  
Legislative Agenda &  
Hosts Delegation  
Breakfast

Session Begins

## Provide Localities the Authority to Regulate Blight in Neighborhoods–Vacant Building Registry (Legislative)

- Prior to 2013 localities had the authority to require registration of any building that had been vacant for a period of 12 months or more. In 2013, the General Assembly amended the Virginia Code to allow registration of such buildings only if they also met the definition of "derelict".
  - The City has encountered instances in which squatters were living in houses which the out-of-state owners intended to be vacant. Some of these houses have been involved in multiple shootings. However, these buildings would not meet the current definition of derelict.
  - Currently being studied by the Virginia Housing Commission and a legislative recommendation from the Commission is likely
-

## Fund Rental Increase for the Hampton Health District (Budget)

- The City of Hampton has hosted the Hampton Health District within its borders continuously since at least 1977.
  - The City bears primary responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of the building. Accordingly, the City requests that the General Assembly appropriate funding to the Virginia Department of Health (“VDH”) so that VDH may pay to the City rent on the full building square footage commensurate with the market, plus an added amount to defray the additional costs incurred by the City for janitorial services, capital maintenance, and upkeep.
-

# Add Municipal Park Rangers, 911 Operators and Animal Control Officers to the List of Local Employees Who Receive Enhanced Hazardous Duty Retirement Benefits (Legislative & Budget)

- The City of Hampton's Municipal Park Rangers complete the Hampton Police Academy, and also obtain annual training as required by DCJS of sworn police officers. By doing so they are considered Conservators of the Peace, can carry firearms, and can enforce the laws of the Commonwealth and the City of Hampton.
  - Likewise 911 operators and animal control officers perform critical law enforcement related duties.
  - The City is requesting a code amendment in order to ensure that these officials who act in a law-enforcement related capacities are eligible to receive this benefit.
-

# Authorizes Local Governments to Provide for the Lawful Seizure, Impounding, and Disposition of An Illegally Operated All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) (Legislative)

- The City of Hampton has experienced a growing trend of unregistered ATVs, dirt bikes, and motorcycles on its streets. It was not uncommon for these groups to frequent highly populated areas, disturb traffic flow, and drive in a manner that places themselves and the general public in danger through maneuvers such as rapid speed increases, wheelies, and blocking roadways and intersections.
- This code change would create a local option for localities to, by ordinance, provide for the lawful seizure, impounding, and disposition of these types of vehicles when operated in violation of law.

## Request a Code Change Related to Public Meetings Under FOIA (Legislative)

- The recent ruling in *Gloss v. Wheeler* has created a new standard for local governments that chills civic engagement by its extreme breadth is contrary to specific language in FOIA
  - It forces staff to guess if a topic is “likely to come before the Council in the foreseeable future” that would cause public notice requirements to apply
  - A potential legislative correction could provide a concrete definition for “public business” and create clearer parameters for informational meetings.
-



# Request a Study of Virginia's Barrier Crimes Statutes Related to Credible Messengers (Legislative)

- Virginia's barrier crime laws prevent local governments or nonprofits working with local governments from using credible messenger programs to effectively combat youth violence. Credible messenger programs, which have been successfully used in metropolitan areas outside of Virginia, including Richmond, California and New York City, have been shown to have an impact on reducing recidivism among young people involved in the criminal justice system.
  - A study by the relevant state agencies would direct a review of Virginia's varying barrier crime code sections.
-

## Fund Rental Increase for the Hampton Human Services Department (Budget)

- Provide a rent increase for the City of Hampton Department of Social Services related to relocation and improvement expenses.
- The Department is committed to assisting vulnerable populations in crisis and encouraging family resilience and economic empowerment. Transitioning to a new facility will allow for adequate office space for Human Services while providing space for needed expansion and provision for privacy concerns and secure rooms. An improved environment will enhance the morale of both employees and citizens receiving \_\_\_\_\_services.

# Hampton's Priority Positions

- Support Funding for Fort Wool Restoration
- Continue Supporting and Enhancing Localities' Resiliency Efforts
- Continue Supporting the Preservation and Expansion of Tree Canopies
- Increase Funding for the Removal of Derelict and Sunken Boats
- Continue Funding for African American Cemeteries through the Department of Historic Resources
- Support Localities' Ability to Maintain Control Over Land Use and Zoning Decisions Including the Regulation of Short-Term Rentals
- Refrain From Passing Unfunded Mandates/Constitutional Inequity
- Expand Communications Sales and Use Tax
- Continue Supporting and Funding Education Initiatives
- Continue Supporting the Virginia Air & Space Science Center – Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) 360 Program
- Continue Supporting Funding Request for Jefferson Lab High Performance Data Facility
- Honor Prior Commitments to the State Assistance to Local Police Departments (599 Program)
- Support an Increase in Funding for Jail Per-Diems at Local and Regional Jails

# Partner Priorities

- Hampton Roads Planning District Commission
- Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization
- Hampton Roads Transportation District Commission
- Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission
- Hampton Roads Military and Federal Facilities Alliance
- Virginia Municipal League
- Virginia First Cities
- Hampton University
- Hampton-Newport News Community Services Board
- Fort Monroe Authority
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Virginia Tech Seafood Agriculture Research and Extension Center



Q/A