



City of Hampton

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

Council Approved Minutes - Final City Council Work Session

Wednesday, September 27, 2023

1:00 PM

Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Tuck called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. All members of the City Council were present.

Present 7 - Councilmember Chris L. Bowman, Councilmember Steven L. Brown, Vice Mayor Jimmy Gray, Councilmember Hope L. Harper, Councilmember Billy Hobbs, Councilmember Martha Mugler, and Mayor Donnie R. Tuck

DONNIE R. TUCK PRESIDED

AGENDA

1. [23-0276](#) The Office of Youth & Young Adult Opportunities Annual Report

Attachments: [Presentation](#)
[Report](#)

City Manager, Mary Bunting stated that back in August Council received a presentation from Chief Wideman about the work the police department is doing to address crime. While law enforcement is an important part of the continuum of dealing with crime, we also have to look at programming around prevention and intervention, and not rely solely on enforcement. Today we are pleased to present the annual report for the Youth and Young Adult Opportunities.

Ms. Bunting introduced the Director of Youth and Young Adult Opportunities, Latiesha Handie, who introduced her team in attendance and then made her presentation.

In response to Councilman Steve Brown Ms. Handie stated that the scorecards are included in the annual report provided to Council and available online.

Mayor Tuck asked how the Youth and Young Adult Opportunities measure its effectiveness against recidivism.

Ms. Handie replied they would measure the outcome for two years and are looking

at our sister cities to see if they have been court or police involved. Currently, we can track and monitor if they have had negative encounters with the Hampton Police Department and are looking for Newport News' support to be able to run names. Ms. Handie described a recent case in which a young person was caught in Norfolk for brandishing a weapon while on probation and wearing an ankle monitor. The Youth and Young Adult Opportunities worked with that locality to make sure they could be part of the program, with the condition that they be released from the ankle monitor and be able to participate in the program. We are looking to enhance those partnerships, hopefully, through the regional efforts of mayors and city managers, to share and receive data on these individuals. Our goal is to keep the data for up to two years to see if there is proven success. There are also some short-term goals where we are teaching them conflict resolution. At this time we are offering those services in twelve weeks. The long-term will show if the services that were offered have worked and hope to engage them for long-term employment, through the summer youth employment year-round initiatives. We want to use that as a caveat to state they have performed well in the program and allow them to mentor and encourage others. Some we will be able to keep an eye on within a year, and others we would have to refer to the data.

Councilman Brown asked if a comprehensive case management system is used and if are you able to share information with other cities.

Ms. Handie replied yes and that everyone who is a part of the program signs a universal waiver to allow us to share information with our partners. We have hired third-party services for large cases, and have partnered with Human Services to offer some services.

Councilwoman Hope Harper was excited about the Summer Youth Employment Program and asked if other students were able to participate if they were not part of the Divergent Program.

Ms. Handie replied they would be available and will share how we were able to retain long-term employment for five individuals who participated in the Summer Youth Employment Program. The criteria has not been clearly defined to select those who will participate beyond the Divergent and Ambassador Program.

Ms. Handie continued with her presentation.

Councilman Brown asked for some examples of services provided and asked if those include trauma-informed services.

Ms. Handie replied that during her time at Bloomberg Harvard, they created a fishbone that allowed us to look at the causes and sub-causes of violence, which include impoverished communities, untreated trauma, family in crisis, desensitization, and access to guns. This informs the work that is done and how services are provided. Through the plan, 44 individuals have been referred or serviced for the opportunity to connect, linking them to counseling, parenting, education, housing stabilization, crisis intervention, and workforce development. Other resources were available and were provided to improve family well-being and safety. Partnerships created allow us to know where to go and who to serve.

Ms. Handie continued with her presentation.

Mayor Tuck asked about the doubling of the number of individuals.

Ms. Handie replied that they have improved the 2022 process of identifying those individuals and as crime has increased so has the number of those likely of shooting or being shot. The first year we were just getting started and it goes along with the increase in fatal and non-fatal incidents that results in those we need because they could be the next shooter.

Mayor Tuck asked how concerned are you that the number would not spike again and individuals would not get missed.

Ms. Handie replied she is concerned but not concerned that they will be missed because sometimes shootings are sporadic. The patterns of gun violence have people who are receiving more than one encounter with law enforcement, to receive points. They could receive three points for one incident of brandishing a weapon, but if you have 17, and show a pattern of being involved with a shooting or holding a firearm. Ms. Handie believes that as the work is continued the list may increase. One of the things that was talked about when creating the service plans is that not just one is touched, which is how the divergent program has evolved because we were not moving fast enough. When dealing with one or two offers of individuals who are likely to shoot or be shot, we are seeing the numbers increase. We were not making a dent in the service provider provisions, which is why we needed to come up with an organized program.

Mayor Tuck stated that there is a target of 2027 but the numbers keep moving in the wrong direction. He then asked how would they hit that target if the number of individuals that are identified are either positive for being victims or perpetrators

seems to be moving higher?

Ms. Handie replied that she believes it is in the way that we look at the data and being intentional about providing services success can look different. If you look at the numbers increasing, instead of looking at the individuals that are impacted, the reality is that we can not work ourselves, nor can we arrest our way out of this and believes we will have longevity in it.

Mary Bunting added the part that she believes has the number of people on the vulnerability list growing, is as we delve into individuals seen, we see more about the violent social network that they are in, as well as family members in that unit. There may have been one person in a family who has been the primary target or perpetrator of violence, but that does not mean that individual has been the only person impacted, the whole family is impacted in that cycle, as well as the social group in which that individual operates which causes the numbers to go up. She believes the fact that the number of vulnerable people has increased is a reflection of us being more sophisticated in the analysis and not just looking at single individuals, but at the social network in which they operate.

We can never stop preventing and intervening in lives because we may help the people who are in the deep end right now, but other people are coming behind them if we do not have proper prevention and intervention, and is a continual process.

Assistant City Manager, Steve Bond added that we are cognizant that we do not operate in a vacuum. While we have jurisdictional boundaries that are very important to us, the young people with people who have all these social networks are not as foreign to them; they jump back and forth. While we're very concerned and working with programs here in Hampton, we're not immune to other changes that happen in other cities and other networks, throughout all of Hampton Roads. As we see the increase in violence throughout all of the different jurisdictions, we're going to have people who also didn't check off boxes that become on that vulnerability list. From the very beginning, this was going to be an iterative process that we were going to learn as we go, we were going to refine our approach, and to be very honest and transparent about things that seem to be working, things that are not working and making sure that we make the needed adjustments. I don't think this is going to be a straight trendline up or down. We saw initially, a big decrease; now we're seeing a rebounding increase and that increase is happening throughout the jurisdiction. We are learning from it and are working with the police department and others to try to find out the intelligence of what's going on, and adjusting our approach to try to tackle the issue.

Councilman Steve Brown stated it appeared the network is expanding and asked when the numbers go up, will more staff be needed and if so, can we anticipate a decrease in shootings?

Ms. Handie replied by increasing staff, I believe we would be able to create a bigger footprint, and as Ms. Bunting suggested it's a continuation that we'll still have to continue to offer prevention and intervention services.

Councilman Brown asked are you getting good intelligence, to let us know where some of the pockets are, to help us determine what resources should be allotted with your violence interrupters and other folks that are on the ground?

Ms. Handie replied that she believed that is one of the things that will come up in our Neighborhood Resource Centers which are located in areas that have been known to have high traffic and firearm-related incidents and Intel will come with that.

Currently, Intel looks different, regarding to making connections with individuals that have been on our radar for support. Our credible messengers, violence interrupters, and interventionists have helped us make connections and build relationships with some of those who are on our vulnerability list. We depend heavily on relationships. Three of the individuals who are currently in the divergent program are mentored by Adrian Cooke, and two are mentored by Troy Ketchmore. We have that relationship to build on to encourage participation in these programs that could dramatically change their lives.

Ms. Bunting added that one of the things that was instilled in us from Bloomberg Harvard is to use data-driven approaches and research-driven solutions. Data should be driving the choices we make financially, both in terms of how we staff and what evidence we're getting from the programs we implement, which offer the highest return. Those should be where we direct our dollars, not to suggest that any of us can control everything about this very complicated challenge.

Councilman Brown added he believes when you look at the data, it helps us not to put money into bags with holes in it.

Ms. Handie continued her presentation.

Councilman Brown asked if you lose the money if not used and does it roll over to the next fiscal year.

Ms. Handie replied that yes, the money would be lost and is based on the contract end date.

Councilman Brown asked if the funds were from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Ms. Handie replied these funds are council appropriations from the general fund. As promised by the Mayor and Council, there was 5% that would be dedicated to grassroots organizations from the ARPA funds and to make sure that we had an easy process for those that were receiving grants, we opted not to use the ARPA funding.

Councilman Brown asked if we have grantees who are currently recipients of these funds, who may lose money if not used and how is that being monitored to ensure all funds are used by the end of the grant cycle?

Ms. Handie replied they have financial and progress reports that are due quarterly and we are partnering with the Finance Department to transition that over. They will be tracking receipts and invoices that they provide, to show their expenditures. If that amount is not used, it has to be returned to the City. In most cases, all of the funding has not been appropriated, it has been encumbered and they haven't received it yet or it's not their quarterly time to receive payment.

Councilman Brown asked if a grantee would be penalized if they didn't use all their monies.

Ms. Handie replied they would not be penalized and could apply for the next cycle if council agrees to another cycle.

Ms. Handie concluded her presentation.

Vice Mayor Gray thanked Ms. Handie for a well-done annual report with good information. He asked what calendar year is being used to track the fatal and non-fatal shootings showing the 50% reduction.

Ms. Handie replied that it is being rated from 2022 to 2027.

Vice Mayor Gray asked if a person received a grant in cycle one, what is the contract length of their program and the work being done with that grant.

Ms. Handie gave the names of those receiving grants for each of the four cycles.

Vice Mayor Gray asked if all of those organizations named used their money as they planned and presented on the grant applications, they are going to run out of money before 2027. How do we look at funding these programs going forward? Most of the funding we're putting in was funded through federal and state sources. If we want to keep these programs going, we would have to fund the balance.

Ms. Bunting commented that the notion I thought Council agreed to with the ARPA funded Grassroots Resource Grants was to pilot them and see which had the best impact on outcomes. The ones chosen were based on the business plan that they put together. Some may have stronger returns than others, and we would look at that as part of our budget process. We want to help these organizations that are grassroots find sustainability of their own. Mayor Tuck recently talked to the Planning Council about providing training to all the grassroots agencies, that we are working with, about how to build self-sustainability in the near future. We don't want organizations to feel like their only funding source and their only viability is the government. It needs to be community-based.

Vice Mayor Gray asked what was learned at Harvard and what recommendations came from that. The Vice Mayor stated that he heard the Focused Deterrence Model was attributed to the past police chief and asked if that was not something developed at Harvard.

Ms. Bunting replied that a lot of it was developed with the Harvard program. Former Chief Talbot was instrumental in the Focused Deterrence Model but was not the only person who committed to focusing on the limited group of actors and associates to provide targeted resources to help them make a change in their lifestyle so that they are not criminally engaged, but engaged in productive activities is the work of focus deterrence. For those who choose not to participate, we need our legal law enforcement prosecutorial resources against them.

Ms. Bunting continued saying that the vulnerability list was developed to know who you're focusing on; of a limited group of actors and associates. Those associates are where our list has grown from and in trying to impact the system, not just the individual.

Vice Mayor Gray stated that there had been three different homicides that had occurred this year where arrests had been made and wondered if there was any association between those individuals and the individuals on the vulnerability list.

Ms. Bunting replied that information could be done separately to avoid identifying anyone but many of the people who have lost their lives or who have been shooters were on the vulnerability list. In some cases, we were trying to help them and in other cases, they were not accepting of our help. The vulnerability lists have been found to be a fairly good predictor, of the people with whom we need to be engaged.

Vice Mayor Gray asked if the forty-four people connected to services with Opportunity Connect came through people who were recommended by their families, neighbors, and people who know them.

Ms. Handie replied yes, it is a combination. Referrals may be received from Juvenile Justice, Commonwealth Attorney's Office, schools, or community members who have self-identified the need for services.

She added that two individuals impacted from the vulnerability list have lost their lives.

Ms. Bunting added that not all of the stories are doom and gloom. The young man that went with us to the All-America City, is one who was able to be helped and seems to be on a very positive track. We have seen that we have been able to make a difference in many of the young people we have engaged.

Vice Mayor Gray stated that in speaking with some people involved with reentry programs, we are not doing enough in terms of partnerships, and working together to serve returning citizens. He also asked if the at-risk returning citizens or groups are carved out from every other person who returned from incarceration locally or at a state level and if the reentry program is working for everybody?

Ms. Handie replied that the Sheriff's Office oversees and manages the reentry program, and a reentry council has been revitalized. Our department is focused on youth that are between the ages of 14- 24 and in partnership with the Sheriff's Office to make sure that we are offering support services upon entry to jail.

She continued to state that what defined them as at-risk were those likely to participate in a shooting, drugs, or gangs. Economic Development now has someone employed for reentry support and looks to get deeply involved with that this fiscal year as the Sheriff's Office revamps the program.

Vice Mayor stated that they are doing great work and he is confident that we will see

some reductions.

Councilwoman Harper thanked Ms. Handie for her presentation and shared that yesterday she had the opportunity to sit in on a divergent program session and expressed her experience and thoughts.

Councilman Brown echoed the sentiments of his colleagues on Council in the work Ms. Handie's office is doing. He asked what tool was used to determine the numbers in the presentation for the 50% non-fatal in five years, and if citizens have access to the data.

Ms. Handie replied that currently, they are using internal structure through police data to see trends of targeted shootings, fatal and non-fatal incidents. Through the Burn Discretionary Grant we plan to hire a data analyst and work with Marketing INC to improve or relaunch the citizen survey that will also gauge the perception of safety. We plan to track data in areas that have been identified on how we are making a change based on the services we offer.

Ms. Bunting clarified that the citizen perception of safety is that 85% of residents feel safe, not that they feel safe 85% of the time.

Councilwoman Mugler thanked Ms. Handie for a wonderful presentation and was thankful for the deep dive.

She continued stating that the slide about the increase in fatal and non-fatal incidents, and the increase in identified individuals to sixty-six. She asked Ms. Handie if she thought that because we are now measuring and looking more into identifying individuals.

Ms. Handie agreed that was why more are on the vulnerability list. Tracking of shootings or being shot were not being tracked before 2022, and as the tracking continues it is very likely the number will increase as we become more effective in identifying those that are vulnerable in our community.

Councilwoman Mugler asked if they were looking at individuals who had been held at gunpoint but not found to have had a gun in their hand or been shot.

Ms. Handie replied yes that victims and associates at level three have recently been added due to their level of vulnerability and the list is managed by the Hampton Police Department.

Councilwoman Mugler clarified that the Divergent Program runs for twelve weeks and one time a year and we had eight participants and asked if the individual previously mentioned was a participant in the program.

Ms. Handie replied that he was a participant but in the first iteration of the pilot program as the Divergent Program was not available at the time. Not only was he, but his mother and six siblings, one of which was also on the vulnerability list.

Councilwoman Mugler stated when Ms. Handie described the work done with the young man and the many resources that were wrapped around him, she thought that was pretty telling and how complex this is. She continued to say that while we have not seen the decrease in fatal and non-fatal shootings, it is important to realize we are just beginning the work. She also asked about the app described in the presentation, how it works, and who is it meant for.

Ms. Handie replied that the idea came from one of the Grassroot organization partners who mentioned easy access to communicate resource services to young people who may need to be connected to pro-social activities, prevention, or intervention. We hope to launch this with Hampton City Schools so young people can have information about programs and events and be able to register with a resource catalog of programs near them. Most importantly, they will be able to apply for services and complete the application online.

Councilwoman Mugler stated that she was thrilled about partnering with Hampton City Schools and then asked about the targeted age group.

Ms. Handie replied that the focus has been on middle and high school. The pro-social activities that have been funded have been those that are younger. The Police Athletic League (PAL) program is for elementary and middle schools, and Troy Ketchmore or Runway Rules Academy offers services to more middle and high schools. We are trying to ensure diversity of services for each age range, but primarily focus on middle and high schools.

Councilwoman Mugler stated that she would love to see a hyper-focus on middle schools where there is an opportunity for a child to get off the rails and thinks it is great news about having a data analyst and feels it will be a real boost to the work her department is doing. She thanked Ms. Handie again for the presentation and expressed how proud she is of the work being done.

Mayor Tuck stated in the latter part of 2016 or early 2017, he, the City Manager,

Former Chief Sult, and counterparts of Newport News met with officials from Riverside Hospital. The concern at that time was negative interactions with those who visit shooting victims in the hospital.

He continued that three or four times a week he receives an email with articles in Safer Cities written by Matt Ferner and one he wrote this week was about violence interrupters in hospitals. In other words, once that individual is shot, they go to the hospital and try and talk to the individual(s) who is the victim about services and try to dissuade an individual(s) from retaliation. Many times when emails are received from the Public Information Officer at Hampton Police Department that tell about the incident, there is no information that is forthcoming from the individual. He asked if we have a relationship with hospitals or if is there someone on that staff trying to speak with the individual to dissuade them from retaliation.

Ms. Handie replied that they do need to increase their engagement with hospitals and have been in conversation with Hand in Hand, for their hospital-based invention program. She emphasized the need to increase our engagement to make sure that we have our street outreach workers there.

Mayor Tuck added that we have gotten some leadership and guidance from Cities United, learned things through Bloomberg-Harvard and Bloomberg-Johns Hopkins, and other individuals who have been there and done that, that we can share with those in other localities. This is not just a Hampton problem, it is, a regional problem.

Mayor Tuck thanked Ms. Handie and her team for the very comprehensive presentation and for all the work your team are doing to address and improve the lives and outcome of our young black men and boys particularly, and to help our city be and feel more safe.

Ms. Handie thanked the Council for their continuous support.

Councilman Bowman commented that he had the opportunity to attend a couple of meetings with Adrian Cook, who works with young males, and his mentorship and direction were outstanding and wanted to recognize him.

Ms. Bunting added that Mr. Cook had traveled with the City to the All-America City and was one of the power players in sharing his story and the work he is doing. She said we are very thankful for him and the other violence interrupters and grassroots organizations.

Mayor Tuck acknowledged Sheriff Bowden and the members of her team and thanked them for their support.

There were no regional issues or new business and Mayor Tuck asked the Clerk to read the motion for closed session.

Presented by Latiesha Handie, Director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Opportunities. Additional information was provided by the City Manager, Mary Bunting, and Assistant City Manager, Steven Bond.

REGIONAL ISSUES

There were no regional issues to report on.

NEW BUSINESS

There were no items of new business.

CLOSED SESSION

2. [23-0284](#) Closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Sections 2.2-3711.A (.1), (.3), (.6) and (.8) to discuss the appointment listed on the agenda; to discuss the acquisition of property in the Greater Wythe area of the City where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining or negotiating strategy of the City; to discuss or consider the investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, where, if made public initially, the financial interest of the City would be adversely affected; and to consult with legal counsel employed or retained by the City regarding short term rentals and the Peninsula Stadium Authority, which requires the provision of legal advice by such counsel.

At 2:31 p.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Martha Mugler and seconded by Councilmember Steven Brown, that this Closed Session - Motion be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Councilmember Bowman, Councilmember Brown, Vice Mayor Gray, Councilmember Harper, Councilmember Hobbs, Councilmember Mugler and Mayor Tuck

3. [23-0259](#) Consideration of an Appointment to the Hampton Senior Citizens Advisory Committee

CERTIFICATION

4. [23-0290](#) Resolution Certifying Closed Session

At 5:12 p.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Billy Hobbs and seconded by Councilmember Martha Mugler, that this Closed Session - Certification be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Councilmember Bowman, Councilmember Brown, Vice Mayor Gray, Councilmember Harper, Councilmember Hobbs, Councilmember Mugler and Mayor Tuck

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Donnie R. Tuck
Mayor

Katherine K. Glass, CMC
Clerk of Council

Date approved by Council _____