



City of Hampton

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

Council Approved Minutes - Final City Council Legislative 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

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

6:30 PM

Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Gray called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with all members of the City Council present.

Present: 7 - Councilmember Randy C. Bowman Sr., Vice Mayor Steven L. Brown, Councilmember Carolyn S. Campbell, Councilmember Michelle T. Ferebee, Councilmember Hope L. Harper, Councilmember Martha Mugler and Mayor Jimmy Gray

JIMMY GRAY PRESIDED

INVOCATION - Councilwoman Hope Harper

Councilwoman Harper gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG

MAYOR'S COMMENTS

The Mayor had no comments this evening.

CONSENT AGENDA

Clerk of Council Katherine Glass read the protocol for the consent agenda and a summary of the consent items.

Approval of the Consent Agenda

Motion made by Vice Mayor Brown, and seconded by

Councilmember Mugler, to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Councilmember Bowman Sr., Vice Mayor Brown, Councilmember Campbell, Councilmember Ferebee, Councilmember Harper, Councilmember Mugler and Mayor Gray

1. [26-0013](#) Resolution to Amend the Fiscal Year 2026 Council Approved Budget by Appropriating up to \$449,414.00 of the FY26 Excess EMS Fees from the Assigned Fund Balance to the Division of Fire & Rescue's Budget to Purchase Equipment for Fire/EMS Operations and the Fire Stations
Item approved.

Aye: 7 - Councilmember Bowman Sr., Vice Mayor Brown, Councilmember Campbell, Councilmember Ferebee, Councilmember Harper, Councilmember Mugler and Mayor Gray

2. [26-0044](#) Approval of the minutes from the special session of January 27, 2026, the work session of January 28, 2026, and the legislative session of February 11, 2026.

Attachments: [260127 MIN SPECIAL SESSION FINAL](#)
[260128 Work Session DRAFT TO COUNCIL](#)
[260211 MIN LEG SESSION DRAFT TO COUNCIL](#)

Item approved.

Aye: 7 - Councilmember Bowman Sr., Vice Mayor Brown, Councilmember Campbell, Councilmember Ferebee, Councilmember Harper, Councilmember Mugler and Mayor Gray

PRESENTATIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, AWARDS

Mayor Gray read a proclamation for Read Across America Week which takes place from March 2-6. Mayor Gray shared that he will be joining them for Read Across America Day at Barnes & Noble on March 7th.

3. [26-0015](#) Budget Briefings - City Real Estate Assessments

City Manager Mary Bunting reminded everyone that, in Virginia, cities do reassessments each year to comply with the state law. She also shared information about the requirements for the assessment process, emphasizing that assessments are not done specifically to generate revenue for the budget. Lastly, she announced that Hampton's Assessor's Office is internationally accredited and Hampton's staff received the highest competency rate of approval, therefore, everyone can be confident with these assessments. She introduced City Assessor Libby Griebel to give the report on the results of the assessment work.

Prior to the presentation, Ms. Griebel encouraged residents who have questions about their assessments to contact the Assessor's Office for assistance.

Ms. Griebel reviewed the presentation. The presentation included statistics and other information about assessed property values; changes in property assessments; the various quadrants of the City; exemptions; total taxable value after exemptions; market conditions and mortgage rates; and the impact future projects will have on housing, such as a heightened demand for housing.

In response to Councilwoman Campbell's question about accessing exempt properties, Ms. Griebel clarified that every piece of property in the City is assessed, whether it is exempt or not, but exempt properties are usually at the bottom of the list due to staffing availability and workload. She noted that while tax exempt properties are just as important as any other property, the primary focus is on taxable properties.

Ms. Griebel shared important dates and deadlines and again encouraged those with questions about their assessments to contact the Assessor's Office. She also briefly spoke about the International Association of Assessing Officers Certificate of Excellence accreditation that Ms. Bunting mentioned earlier and added that this certificate is afforded to jurisdictions for best appraisal and assessment practices.

Ms. Bunting outlined the sequence of events and citizen participation opportunities leading up to the release of the City Manager's recommended budget.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Ms. Glass read the protocol for public hearings.

Ordinances

4. [26-0061](#) Ordinance Accepting the Bid Submitted by Virginia Electric and Power Company, a Virginia Public Service Corporation, Doing Business in Virginia as Dominion Energy Virginia, for a Non-Exclusive Easement Agreement to Use and Occupy City-owned Property Located within the City for the Purposes of Transmitting and Distributing Electric Power to Provide Electric Services to Property Operated by Langley Air Force Base

Attachments: [EXHIBIT 1 - Dominion - Right of Way Agmt - LAFB matter - FINAL 2-25-2026 Mtg](#)
[Dominion Energy Bid dated 2-3-25 North Armistead Avenue](#)

Ms. Glass read the title for the item.

Ms. Bunting provided information about the item.

Councilwoman Martha Mugler made the following statement: In accordance with section 2.2-3112 (A) of the Virginia Conflict of Interest Act, I am disqualified from participating in the consideration or voting on items 26-0061 and 26-0062, because my spouse is engaged as a paid lobbyist for the bidder, Dominion Energy Virginia.

Mayor Gray opened the public hearing and announced that no one signed up to speak. He then closed the public hearing.

A motion was made by Councilmember Carolyn Campbell and seconded by Vice Mayor Steven Brown, that this Ordinance-Non-coded be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Recuse: 1 - Councilmember Mugler

5. [26-0062](#) Ordinance Accepting the Bid Submitted by Virginia Electric and Power Company, a Virginia Public Service Corporation, Doing Business in Virginia as Dominion Energy Virginia, for a Non-Exclusive Easement Agreement to Use and Occupy City-owned Property Located Within the City for the Purposes of Transmitting and Distributing Electric Power to Provide Electric

Services to Property Operated by the Commonwealth of Virginia
(VDOT)

Attachments: [EXHIBIT 1 - Dominion - Right of Way Agmt - VDOT I-64 Project - Bethel Landfill - FINAL 2-25-2026 Mtg](#)
[Dominion Energy Bid dated 2-3-25 100 North Park Lane](#)

Ms. Glass read the title for the item.

Ms. Bunting provided information about the item.

Councilwoman Mugler previously made a statement disqualifying herself from participating or voting on this item.

Mayor Gray opened the public hearing and announced that no one signed up to speak. He then closed the public hearing.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Steven Brown and seconded by Councilmember Randy Bowman, Sr., that this Ordinance-Non-coded be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Recuse: 1 - Councilmember Mugler

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Glass read the protocol for the public comment period.

Mayor Gray reviewed how the timer works and then called on the first speaker, John Riddick.

Mr. John Riddick greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: I came here several months ago concerned about the safety on Mercury Boulevard, and I must say, you guys addressed a lot of it right away. The Assistant City Manager Obeng, I called him, he came out to the house, and we rode around, and I showed him some things that I was concerned about in the community as well, and he brought it to you guys, and he got it done. The light poles on Mercury Boulevard, the fencing, you guys put that there, and the reason why I got this flag, because I only got a couple of minutes, this is African-American month, Black History Month, and there's no exhibits around the City. I would love to take my cousins, my family,

to show them some exhibits of, you know, Black History Month. We only got three days left, and then also some flags, something... you come out the house, it don't feel like Black History Month. It don't. You don't see no representation, but you go to Walmart, you go to all those stores, you see the Easter Bunny, you see Christmas stuff, you know, St. Patrick's Day stuff. We need to - I think we need to step up. I don't know where that's going to be coming from, but we need a little bit more to bring this to a real, real reality. Twenty-eight days, that's a lot, and I don't see enough representation of this history month here in Hampton, and we can get some exhibits, we can keep it going and roll it on to March. And, I appreciate all your hard work - this whole regime. I watch y'all, I don't come, but I study y'all. I watch you on the TV. You're doing a great job. You're doing a great job. Continue to do the great job, okay.

Mayor Gray called on the next speaker, Joan Weaver.

Ms. Joan Weaver greeted those on the dais and the Clerk of Council and made the following statement: My name, Karen Joan, good trouble, I am somebody, Weaver, and I am here tonight to say something this gentleman spoke about black history - I have not heard his name said, and I am here to say it: the one, the only, Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson, something should be said. Something has to be said, and I will say civil rights activist, politician, Baptist minister, most importantly, a presidential candidate that set the shoulders for our President, Barack Obama. Everyone who's sitting here, who's on the City governance, I hope you take course and counsel in knowing what Jesse stood for. He was of the people and for the people, not big business...and I hope you heard that - of the people and for the people. Empowerment, peace, civil rights, economic and social justice - remember that when you think of our area, the Greater Wythe area that has been marginalized and neglected for so long. No, your plan does not fit us. You don't work better with us. You don't have accountability, collaboration, customer service, integrity, respect or trust. You need to educate and elevate about what you do. You need to stop trying to humiliate and intimidate by frivolous lawsuits. Miss Gertrude Johnson, 1988 Hampton University graduate. Why do I bring her up? The mother of Reverend Jesse Jackson. Where did she live? Greater Wythe - in my neighborhood, off of Shell Road. And one who you cannot touch, Katherine Johnson, NASA's brightest. Where did she live? Off of Shell Road, my neighborhood. So, before you try to treat us, marginalize, not respect us, keep in mind you don't know who is where. They didn't live in Elizabeth Lakes or Farmington, but they lived in Greater Wythe, and I will end on saying, you can't intimidate or humiliate us, and we will keep hope alive. Thank God for Jesse Jackson. Thank God for Mr. Johnson, and most important for Katherine and Thomas Weaver, who's taught me to stand and to address inequities wherever they may be. Thank you.

Mayor Gray called on the next speaker, Aaron Weaver.

Mr. Aaron Weaver introduced himself as Aaron Weaver and made the following statement: We cannot criminalize homelessness and call it balanced. I watched the work session last week, well, the week before last, that was... very closely. What was presented as a neutral public safety language, is, in reality, an ordinance that will primarily affect homeless individuals. We can rename it. We can soften it. However, the impact does not change at all. A class two misdemeanor is not harmless. Court involvement, create records. Failure to appear warrants follow. Barriers to employment and housing grow. This is not theatrical. This is a structural reality. As a black man who has lived in this system for 39 years, I know enforcement does not, does not, feel like access. It feels like escalation. We were told only a rare number of people are camping or storing belongings. If that is true, then show the data. How many calls were made? Over what period of time? By whom? Which some people might say anonymous. What kind of cause were they? Public indecency? Was it urinating on structures? Show the data because we do know one number - homelessness in our region has increased by 11%, that is verified. Criminal escalation during a documented increase in homelessness demands serious justification. As reported in The Daily Press. Miss Cipriani, a homeless expert with years of direct experience as someone who Mayor Gray specifically stated he wanted to hear from, made it clear - ordinances like this fail to address homelessness and inherently target the vulnerable populations. She also made it clear that the agreement that was so celebrated at that work session was for policy, not ordinance. This is not an opinion. That is the expertise placed on record. If that expertise is incorrect, then provide the data if it contradicts it. Another concern is the term reasonably available. It is undefined. If the shelter is full, is that available? If it's unsafe, is it available? If it is not ADA (The Americans with Disabilities Act) acceptable, is that available? Without definition of enforcement, becomes discretionary. Discretion without guardrails erodes trust. If this is the ordinance that moves forward, it must include a clear definition of reasonably available, mandatory service, verification, but before any citation, public reporting of warnings, citations, misdemeanors and escalations sent to you all, demographic breakdown of enforcement, shelter availability at the time of enforcement, and a sunset clause so that the evaluated is not permanent, but is made on a need to have basis. If all this is truly about is balance, then transparency and safeguards must be built into the first draft. Show the baseline data, define the terms and build the guardrails.

Mayor Gray said that Mr. Weaver was the last person signed up to speak and then called on the City Manager for responsive remarks.

The following summarizes City Manager Bunting's remarks. She agreed that stores,

and others, could do more to recognize Black History Month and shared some of the ways in which the City has already begun to do so. For example, through the exhibits at the Hampton History Museum and posts on its social media pages. With regard to the camping and storage ordinance, she noted that staff was in an all-day meeting this afternoon, but will pull the data as soon as possible. In addition, the ordinance is being drafted and will be very specific. Lastly, Ms. Bunting read an email from Joy Cipriano, the Director of Property and Resource Development at the Hampton-Newport News Community Services Board, clarifying her comments about homelessness.

Mayor Gray noted that he would give Mr. Riddick a copy of The Family Tree, a booklet that highlights all the historical black history sites around our City.

GENERAL ITEMS

There were no general items on the agenda.

REPORTS BY CITY MANAGER, CITY COUNCIL, STAFF, COMMITTEES

Several members of Council shared historic information about significant African American individuals and sites in the Hampton community. Senator Mamie Locke, Bayshore Beach and Dr. Mary T. Christian were highlighted.

MISCELLANEOUS NEW BUSINESS

There were no items of new business.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Contact Info:
Clerk of Council, 757-727-6315, council@hampton.gov

Jimmy Gray
Mayor

Katherine K. Glass, MMC
Clerk of Council

Date approved by Council _____