



City of Hampton

22 Lincoln Street
Hampton, VA 23669
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Council Approved Minutes - Final City Council Work Session

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

STAFF: Mary Bunting, City Manager
Steven D. Bond, Interim City Attorney
Katherine K. Glass, CMC, Clerk of Council

Wednesday, April 10, 2024

1:00 PM

Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Tuck called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. Councilwoman Mugler was expected to arrive following an appointment. Councilman Brown and Councilman Hobbs entered shortly after roll call.

- Present** 4 - Councilmember Chris L. Bowman, Vice Mayor Jimmy Gray, Councilmember Hope L. Harper, and Mayor Donnie R. Tuck
- Absent** 1 - Councilmember Martha Mugler
- Out** 2 - Councilmember Steven L. Brown, and Councilmember Billy Hobbs

DONNIE R. TUCK PRESIDED

AGENDA

Councilman Brown, Councilman Hobbs and Councilwoman Mugler arrived a few minutes after roll call.

- 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

1. [24-0062](#) Briefing on the Poverty Study & Family Resilience and Economic Empowerment

Attachments: [Presentation - Poverty Study Results](#)
[Presentation - Family Resilience](#)
[Presentation - Economic Empowerment - corrected](#)

City Manager Mary Bunting provided an overview of the entire agenda and then introduced this item. She announced that the three-part presentation would cover the goal of the poverty study, completed by MGT of America Consulting, LLC, to seek recommendations on how to lift people out of generational poverty and achieve self-sufficiency and full productivity; the City's current efforts regarding poverty; and the City's proposed future efforts based on what was revealed in the poverty study.

PART 1- POVERTY STUDY RESULTS

Mr. Andres Bernal, Vice President of Disparity Services at MGT of America Consulting, LLC, greeted those on the dais; thanked the City's Director of Human Services, Dr. Tamara Temoney-Porter, and her team for their engagement in the process; and shared a bit of information about MGT of America Consulting, LLC, including key staff who worked on the project.

Mr. Bernal began the presentation and shared the project goals which were to define poverty equity issues to ensure programs and services are viewed through an equity lens; engage and empower the community; and create a shared vision with public and private sectors for addressing poverty in Hampton. He also spoke about the two-part approach to the study which involved quantitative analysis and stakeholder feedback.

Mr. Bernal explained that the presentation would be two-fold through a quantitative and a qualitative lens. The quantitative lens is based on what the data revealed about poverty in Hampton. The quantitative variables, or economic landscape, include household income; the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) stability threshold which allows for an understanding of the survivability of individuals and families; demographic characteristics and residents' neighborhoods; and home values.

Mr. Bernal spoke a bit about demographic characteristics and emphasized that family and individual characteristics alone do not cause poverty; however, there are statistical correlations between the likelihood of being impoverished and factors such as family size, head of household gender, race/ethnicity, age, marital status, and level of educational achievement. He then reviewed the next slide about stakeholder engagement, communication strategy, and the methods of engagement used during the study.

During the presentation, Mr. Bernal provided the following information in response to Council's questions about the presentation. The term "significant income" refers to whether an income is above or below the state-level average. The metrics were based on

comparing incomes to the average income in the Commonwealth. The median income for this community is \$35,000. The demographic described in the slides for Hampton University refers to the area where Hampton University is located (based on census tracts).

The next portion of the presentation included the results of the survey. Mr. Bernal again emphasized that the quantitative part (what the data revealed) leads to the qualitative part (the priorities).

With regard to income growth within the past five years for all Hampton neighborhoods, the highest levels of decline were seen in Armistead Heights, Garden City, and Mill Creek. With regard to geographic inflow and outflow patterns of Hampton's employed population, the majority of people employed in Hampton live outside of Hampton and many of those that live in Hampton are employed outside of Hampton. This means that tax revenue and economic benefits are leaving Hampton and causing some of the societal effects typically seen in poverty. A map of Hampton neighborhoods and their median household incomes is also included with the results of the study. In conclusion, the data showed that single-family-headed households with a number of children in the minority were at risk of being below the poverty line and the ALICE threshold.

Mr. Bernal reviewed the next slide with community observations and priorities stemming from the survey. Some of the highest community priorities included the availability of quality affordable housing and living wage jobs; access to mental health care; education; youth programs; child care; homelessness; crime; and marketing available services.

The final slides in this section listed the top 11 impoverished communities that need the most attention to alleviate poverty in Hampton. These neighborhoods stretch from downtown to the Coliseum and Pine Chapel areas. Key findings also indicated that top priorities were related to childcare, transportation, resources, education, elder care, and food accessibility.

City Manager Bunting shared that all of Hampton's schools are fully accredited and have been outperforming in the region and state. She asked how is it that the census tract areas or neighborhoods show low, lowest, or very low in certain categories considering Hampton's high- performance history.

Mr. Bernal explained that it is not about the rating or accreditation, instead, this means the community is at the base level when compared to other communities based on that base level.

Ms. Bunting stated that is very important to note because the public has heard different information from the school system and City leaders. She emphasized that our schools have made tremendous strides and have been recognized by the state and various national organizations for their growth and achievement levels including at-risk

populations.

For the benefit of the public, Interim City Attorney Steve Bond explained that when staff worked with MGT on this project, there were references to neighborhoods that meant different things to different people (different boundaries). He also clarified that these are in fact the census tracts, therefore, some of the names associated with them are not the names that colloquially people use for those neighborhoods. A census tract may encompass a number of different neighborhoods and those different neighborhoods may be in different places and may experience different things when it comes to poverty. For the benefit of the public, he clarified that the census tracts are larger than what we normally think of as neighborhoods locally.

Discussion took place among Mr. Bernal and several members of Council. Conclusions from the discussion were: Census tracks are the best metric to obtain information about income, demographics, and educational attainment. The census data provided a baseline to work with, but the information obtained from those in the community is what led to the highest priorities list with the goal of determining if the census data is accurate. Information was received from the community via focus groups at community centers, but not by going door to door.

Mr. Bond added that as staff worked with MGT, it targeted events that were already taking place in neighborhoods with socio-economic challenges and a history of high turnout. Staff capitalized on that and conducted the surveys at these functions. This seemed to work better since staff had previously experienced problems going door to door.

Councilman Brown spoke about the community priorities slide which showed the community desired funding for quality K-12 education and support for mental health. He emphasized that each year, the City and Council have always fully funded K-12 education much higher than what is in the state formula, and education has always been a priority. In addition, the Hampton-Newport News Community Services Board (CSB) ranked number 1 in the region (out of 40) for mental health services, resources, and other mental health needs. He clarified that he is not implying that the data is incorrect, but is expressing that Hampton ranks high in providing these services for our community. He asked to receive more information on the sampling of the surveys that came to these conclusions.

Mr. Bernal reiterated that this information is based not only on the focus groups but also on the 453 surveys taken. It is qualitative data and the perception of the community, but not necessarily statistical, quantitative, audited data.

Councilman Brown suggested that perhaps this means the individuals may not have been aware of available services versus the services and funding not being there. Mr. Bernal agreed.

Mayor Tuck shared his experience doing a survey for the National League of Cities and

also said perhaps the City can do better at informing people about what is available and how to access services. He thanked Mr. Bernal for this information which gives us something to think about.

Mr. Bernal reviewed the last portion of the presentation, MGT's demand-side and supply-side recommendations. Demand-side recommendations directly influence an individual's needs leading to alleviating poverty, while supply-side recommendations are community-wide recommendations that help lift the economic development of a community while helping to alleviate poverty.

Finally, Mr. Bernal reviewed the outline of the recommendation plan for Hampton. The demand-side recommendations involve having a comprehensive map of services and providers in one stop where information is available in one place (for example, the City's website); establishing an anti-poverty consortium to help understand where services need to be provided; creating service stations/service mobiles with resources and food accessibility; and creating community partnerships to help provide the services in one community center. This also involves partnering with other entities, such as the Criminal Justice System, to identify mental health needs. Supply-side recommendations refer to economic development as a whole. This involves mental health care access; community financial literacy (education); commercial and business development; and cultural-themed tourism. An example of commercial and business development is leveraging Hampton's rich African-American history and culture as a commercial and business development tourism theme. An example of cultural-themed tourism is encouraging women and minority-owned businesses and other groups to participate in the economic growth of the community.

Mr. Bernal closed by stating that this will be the basis of the strategic plan/smart goals that MGT is working with Dr. Temoney-Porter to create. These goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relatable, and time-sensitive. Some of these goals can be accomplished in approximately two to four months, while other goals may take more than a year to accomplish.

Mr. Bernal opened the floor for discussion.

In response to Councilman Brown, Mr. Bernal indicated that MGT did not reach out to the local court system during the process. Councilman Brown shared that Hampton has a behavioral health court that allows individuals to receive treatment and services versus incarceration. In addition, there is a combined drug court with the City of Newport News that does similar work. He agreed that mental health is an issue and shared that our police officers and first responders receive crisis intervention training in order to de-escalate mental health crisis situations. He emphasized that this plays into the information gathered and moving forward. He also expressed concern about whether a good geographical sampling of the City was taken or if it just focused on the few communities presented today.

Mr. Bernal replied stating there is always an opportunity to be more inclusive, however, a probability calculator determines how many surveys should be taken in a given community to ensure that there is a representative sample. MGT believes that 450 is a sufficient sample for Hampton. With regard to whether this was based on data and the community and not the criminal justice system, this is an area where Hampton is doing good work and partnering with other entities to understand the entire community when making these recommendations. Mr. Bernal reminded everyone that many different things affect poverty, and MGT felt that, based on the demographics, this plan would help alleviate poverty on a much greater scale.

Vice Mayor Gray referenced the community's priority about the availability of living wage jobs. He spoke about the thousands of jobs that are available in the Commonwealth and expressed the need to determine how to connect people with those jobs. He asked what MGT learned from the surveyors about their perceptions on connecting them to training and job opportunities. He also spoke about the report indicating Hampton's need for a hub for people to get resources in one location, and the fact that Hampton already has the Workforce Development Center and New Horizons Educational Center. He asked if surveyors indicated whether they were not aware of what's available, if they do not have transportation or access to resources, or if there is a lack of interest in the type of training and positions that are available. He also spoke about the many jobs available in the maritime industry in our area and the frustration of having these available opportunities but determining how to connect people to the training and jobs.

Mr. Bernal stated that MGT did not get the impression that people did not want to work, instead, it was more about people not knowing what services and jobs are available. In addition, people indicated that they did not have access or adequate transportation to get to those places. Mr. Bernal spoke about the Workforce Development Center already in existence and said that the plan includes incorporating those types of services with other services under one roof. For example, the potential to add medical care at that location so that individuals have access to medical care at one stop. He again stressed the importance of incorporating services under one roof and advertising what is available to the community.

Mr. Bond thanked Mr. Bernal for the eye-opening presentation and said that after more work is done with Dr. Temoney-Porter on the smart goals, hopefully, we will receive information about best practices that have worked well in other locations. This will also ensure that services are provided in a way that makes sense and Hampton can measure whether a difference is being made.

Mayor Tuck thanked Mr. Bernal for the presentation and the work done by MGT. He spoke about the myriad of challenges associated with trying to lift people out of poverty including the fact that some single parents with a high school education or less and no access to transportation are trying to survive. He spoke about training programs and job

opportunities that have been brought into some of Hampton's neighborhoods such as job training via the Virginia Peninsula Community College and the WorkOne Center at the Y.H. Thomas Community Center. He also spoke about plans that are underway for the Phenix Commerce Center to put workforce development in that neighborhood and the challenges people face with housing, transportation, childcare, and other expenses.

Mayor Tuck concluded his comments by elaborating on current economic challenges including inflation and higher food costs; the lack of a definition of affordable/workforce housing; various types of white-collar and blue-collar jobs; transportation concerns; and that these are some of the reasons why people who are employed in our City live elsewhere. In addition, people are challenged with getting to where the jobs are. He said that as well-intended as we are to lift ALICE individuals and others, there are still challenges and other barriers to employment that complicate this picture. He assured Mr. Bernal that we understand that there is more to this endeavor and we appreciate his work and the work of MGT.

PART II - HUMAN SERVICES

Ms. Bunting introduced Human Services Director Dr. Tamara Temoney-Porter to speak about what the department is doing and anticipates doing having received the statistical data and recommendations from MGT.

Dr. Temoney-Porter greeted those on the dais and shared that the department works to ensure that all Hampton families become healthy and self-sufficient through supporting its mission, services, and benefits program. She also shared the department's goals which are to empower families and children to escape the long-term effects of poverty; protect abused or neglected children and adults; and support families for healthy development.

Dr. Temoney-Porter spoke about the benefits program eligibility requirements and highlighted the three primary requirements. They include requirements to be a U.S. Citizen or meet certain immigration requirements; to apply at the local department in the City or county of residence; and income verification. Dr. Temoney-Porter also briefly spoke about the application process and how the department tries to make the process as convenient as possible for applicants.

Dr. Temoney-Porter reviewed the next group of slides with information about some of the programs that are available through the Human Services Department. Programs include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); SNAP Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T); the Medicaid health insurance program; Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF); Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW); Child Care; Energy Assistance Program (fuel, crisis, cooling, and the Percentage of Income Payment Program (PIPP)); and the Balanced Approach to Success and Empowerment Program (B.A.S.E.)

Dr. Temoney-Porter provided the following information in response to questions posed by Council: Human Services offers childcare for individuals who participate in SNAP E&T. In addition, bus tickets, gas cards, and other transportation services are available. The poverty study revealed that there are people who live here, but work elsewhere, so the department also supports individuals who may find employment outside of the area. The SNAP E&T program is voluntary. The department does not offer stipends but does have gift card incentives. In addition, Rehab Services and Vocational Placement (RSVP) offers an incentive for those who complete short-term skills training with them. Some participants receive credentials for training, depending on the program. Children under the age of 19 receive dental coverage through the Medicaid program. Work is being done to determine how to best inform people of the available services. Individuals who are found to be fraudulent or have received TANF benefits under false pretenses, or who did not report all of their income under the eligibility requirements, may be required to pay back benefits.

Dr. Temoney-Porter paused to speak more about PIPP. This program was passed by the General Assembly in 2020 and 2021 and was approved for implementation in January 2024. It involves eligible individuals paying a percentage of their gross income for energy costs. The program is also funded through a universal fee assessed to all Dominion Energy customers.

Dr. Temoney-Porter spoke about the TANF Assessment and Planning Team (TAPT) assessment and planning team that was developed to determine how to bridge the gap for individuals who may not qualify for government assistance, but still need help. Individuals in the group may meet with a multidisciplinary team, made up of the Department of Human Services, Workforce Development, CSB, Healthy Families, and others, to discuss their interests, career goals, and challenges. Following the initial assessment, individuals are eligible to receive up to \$3,000 to assist with housing needs. In addition, participants who complete some type of short-term skills training are also eligible for a second payment of up to \$3,000. These payments are paid directly to landlords or other vendors.

Dr. Temoney-Porter elaborated on the B.A.S.E Program. This statewide program came about after a juvenile court judge identified that there was an increase in the truancy docket. This program was created in an attempt to reduce the number of truancy cases. Social workers are in elementary schools to monitor behavior. Students who have up to three unexcused absences are referred to the B.A.S.E. team to determine what is going on and what family support may be needed to ensure our youth are going to school. The Human Services Department is excited about this program and has seen how the program helps our community.

In response to Vice Mayor Gray's question about other schools that may have this problem, Ms. Bunting explained that the school system does the same thing, but the

B.A.S.E. program involves an extra family service worker in schools with higher truancy rates. For the benefit of the public, she also explained that the way schools were chosen for this program is Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court judges and the Human Services Department worked to determine which elementary schools had the most students with these court cases and placed extra resources in those schools. She reminded everyone that all elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools have referrals back to our Human Services Department, but those with a higher number of truancy cases have more full-time dedicated resources.

Dr. Temoney-Porter shared two slides about the Healthy Families Initiative and statistics related to participation in that program.

Dr. Temoney-Porter described some of the opportunities for improvement in the areas of communication (ensuring that people are aware of the services being provided); consistency (ensuring that practices and processes are consistent with federal, state, and City policies); and connection (aligning programs and practices to support the needs of the customers and the community). With regard to connection, the department is focusing on using available funding to support emergency needs for housing and material assistance.

Dr. Temoney-Porter highlighted some of Human Services' partnerships that offer support in the areas of employment, community awareness, and education.

Lastly, Dr. Temoney-Porter shared some of the challenges the department has determined are similar to the challenges described in the poverty study. In summary, poverty is a multi-layered problem that requires support from government and non-government strategic partners and stakeholders; there are concerns with capacity and insufficient resources; and additional concerns with the alignment of resources and identifying any extended gaps.

Dr. Temoney-Porter opened the floor for discussion.

Vice Mayor Gray asked Mr. Bernal to speak about best practices for moving people from poverty to self-sufficiency and what is involved in creating an anti-poverty consortium.

Mr. Bernal noted that part of the SMART goals process is to provide best practices and said that the key component to moving people from poverty to self-sufficiency involves making sure that people are aware of and have access to services. He also explained that creating an anti-poverty consortium requires getting the entire community involved and on the same page. This includes support from the government, non-profits, universities, the private sector, and more.

Councilman Brown spoke about how people were forced to be retrained/rescaled in the workforce as a result of job loss during COVID and asked if one of the best practices

could be to rescale people with the goal of them obtaining higher paying jobs.

Mr. Bernal agreed that many changes took place during COVID including the need to provide retraining services and a goal will be to continue with that.

At Councilman Brown's request, Dr. Temoney-Porter provided the following information about how we are helping homeless people in Hampton. Hampton has a homelessness prevention program that typically has specific federal or grant-funded funds with limitations on how they are spent. On a local level, there is some flexibility for those who may need short-term assistance while they are in the process of completing the assessment phase and determining what programs they may qualify for. The department is aware that this is an area of opportunity for improvement and is trying to determine how to leverage grant funding to make sure that we are able to provide more resources than what is currently being provided.

Mayor Tuck called for a 10-minute recess at 2:30 p.m.

PART III - ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Ms. Bunting called upon Interim Economic Development Director, Steven Lynch, to present the final part of the presentation related to family resilience and economic empowerment. Before Mr. Lynch came forward, Ms. Bunting explained that the Economic Development Department (EDD) is home to our workforce development and also works with small businesses, entrepreneurs, and partners, including the Hampton Roads Workforce Development Council and others, to offer opportunities for individuals to enhance or develop new skills. She noted that Mr. Lynch would provide information about this initiative and the role EDD plays in this continuum of services as it relates to moving people out of poverty.

Mr. Lynch greeted those on the dais and shared the EDD's mission which is to grow the skills of the current and future workforce to be part of the region's world-class talent pool; meet the needs of existing and emerging businesses and industries in the City and region; leverage strong community partnerships to create career pathways, improve economic mobility, and remove barriers to employment; and assist displaced citizen workers in discovering new career paths and training opportunities. Mr. Lynch pointed out that the EDD does not have programs that it owns, but it is able to make offerings to citizens through partnerships and its work to direct people to training opportunities and services.

Mr. Lynch spoke about the economic empowerment values which are to create and empower people by leveraging opportunities in education, training, and supportive services throughout our City and the Hampton Roads region. He also emphasized the

importance of collaborating with civic groups, community partners, and others to identify opportunities and constant change to occupational and educational requirements that can diminish poverty in the City of Hampton.

Mr. Lynch shared the next group of slides with information about Hampton's labor force, employment, and unemployment for each month during the year 2023. In December of 2023, Hampton had a labor force of 65,414, with 63,147 employed and 2,267 unemployed, resulting in an unemployment rate of 3.5%. This information is tracked through the Virginia Employment Commission. Additional slides in this section compared Hampton's unemployment rate to those in other localities in the region, in Virginia, and the United States. Mr. Lynch noted that overall, the information shows that there is room for improvement and work to be done in Hampton to get more people into employment.

Mr. Lynch spoke about Hampton's WorkOne Workforce Center which facilitates alternative pathways for meaningful employment. Some of the pathways include job preparedness, training, skill-building, college or vocational certification, career counseling, placement, job retention, and entrepreneurship opportunities. These services are for Hampton residents and especially those who need to up-skill or re-skill toward livable wage careers.

Mr. Lynch spoke more about additional services provided through the WorkOne Center, some of which include resume assistance, interview practice, and computer education. He also shared statistics about the number of people who receive assistance and the number of community engagement events that take place (including events focused on re-entry programs and second-chance employers).

Mr. Lynch described those who often are assisted through this work. He also talked about frequently encountered barriers to employment that the EDD helps to address. Some of them include age discrimination, daycare, justice-impacted individuals, transportation concerns, individuals without high school diplomas or GEDs, and individuals who lack 19 documents such as birth certificates and social security cards.

Mr. Lynch provided the following information in response to questions posed by Council throughout the presentation. The EDD works with the Re-entry Council. It also works with partner agencies to support clients who need childcare and childcare funding assistance.

Mayor Tuck stated that the City of Suffolk does not have enough people to fill the many job openings it has and spoke about the need for a regional plan (perhaps van transportation) to transport people who need jobs to the job locations in various cities in a reasonable amount of time. This would be a substitute for bus travel which can potentially take three to four hours to reach a destination in another locality.

Mr. Lynch agreed with Mayor Tuck's point and shared a similar example of what the Mayor described. He said that he had no information about the cost associated with it,

but assumed it was beneficial because that business continued with the practice. He noted that it would be beneficial if more employers implemented something of that nature.

Mayor Tuck asked if the regional workforce development team had discussed this idea.

Vice Mayor Gray indicated that a discussion specifically about moving people around the region in that fashion has not taken place, but transportation has been discussed with a focus on transit as the most appropriate means of transportation around the region. He also shared that the Amazon distribution facility in Suffolk worked with Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) to provide bus service to those facilities for employees. This is one example of how it could be done, but this has not been implemented throughout the region.

Mr. Lynch added that many employers do not have the number of people that Amazon does, therefore, that type of arrangement may not be feasible with other businesses; but, the Mayor's idea of creating a vanpool to potentially service multiple employers in the same area may work.

Mayor Tuck made a few additional remarks. He spoke about the need to convince our regional partners to consider this strategy; transportation barriers in our area, such as traffic associated with the Hampton Roads Bridge tunnel; the need to think outside the box; and the need to determine how to implement the logical solution to some of these employment concerns (for example having a company provide transportation to jobs).

Mr. Lynch spoke about resource partners that assist with getting people employed. Some of them include the City of Hampton's Human Resources Department; the Hampton Employee Connection; Newport News Human Resources and Human Services Departments; Hampton Roads Workforce Council; Virginia Department of Corrections; Hampton-Newport News Community Services Board; Virginia Parole Board; Dominion Energy; U.S. Small Business Administration; Virginia Employment Commission; and Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services.

Mr. Lynch also shared information about some of the City's training and employment partners and non-profit partners. Some of the training and employment partners include the Virginia Peninsula Community College; New Horizons Computer Learning Centers; Huntington Ingalls Industries; Bryant & Stratton College; and Sentara Health. Some of the non-profit partners include Catholic Charities USA; Hampton Roads Community Action Program; Virginia Peninsula Foodbank; and Jobs for Life. Mr. Lynch emphasized that the EDD and the City would not be able to do the work they do without the services from these entities which help individuals who are trying to elevate and improve themselves.

Mr. Lynch paused to speak about the Workforce Center's future expansion project at the North Point facility at 700 Shell Road. The intention is for the center to be a one-stop shop, similar to what the consultant described earlier in the meeting. The layout floor plan

of the facility is also included in the slide presentation.

Vice Mayor Gray commented that it is a good idea to centralize services and have everything in one place where people will have access to a variety of services in a prime location.

Mr. Lynch spoke about ideas to potentially overcome some of the challenges associated with this work. The new position, the Economic Empowerment and Resources Director, will lead efforts to reduce poverty, grow the middle class in the City, and implement strategies to address the needs and gaps in employment, education, housing, and health. This individual will assemble a task force to assist with this work; assess existing economic empowerment and resiliency opportunities; educate community partners on the impacts of poverty on the entire community; and develop evaluation tools, metrics, and schedules to assess the progress in o

2. [24-0147](#) Budget Briefings: City Manager's Recommended FY 2025-2029 Capital Improvement Plan ("CIP")

Attachments: [Presentation](#)
[CIP by CSP](#)

Prior to the presentation, Mayor Tuck recognized several members of the Budget Office staff and the guest employee from the Treasurer's Office and thanked them for their efforts during this very busy time of the year.

Ms. Bunting introduced Budget and Management Analyst Kenneth Barrentine to review the proposed FY25-29 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Mr. Barrentine greeted those on the dais and reviewed the first portion of the presentation which included the definition of a CIP and the funding sources for the projects. Sources include bonds, the general fund, dedicated sources, and state and federal funding (one-time funding for specific projects).

Next, Mr. Barrentine stated that the FY25-29 CIP includes projects that advance Council's strategic priorities in the areas of economic growth; educated citizenry; excellence in government; family resilience and economic empowerment; living with water; placemaking; and a safe and clean community.

Mr. Barrentine reviewed the next group of slides which broke down the percentage of funding allocated for each strategic priority in the CIP. This section also listed various projects for each priority and the amount allocated for each project.

For the benefit of the public, Ms. Bunting emphasized the importance of the living with water priority and everyone understanding the scale and scope of these projects. She explained that there is a variety of projects from the living shoreline projects (which will

protect our community) to canals and ponds (which will hold more water when it rains). She also explained that several of these projects were recommended as part of our resiliency planning and a question posed during that planning phase was related to project implementation in the downtown, Buckroe, and Phoebus areas. Ms. Bunting also acknowledged that the City has been successful in getting many grants (not shown on these charts) and this indicates that great progress is being made with the living with water priority.

Mr. Barrentine continued speaking about the projects associated with each of the strategic priorities.

He highlighted the Hampton Roads Center Parkway bike and pedestrian access project under the placemaking priority (\$4.9 million allocated); the skateboard park project under the placemaking priority (\$495,000 allocated); and the advancements of public safety under the safe and clean community priority (\$3.2 million).

Councilwoman Harper asked what the difference is between the blighted property acquisition and demolition project and the commercial blight abatement and redevelopment project under the safe and clean community priority.

Mayor Tuck explained that blighted property acquisition typically involves residential homes and houses and goes through the Hampton Redevelopment and Housing Authority (HRHA); whereas, commercial blight abatement typically involves commercial properties and goes through the Economic Development Authority (EDA) or the EDD.

Finally, Mr. Barrentine shared the next steps in the process which are to receive comments from City Council on the FY25-29 CIP and to hold a public hearing on April 24, 2024. Mr. Barrentine opened the floor for questions and discussion.

Councilman Brown suggested that some of the specific CIP items and projects be shared with the public at the time of the public hearing so that citizens can benefit from seeing the strategy and what takes place behind the scenes in putting the CIP together.

Vice Mayor Gray spoke about the funds in the CIP for a housing study and also referenced the previous poverty study which revealed some housing concerns including affordable/workforce overall. He said that, in his opinion, this study will help update our master plans and provide an idea of where we are going and the housing needs in our community.

Ms. Bunting clarified that those funds will not update the master plan alone, but are also intended to focus on what was revealed during the housing market studies and what can be done to meet our housing goals of having affordable housing for all (low-income housing to workforce housing) and better-diversifying housing in Hampton.

3. [24-0166](#) Budget Briefing: Highlights of the City Manager's Fiscal Year

2025 Recommended Budget

Attachments: [Presentation](#)

City Manager Bunting stated that the manager's recommended budget will officially be released on April 15 and the first public budget hearing will take place on April 24. The purpose of today's item is to summarize the content of the budget until the budget is available in libraries and online.

Ms. Bunting explained that part of the challenge with the budget is that the state budget has not yet been received. The governor sent a host of amendments to the state budget, but it is unclear what will take place with the General Assembly, the amendment process, and the Governor's Office. This means that what we start with may not be what we end with when the budget is adopted. Ms. Bunting assured everyone that we wait as long as possible in order to be aware with some certainty of what the state revenue situation will be. If there is more state revenue, there is potential to do more for employees or more tax relief for residents.

Ms. Bunting began highlighting the recommended budget with the following statement: I am pleased, today, to review the recommended budget that we will release on Monday. It is interesting, I always hope going into a budget, it's going to be an easier budget to do, and to some extent, it is certainly easier than that first budget I inherited when we had a \$20 million deficit that we had to solve. By deficit, I did not mean we had \$20 million of new stuff we could not do, I mean we had to cut \$20 million in the base budget, but even when you have revenue to work with, there are more needs and/or community desires than you have money to deal with, so it is always a challenge to find that perfect balance between honoring what the community is asking for, what the workforce truly needs (and I'll talk a bit about that in a moment) and making sure you take care of residents and don't ask for too much money from the residents - be sensitive to what they're dealing with in their own home budgets. So, I want to put this in context by saying that the request for new operating expenses totaled more than \$12 million, and the new capital project request that went into the CIP, but in particular, also people were asking for, for this year, totaled more than \$200 million. Clearly, there was no way we were going to be able to fund all of that. We were able to include some of the requests, but far from all of them, so we strived to provide a good balance. As I mentioned, we constantly strive to ensure that we don't ask residents to pay more in taxes or fees than is reasonable, given the many demands we face. Some of those demands are unfunded mandates, inflationary pressures, the rising salary expectations of the workforce, the aging infrastructure, in particular with wastewater (and we'll talk about that in a moment), and continued emphasis on strategic priorities, like we were just talking about, housing needs and trying to address generational poverty and public safety and education and all those important things that make a community a place

people want to live, work and play. I do think we've come up as a staff with a budget that adequately addresses each of those areas without constraining our public too much. Could we do more? Would we like to do more? Absolutely, but again, we have to live within a budget reality. I think that what I'm going to share today is a really good balance and something that we should take pride in. It does fulfill our community too moving forward in all of these areas, and I believe in a financially responsible way. I believe it takes care of our employees, and it does provide a third year of a real estate tax rate reduction, which I'm proud of. It's not a big one, but it is one and it builds on two prior years of real estate tax relief, so I'll talk about all of that.

The total proposed budget will be \$643,271,950, which is an increase of 5.2% from last year, or the current year that we're in. The school's portion of that is \$289,035,244. Based upon our school funding formula, they will receive \$95,000,573 from the City, which by the way (this refers to something I think Councilman Brown said earlier) is above our total state requirement for the schools, well above it. We exceed the state requirement by \$40,272,042. We've long supported our Hampton City Schools. I will say, to be fair, I think it's still true that every city, town, and county exceeds the state requirements because the state has habitually underfunded schools. I do think we do right by our schools, long have, but it's every locality (that) far exceeds this state requirement.

As I mentioned, this budget recommends a real estate tax reduction from \$1.16 to \$1.15 per \$100 of assessed value. That will partially offset the increase in assessments most residents will see. The decrease in rate will save the owner of an average house. An average house in Hampton is currently worth about \$250,000, so a one-cent tax decrease will save about \$225, compared to the existing rate. Hampton has led the way regionally in aggressively lowering our real estate tax rate in response to rising real estate values, having lowered our rate nine cents in just three years from \$1.24 to \$1.15. It's fair to note that the budget will have the assessed increases - that do impact people, but the total budget for the City is increasing below the cost of inflation and has for some time. We try to do that by not having our costs grow out of control because we have revenue that's reflective of our lowering the real estate rates. We do face the same cost increases that others do and homeowners do, like the cost of fuel impacts us just as it does for homeowners. The cost of materials for construction repairs impacts us, so we do have to have revenue to grow, especially for salaries, and increases for workers, which I'm going to talk about again in just a few moments. If we had proposed a budget that covered inflationary costs, the tax rate for next year would need to be \$1.17, so we're going to be two cents lower, assuming Council approves the budget that I'm recommending, two cents lower than what the inflationary tax rate would be. Even with our proposed rate, we will still be lower than several localities in our region.

Portsmouth is proposing to lower its rate to \$1.25; Norfolk is proposing to lower its rate to \$1.23; and Newport News is proposing its rate remain flat at \$1.18. We would be at \$1.15, so you can see we've made substantial progress in making our rate very competitive with other urban cities.

Unfortunately, we do have two proposed increases in both the solid waste user fee and the wastewater fee and we previewed that to the public and you. I won't spend a lot of time on that, except to say that I'm proud that Hampton disposes of most household trash in a manner that's better for the environment than disposing of it at the landfill. For 43 years, we've burned our household trash to create steam for NASA Langley. We are pioneers in this technology, but because we were so ahead of our time, our equipment is aging and needs to be upgraded. We will be able to issue bonds for most of these upgrades, which will extend the life of our plant through 2040. In addition to the renovations at the steam plant, other factors are also driving the increase of our solid waste fee, including the cost of recycling, which has increased dramatically everywhere. In fact, you see several cities around the region increasing their solid waste fee this year because of the recycling cost, and/or eliminating recycling. Our residents expressed a clear preference to keep recycling (curbside recycling). We also have higher wages for truck drivers due to high demand. For all these reasons, I am recommending the weekly rate be \$8.78, which is an increase of \$1.53. We will continue to work to pursue all efforts to reduce future increases. We have already submitted requests to our federal delegation to help us with the steam plant issue since NASA benefits significantly from the steam plant. We're hopeful that we will be able to get earmarks and/or grant support to help offset that cost. If we are successful, we will look at lowering the rate or not having to increase it again in the future as much as we've projected. We will keep you all updated on that. We also must raise the wastewater user fee to address federal and state requirements relating to aging infrastructure and environmental protections. This is a valuable and important effort and we recognize the goal of reducing pollutants that leak into the waterways through cracks in pipes or other problems. The majority of our sewer pipes are more than 65 years old, and those cracks or leaks also create disruptions to customers if and when they happen. We have been working to make improvements since 2014 and have spent almost \$20 million already. The state, however, has released new guidelines, and the cost of meeting those mandates is about \$230 million by 2040, not counting inflation, so we are going to have to spend at least \$106 million in the next six years. This is a problem common to all Virginia localities, but it especially affects older cities with older infrastructure.

Specifically, Richmond has already asked the General Assembly for financial assistance to meet the requirements twice and they've been denied. Bills there already stand at \$51.95 per month for an average resident, and they've said it could

increase by 200%. We've been able to keep our bills below average, nearly 1/3 of Richmond's, for example. Our current rate of \$19.10 per month on average is the second lowest in the region, currently. We are proposing to increase it to \$30.06, which will still keep us below the average in the region and help us meet those state mandates. This is the one that sort of pains us the most. We really didn't want to have to do this, but we will not meet the state mandates if we do not do it. I only take comfort in the fact that we will still be below the average in the region and with the real estate tax rate reduction, and looking at that average value, we will offset the cost of these user fees for our residents.

Our workforce, which is where we spent the bulk of the money for compensation, the bulk of our new revenue has gone to compensation. That's appropriate because our workforce is the heart of the City. Our City does very well with service delivery, and while we're trying to improve our manning over time, we do have fewer employees per capita than our neighboring localities. Employee compensation has been among our top priorities as a leadership team and a community consistently rating highly in our I- Value budget input sessions and polling. Our employees deserve whatever compensation increases we can reasonably afford to give them, especially in the highly competitive labor market in which we now operate. Like the private sector, local governments are struggling to attract and retain talent and this is largely a function of demographics. More people are leaving the workforce than entering it, creating an oversupply of jobs, as compared to the available workforce to fulfill it. Further complicating the challenge is the changing motivation of a younger workforce, which is much more comfortable changing jobs and even careers with greater frequency than ever before. The combined effect of these trends has placed immense pressure on wages. Hampton, like most localities and the private sector, has nearly doubled our minimum wage, our minimum starting salary, in recent years. However, as we've done this, to fill vacant positions, we have created wage compression with senior and higher-level employees. Several years ago, we made a commitment to address wage compression, realizing this would need to be a multi-year commitment. As Council knows, this year, we started the process with public safety, increasing fire and police salaries significantly. We created a step plan, long requested by sworn officers of both departments, which establishes a 2.5% pay differential for each year of service for the first 10 years of service, and then every two years afterward. The step plan, which went into effect in January, finally eliminated pay compression in the sworn officer ranks. Upon initial implementation, senior officers received very large salary increases to place them into the proper salary step for their time as sworn officers. I think it's fair to say that the officers felt we had treated them fairly and are feeling very positive about the step plan. This budget continues the commitment to the sworn officers of the step plan by funding the other six months. Because we went into effect in January, we have to annualize those increases. Additionally, they will receive their next step

increase in January. I will pause here to say that because they won't receive their next step increase until January, it's important to note that the budget also covers 100% of the increase in health care premiums, which means that they won't lose part of their salary, if you will, to cover health care costs before they get that next salary increase. I have recommended and it was really important that we recommend covering 100% of the health care premium increase, so they didn't sort of take a step back since they're now on a January increase schedule as opposed to a July increase schedule.

This year, we turned our attention for fiscal year 25 to addressing compression and wages for our civilian workforce. Jobs were reviewed against regional benchmarks to determine whether or not the salary ranges were appropriate. Our goal has been and remains to be at or above the average of our peer communities. Ninety-six jobs impacting 341 employees were recommended to be moved into higher pay ranges. Some jobs, such as equipment operators who require a commercial driver's license, were substantially behind the market and required a major pay adjustment in the range of about 15%. Others did not require an adjustment at all because they were at an appropriate level. Jobs that were already at or above the pure benchmark average were left at the current pay range, but even those ranges were adjusted by 2% to ensure they did not fall behind as our peer localities make adjustments this year. This 2% adjustment impacted 333 employees whose pay ranges were below new minimums. To ensure we don't worsen compression and that we make improvements to the existing compression, this budget proposes a 3% general wage increase for civilian employees plus a point 0.5% increase for each year of service up to a maximum of 10% additional for a maximum total of 13%. Thus, any civilian employee who has completed at least one year of service will receive an average salary increase in the region of 3.5%, and our most tenured employees, those with 20 years or more of service with the City will receive a 13% increase. The combination of the general wage increase plus the point 0.5% per year of service tenure adjustment will significantly address the compression that has long impacted our civilian workforce. I am pleased that we are able to finally make good on our promise to address this issue for them as we did for our sworn officers this past year. I'm also pleased to note that our residents also favored staff wage increases in community polling, with just over half saying they thought competitive wages were their number one top priority for this budget. I know very well how hard our staff work and how customer-friendly they are, so it was gratifying to know our taxpayers see this as well.

While the bulk of the available revenue, as I mentioned, went to compensation and the proposed tax rate reduction, we were able to fund a limited number of strategic priorities in this recommended budget. Those projects and positions that were chosen for funding were those that most closely aligned with the strategic plan and

those that received the highest expression of support from the Council and/or the community during our I-Value budget preference polling. I'm going to go through those very quickly.

Starting with educated citizenry, I already talked about the increase for the schools and our local funding formula, so I'm not going to repeat those numbers again. I will state, it's predicated on the Governor's released budget. The schools currently have a 3% across-the-board salary increase, which builds on the 7% raises that they gave in the current fiscal year (5% at the start of the school year and another 2% in January). I believe that this being based upon the Governor's budget plus our local contribution, that 3% raise is secure, despite what's going on right now in Richmond with the Governor and the General Assembly at odds. That puts us more or less in alignment with our general wage increase of 3.5%. They're also covering 100% of their health insurance premium increase. Dr. Haynes and myself, just as Dr. Smith and myself before me, as well as our two boards, try to work together to do as much as possible to stay in the same range, and I'm pleased that we were able to do that again. Their budget has several key highlights. They will talk about that with you all at your next afternoon work session, so I won't detail that. I will say, that in addition to fully funding their annual budget in our local funding formula, I am recommending that we add \$300,000 a year to the capital budget to provide the handheld technology to younger students. As you know, our high school and middle school, one-to-one device program and their replacements have been funded as part of a dedicated tax increase for many years, however, the elementary school devices had not been funded until the pandemic. When the pandemic hit, they got the initial devices funded through pandemic funds, but they need a source of funding to replace those over time. They've asked us to give them the funding for that, and that seemed a very appropriate request, and the public certainly highly supported that, so in the five-year plan, the technology and maintenance funds are planned for \$7.587 million for the next three years, with a \$20 million boost in fiscal year 2028 to allow for a major renovation and or other projects in the schools.

Turning to a safe and clean community, this recommended budget adds a full-time civilian grant writer to the police division to free up a sworn officer who had been handling this role, a full-time security guard for the main library, and an additional position to the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office to assist with expanded victim witness efforts. We've also included travel funds to assist with the relocation of victims and witnesses when needed. As we discussed last time in our work session, a major new addition to the budget is the adoption of speed zone cameras in school zones. It's designed as a safety initiative to change aggressive speeding behavior. This budget includes the necessary funds as well as offsetting revenues to implement the speed zone cameras in all of our elementary, middle, and high school traffic zones. Although we planned to start with a 12-school pilot, we've included the

necessary funds to expand all the schools if we find the program is working as needed. The budget only includes enough revenue from the school zone speed cameras to offset the budgetary cost of the speed zone cameras as our intent is to change behavior, not raise additional money. Additionally, several capital requests are recommended for funding, including a bomb-detecting robot, so we don't have to rely on the region for those bomb threats of courthouses and other facilities, police boat repairs, and security access controls. These projects are in addition to the annual police and fire capital funding for equipment technology and lighting as well as the new police fire station and 911 center, both of which are in the planning stage.

Family resilience and economic empowerment. Through general fund appropriations and grant resources, we will expand our behavioral health court services, mental health partnerships with police, crisis intervention services, homelessness services, and the Summer Youth Employment Program for some students by allowing them to continue to participate during the school year. The budget also funds enhanced teen programming so we can offer specialized programs like midnight basketball, to keep young people productively engaged in positive activities. Likewise, the budget funds an increased contribution to HRT, an invaluable service to those who don't own their own cars. These were all among the top priorities of our residents who participated in the I-Value budget input. I want to pause on this because a lot of times you see in public polling that people don't support Human Services. Our public really does see the value in that and it shows me that Hampton is a really caring and compassionate community and it just really makes me proud to be a Hamptonian.

Economic and workforce development. This budget proposal fulfills a commitment to expand workforce development services at the new North Point Center. This is a commitment we made to the neighborhood residents adjacent to and the stakeholders invested in the former Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind site. Staffing to accomplish this was added for a partial year because it's not expected to open July 1, but as Mr. Lynch mentioned, when he showed you the layout and everything, we really want to make this a very vibrant center, and so it needs staffing to operate. The Downtown Hampton Development Partnership (DHDP) had requested capital funding for several projects. Together, they would increase public access to the waterfront, create a more pedestrian-friendly downtown, link the downtown facilities along the waterfront to retail restaurant areas, and boost business activity. We did not fund all of those in this CIP or budget. There were a lot of them, and frankly, they didn't all receive support from the public, but we did add some funds for the pedestrian walkway from the new Virginia Tech Seafood facility across Bridge Street and over to the History Museum. We really see expanding the public waterfront as a key priority. We may look to do more over time as we get grant opportunities or end-of-the-year savings or those kinds of things, but we did

think the public promenade and pedestrian walkways were important to create synergy in downtown and really needed to be prioritized.

Our youth athletic tourism continues to grow, whether it's the Boo Williams basketball facility, the new AquaPlex, or the other many events that the convention center hosts. A lot of people don't realize, but there are a lot of athletic competitions there, and to increase our ability to profit from these events, we really do need to invest in renovations at the convention center. Most of these funds will come from the retained earnings in the convention center funds, so they don't really impact the general fund, but I would be remiss if I didn't highlight them here, as we try to give a comprehensive picture of the investments and the operating and capital budgets that we're making.

Also, this budget includes funding for a new business development specialist to support the establishment of a new retail incubator. This is a program that we're working on developing. We're not ready to announce the location yet, but we think that what some cities are doing, like Norfolk in the Seldendale market is really cool. We think that the retail incubator will assist entrepreneurs who want to start a new retail or restaurant business in our community, and we want to help them grow as part of our small business program, so we need to bring on a staff person to really lead the project, and this is the first step in that effort.

Living with the water. As I mentioned earlier, we have been very successful in getting grants, and as a result, we don't have to raise the stormwater fee this year. I'm very glad about that, especially since we have to raise the wastewater and solid waste fees this year. You don't want to have to raise them all at one time, but I do want to say that even without new funding, much progress will be made this year as capital projects started in fiscal 24 (are) near completion. We also have approximately \$63 million in living with the water projects that were just shared with you very briefly. These are designed for flood reduction, water quality, and enhanced recreation and economic development. More importantly, two monumental efforts will begin: the Army Corps of Engineers' three-by-three-by-three study, which is the gateway to much more significant funding for large-scale flood mitigation projects such as flood walls, tide gates, and levees will begin this year. Also, Bloomberg Philanthropies is kicking off a project in Hampton and several other cities nationwide to assist in addressing resiliency, especially in economically vulnerable neighborhoods, with an emphasis on social equity. They are funding the addition of three permanent full-time staff to assist with this effort here in Hampton. We're excited to be part of this effort and pleased that the staffing we would have otherwise needed to request is being underwritten for three years as a grant from the Bloomberg Foundation.

Placemaking. Funding for two new holiday events is recommended. As a military community, it's long been noted that while lots of organizations do recognize our veterans, and we support those, we have not done a City Veterans Day event and it was suggested by the Mayor and others who supported it, that we have a Veterans Day Parade and there's been a lot of excitement about that, so we have added the funds to do that this year. Also, while we've not traditionally held a Fourth of July event, Fort Monroe had done that for several years, but they stopped doing it after COVID and had said that they would not be picking that up this year. Our residents have been asking to see a Fourth of July event return, and so, we have budgeted money to do that. We will announce more specifics about that later in the year. We are going to have a really nice surprise for our residents and I'll leave it at that, but we do have the money in the budget so that we can return to having an annual Fourth of July event.

There's also some use of one-time funds for some one-time events. I realize that these are not ranked highly necessarily by the public, but they're key one-time events that we would be really remiss if we did not recognize and since we have money in our fund balance, otherwise known as the savings account, it's appropriate to look at using those for the Phoebus 125th Anniversary, and the Virginia 250th Commemoration, so I have put money in the budget from the fund balance for those things.

In addition to the regular funding that Parks and Rec receives for maintenance each year, typically about \$2.5 million a year for renovations and maintenance of the parks and recreation facilities, we are proposing to add an additional \$750,000 to that amount to allow them to make more progress in modernizing and updating playgrounds and community centers. Additionally, this budget for FY2025 includes a renovation for the senior center and a new gaming center to be added to the Y.H. Thomas Neighborhood Center. We added gaming centers to our community centers last year and the Y.H. Thomas Neighborhood Center has asked for one as well, so we're pleased to add that.

Excellence in government. The one new full-time position we have in that area is for the internal audit department. It's an Information Technology (IT) auditor position. The job will be to ensure the smooth operation of the City's complex information technology infrastructure with a special emphasis on growing cybersecurity threats, increased regulatory legal and industrial compliance needs, and the growing opportunities represented by the evolving artificial intelligence environment. Mostly, the money that relates to this strategic issue is on the capital side with over \$33 million of public infrastructure and building projects in the capital budget. Nearly \$8.5 million of this is dedicated to the wastewater infrastructure rehabilitation projects that will be funded with the wastewater fee. Another \$8.2 million is dedicated to Citywide

street and traffic maintenance. In addition to the general street and traffic maintenance, the capital budget includes the first of a four-phase renovation of Mercury Boulevard, from King Street to Fort Monroe, repairs to the Settlers Landing Bridge, upgrades to the City's main traffic fiber optic cable cabinet, and other streets and roads maintenance projects. Also, the main library roof will be replaced. Residents ranked these projects the highest in their I-Value rankings, indicating a priority for basic infrastructure maintenance.

In conclusion, as I stated at the outset, I believe this spending plan is the best way to allocate our funds for the next fiscal year. Members of the public who participated in the I-Value process strongly favored investments and employee compensation with a clear majority indicating their preference for this priority over even a tax rate decrease and other new positions or projects. I'm pleased that this budget enables us to address compression for the general workforce as we did for sworn officers, police, and fire last year, however, I caution that other cities continue to increase their wages as well. As long as we face a mismatch between labor supply and demands for jobs, we will need to be hyper-focused on ensuring that we do all we can to offer the most competitive wages, while also maintaining a great work environment for our well-deserving employees. However, I'm also always mindful that we must balance staff needs against those of our citizens, which is why we strive to provide tax relief whenever and however we can. While this year's one-cent tax reduction is not as large as past years, taken together with the last two years' decreases, we have been able to reduce the tax rate for our residents by nine cents per \$100 of assessed value in just three years. No other major city in our region has done as much for its residents in such a short period of time. We will continue our efforts to invest in our employees and provide tax rate reductions by continuing to grow our local economy. I just want to say that our local economy is healthy. Home values have increased for the past 10 years, which increases wealth. Retail sales are strong. People continue to eat out. Our tourism has rebounded from the pandemic and we expect a strong growth in the number of people visiting our community. We're not going to rest on our laurels. We're going to do all we can to boost our local economy, and we have several new things on the horizon. One is the North Point development we talked about. We have many more in the pipeline that we can't announce here, but I want to assure you we will not rest on our laurels. We will keep trying to grow our economy so that we don't have to rely too much on our residential real estate tax base. People do want to live, work, visit, and enjoy Hampton because of our award-winning schools, beautiful waterfront recreation, and quality life, a vision that was set by Council years ago is as relevant today as it was then. We are Hampton, a vibrant waterfront community, celebrating and embracing now over 400 years of history and innovation to create an even more dynamic future.

As always, I want to thank the strong team of department heads, assistant city managers, and the budget team for putting together a balanced budget that seeks to meet as many community needs as feasible. I also want to thank the community for their continued participation and thoughtful insight during the budget development process. When we work together, there's nothing we cannot achieve.

Ms. Bunting shared the next steps in the budget process. The full release will be on Monday, April 15. It will also be online at Hampton.gov/budget. Copies will be in the library by April 18. Public hearings will take place on April 24 and May 1. A special meeting to give the public a second public hearing opportunity will take place on May 1. This is also the first vote on the budget by tradition and no amendments will be made. The first and only vote on the capital budget will take place on April 24 with the final vote on the budget and any amendments Council may choose to make would occur on May 8. We will operate on a fiscal year of July 1, therefore what was discussed today will take effect July 1.

Mayor Tuck announced that April is National Child Abuse Awareness Month, recognized by people wearing blue and also blue pinwheels community partners have put out throughout the City to rec

REGIONAL ISSUES

There were no regional issues to report upon.

NEW BUSINESS

There were no items of new business.

CLOSED SESSION (if not concluded during 10 a.m. session)

All topics to be discussed during closed session were handled in the City Council's special closed session at 9 a.m. this morning.

4. [24-0157](#) Closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Sections 2.2-3711.A (.1), (.3), and (.8) to discuss appointments as listed on the agenda, to discuss or consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or the disposition of publicly held real property in the areas of Neil Armstrong Parkway and in the LaSalle Avenue corridor, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the City, and to consult with legal counsel employed or retained by the City regarding specific legal matters pertaining to short term rentals and council conduct which requires the provision of

legal advice by such counsel.

No action

5. [24-0144](#) Consideration of an Appointment to the Hampton VA 250
 Committee

CERTIFICATION (if closed session not concluded during 10 a.m. session)

6. [24-0167](#) Resolution Certifying Closed Session
 No action

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:12 p.m.

Contact Info:

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

Donnie R. Tuck
Mayor

Katherine K. Glass, CMC
Clerk of Council

Date approved by Council _____