



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, March 26, 2025

6:30 PM

Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Gray called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. All members of the City Council were 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

Mayor Gray spoke about the Mayor's Book Club and provided statistics on the children served, the volunteers and schools involved and the number of books shared. Mayor Gray also shared that the City Council will change the timing of the sign-up for public comment to begin at 6 p.m. and end at 6:30 p.m., which will conform with the time that citizens sign-up for public hearing items. This will begin at the first meeting of May (May 7, 2025).

Mayor Gray commented on the future of golf courses in the City. He reminded everyone that a few weeks ago, consultants presented information to Council and

made recommendations regarding the future of The Hamptons Golf Course and The Woodlands Golf Course. Since that time, conversations have taken place in the community and on social media about the future of The Woodlands Golf Course, but some of the things being shared are not accurate.

Mayor Gray addressed that concern with the following remarks: The Hamptons and Woodlands golf courses have been important recreational assets for our community; however, both have consistently operated at a financial loss, prompting us to take a look at their long-term viability. To ensure we were making an informed decision, the City engaged the National Golf Foundation and Richard Mandel Golf Architecture to conduct a comprehensive assessment on both courses. Their study evaluated financial sustainability of our municipal golf courses and provided some recommendations to improve their performance. One key finding from the report is that upgrades to the Hamptons Golf Course could allow it to accommodate all the rounds of golf currently played in Hampton, consolidating golf operations into a single course. Given this, the report suggests that investing in renovations in The Hamptons would make what seemed to be the most financial sense for the City. Since the release of the study, there has been a lot of speculation in the community about the future of The Woodlands Golf Course. Some of the things (being said) are not exactly accurate. To be clear, the City Council has not made any decisions regarding the future of The Woodlands Golf Course. There are no agreements done or in progress to sell The Woodlands to Hampton University or any other entity. I want to repeat that: There is no agreement done or in progress to sell The Woodlands Golf Course to Hampton University or any other entity. We've made no decisions on those. Our goal is to balance the fiscal responsibility with providing quality recreational opportunities for our residents, and I look forward to having future discussions on this, as well as input from the community as we work toward the best possible outcome for Hampton.

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 Councilmember Harper, 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. [25-0093](#) Resolution to Amend the Fiscal Year 2025 Council Approved Budget to Appropriate a Total of \$142,000 from the Computer Replacement Committed Fund Balance Account to the Information Technology General Fund for the Cybersecurity Program
Item approved.

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

2. [25-0099](#) Resolution to Amend the Fiscal Year 2025 Council Approved Budget to Appropriate \$90,160.01 from the Hazmat Restricted Fund Balance to the Fire and Rescue Division's General Fund Operating Budget

Attachments: [Audit Schedule 01-56027](#)

Item approved.

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

3. [25-0088](#) Approval of the minutes from the work sessions of February 12, 2025, and February 26, 2025, and the legislative session of February 26, 2025.
Item approved.

PRESENTATIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, AWARDS

4. [25-0087](#) Briefing on Bloomberg American Sustainable Cities (BASC) and InnovationTeam (i-team) Introduction

Attachments: [Presentation - Final](#)

City Manager Mary Bunting gave the following introduction: Some time ago, Hampton was one of only 25 cities nationwide selected to join the Bloomberg American Sustainable Cities (BASC) cohort. This is a three-year initiative supporting 25 U.S. cities efforts to proactively build cleaner, more resilient and economically thriving communities through local leadership. It comes with the financial support and technical support of Bloomberg Philanthropies and many other national partners of Bloomberg. It is an honor to be selected by Bloomberg for this outstanding program.

Ms. Bunting introduced Interim Assistant City Manager, Hui-Shan Walker, i-team Director, Chad Sanders, and i-team Civic Designer, Demetrius Keilu, to make the presentation.

Ms. Walker greeted those on the dais and repeated the description of the program as described by the City Manager. She shared the timeline of events leading up to September of 2024 when Hampton was selected to participate in the program. Ms. Walker shared the list of the 25 cities that were selected for the program and noted that the City of Newport News is also on the list.

Ms. Walker explained that the BASC program helps cities develop solutions to address unique priorities by taking bold actions to achieve safer, more prosperous local communities, particularly in areas where health, infrastructure and economic outcomes can be improved. BASC is supported by partners Policy Link, the Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at Johns Hopkins, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Delivery Associates, and the Sustainable Cities Fund.

Ms. Walker spoke about how Hampton plans to implement solutions. In summary, Hampton's partnership table consists of the "i-team", City staff, local partners and initiative partners who will develop action plans focused on flood-related damages, future resilience and response in flood-prone areas of the City. Pilot areas identified in the grant application include Aberdeen Gardens, Briarwood Terrace and the West Shell Road area of greater Wythe. Plans also include applying what is learned in pilot areas to other areas of the City.

Ms. Walker spoke more about Hampton's partnership table which aims to strengthen the City and its community partnerships and advance transformative solutions. The City will be able to address energy efficiency, flood mitigation, infrastructure, workforce development and community health. Everything that will be worked on will link to one of Council's strategic priorities.

Next, Ms. walker summarized what has been accomplished thus far. Since Hampton was selected for the program, the partnership table has been developed, some

people from the partnership table attended a kick-off workshop in Memphis, also attended by representatives from other BASC communities, and Hampton's i-team has been introduced to City leadership.

Ms. Walker briefly reviewed a slide about grants and other funding for the program and additional opportunities for future grants. Ms. Bunting added that over the course of the next three years, Hampton is also receiving funding to support the salaries of the three i-team positions.

Ms. Walker introduced the i-team Director, Chad Sanders, who greeted those on the dais and commented that he is excited to serve and embark on what has already been done in Hampton. He assured everyone that the i-team will work diligently over the next three years to have a great impact on the community.

I-team Designer, Demetrius Keilu, greeted those on the dais and spoke about the i-team's process. In summary, the team will connect with the community, City Government and City leaders prior to beginning the process known as the "path". The i-team will be available to meet with City staff to brainstorm, troubleshoot and explore new ideas. Two workshops per month will be offered and City agencies and employees may reach out to them to build tools around user personas, journey maps and user insights.

Mr. Keilu shared the next steps in the process. The i-team will begin engagement with residents and other partners in the City; work to refine a vision for Hampton and identify priority areas; hire a third i-team manager; support new projects and grant applications; continue to learn from City partners and residents; and install the i-Team office hours to serve Hampton City agencies.

Mr. Keilu opened the floor for questions.

Mayor Gray welcomed the i-team staff and said that we all look forward to the great work they will do in Hampton.

Ms. Bunting also made a few remarks.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no public hearings scheduled.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Clerk of Council Katherine Glass read the protocol for the public comment period.

Mayor Gray indicated that five people signed up to speak and then called on the first

speaker, Aaron Weaver, to come to the microphone in the center of the floor.

Mr. Aaron Weaver introduced himself and made the following statement: I want to take a moment to stand up and simply say thank you to Monica Meharg, Gabe Diaz, Will Pell and the entire team. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to the hard work and the belief that this school, these students, and that facility and this neighborhood deserves to be seen and honored, but not just honored one time, permanently. On March 1, 2025, we had a blessing - standing to get to see Ms. Catherine Tyler-Northan, who gave us the most vivid, heartfelt display of what life was like on campus of the Virginia School. I'll tell you that what we saw that day was more than just a presentation. It was a promise that these students matter, that their stories matter, that this community matters. After all the tireless nights that I've had since before 2022, fighting for this neighborhood, for this school, and for these families, seeing these students honored like that and my mother honored like that, is one of the greatest moments of my life. I've had the privilege to witness, but let this be clear, this is just the beginning. This is the first step in building (what we call) back trust, because, as you all know, or if you don't know, trust has been broken. It's hard to build back trust when trust has been broken, but it has - but it's a step toward healing, a step toward accountability and toward making something whole again. So, we will keep showing up. We will keep fighting. We will continue to do the work, and not because it's easy, but because it's right. My last thing is this, thank you again for believing in what's possible. Thank you for honoring those students. Thank you for honoring my mother, and I thank you all.

Mayor Gray called on the next speaker, Richard Brown.

Mr. Richard Brown greeted those on the dais, introduced himself, noted that he lives in Phoebus and made the following statement: I've got several issues that I'd like to address and bring to some concern. First off, I got - very heavy traffic, if you all are familiar with, down in Phoebus. A few years ago, a woman was hit (and run accident) coming off the Mugler Bridge. I've got young kids. The neighborhood has young kids. I would like to impose or see what I can do to try to get speed bumps or islands put in. You have other neighborhoods with all the same thing. I'm just afraid that somebody's going to get hurt - one, my child or a neighbor. You know, like neighborhoods down in Grandview, Willow Oaks, Elizabeth Lake - there's been issues and then you all put speed humps in. I would like to know what I could do, or what we could do, as a community, to fix this problem, to find a solution. Like I said, there's a bunch of kids in the neighborhood, and it's just a drag strip. If you're familiar with coming off of Mellen Street towards the VDOT building, it is a wide-open road, and as Fort Monroe gets more popular, or during the summer hours, there's nothing but speeding traffic. I'm talking about cars going 45/50 miles an hour. I did speak with Gregory Moyer, who I think is in Public Safety or something like that. He

did call me, but he informed me that there's - it has to be over 85% of speeding for something to take place, you know, for the action of speed bumps or anything of that, which to me, it seems really high, you know, like I said, there's already been one woman killed, a young mother on Mellen Street coming off of Mugler Bridge. I believe that was two years ago. I would hate to see an incident of that nature, especially for a young child. So, I would like to know what I could do, or speak with somebody further after this to see what we can do as a community. Thank you for the time.

Mayor Gray indicated that City Manager Bunting would address Mr. Brown's concern at the end of the public comment period and then called on the next speaker, Linda Boone.

Ms. Linda Boone greeted those on the dais, introduced herself, and made the following statement: I want to share a story about a special sea turtle, named by Kecoughtan High School students, Morris, but first, let me tell you a little bit about myself. I'm a volunteer for Hampton Waterways Restoration Project, which is a subcommittee of Hampton Clean City Commission, and we kind of align with some of the same goals that the Bloomberg Innovation. So, I'm glad to see them come along. I'm also a volunteer with the Master Naturalist Group, and that's a state-wide group of trained volunteers. Both the Master Naturalist and Hampton Clean City Commission provide education, outreach and service dedicated to the beneficial management of the natural resources in our community. But, I'm the point of contact of Blue Bird Gap Farm for the Master Naturalist and there's something very special about that park. Why? It's the only park that has animals. The kids love that. They love the playground and the trails and hills to climb for the kids. So, The Peninsula Master Naturalist maintain these 20 acres, and we have for the past four years. Oh, I forgot, there's also a kayak launch there, and the trails for the adults as well, but Morris brings all of these elements together because this collaboration began in the spring of 2022 between waterways, Master Naturalist, Blue Bird Gap Farm, Makerspace and Kecoughtan High School. The Kecoughtan students of the Governor's STEM Academy created a 7-by-5-foot sculpture display to educate the public about the ill effects of littering. On April the 26th at 12:30 pm, the Earth Day Environmental Festival called Together is Beautiful Event is happening at Blue Bird Gap Farm and Morris will be officially dedicated. So, I definitely invite you guys to come out any day, but especially that day if you can, because it's going to be a lot of fun. My fellow naturalist, Jacqueline Keener-Weatherford, will inform you about one of our projects at the farm called the At a Farm Project. This works with benefits for those with special needs. Thank you so much.

Mayor Gray called on the next speaker, Jacqueline Keener-Weatherford.

Ms. Jacqueline Keener-Weatherford greeted those on the dais and the Clerk of Council, introduced herself, and made the following statement: I'll be discussing the At a Farm Project with you tonight. At a Farm was founded in 2023 by myself, my colleague Linda, and the wonderful team at Blue Bird Gap Farm. At A stands for accessible trails to all, which perfectly sums up our mission to make natural spaces, like the Blue Bird Gap Farm, accessible and inclusive to those with disabilities. Our earliest project involved earning a \$14,000 grant to obtain two All-Terrain wheelchairs. We are proud to say that they have arrived at the park and will be available free to the public in May. Subsequent projects involved surveying parents of children with disabilities within Hampton City Schools. The feedback showed an overwhelming need to better support those with autism. Autism is a developmental disability where individuals can become easily overwhelmed with the sights, smells and sounds of the hectic world around them. To combat this, At a Farm has created sensory tool kits for visitors, which contain resources for managing these sensory stressors. Our next projects will focus on dynamic learning opportunities in Blue Bird's forested spaces, including a weather-learning wall, music sensory station and animal footprint finder. Each of these activities incorporate concepts of Universal Design for Learning, which ensures that visitors of all ages and abilities will be able to engage in these outdoor learning spaces. Every time Linda and I visit the farm, we see individuals and groups of citizens with visible disabilities, and probably walk past many with invisible disabilities without knowing. With global statistics indicating that one in five people have a disability, this is, by all means, a sizable and worthy demographic to support. The At a Farm Project wants to formally thank the City of Hampton for their support so far. We are excited to continue our mission alongside our amazing community.

Mayor Gray called on the last speaker, Neva Beierle.

Ms. Neva Beierle greeted those on the dais, introduced herself and made the following statement: I too, like several of the other speakers, would like to thank the Councilmembers and I don't know who all you guys are, but you know, everyone, and the security people, and I assume the gentleman over there is the IT person, but everyone. The reason that I'm here is to talk about - I had heard that some members of the Election Board have made suggestions, and two of those suggestions - one of them is to close three polling places, and the other one is to redraw the boundaries of I forget if it's like nine or 11 other polling places. And, my first question is, have you guys decided on those suggestions yet?

Mayor Gray indicated that a presentation was given this afternoon and the City Attorney will be handling the next steps. Ms. Beierle asked whether anyone is allowed to share if a decision has been made. (Someone from the dais indicated no, however, the verbal communication is inaudible.)

Ms. Beierle continued: Anyway, I was just going to say that I don't know their reasoning for doing this, but it kind of doesn't feel like a good idea to me. For one thing, closing three polling places, that's like over 10 percent of our polling places, and I wouldn't think they could give the reason that there's been a reduction in population, because I don't think there's... I haven't heard anything about 10 percent of the people leaving or anything. And also, it feels kind of like - oh, I and if they wanted to reduce the number of people in particular, you know, like they had some really big polling places, and they wanted to reduce the strain on those that they would say, well, we want to open up three other locations for polling places that would reduce the burden on the larger ones, and it just kind of feels like maybe they're trying to be disruptive to certain - and lower the number of people voting, and maybe even target certain communities. And, is there any way that I can find out what their reasons were that they gave for wanting to do this?

Mayor Gray indicated that the City Manager would address this and all questions at the end of the public comment period.

City Manager Bunting reminded everyone that staff does not typically engage during the public comment period in order to keep the flow of the meeting going and to ensure that all speakers are able to speak for the entire three minutes that they are allowed. In addition, the City Manager cannot speak to some things, such as political commentary, but can address administrative topics.

Ms. Bunting echoed Mr. Weaver's compliments of the work done for the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind and agreed that the unveiling of the panels was a special and moving event. She said that the neighborhood's trust is important to the City and also indicated that the City has identified funds to begin the infrastructure study for the project.

With regard to Mr. Brown's concern, Ms. Bunting shared that a traffic counter was installed on his street on March 20th. This is the first and least invasive step the City takes to evaluate traffic calming solutions before trying other solutions that may create more problems, such as speed humps/bumps. With regard to the unfortunate death that took place in the area, she noted that the Police do not believe that was a speed-related death. She also assured everyone that the City wants to do everything it can to ensure everyone's safety, as aggressive speeding has become a problem in the City and the region.

Ms. Bunting thanked Ms. Boone and Ms. Keener-Weatherford for their volunteerism and the work they are doing through the various programs they spoke of.

With regard to Ms. Beierle's question, Ms. Bunting shared that Council had a long discussion with the Electoral Board at today's afternoon work session. That meeting will replay on Channel 47 and can be viewed online at Hampton.gov/council. In summary, the members of the Electoral Board described their rationale for the two recommended changes. The first recommendation involves moving the East Hampton polling location from Phoebus High School to Hampton University. Council's conversation revolved around the desire to make it easier for Hampton University students to vote by potentially leaving the current location where it is and adding another voting location at the university. The second recommendation involved precinct changes. Council had many questions about this recommendation and did not seem interested in pursuing those changes.

GENERAL ITEMS

Appointments

5. [25-0027](#) Consideration of Appointments to the Hampton Commission on the Arts

Attachments: [Additional Applications 250409](#)

A motion was made by Councilmember Ferebee and seconded by Councilwoman Mugler that this Appointment be deferred to the City Council Legislative Session, due back on 4/9/2025. 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

REPORTS BY CITY MANAGER, CITY COUNCIL, STAFF, COMMITTEES

Ms. Bunting stated that the iValue budget polling has concluded and she thanked the citizens who participated.

She highlighted the budget process: she will preview the budget on April 9, the budget document is released on April 15, a public hearing on the budget is scheduled for April 23, and another

public hearing on May 7, with budget adoption on May 14.

MISCELLANEOUS NEW BUSINESS

There were no items of new business.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

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

Donnie R. Tuck
Mayor

Katherine K. Glass, MMC
Clerk of Council

Date approved by Council _____