



City of Hampton

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

Council Approved Minutes - Final City Council Legislative 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, January 24, 2024

6:30 PM

Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Tuck called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. All members of the City Council were present.

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

DONNIE R. TUCK PRESIDED

INVOCATION - Councilwoman Hope Harper

Councilwoman Harper gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG

MAYOR'S COMMENTS

There were no comments by the Mayor.

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 Hobbs, seconded by Councilmember Brown, to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

1. [24-0020](#) Resolution to Amend the Fiscal Year 2024 Council Approved Budget by Appropriating up to \$337,034.82 of the FY23 Excess EMS Fees from the Assigned Fund Balance to the Division of Fire & Rescue's Budget to Purchase Equipment for Fire/EMS Operations and the Fire Stations

Attachments: [FY23 Budget Performance Report](#)

Item approved.

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

2. [24-0030](#) Resolution to Amend the Fiscal Year 2024 Council Approved Budget to Accept and Appropriate the FY 2024 Operation Ceasefire Grant Program - Prosecutorial Services Awarded by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

Attachments: [Proposal Overview for Operation Ceasefire Prosecutor grant1](#)

[OGMS Ceasefire Prosecutorial Services Grant](#)

[Operation Ceasefire Grant Program Prosecutorial Services](#)

Item approved.

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

3. [24-0034](#) Resolution to Amend the Fiscal Year 2024 Council Approved Budget to Accept and Appropriate, to the Grants Fund, the Get Outdoors Fund Grant Awarded by the Virginia Outdoor Foundation

Attachments: [Grant Proposal Documents](#)

[Grant Agreement](#)

Item approved.

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

4. [24-0032](#) Resolution Authorizing the Execution of an Agreement Between the Virginia Department of Health and the Hampton City Council for Funding and Services of the Hampton Health Department

Attachments: [Services Agreement](#)

Item approved.

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

5. [24-0044](#) Approval of the minutes from the December 13, 2023, legislative session of City Council.

Item approved.

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

PRESENTATIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, AWARDS

There were no presentations.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no public hearings.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Mayor Tuck indicated that speakers would be called upon two at a time and asked that they alternate using the podium and the free-standing microphone.

Ms. Brenda Marks greeted those on the dais, introduced herself and made the following statement: I'm here to talk to you to address the problem of the homelessness that is gradually just growing and growing and growing. It is impossible to ride on the interstate near Big Bethel Road without seeing the tents that have grown in number to the point you can see them from the interstate. I can't take my daughter to school driving down beside the carousel without observing the at

least three different individuals that are sleeping on the benches in Carousel Park. I have had neighbors that have told me they left their nail appointment without ever going in the door because of the number of people sleeping in the doorways of the strip center where the new One Life Wellness Center is going. Hampton has not addressed the income set aside - the section eight housing that they demolished years ago. Anybody google Lincoln Park, you'll see a video of George Wallace standing on a balcony announcing how it was bad they were having to be displaced, but many of those people would be able to come back because Lincoln Park was going to be replaced with an apartment complex, a set aside section of apartments, and a community center for that area. Five, six, seven years later, when everybody hopes we've all forgotten what was promised, we rezone it to downtown now, and we build something that has absolutely no income-restricted apartments, no section eight set aside. According to the statistics released by ODU, in the last 30 to 45 days, Hampton's population is declining point 2 percent a year and has declined over 2 percent in the last decade. The majority of what you are losing are young people that are leaving because they can't afford to live here; because they can't get a job other than working in a warehouse and flipping burgers. Yeah, the resort's gone. Made a nice to-do in the State of the City, but it's gone. Y'all need to start looking out for the people that live here and improving their quality of life.

Ms. Candice Harris greeted those on the dais, introduced herself, and made the following statement: I'm from Empowered Believers Christian Learning Center off Nickerson Boulevard here in Hampton. I've recently moved back to the area, and one of the missions at the church that I have overtaken is the outreach ministry, especially to the homeless community. So, we go out on Saturdays, and we're looking to see who we can find and see how we can be a blessing. My address to the City Council is actually to find out, how can we help? What are we allowed to do? What resources are out there? I know, we're part of the food bank, so it's not a problem to pick up food. We get whole foods. So, we have a lot of good food for the homeless people that they can actually...they don't have to cook it. It's already prepared. So, we're blessed in that way. We ran into a gentleman named Ricky Malcolm and he's a veteran. Poor Ricky had one leg and then they had to amputate his second leg. He's a veteran. He, in the process, lost his identification. He has a non-power wheelchair that he lives in, that he was having a friend that was pushing him around, couldn't even get bus passes. So, we of course, bought him and his friend 30-day bus passes. Not to brag on that, but just to say there's a need and I understand that there are qualifications and there needs to be qualifications for people to be in low-income housing. There needs to be qualifications to allow people into shelters and things like that, but I'm here to find out and to want to be a resource. How can we partner with the City? How can we apply and get grants? How can we come together to try to address the situation? Nobody wants to see the homeless out on the street. I understand that there's lots of concern about how they

became that way and there's stories from people that were millionaires that had great jobs and lost them to people that have mental health issues to people that have gone through the loss of a loved one, and they just ...and they mentally can't help themselves, but how do we address it together? What can we, as a nonprofit, do to come together with the City and partner to make these things better? I'd just be interested in what you can tell me and how you can help us help the City.

Mr. Andre Hammond greeted those on the dais, introduced himself, and made the following statement: I'm from the Phoebus area, and like she was explaining how the homelessness has increased in our community, and it is no help, other than what they are doing, which is provide food, you know, and things of that nature. You know, and like I say, you know, we're all human beings, you know what I mean? Despite why anybody's out there, they are out there, and you know, and I was looking into the HUD (US Department of Housing and Urban Development) housing, or whatever, and last time I spoke, Bobby Scott, allegedly had gave \$4.6 million for to help the homelessness, you know, (inaudible word). But, my point is right, what are we effectively doing to try to rectify the situation? You know, and like I say, I'm out there with them, so I know that this situations occurs and that it exists. You know what I mean? But, they are human beings too. That's all I can say.

Ms. Shantel Lawson-Willis greeted those on the dais, introduced herself, and made the following statement: I, too, am from Empowered Believers Christian Learning Center, with Ms. Candace Harris. We partake the two-part team to be split in reference to what we were already doing as part of outreach, and within the past couple of weeks of us going out and also been homeless. So, I've been through the (inaudible word) of figuring it out, and just so confused and disgusted at the same time, because you have signs posted throughout the City not to help. There's nonprofit organizations, but what's going on to the ones that don't have identification, or don't fit those profiles? That's what you're asking or requesting from them. I also, myself, I'm putting myself on the stand that I had issues, trying to get it between me and my three girls that was within school, and still couldn't get and maintain housing. I'm also a veteran, and because I'm not even 100 percent (inaudible word) as soon as they hear veteran, they figure we have it all, and we don't because we're being offended by what we thought or what others thought that is given to us, but there's several of us that don't get absolutely what we deserve, and we're having to fight for that and that doesn't make sense at all. Suffering PTSD, through domestic violence, not able to go through the shelters that were offered because of different circumstances. Also, there's buildings that have lights on throughout the City. Can we revitalize and use those buildings? The electricity is being paid by somebody, you know, can that use or service a point where people can go or ourself as our church? We're not able to physically man it because we're renting the space, but is there anything that's doing with the places that are already existing versus just

tearing them down? And like it's been said already, you don't want to see homeless people on the streets. Me and my kids were in the woods. So, it's like...and as soon as you put Porta Potties up, we're no longer classified as homeless anymore. So, that's one part of that's helping. Yeah, we have a place or facility to use the facilities, but now we just got disqualified and lost a priority position in the status quo on which we really aren't. And actually, we're all in this together, and there's like, you know, and like my colleague has said, we have seen them from being rich to not having anything at all, to not even being able to get it. One of the statuses - is there anything we're reaching knowledge as far as it's not just our City. Right now, we have to take care of home first, but we're on a mission to expand.

Mayor Tuck indicated that Ms. Lawson-Willis' speaking time had expired.

Ms. Mendel Service greeted those on the dais, introduced herself, and made the following statement: I'm a leader in the chapter of the Newport News/Hampton, Virginia Organizing, and I'm also addressing the issue of homelessness. I had the opportunity to be homeless in Hampton, so, I'm accepting your invitation to become a person that has a home in Hampton, because all the things that I saw look wonderful, but as part of the marginalized population, most of that is not within reach for many of us who are unhoused. Specifically, we are having an issue with affordable housing, as many of you know, and I'd love to see a presentation showing how Hampton led the way in changing the situation of people who are unhoused or homeless - and you could show us from being on the street, living in the woods and all those different things into being homeowners and different things like that. That would be really something that would be amazing. I'm supposed to share specifically a few points. I'm going to try to read them, I'm not good at reading it that way, but...The American Rescue Plan Act, ARPA, of 2021 authorized \$350 billion state local fiscal recovery funds and it provided \$65.1 billion in direct aid to states and cities across the U.S. Hampton received approximately \$48 million, and we know that the funds have been used appropriately, and have done wonderful things, but we need to address the lack of affordable housing. It's a crisis. It affects people from all walks of life. Specifically, though, there's an issue with African Americans, blacks, who represent 50 percent of unhoused population. And, finally, I was asked if I could say this, and I hope it's not against the rules, but she sounded so official, so I hope I'm not going to break any rules because I don't want to be turned off, but I've asked, please stand if you support having a shelter on the Peninsula. The need is there. The hope is there. It's in your hands to make a decision to help move these things forward. The people that are least represented need your help. Thank you very much.

Mayor Tuck reminded everyone that applauding is not permitted in Council Chambers.

Ms. Rhonda Saddler greeted those on the dais, introduced herself, and made the following statement: Here to address the homelessness situation. We have met over several months with Mr. Bowman, Ms. Harper and Vice Mayor Gray. Also, with Councilmember Mugler, and when I say we, I mean Virginia Organizing. We're here in large numbers this evening, because this is serious, and I am an implant. I came from Chicago and I have some very good, insightful ideas about how to move forward with this, but we have addressed the ARPA. Not sure if I can bring that up tonight or not, but it is what it is. The ARPA funds to look into that. Previous speakers before me also said there's buildings with the lights on. I've seen them myself and I've seen some of the people that are out in the cold in front of the libraries in the City buildings or whatever, and it's starting to look like the City doesn't have any intentions on doing anything about it because it's getting worse. The numbers are going up. We're hearing that tonight. We want action, just like the animal shelter. We want to see some action. We really do. Like a lot of people are being affected, and I can honestly say I'm one of those people who have had a great career and this and that, and all of us in here are one paycheck away from being homeless with what's happening in today's society across the world, but we're really concerned, here in Hampton, and we really would like some answers, and work together with you, and, please get back with us. We've offered our emails like we really want to hear back from you all, and we don't. So, I wish you would make a promise that you would get back to Virginia Organizing on this issue. Thank you for your time.

Mr. Edwin Boone offered the next speaker to speak before him; however, Mayor Tuck indicated that speakers should speak in the order in which they are called.

Mr. Boone noted that he did not know he was going to speak and asked if he could also go under the public comment section on his own time.

Mayor Tuck indicated that Mr. Boone could speak about any topic, but that he had three minutes to do so. Mr. Boone began giving his comments and Mayor Tuck asked him to state his name.

Mr. Edwin Boone introduced himself and made the following statement: I was born and raised here and as I look at you all, you're too comfortable. This ain't the first time this organization come before y'all. Been here many times and nothing gets done. So, I want to dedicate just what I wrote - dedicate it to the homeless and kind of force your hand and I need the public involved to make it happen. You thought you killed my brother, born to die. We all are here. Afraid of death. I have no fear. Believe it when I tell you his dream shall come true. A gift from God. His thought-provoking life. Sacrificing is all he helped to eliminate strife. Confused and

vicious cycle forced upon us. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., showed us his trust. He trusted that God would make a way, guided by God's defined spirit, he would not let us stray. So much to be grateful for. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., gave us this purpose, goal in life, so that we cannot ignore. Taken away from me suddenly. I miss my brother. His face was so encouraging in times of trouble. His feet walked a path that mine shall follow. His chosen words helped to guide me to righteousness. You've taken away my flesh and blood. His body no longer exists, but his spirit lives within me. You thought you killed my brother.

Mr. Aaron Weaver introduced himself and made the following statement: Three months ago today, I reached out to you all highlighting serious lapses in the City's safety measures that these lapses have affected real people, our colleagues, our friends, our City's backbones. I detailed instances spanning over two years expecting action, expecting change. Yet, here we are three months later, and the silence is deafening. The response from the Mayor, while acknowledged, lacked substance. Taking under advisement cannot be the end of the conversation. It's not just acknowledging the problem; it's about acting on it. As members of the community, as parents, as grandparents, you all should understand the gravity of the situation. If he did that to your children, to your grandchildren, or Councilwomen, if he did that to you. It's one thing to hear the multiple offenses, it's another to live through them. The victims did their part. Now, the duty to act became upon you all. Repeated counseling has failed. You see that because he did it again. We need more than just temporary fixes. We need a solid, tangible solution. I urge you, let's not reduce this to mere formalities, and let's not present fluff. We demand the same level of detail accountability from you all as you all would expect from the department presenting before this Council. To the City Manager Bunting, I have two specific inquiries. First, the poverty study that was conducted by the MGC Consulting Group, which was four different ones resumed and also in person, is critical for our community's understanding and development. When will those findings be made public? Transparency here is expected and it's essential. Secondly, clarity on the Hampton Aquaplex is necessary. Which department is overseeing that and where do the financial responsibilities lie and are reported? The information is crucial for our City's financial transparency. And in closing, I just think it's apropos to what happened with the Virginia School of Deaf and Blind property. We came to you all for months upon months upon months of our ends, telling you the exact same thing that these people are saying here, but in 2016, you all change it to the economic development. Good chess move, but the people are speaking. We've been saying this to you. We've been asking for this thing, and you can give us warehouses, threatening those people in that neighborhood including myself. Have a good one.

Ms. Sahian Nanez greeted those on the dais, introduced herself, and made the following statement: I'm an honorably discharged Navy veteran and a devout

Catholic. This Council's decision to remain silent on the situation in Palestine has put me in a state of severe emotional distress. I swore an oath as a sailor and as the famous saying goes...once a sailor always a sailor. I swore an oath as a sailor the last half being...I represent the fighting spirit of the Navy and those who have gone before me to defend freedom and democracy around the world. I chose to obey 10 commandments, the sixth being Thou Shalt Not Murder, and now I watch as my tax dollars have killed an estimated 11,000 children. All I am asking for is for this Council to stand against what is by definition, a genocide, and instead, when I met with the City Manager, Mary Bunting, this Monday, Mary Bunting, your response was and I quote, "Yes, they could adopt the resolution if they wanted to. - They can do that. It doesn't have any effect." Mary Bunting, you then proceeded to lie to me saying and I quote, "The City can't do anything in regards to a ceasefire." With all due respect, you can. You're choosing not to. Mary Bunting, you said and I quote, "If you do it for one, you have to do it for all." If they're doing that, they're not paying attention to the things that really need to be focused on. I asked you if there are any other resolutions in relating to genocide, and instead of just answering my question, Mary Bunting, your response was, and I quote, "I don't know what's coming up." With all due respect, that did not answer my question. This Council starts every session in prayer, yet this Council is not reflecting the actions of Christ. For it is Jesus who stands with those who have been disposed of and thrown away. Throughout the Bible, it is Jesus who lives, loves and listens to the broken, forgotten and outcasts. I see human beings in this Council and no humanity, and I hope for your souls that you find it. Thank you.

Ms. Frega Azza introduced herself, greeted those on the dais, and made the following statement: One hundred and nine days; 109 Mine days and this Council seems to think that the ongoing genocide we are witnessing isn't a local issue and responding to it is out of their jurisdiction. Hampton does not exist in a bubble or vacuum. Hampton policies don't exist in a bubble or vacuum. You may think this is not a local issue, but as we all know, local governments are interconnected with state, federal and global governments. Members of our community in Hampton are being affected. Their family members and friends are being murdered. To turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to our concerns is equivalent to outright saying that you do not care about your constituents. You, as elected leaders of Hampton, have power. You have the power to influence. We cannot access our representatives in Congress like we can access our immediate local elected leaders, such as this Council. No matter how much we email or call our state representatives, your platform is more powerful. Now, I request you use it to fight for justice. City Manager Bunting has shared with us that the Council feels like their time and energy could be put towards local issues instead. Time is not an issue. We have extended an offer to work with this Council and have drafted resolutions. We are willing to put in the energy for our people - even do the work for you. It takes less than two

minutes to vote on passing a resolution once it is proposed. That is what we are asking for you, two minutes. This is not a political concern. This is about humanity. After 109 days, 25,000 Palestinians have been killed, including over 10,000 children. This Council remained silent. After none of the 36 hospitals are left fully functioning, this Council remains silent. After 16 cemeteries have been desecrated and bodies on earth, this Council remains silent. Our tax dollars are going into funding this genocide when we could direct these funds to the homelessness crisis going on in America. So, silence is now complicity. Silence is saying you are not impacted. Silence is saying that Palestinian lives are less human than our own, and you are okay with directing your tax dollars to fund this genocide. Use your platform and your power that we have elected you for to stand on the right side of history and represent your people. Thank you.

Mr. Syied M. greeted those on the dais, introduced himself (after being reminded by the Mayor to state his name) and made the following statement: Most respected organizations like United Nation, UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), Amnesty International are paralyzed. (Inaudible word) in stand of this illegal war, and this action when the United Nations cannot do anything after the resolution after resolution or veto. We are just cut off from the world community. Most of the time, we talk about what the world community say and we work together, but recently, we see against that. There is no way you can support this war without sacrificing our values. Like, as we said, this is prohibited to supply the arms to the military or the group that has a poor human rights record. So, what are human rights organization saying about the recent events? Please think about that. All human rights barometer on the lowest level since the second World War was going on at this time, and we are still supporting this. You're in - look like a complete illusion of something that I think if you're not saying anything, your silence is neutral. No, this is not - this is not a neutral. As the recent report by the CNN, because this reporter is embedded with the idea of soldiers, and there are 16 cemeteries they leveled, they are making a parking lot. So, there's something we have to, we have to consider a break of our silence. US Army is the best army in the world. They can defeat any army in the world, but there is some politician or something wrong. They put their army to go against unarmed civilians. So, we call this is not a war. This is a genocide. This is war crimes. So, please address this. This is very clear. Thank you.

Mr. David Spring greeted those on the dais, introduced himself, and made the following statement: I'm the owner of Buckroe Coffee Co. I just wanted to introduce myself to the Council. I think, in light of the other matters raised, asking for money at this point kind of seems almost embarrassing to think that, but I've been working hard diligently over the past year to try and build out Buckroe Coffee Co. It's a 17-acre parcel. We have a lot of plans to develop it, to build a shipping container park

and to pair it with various nonprofit organizations, even for homelessness. For example, we could do something where we roast a particular coffee bag, and \$3 from every bag could go towards funding homelessness. So that's something that we can work together as a community. So, that's kind of the type of agenda that I'm looking at pursuing with this, with this event, but I wanted to introduce myself. I've been working pretty hard on it. We're getting really close to finalizing it. We've ran into a few hiccups. We did bump our heads with some of the logistics, but we do have engineers on board and City planning is finalizing our stuff, so, I think we should be having our opening within the next two or three months or so. We're really excited to engage with the City Council and see how we can bring the community together to kind of be like this neutral healing space where we can kind of collaborate and work together as a community. It's Buckroe Coffee Co. I'd love to talk to any of you about it. If you have any ideas or plans or anything like that. I just want to make this Buckroe the place to be. I think our beaches are beautiful. I think there's a lot of opportunity in Hampton, and I think we're a diamond in the rough and if you give me the chance, I'll build a place and I'll bring those people back that you guys are saying have left. We'll bring them back. We'll build a community space. I'm planting 10 million sunflowers this summer. So, it's going to be a beautiful spot out there. So, if you've got any questions, hit me up. We're on social media. My name is once again is David Spring, it's Buckroe Coffee Co. If you've got any questions, I'd love to talk to anybody about anything. Thank you.

Ms. Frepa Listin greeted those on the dais, introduced herself, and made the following statement: One hundred and nine days, 109 days of ongoing genocide against Palestinians. Over 25,000 Palestinians killed. Over 11,000 children have been killed. Three college students in Vermont, a six-year-old boy in Illinois, a doctor in Texas, all killed for being of Palestine, Arab or Muslim descent. Students at Columbia University have been sprayed with skunk by former Israeli soldiers at a pro-Palestine protest. Seventeen-year-old Delphic Abdul Jabbar, a Palestinian American, killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank. The idea that this is an issue outside of your scope is neglectful. Will it take a hate incident to happen in Hampton for you to break your silence or will you be proactive in showing solidarity? There are six ambulances left in Gaza for 2 million people. Israel kills two mothers every hour. Ninety percent of Gaza's population has been displaced. That's 1.8 million people. Fifty-five percent of Gaza faces famine. One in every four people in Gaza are starving. One hundred and ten mosques have been destroyed including every mosque in northern Gaza. Every hospital in Gaza has been destroyed. Despite hundreds of emails calling for the proposal and support of this Council and calling for a ceasefire, you all have deliberately made the choice to stay silent. President Biden is being sued for failure to prevent genocide in Gaza. South Africa is preparing a case against the United States for complicity in war crimes and genocide in Gaza. We come out every City Council meeting to give you the chance

to choose to be on the right side of history, yet, all we get is silence from this Council. All we get is an empty promise, a prayer for peace. Act on your words and have Hampton written as being on the right side of history. You all have been voted into your positions to represent your constituents' voices, and regards to Palestinian voices, that doesn't seem to be going too well. You have power. You have influence. You can pass our voices on to our representatives in Congress. You can be on the right side of history or go down as being a City that supported war crimes by staying silent. I will no longer try to prove that Palestinians are just as human as you are. Check your values and choose humanity. To offer to work with our community to propose a resolution is still on the table. A resolution exhibiting a stance with humanity and sending a clear nationwide and international message that the people and the Government of Hampton support humanity and stand against killing of civilians. As Palestinian rapper Low Key said - This isn't war; this is systematic genocide. Thank you.

Ms. Latoya Fleming greeted those on the dais, introduced herself, and made the following statement: I'm here to discuss a recent poll that I did. The poll asked what initiatives could be implemented to enhance community engagement and participation. Fifty-nine percent agreed to establishing neighborhood watch programs; 11 percent agreed to organize more townhall meetings; 30 percent, encouraging more volunteer programs. That led me down to researching the Neighborhood Watch Program in Hampton. What I come to find out is that the Neighborhood Watch Program has literally no information that could be found or feasible, that we can actually get an understanding on what we should do (the requirements). Once I went on hampton.gov, it was literally just maybe the history of it and a phone number to contact. So, I went on social media and I looked around to see what information could I find there. It was literally no update since 2021. So, in return, I was invited to a back-to-school drive this Saturday, with the Malone project. I met Officer Birdsong. He's a Hampton community police resource officer, and, so, I asked him then, could he explain to me about the Neighborhood Watch Program in Hampton. So, he told me that only 26 people were in training for this month. Hampton has a total of 138,000 citizens. So, what that lets me know is the information isn't readily available for us, and more people are willing to be engaged with the community if we had this information. So, we need to put more resources out there so people are aware of this. This is something that we want to do. This poll was done with 1.8 thousand people that responded to this. So, it is a need. It's something feasible. We can start putting this information out in schools. We can start having these resource officers in the community start speaking to other citizens about this, and we can also do when we do local community events, when you guys go to different organization meetings, talk about it then. This is something that we need. We know the benefits of it. With neighborhood watch programs, crime decreases 25 percent. It also brings down (it was another benefit - I'm sorry, it

slipped my mind) that brings it down 15 percent, but we know this is a need. Oh, it will help increase community engagement by 15 percent, so that will help us all. We will become more united. We'll have a strong front as a Hampton community and I know we could do this. Thank you.

Mayor Tuck made the following remarks: First of all, I had a conversation with at least two individuals, maybe three, who spoke after the last Council meeting related to this resolution, and what my conversation was with them was they said it was more or less a hate crimes issue, and I said, well send me something and I'll see what I can draft; perhaps we can get Council to approve it. What was sent was some of the same statistics that were read here that most of the incidents of hate crime occurred in other states, not in Hampton. So, what I did was I contact our Chief of Police and asked him for data to show hate crimes that occurred in Hampton. In that data, in 2003, there was one anti-biased, I think, incident, as we call it, against a black individual. There were two anti-biased instances against two white individuals. The last time there was a religious-related bias issue was in 2022, and prior to that, there was one in 2020. So, what I wrote back was that this does not constitute hate crimes in our City, and therefore, it still remains a political issue in taking a side in national conflict. Now, last Thursday, I spoke to representatives from our two U.S. Senators offices, and was assured that this has been on their radar, even to the point of one of them meeting face to face with Prime Minister Netanyahu, who still would not change his mind on that. So, if you're asking what we can do as a Council, it's not very much influence. In addition, on Monday, I received an email from a group that wants us to sign on to an anti-Semitism resolution. They have 34 states that have signed on and 89 localities, and the language of that strictly is against Hamas, and what it did on October 7th. I know what you want us to do is do something general which says, you know, anti-Semitism, anti-Islamophobia, a number of different things, but what I believe and what I think this Council still stands by me in is that we're drawing ourselves into international conflict where we don't know all the issues. So, therefore, whether you call it remaining silent or abstaining from trying to do what you believe is right, and what we're elected to do, I think it's wise for us not to get pulled into a matter where there are different sides in which both are residents of our City. So, that's my position on that.

Mayor Tuck continued with his comments: With respect to some of what was said related to homelessness, I think our Director of Human Services still goes out on a weekly basis, and tries to find individuals who are homeless. As for the veteran who spoke, there are many more resources that we have in our City for veterans, I think

they're VASH vouchers, that are designed for veterans, I see heads shaking, but that's what we had, so, it's not that there's a disregard for homeless individuals. Again, we go out and try and find them. I've even stopped and talked to individuals who said they were homeless, and even tried to offer numbers offered to try and have somebody from Human Services come out and talk to them, and I've had those individuals run away, but they're out there holding signs saying homeless - need help. Granted, I'm not trying to paint everybody with the same broad brush, but I do know that does happen because I've been out there trying to get those individual's shelter.

Mayor Tuck addressed one additional topic with the following comments: The last thing I will address is that \$4.6 million check from Congressman Scott was not intended to help homeless. What we're trying to do is we're trying to combat instances of gun violence. We've identified neighborhoods that are most impacted in our City. There are five neighborhoods, and we're trying to create some Neighborhood Resource Centers to help some of those individuals who have identified as most likely to either be victims or perpetrators of crime.

Mayor Tuck turned the floor over to the City Manager for comments.

City Manager Bunting commented on youth violence and the Neighborhood Watch Program. She assured everyone that the City supports the Neighborhood Watch Program and the latest statistics show that there are approximately 167 Neighborhood Watch groups in the City. She explained that the numbers referenced about current enrollees are people currently going through training, but we have a long-established program with existing neighborhood captains and homeowners in the program. She also noted that there are opportunities for the program to grow since there are more than 167 neighborhoods in the City, and the City welcomes and appreciates all of those willing to partner with the City in this matter. She also indicated that Mr. Birdsong is the correct person to assist and that she would pass the message to him and the Police Chief about the interest in working with the program. Ms. Bunting reiterated that Council, staff and the Police Chief very much support the Neighborhood Watch Program and have a long history with it.

Ms. Bunting spoke about homelessness. She introduced Hui-Shan Walker (who was in the audience) as the Interim Assistant City Manager who oversees Human Services and Public Safety. She encouraged anyone who wants to partner with the City in this matter to provide their contact information to Ms. Walker for the purpose of organizing a meeting with the Director of Human Services to discuss partnership opportunities. Ms. Bunting concurred with the Mayor in that there is a team that goes out, oftentimes on a weekly basis, with the Community Services Board (the

state-vested entity that is responsible for mental health and addiction services). She added that many times homeless people have either addiction or mental health issues that occur concurrently with homelessness, and sometimes they cannot be sheltered in some of the available programs for safety reasons; otherwise, they may be turned away from some existing sheltering programs, like the H.E.L.P Nights Welcome Program here in Hampton where the homeless that are not drunk or on drugs can be housed nightly.

Ms. Bunting spoke a bit more about housing the homeless in extreme weather; program requirements associated with housing the homeless; housing vouchers available for veterans through the Hampton Redevelopment and Housing Authority; and the Hampton and Newport News City Councils' priority to develop a regional shelter program.

Ms. Bunting added that she could not say much more about the shelter project because it is not proper to make announcements about projects before everything is secured with them. She emphasized, for the record, that active conversations and work continues, but this takes time and she believes we will continue to make progress on it with the Newport News City Council and City Manager. Ms. Bunting recapped by saying, Ms. Walker can assist with short-term concerns, keeping in mind there is also a long-term effort being worked on for a regional shelter program.

Ms Bunting provided the following information in response to some questions posed during the public comment period. The poverty report was not received in time to be on this meeting, but hopefully, it will be on the February 14th meeting or shortly thereafter. She emphasized that there is never intention not to be transparent and reiterated that the issue is that staff had not yet received the report. In addition, Council asked staff to do more outreach which resulted in the consultants needing additional time to pull the information together. With regard to the Aquatic Center, she explained that there is a contract with Eastern Sports Management to run the facility for the City, and that contract administration is overseen by the Coliseum and the Hampton Convention and Visitor Bureau.

Lastly, Ms. Bunting made the following statement addressing what she was quoted as saying about the resolution: I do want to share what was not said by me (I said, but was not quoted) and that is we all up here have great empathy for any human suffering, but what we, as a staff and the Council, strive to do is put our energies into our City where we can make an immediate difference, and that doesn't have to be inconsistent with our belief that we want to see no suffering in the world. We all care deeply about any human suffering, and I just want that stated for the record because if you only quote certain things that someone says, you may get a limited view of their belief. I know that at the last meeting, Mayor Tuck said something at

the beginning of the meeting (and I can't remember his eloquent words, specifically), but he also said, then, we all have great empathy for any human loss, regardless of where it happens, whether it's in our own backyard, or it's in Israel, or it's in Palestine, none of us wants to see any human loss of life. So, I just wanted to say that that was also shared when I met with some young individuals earlier this week about the resolution.

Mayor Tuck provided the following information with regard to the affordable housing crisis in the region. The Hampton City Council is considering how to incentivize developers to add affordable units in Hampton, while recognizing that affordable housing is a regional and national issue. A regional housing assessment group meeting is taking place in Chesapeake on Tuesday to address housing in the seven localities. Other localities are considering creative ways to handle the affordable housing crisis, including the use of vacant or abandoned hotels and motels, but this is off the table for Hampton because Hampton has no vacant or abandoned hotels and most of the buildings with lights on at night are privately owned.

City Manager Bunting noted that she is not aware of any buildings with lights on at night that are immediately available for use and then provided the following information about the concern related to no set aside for Section 8 with the redevelopment of the former Lincoln Park: There is no such thing as a set aside for Section 8. By law, landlords must accept Section 8 certificates if the value of the certificate covers the rent. In the case of the proposed redevelopment of the former Lincoln Park, some of the rent ranges would be covered by Section 8 certificates. There are no set asides, instead, they are market rate. Section 8 certificates cover market rate rent to a certain level. The Federal Program is structured this way because after some research, it was determined that people remain stuck in poverty when poverty remains concentrated, and things work better when people receive Section 8 vouchers and have the flexibility to select where they would like to live. In the case of Lincoln Park, all residents received Section 8 certificates, some of which were used in Hampton and others used in other areas in Virginia and elsewhere in the nation. If those residents chose to return to Lincoln Park once it's rebuilt, the landlord must take them (assuming that voucher covers the rent); otherwise, it would be considered housing discrimination, which is chargeable. Ms. Bunting reiterated that Section 8 set aside is no longer done due to Federal and State Housing Law.

GENERAL ITEMS

6. [24-0036](#) Invitation for Bids to Qualified Wireless Service Providers and Wireless Infrastructure Providers for a Nonexclusive Franchise to Use and Occupy the Streets and Public Rights-of-Way Located Within the City for the Purposes of Constructing, Installing, and

Maintaining Network Facilities for Wireless Services and for Providing Wireless Infrastructure Services Within and Through the City

Attachments: [Proposed Ordinance](#)

[240118 ENV Williams Mullen BID FOR WIRELESS FRANCHISE ENCLOSED](#)

[240118 ENV FED EX Cox Communications - BID FOR WIRELESS FRANCHISE ENCLOSED](#)

[240122 ENV FED EX Maria Sansom](#)

[240117 LTR Verizon - Wireless Franchise Bid](#)

[240116 LTR Crown Castle - Wireless Franchise Bid](#)

[240116 LTR Cox Communications - Wireless Franchise Bid](#)

[Cox Bid 240116](#)

[Crown Castle Bid 240117](#)

[Verizon Bid 240117](#)

Ms. Glass read the title for the item.

Ms. Bunting introduced the item and explained the bidding process and procedure in accordance with state law. She also indicated that the purpose for tonight's item is to open, acknowledge and make the bids public; however, no action will be taken. The action on the bids will be taken at the next meeting in two weeks. Ms. Bunting opened the floor for additional comments from Interim City Attorney Steve Bond who indicated that the City Manager had adequately covered the information.

The Mayor called upon the Clerk of Council to announce whether any bids were received for this franchise matter.

Clerk of Council Glass announced that three sealed bids were received. She then read the bids received on January 18 from Derrick Williams on behalf of Cox Communications; on January 18 from Williams Mullen on behalf of Verizon Wireless; and on January 22 from Marina Sansom on behalf of Crown Castle.

After confirming with Interim City Attorney Bond, Mayor Tuck asked if any further bids are being offered, and if so, they should be given to the Clerk. He then declared the bidding closed and announced that City staff will review all bids which have been received and will give their recommendations at the public hearing on February 14, 2024.

7. [23-0347](#) Approval of the minutes from the Downtown Hampton Business District Annual Meeting on November 8, 2023; the Hampton City Schools Community Priorities Workshop meeting of November 9,

2023; and the Aberdeen Gardens Historic & Civic Association's meeting of November 18, 2023.

Attachments: [231108 MIN DHDP - final REVISED](#)
[231109 MIN HCS Community Priorities Workshop - final REVISED](#)
[231118 MIN Aberdeen - final REVISED](#)

Ms. Glass read the title for the item.

Mr. Bond made the following statement for the record: The Hampton City Schools Community Priorities Workshop meeting was held on November 9, 2023. These meetings were originally on the Council Consent Agenda on December 13. Action was deferred until the January 10 meeting. At that time, there was some discussion about how the members of Council would handle voting on the minutes for meetings that they did not attend, and we deferred and decided that that matter would be taken up again today. According to Robert's Rules of Order, minutes can be approved without having a formal vote or formal motion. For that to happen, the presiding officer, in this case the Mayor, would simply ask if there are any corrections to the minutes and if there are no corrections, he can say that the minutes stand as approved. It also should be noted that Robert's Rules of Order also says that a member's absence from the meeting from which minutes are being approved does not prevent them from participating in their correction or approval.

Mayor Tuck asked if there were any corrections to the three sets of minutes on the agenda from non-City Council meetings. No corrections were announced, therefore, the minutes stand approved.

Appointments

Ms. Glass read the motion required for the appointments.

8. [23-0198](#) Consideration of Appointments to a Hampton VA 250 Committee

A motion was made by Councilmember Billy Hobbs that the following individuals be appointed:

Councilman Steve Brown, Katherine Dermanis, Ryan Fontes-Taylor, John Golden, Joe Griffith, Asa Jenrette, Amy Jordan, Jay Joseph, Patricia Leary, Stephen Mallon, Glenn Oder, Jennifer Oliver, , Jeffrey Smith, Samantha Snead, Martha Tennille, and Vanessa Thaxton-Ward.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

9. [24-0039](#) Consideration of Appointments to the Hampton Commission on the Arts

A motion was made by Councilmember Billy Hobbs that Brian DeProfio be reappointed as the City Manager's designee until January 31, 2028, and that Tekey Wallace, Michael Hamar, and Irena Gorbunova-Ford be appointed to first terms expiring on January 31, 2028. One vacancy remains. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

10. [24-0040](#) Consideration of Appointments to the Golf Course Advisory Committee

A motion was made by Councilmember Billy Hobbs that Mark Ewell, Sharon Durette-Hunt, and Joya Boone-Tynes be appointed to first terms expiring on January 31, 2027. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

11. [24-0048](#) Consideration of Staff and Liaison Appointments to the Economic Development Authority, Hampton Citizens' Police Advisory Group, Hampton Community Policy and Management Team, Hampton Neighborhood Commission, Hampton Citizens' Unity Commission, Hampton Citizens' Engagement Advisory and Review Commission, Hampton Town and Gown Committee, Hampton Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities, and Virginia Air and Space Science Center Board of Directors

A motion was made by Councilmember Billy Hobbs that Hui-Shan Walker be appointed in the place of Steven D. Bond on the Hampton Citizens' Police Advisory Group, Hampton

Community Policy and Management Team, Hampton Neighborhood Commission, Hampton Citizens' Unity Commission, Hampton Citizens' Engagement Advisory and Review Commission, and Hampton Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities; and that on the Virginia Air and Space Science Center Board of Directors Ann Bane be appointed in the place of Steven D. Bond and Dr. Raymond Haynes in the place of Dr. Jeffrey Smith; and, on the Economic Development Authority, Mayor Donnie Tuck be appointed as the City Council liaison. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

REPORTS BY CITY MANAGER, CITY COUNCIL, STAFF, COMMITTEES

Ms. Bunting spoke about the Interim City Assessor's report given earlier today on reassessments for this next year. Included in the report was the announcement that overall, city-wide assessments will be going up by about 5.2 percent. In addition, the report included information about the tax exemption process, veteran's exceptions and senior tax relief. Anyone interested in viewing the entire presentation may watch it online or on replay with Channel 47.

Ms. Bunting shared that assessment notices will go out the first week of February. Anyone wishing to challenge their assessment may go to the City's website for additional information. Assessments are going up because there are fewer homes for sale in Hampton and Hampton is a very attractive place to buy, so housing prices are still elevated as a result of that.

Lastly, Ms. Bunting shared that oftentimes when the Assessor's report comes out, people inquire about whether the tax rate will change. She indicated that it is too soon to say and we should wait until the General Assembly work is complete because sometimes the General Assembly passes on unfunded mandates or gives revenue to address things like teacher pay. She reminded everyone that budget conversations will take place at the afternoon meetings from now until May and the Managers Recommended budget will be released on or about April 15 with public hearings during the April 15 to May 15 timeframe.

Mayor Tuck announced that he will be hosting a town hall meeting tomorrow at 7 PM at Jones Magnet Middle School. This meeting will also be broadcast on the City's Facebook page live.

Councilman Hobbs gave special thanks to Fire Station 11 and Fire Station 8 fire fighters, the EMT's, the 911 dispatcher, and the doctors and nurses at Sentara CarePlex for their outstanding assistance during a critical health scare he had a few weeks ago. He shared that the situation could have ended much worse, but did not due to the excellent training of the City's emergency staff and hospital staff.

MISCELLANEOUS NEW BUSINESS

There were no items of new business.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 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 _____