



City of Hampton

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

Council Approved Minutes - Final City Council Work 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, November 12, 2025

1:00 PM

Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Gray called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. and 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

AGENDA

1. [25-0326](#) Updated 2026 General Assembly Legislative Priorities

Attachments: [Presentation](#)

City Manager Mary Bunting introduced the presentation on the City's 2026 General Assembly Legislative Priorities, scheduled for adoption later that evening. She noted that updates were made following Virginia Municipal League and regional discussions.

Mr. Ed Reed of Two Capitols Consulting provided an overview of the revised legislative package. He reported on recent state election outcomes, noting Democratic control of statewide offices and expected changes to General Assembly committee structures. He also outlined the session timeline, key fiscal dates, and an estimated \$4 billion state budget gap that may affect funding priorities.

Mr. Reed summarized the primary updates: removal of the trap-neuter-release item; continued support for school construction funding; addition of language supporting a study on the disabled veterans' tax exemption; opposition to mandated collective bargaining in favor of local choice; and a request to remove state language requiring localities to fund wrongful incarceration compensation. Additions under public safety included support for legislation addressing large "pop-up" gatherings and continued authorization for license plate readers. A transportation addition supported creation of a regional secondary road fund. The City's budget requests remained unchanged, including funding for the Safer Communities Program, Hampton Health District, and Fort Monroe initiatives.

During discussion, Vice Mayor Brown asked whether the collective bargaining stance was regional or Hampton-specific. Mr. Reed said similar positions appear in other localities' packages, and Ms. Bunting emphasized that the goal is to preserve local choice rather than oppose collective bargaining. Mayor Gray confirmed that similar legislation had been vetoed previously but is expected to return. He also raised concerns about continued underfunding of House Bill 599 for public safety. Mr. Reed acknowledged the issue remains a statewide priority and expects renewed advocacy in the next budget cycle.

Mayor Gray thanked Mr. Reed for the presentation, noting that the legislative priorities document will appear on the consent agenda for adoption during the evening Legislative meeting.

2. [25-0320](#) Department of Community Development Update

Attachments: [Presentation - Final](#)

City Manager Mary Bunting introduced the next agenda item and the presenter, Kim Mikel, Interim Director of the Community Development Department, noting that the presentation would address longstanding community concerns about responsiveness and bureaucratic delays while also recognizing the regulatory requirements that the department must follow at the state and federal level.

Ms. Mikel briefed City Council on the department's strategic shift to improve operational efficiency, customer service, and overall responsiveness, emphasizing that input from staff, community members, and the consulting firm Clarion had informed the department's new direction.

A central focus of the department's changes is adopting a more customer-centered approach. Processes are being streamlined, expectations clarified, and flexible approaches introduced to accommodate a variety of project types. The department is prioritizing trust, collaboration, and partnerships, aiming to deliver solutions rather than just oversight. This approach aligns closely with the department's vision:

“Through the Community Development Department, we strive to be a connection point for people, ideas, and opportunities where everyone thrives in a healthy, inclusive, and future-ready community.” The department’s motto, “Serving you today to build a better tomorrow,” reflects a commitment to both staff engagement and public service, emphasizing long-term planning and immediate responsiveness.

Ms. Mikel provided updates across multiple divisions. The zoning division, which faced turnover and challenges over the past two years, is now nearly fully staffed with a new zoning administrator, deputy administrator, and several zoning officials. The division has completed over 3,600 reviews, responded to 235 inquiries, and served more than 450 walk-in customers at the Development Services Center. Improvements include a new training program, updated standard operating procedures, and an inquiry tracking system, all designed to uphold community character, economic investment, and public trust.

The Resilience Team focuses on planning, project management, grant administration, and strategic initiatives to support sustainable growth. Key projects include the Back River Central and Aberdeen Gardens studies, the New Market Creek flood study, and the citywide Stormwater Master Plan. The team’s work ensures that policies align with community needs, while embedding staff across divisions allows for greater efficiency and collaboration. The addition of a small business coordinator, customer service manager, and executive project manager has strengthened connections between zoning, permitting, and business development. Over the last fiscal year, these roles helped more than 100 businesses, with 49 new businesses opening, generating over \$2 million in construction value and approximately 450 new jobs. These positions ensure projects move efficiently, processes are clear, and economic growth is supported alongside high-quality customer service.

Process modernization is another priority. The department is implementing new customer-focused software for permitting and project tracking, updating standard operating procedures, conducting internal audits, and introducing accountability measures. Steps are being taken to simplify and modernize zoning ordinances, including accessory dwelling unit regulations, using a phased approach following a Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Consultant Clarion benchmarked Hampton’s development processes against other localities to identify best practices and ensure efficiency and clarity for customers. Ms. Mikel emphasized the importance of integrating software platforms and planning for reporting needs to maximize utility.

Divisional accomplishments highlight measurable improvements in responsiveness, staff capacity, and customer service. The Development Services Center has extended its hours from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., which has improved permit

processing and customer satisfaction, while the New Construction Division conducted over 11,000 inspections and reviewed more than 2,400 plans while maintaining regional standard review timeframes. The Housing and Neighborhoods Division managed over \$2 million in grants, supported neighborhood organizations, and graduated 43 participants from leadership programs, with new staff expanding these efforts. Community engagement has included over 3,000 public notices, interactions with 800 households, youth-focused events, distribution of neighborhood block party kits, and the installation of the Braille History Panel. The Support Services Division provides critical administrative, finance, procurement, and records support, with embedded staff improving both efficiency and accountability. The planning and zoning team continues to advance land use policy, environmental stewardship, and economic development while ensuring ordinance compliance and supporting balanced growth and inclusive communities.

In response to Council questions, Ms. Mikel addressed outdated zoning ordinances, benchmarking, software integration, and community engagement. She explained that zoning modernization will follow a phased approach with the Comprehensive Plan Amendment and that Clarion's benchmarking ensures efficiency and clarity for customers. Council members praised the progress and positive citizen interactions and suggested expanding customer service staffing as demand grows. Ms. Mikel concluded by thanking Council for funding and resource support, emphasizing that the department's work is ongoing. She reiterated that the department remains focused on strategic improvements, responsive service, staff development, and fostering a customer-focused, efficient, and innovative Community Development Department. Through their motto, "Serving you today to build a better tomorrow," and their vision of connecting people, ideas, and opportunities to create a thriving, inclusive, and future-ready community, the department continues to prioritize operational excellence and public trust.

3. [25-0327](#) Briefing on Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments for Accessory Dwelling Units

Attachments: [Presentation](#)

City Manager Mary Bunting introduced the item and City Planner, Quinn Heinrich, presented the proposal for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in Hampton. Mr. Heinrich outlined the plan to increase housing opportunities by permitting ADUs in single-family residential areas while preserving neighborhood character. Key changes include allowing only one ADU per lot with no minimum lot size, requiring setbacks similar to existing accessory structures, and capping ADUs at 800 square feet, with a 20% rear lot coverage limit. Detached ADUs would require a five-foot side setback for privacy and safety, in line with the Planning Commission's recommendation. Mr. Heinrich clarified that the ordinance should refer to a

maximum dwelling area for ADUs, not a minimum, and that the height of ADUs would be capped at 16 feet, except in flood hazard areas where height would be based on the design flood elevation. ADUs would not be permitted as short-term rentals, and must have clear access for emergency responders. Additionally, ADUs must be owner-occupied, and attached ADUs should have separate side or rear entrances. The amendments would also allow nonconforming structures to be converted into ADUs, provided they meet the 800-square-foot cap and don't create new nonconformities. For ADUs in the Buckroe Bayfront districts, new construction would follow Chapter 1 standards, superseding the older regulations in Chapter 8. Chapter 2 would define ADUs, and Chapter 4 would clarify that references to "dwelling area" apply only to principal dwellings, removing outdated language about guest houses and servant quarters. Chapter 11 would amend parking requirements, allowing ADUs without additional off-street parking unless on-street parking is prohibited in the area.

Council Members had questions on various topics, including whether a detached garage could be converted into an ADU and whether new ADUs could still be added to a property with a detached garage. Mr. Heinrich confirmed that detached garages could indeed be converted into ADUs, and that new ADUs could be added to properties with sufficient space. There was also a question about subdividing lots, to which Mr. Heinrich confirmed that each newly subdivided lot could have one ADU, provided it meets all other requirements. Additionally, campers or trailers would not qualify as ADUs under the current ordinance, and the maximum height for ADUs would be limited to 16 feet, regardless of the height of the principal dwelling.

The Planning Commission supported the amendments, including the change from minimum to maximum dwelling area, and staff recommended approval with a delayed effective date of December 31.

Mayor Gray asked the rest of Council if there were any additional questions for the presenters. No further discussion took place. He thanked the presenters and closed the session.

REGIONAL ISSUES

There were no regional issues to report on.

NEW BUSINESS

There were no items of new business.

CLOSED SESSION

4. [25-0324](#) Closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)

(.1) to discuss the performance of appointees to a local board or commission; (.5) and (.8) to discuss a prospective industry in the Hampton Roads Center area where no previous announcement has been made about the industry’s interest in locating in Hampton, and to consult with legal counsel regarding specific legal issues related to such industry; and pursuant to (.7) for consultation with legal counsel regarding potential settlement of a pending legal case.

At 2:16 p.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Martha Mugler seconded by Vice Mayor Steven Brown, that this Closed Session - Motion be approved. 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

CERTIFICATION

5. [25-0299](#) Resolution Certifying Closed Session

At 3:29 p.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Martha Mugler and seconded by Vice Mayor Steven Brown, that this Closed Session - Certification be approved. 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

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:29 p.m.

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

Jimmy Gray
Mayor

Katherine K. Glass, MMC
Clerk of Council

Date approved by Council _____