



City of Hampton

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

Council Approved Minutes - Final City Council Special 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, October 29, 2025

8:30 AM

**Council Chambers and
Lawson Conference
Room, 8th Floor, City
Hall**

Hampton City Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Gray called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. All members of Council were present except for Councilwoman Harper who arrived shortly after roll call.

Present 6 - Councilmember Randy C. Bowman Sr., Vice Mayor Steven L. Brown, Councilmember Carolyn S. Campbell, Councilmember Michelle T. Ferebee, Councilmember Martha Mugler, and Mayor Jimmy Gray

Absent 1 - Councilmember Hope L. Harper

JIMMY GRAY PRESIDED

READING OF THE CALL FOR THE SPECIAL MEETING

At the Mayor's request, Tamytha Lee, Deputy Clerk of Council, read the Call for the Special Meeting.

The purpose of this meeting is to provide an update on the status of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits amid the ongoing federal government shutdown and to convene a closed session to discuss the performance of appointees to a local commission.

Councilwoman Harper arrived at 8:35 a.m.

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

AGENDA

1. [25-0321](#) Update Regarding Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefit Distribution During the Federal Government Shutdown

Attachments: [Presentation](#)

City Manager Mary Bunting introduced the item and introduced Human Services Director, Dr. Tamara Temoney-Porter, to speak about the emergency plan for those who will lose Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits as a result of the government shutdown. She also noted that the City is working with community partners to assist those who have been furloughed or lost their jobs, also due to the government shutdown.

During the council meeting, Dr. Temoney-Porter presented a detailed update on the SNAP and the new Virginia Emergency Nutrition Assistance (VENA) program. The VENA program was created by the Governor as a temporary measure to help families who rely on SNAP benefits during the ongoing federal government shutdown. It will be funded entirely through Virginia's state surplus and is currently planned to operate through the month of November.

New applicants who applied in October and expected to receive November benefits may experience delays due to the government shutdown, potentially not receiving aid until December. The state is still determining how to handle these new recipients.

Dr. Temoney-Porter explained that, unlike the traditional SNAP program that provides a full monthly benefit-typically distributed on November 1, the VENA program will issue benefits weekly. Recipients will receive 25% of their normal monthly amount each week, starting November 3. This approach allows the state to manage funds more flexibly and avoids creating repayment issues for recipients if the shutdown ends mid-month. Dr. Temoney-Porter gave the example of a client who would normally receive \$400 of benefits would instead get four weekly payments of \$100. This schedule also helps prevent grocery stores from becoming overcrowded

by staggering when benefits are available.

Dr. Temoney-Porter provided the following information in response to questions posed by Council: Eligibility for SNAP and VENA benefits remains the same and is determined by household income, household size, and whether individuals prepare and purchase meals together. Dr. Temoney-Porter emphasized that recipients represent a diverse group, including single parents, families with children, seniors, adults with disabilities, and many working individuals earning low wages. Benefit amounts vary significantly, with some seniors receiving as little as \$23 per month. All VENA funds will be loaded onto recipients' existing EBT cards, and participants may continue using any remaining SNAP balances. Clients are encouraged to check their EBT balances before shopping, as official communications will not specify individual benefit amounts. VENA funds follow the same rules as SNAP—they are not considered taxable income, and recipients will not be required to repay these funds. Dr. Temoney-Porter noted that the state hopes that the federal government will reopen before December, but if the shutdown continues, additional guidance will be provided later. If VENA benefits are issued, for example, providing two weeks of assistance her hope is that, once the government reopens and SNAP resumes, clients will receive their full or partial benefits. However, this cannot be confirmed at this time, though that remains the plan. Communication about the new program will come from both the state and local levels. The Virginia Department of Social Services is developing a communications tool kit that will include social media materials and possibly text or email alerts, pending approval from the Governor's Office. Local departments will also post signage in their offices and share updates online to make sure clients understand the new payment schedule. Dr. Porter stressed that the situation remains fluid and that updates will be provided as soon as new information becomes available.

City Manager, Mary Bunting addressed another concern related to the shutdown the employment of social services staff. She explained that although the City is normally reimbursed by state and federal funds for a portion of these salaries, mixed messages from the state initially created uncertainty about whether that reimbursement would continue. Despite that, the City plans to keep all staff on the payroll to maintain vital services for residents. Ms. Bunting emphasized the importance of supporting employees who are cross-trained to handle SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Medicaid cases, noting that furloughing workers could lead to losing skilled staff to other localities.

Mayor Gray asked the rest of Council if there were any additional questions for Dr. Temoney-Porter or the City Manager. No further discussion took place. He thanked the presenters and closed the session.

Closed Session

2. [25-0296](#) Closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711.A (.1) to discuss the performance of appointees to a local commission.

At 8:51 a.m., Mayor Gray asked the Clerk to read the motion required for the closed session. Ms. Lee read the language required for the closed session. A motion was made by Councilmember Michelle Ferebee and seconded by Councilmember Randy Bowman, Sr., 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

Move to Lawson Conference Room

Mayor Gray indicated that the closed session would begin in the Lawson Conference Room at 9 a.m.

Certification

3. [25-0297](#) Resolution Certifying Closed Session

At 10:37 a.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Martha Mugler and seconded by Councilmember Hope Harper, 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 10:37 a.m.

Jimmy Gray
Mayor

Katherine K. Glass, MMC
Clerk of Council

Date approved by Council _____