



# City of Hampton

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

## Council Approved Minutes - Draft 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*

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**Wednesday, February 11, 2026**

**1:00 PM**

**Council Chambers**

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### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Gray called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. All members of the City Council were present except for Councilman Bowman who arrived just after roll call.

**Present** 6 - Vice Mayor Steven L. Brown, Councilmember Carolyn S. Campbell, Councilmember Michelle T. Ferebee, Councilmember Hope L. Harper, Councilmember Martha Mugler, and Mayor Jimmy Gray

**Out** 1 - Councilmember Randy C. Bowman Sr.

### JIMMY GRAY PRESIDED

### AGENDA

**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

1. [26-0049](#) Final Report from Stakeholder Group - Proposed Ordinance Amendment: Camping and Storage on Public Property

**Attachments:** [Presentation](#)

Mayor Jimmy Gray called the work session to order and welcomed those in attendance. He noted that several presentations were scheduled for the afternoon

and turned the meeting over to City Manager Mary Bunting to introduce the first agenda item.

City Manager Bunting introduced the first item concerning the stakeholder report on the proposed camping and storage ordinance. She provided background on the prior Council discussion, noting that the ordinance had been deferred to allow for the formation of a stakeholder group to develop a more balanced and compassionate approach that addressed concerns from residents and businesses while supporting individuals experiencing homelessness. She stated that the stakeholder group met over several months, worked toward consensus, and developed recommendations for Council's consideration. City Manager Bunting then recognized Jason Mitchell, Assistant City Manager to present the report and noted that several stakeholder participants were present in the audience.

Jason Mitchell presented the stakeholder group's report regarding the proposed camping and storage ordinance. He provided background on the original ordinance, which was introduced to address behaviors occurring in public rights-of-way in front of businesses and residences and originally included a Class 1 misdemeanor penalty. He noted the ordinance had been widely perceived as targeting individuals experiencing homelessness, which was not its intent, and that Council directed staff to convene a stakeholder group to develop a more compassionate, community-informed approach.

Mr. Mitchell reported that the stakeholder group included residents, business owners, service providers, individuals with lived experience of homelessness, public safety officials, and City staff. Through listening sessions and collaborative discussions, the group developed recommendations emphasizing a service-first approach that prioritizes outreach, voluntary compliance, and relocation to lawful areas or shelter when available before enforcement. The recommendations also include clarifying the ordinance's intent, reducing the first violation to a Class 4 misdemeanor with no jail time, using a Class 2 misdemeanor for subsequent violations, and continuing to invest in sheltering, supportive housing, and other housing alternatives.

City Manager Bunting acknowledged the stakeholder group members who were present in the audience and thanked them for their time, collaboration, and work in developing the recommendations.

Staff received feedback from Council regarding the inclusion of language referencing access to additional supportive services beyond behavioral health resources, which will be incorporated. Council questions prompted discussion regarding next steps, including confirmation from the City Attorney's Office that an ordinance is necessary for enforcement authority and the anticipated timeline for bringing forward a draft, potentially in March.

Topics were also discussed regarding the intent of the ordinance being behavior-based and applicable to anyone obstructing public rights-of-way, not solely individuals experiencing homelessness. Additional discussion addressed implementation, including Police Department training on the ordinance's intent and available referral resources to support compassionate and effective enforcement.

Council expressed general support for the direction of the report. The City Manager stated that, pending Council concurrence, the City Attorney's Office will draft an ordinance consistent with the stakeholder recommendations for future Council consideration.

Presented by Jason Mitchell, Assistant City Manager.

2. [26-0055](#) Proposed Updates to the Economic Development Authority Grant Programs

**Attachments:** [Presentation](#)

Leonard Sledge, Chief Officer for Community and Economic Development presented proposed revisions to the Economic Development Authority (EDA) grant programs intended to make the programs easier for small businesses to access, reduce administrative barriers, and better align funding with the City's economic development priorities. The recommendations were developed by a staff task force and include clearer funding caps, expanded eligibility for certain service-based businesses, the ability to reimburse eligible projects completed within a defined time frame, standardized grant terms and conditions in place of individual agreements, an electronic application process, annual funding limits, administrative approval of smaller grants, and assignment of a dedicated staff position to manage the programs.

Councilman Bowman stated the proposed changes would remove delays for

businesses, particularly the ability to complete improvements without waiting for prior approval, and confirmed that businesses must be current on taxes to qualify. He also asked whether major building systems such as HVAC could be eligible under certain grants, and staff indicated those costs could be considered if they meet program requirements.

Vice Mayor Brown asked how staff work with applicants during the review process and whether any assistance exists for businesses facing operational challenges. Mr. Sledge explained that staff will collaborate with applicants to strengthen proposals and connect them with partner resources but that the grant programs do not provide direct operating subsidies. City Manager Mary Bunting added that allowing reimbursement after improvements are completed would help businesses preserve operating cash and described a prior example of a business that would have benefited from that flexibility.

Councilwoman Mugler raised concerns about removing business plan and financial documentation requirements for façade grants, particularly for newer businesses, and suggested the possibility of different standards based on business history. Mr. Sledge responded that the grants fund permanent property improvements that retain value regardless of the business but agreed to consider the concern.

Councilwoman Ferebee expressed support for the proposed changes based on her prior experience with the EDA and the need to make the programs more user-friendly. Councilwoman Campbell asked whether grant funds could be used to offset architectural plan costs for startup businesses; staff stated the programs are reimbursement-based and primarily for hard construction costs and would review whether such expenses could qualify.

Mayor Gray confirmed that signage improvements are included within the façade and retail grant programs and encouraged continued outreach to businesses in targeted corridors to increase participation. Mr. Sledge stated staff already conducts business visits and promotes the programs but noted participation depends on property owner cooperation.

Council indicated general support for the proposed direction. No formal action was taken, and the recommendations will be forwarded to the Economic Development Authority for consideration.

Presented by Leonard Sledge, Chief Officer for Community and Economic Development.

3. [26-0051](#) I-Value Citizen Outreach

**Attachments:** [Presentation](#)

City Manager Bunting introduced the final presentation on the I Value outreach program. She explained that the City is entering budget season and highlighted Hampton's long-standing practice of engaging the public early in the budget process. She noted that the I Value program allows community input to be incorporated into the City Manager's recommended budget before it is presented to Council, which reduces the need for significant last-minute changes during budget hearings.

Dacia Scott, Director of Marketing and Communications provided an overview of the Fiscal Year 2027 I Value process. She stated that the program, in place since 2010, is designed to align the budget with community priorities and includes opportunities for public input both before and after the budget is released. She explained the distinction between operating expenses, which fund ongoing services such as public safety, libraries, parks, staffing, utilities, and maintenance, and capital projects, which are one-time investments aligned with the City's seven strategic priorities, including economic growth, education, family resilience, living with water, placemaking, and safe and clean communities.

Ms. Scott reviewed examples of items the public may be asked to prioritize, including employee pay competitiveness, inflationary cost increases, new programs, service level changes, park and road improvements, playground replacements, and flood resiliency projects. She also noted that potential tax and fee topics could include wastewater, stormwater, solid waste, permitting fees, school-age program fees, and real estate tax considerations.

Ms. Scott announced three public engagement opportunities: an in-person meeting on March 3 at the Mary T. Christian Theatre at Virginia Peninsula Community College, an in-person meeting on March 7 at Kecoughtan High School, and a virtual Facebook Live session on March 5. She stated that the public survey will be available March 9 through March 16. She added that the City Manager's recommended budget will be released April 15, with public hearings scheduled for

April 22 and May 6 and Council adoption planned for May 3. She also noted that informational postcards will be mailed to all households and that additional information is available at [hampton.gov/IValue](http://hampton.gov/IValue).

Councilwoman Hope Harper asked how polling topics are selected and whether they are tied specifically to the current budget. City Manager Bunting responded that polling items are based on active budget and capital requests presented to Council, as well as community and organizational proposals. She explained that items that are not feasible due to legal or policy constraints may be excluded. She also noted that revenue questions typically reflect potential fee or tax considerations under discussion and may include exploratory questions to gauge public interest in pursuing state authority for certain options.

City Manager Bunting added that some potential future topics, such as an optional one-cent sales tax for school construction or possible marijuana legislation, could be included in polling if action by the General Assembly makes them relevant, though they would not affect the current budget cycle. She stated that staff will update polling content as more information becomes available from the state.

Councilwoman Harper thanked staff for the presentation. Mayor Gray asked if there were additional questions from Council and, hearing none, expressed appreciation for the outreach efforts and the goal of increasing public participation.

City Manager Bunting also noted that staff will release short educational videos explaining key budget concepts, such as the Dillon Rule, property reassessments, and the difference between assessments and tax rates, to help residents who cannot attend meetings in person.

Mayor Gray then closed the presentation portion of the meeting.

Presented by Dacia D. Scott, Director of Marketing & Communications/Marketing

**REGIONAL ISSUES**

There were no regional issues to report on.

**NEW BUSINESS**

There were no items of new business.

#### CLOSED SESSION

4. [26-0016](#) Closed session pursuant to 2.2-3711(A)(3)(5) and (6) for discussion of a potential mixed-use project in Coliseum Central that may involve the disposition of public land and the investment of public funds, where negotiation is involved and public discussion would adversely impact the city's negotiating position and financial interest; and which also involves the location of a prospective business in Hampton where no previous announcement has been made about the business' interest in locating in Hampton; pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(8) for consultation with the City Attorney's Office regarding zoning enforcement issue in the Downtown area; and Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) and (7) for discussion of aquisition and disposition of public land in Downtown Hampton where discussion in an open meeting would adversely impact the city's negotiation position and financial interest; and which also involves consultation with legal counsel regarding same; and Section 2.2-3711.A (.1) to discuss appointments as listed on the agenda and the performance of an existing member of a public body.

At 2:15 p.m., a motion was made by Vice Mayor Steven Brown and seconded by Councilmember Hope Harper, 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

5. [25-0349](#) Consideration of Appointments to the Citizens Police Advisory Group (CPAG)

**Attachments:** 2026 - CPAG Attendance calculations

6. [25-0352](#) Consideration of Appointments to the Citizens' Unity Commission (CUC)

- 7. [26-0022](#) Consideration of an Appointment to the Peninsula Alcohol Safety Action Program Advisory Board
- 8. [26-0023](#) Consideration of Appointments to the Golf Course Advisory Committee
- 9. [26-0028](#) Consideration of Appointments to the Hampton Economic Development Authority (EDA)
- 10. [26-0029](#) Consideration of Appointments to the Hampton Clean City Commission
- 11. [26-0030](#) Consideration of an Appointment to the Grievance Board
- 12. [26-0031](#) Consideration of Appointments to the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities (MCFPWD)
- 13. [26-0034](#) Consideration of an Appointment to the Peninsula Town Center CDA
- 14. [26-0035](#) Consideration of Appointments to the Athletic Hall of Fame

**CERTIFICATION**

- 15. [26-0017](#) Resolution Certifying Closed Session  
At 6:25 p.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Carolyn Campbell and seconded by Councilmember Martha Mugler, 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 6:25 p.m.

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Jimmy Gray  
Mayor

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Katherine K. Glass, MMC  
Clerk of Council

Date approved by Council \_\_\_\_\_