



# City of Hampton

22 Lincoln Street  
Hampton, VA 23669  
[www.hampton.gov](http://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*

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**Wednesday, March 26, 2025**

**1:00 PM**

**Council Chambers**

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### CALL TO ORDER

Due to technical difficulties, the meeting began a few minutes late. Mayor Gray called the meeting to order at 1:06 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

### AGENDA

1. [25-0094](#) Recommendations by Hampton Electoral Board Concerning Precinct and Polling Place Changes - Question and Answer Session With Electoral Board

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

City Manager Mary Bunting introduced the item and reminded everyone that, at the last meeting, Council received a briefing from the City Attorney about proposed recommendations by the Hampton Electoral Board concerning precinct and polling place changes. Council indicated they would like to hear the Board's rationale and ask questions of the Board prior to making a decision on advancing one, both or none of the recommendations. Ms. Bunting spoke more about the processes related to these potential changes.

Rebecca Winn, Chair of the Hampton Electoral Board, thanked Council for the invitation to speak. She indicated that this can happen either through City Council or through an approval process with the Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

City Attorney Courtney Sydnor responded stating that an ordinance by Council is required. She explained that the either/or is for the Virginia Civil Rights Act process where there is either an extended public process or the submission to the Attorney General for their certificate of no objection. Most localities use the Attorney General process because the other process is much more difficult and extended, however, an ordinance by City Council is required.

Ms. Winn shared her rationale for supporting the option to move the East Hampton location from Phoebus High School to the Hampton University Convocation Center. In summary, the current location is outside of the precinct; is not working as a poll location due to infrastructure-related issues and other issues including the lack of Wi-Fi, poor cell phone service and long lines. She also shared several reasons why she supports moving the location to Hampton University (HU) and added that the Board is obligated to make decisions in the best interest of the needs of all Hampton voters and are also obligated to ensure that all voters are treated equally.

Ms. Winn elaborated more about her support for moving the East Hampton location.

The below summarizes information provided by Ms. Winn and Voting Registrar, Tara Morgan, in response to questions posed by Council.

Anyone voting in the East Hampton Precinct would have access to the location (not only HU students). There is a significant number of voters within the East Hampton Precinct (several thousand). Some provisions of the law speak to numbers of registered voters when making precinct considerations. There are also provisions related to presidential election years. There would be no cost associated with this change. This option would include amenities such as adequate parking and internet service and traffic would not be a major consideration because those who live within the precinct will not need to get on the interstate to go to their polling location. Data is not collected on individual voters due to privacy provisions, therefore, no information is available about how many HU students vote in the precinct. The Board has not deliberated on the creation of a separate precinct on HU solely for the use of students.

Councilwoman Mugler commented that the traffic concern is not necessarily with people getting on and off the interstate, but rather about the intersection near HU

which is a huge bottleneck and traffic snarl, which will be an issue for the next few years until construction is complete.

Councilwoman Ferebee expressed concern about those who vote on their way to and from work; the lack of the internet at Phoebus High School; and the fact that the new location would only be walkable for HU students. Ms. Winn clarified that currently, students have private access log-ins at Phoebus High School, but when the facility is being used for Election Days, poll workers do not have the same ability.

Ms. Bunting indicated that she would speak with the School Superintendent and also consult with our I.T. professionals to come to a solution for the internet access issue. Ms. Morgan noted that she would confirm which other school locations may be having the same issue.

Ms. Winn commented more about the walkability issue and also responded to Councilman Bowman's question about the span of time for the precinct to be relocated. She shared that the Board is asking for the East Hampton Precinct to be permanently relocated at the Hampton University Convocation Center.

Mayor Gray spoke about cost and also asked how moving the location will prevent long lines at the Convocation Center if the number of voters is the same.

Ms. Winn confirmed that no additional costs will incur to move the location since the same population will be served. With regard to lines, in summary, localities serving colleges and universities have a large number of same day registering voters. In addition, the Convocation Center has better cellular service (which is better for communication) and more space which creates an orderly, organized and comfortable process for the voters.

Ms. Winn noted that she has separate comments with regard to the second recommendation. Mayor Gray acknowledged that and then asked if any other Board Members wanted to comment on the relocation of the East Hampton Precinct.

Secretary of the Electoral Board Matthew Scott indicated that he made the motion to move the precinct to the Convocation Center and to initiate the different precinct lines and locations. He also gave background information about Mr. Carl Anderson, the former resident and current property owner in Hampton, who initiated this idea about making voting better in Hampton.

Mr. Scott spoke about his reasoning for wanting to move the precinct to the Convocation Center. In summary, the reasons are related to the conditions at

Phoebus High School, the Presidential Election taking place on the same day as registration, and other potential locations (such as the Moton Early Childhood Development Center) not being as good as the Convocation Center for various reasons.

Mr. Scott noted that he believes this can be worked out with HU and would require the help of the City Attorney to negotiate a good agreement.

In response to Councilwoman Ferebee's question, Mr. Scott indicated that the plan does not call for moving any locations or lines this year, but perhaps next year after some planning has taken place, to include notifying voters. This will also allow time to make good decisions without rushing and potentially missing something.

Next, Board Member Thomas Harmon spoke about his standpoint which is to provide the citizens the best and most efficient way of doing business. He spoke about problems at other voting locations (like City Hall) and how this new way of doing things would eliminate three bad precincts and create a new, more effective way of doing things. He also mentioned that this has not been looked at in more than 50 years.

Ms. Winn made additional comments about how this all came about, how the Board Members voted and the timeline of things moving forward.

City Attorney Courtney Sydnor addressed the timing issue stating that she does not think it is possible to have this done in time for the primary and her understanding from the General Registrar and others is that it is not a best practice to have a change of polling place or precinct mid-year. She continued saying that we could go through the process, and, as with any ordinance, Council can establish an effective date. She suggested if Council wants to make a change, she would propose the adopted ordinance language state that this becomes effective January 1, 2026, subject only to the Attorney General approval.

The Board Members summarized their reasons for supporting or not supporting the recommendation.

In summary, Mr. Scott supported it for the following reasons: 234 homes will be affected, but that is not a big deal in his opinion; this plan will save money, but not much; fewer public buildings will be open on Election Day; less equipment will need to be purchased, programmed and repaired; this will affect the number of voters on Election Day; there are problems with long lines at large precincts; and current precincts are not in functional building areas.

In summary, Mr. Harmon supported it for the following reasons: From a management perspective, these changes will better prepare us for the worst-case scenario in terms of voter turnout and making these adjustments would also put us in a better position to provide good services for our citizens.

Ms. Winn elaborated on the rationale for her vote against this. In summary, the Board's vote was partisan; another individual with individual interests (not a political party) later withdrew his name; this could potentially create confusion for voters; squiggles; there has been no significant population decline in Hampton; stipulations associated with large precincts; handicapped and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) parking and other requirements; pros and cons of security requirements at public buildings; potential for moving voters to a larger area at Phoebus High School would resolve the small location issue; infrastructure disables us to secure the location, communicate and carry out the needs of the voters; there's a unique population at the Phoebus Precinct (including military and veterans); and the changes appear to disproportionately target student population, black communities, military service members, disabled veterans, homeless veterans and other groups.

Discussion took place among the members of Council and the Electoral Board Members. Topics of discussion include: whether there was thorough consideration at all precincts; the proposed changes appear to impact many citizens in the black and brown precincts; moving voting locations will create confusion for citizens; the proposal suggests fixing something that does not appear to be broken; the problem with voting at City Hall is unclear; this concern was brought forth by one person, but not many Hampton citizens have expressed the same concern; the potential for moving the City Hall precinct to the Mary Jackson Community Center; addressing long lines during early voting and on Election Day; "bad precincts" being considered for consolidation include City Hall (security risks), Syms Middle School (no handicapped parking) and the Phoebus Library; voter requirements at precincts (the number of people who vote at each precinct); and this work was non-partisan (no one who worked on this proposal was appointed by or represented a political party).

Mayor Gray called for discussion from Council about relocating the East Hampton Precinct to HU.

Councilwoman Harper recommended leaving the East Hampton Precinct where it is and allowing HU to have its own precinct, mainly to eliminate confusion for voters. Councilwoman Mugler agreed with Councilwoman Harper's recommendation and also asked that staff provide Council with more information about the potential for the addition of a precinct at HU. Councilwoman Ferebee concurred with Councilwomen Harper and Mugler and added that communication with first responders from all public buildings is necessary and that she recommends not taking action right now,

considering what is currently going on with Executive Orders. Councilman Bowman and Councilwoman Campbell concurred. Vice Mayor Brown supported adding a separate precinct at HU. Mayor Gray agreed with the recommendation to keep East Hampton where it is and consider establishing a separate precinct for HU.

City Attorney Courtney Sydnor noted that staff would need to work on what an additional precinct would look like, take all requirements into consideration and return to Council with that information before moving forward with the next steps in the process.

Mayor Gray called for discussion from Council about the second recommendation.

Several members of Council thanked the Electoral Board Members and the Registrar for their work on this and for the presentation.

Councilwoman Mugler and Councilwoman Harper were in favor of leaving the other precincts (that were recommended for change) to stay in place and make no changes.

Councilwoman Campbell said that she sees some benefit in moving some of the precincts. She spoke about the main concern at City Hall which is keeping voters and those doing regular business separate, but she is confused about an actual security risk at City Hall. She spoke about the wait times at Cooper and Machen Elementary Schools and said that she is uncertain if now is the time to make changes, but in her opinion, the extremely large precincts need consideration. She also spoke about the long line at the registrar's office for early voting and the need for potential solutions to fix that problem.

Councilman Bowman, Councilwoman Ferebee, Vice Mayor Brown and Mayor Gray supported making no changes at this time.

Mayor Gray thanked Mr. Scott, Mr. Harmon and Ms. Winn for their participation in the meeting and made a few closing remarks.

At 2:48 p.m., Mayor Gray called for a recess until 3 p.m.

**2. [25-0096](#) Budget Briefing - Preliminary Revenue Estimates**

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

City Manager Bunting introduced the item and introduced Chief Financial Officer Karl Daughtrey to make the presentation. She announced that the General

Assembly will reconvene on April 2, thus these are preliminary estimates that may change prior to the release of the Manager's Recommended Budget.

Ms. Bunting and Mayor Gray acknowledged and congratulated Mr. Daughtrey on his new title of Chief Financial Officer.

Mr. Daughtrey greeted those on the dais and said that he was happy to speak about the preliminary revenue projections for fiscal year 2026. He paused to give kudos to the many City departments that played a role in determining these projections and also recognized Marcie Dunn of the Finance Department who did a lot of behind the scenes work to make this project successful.

First, Mr. Daughtrey spoke about the factors considered when developing the revenue projections. In summary, factors are related to the Real Estate Tax Rate; fundamentals of the national and Hampton Roads economies which remain strong; and policy changes at the Federal level. He announced that the impact of certain policies on the economy is unknown and could potentially impact consumer-driven revenues, some of which include meals tax, sales tax and personal property tax. As part of the budget strategy, the City Manager has recommended delaying implementation of most new spending in the General Fund for FY26 until there is a better sense of the budgetary impacts.

Mr. Daughtrey spoke about the Governor's intention to offer amendments to the budget and vetoes that may impact Hampton which may result in adjustments to the revenue projections. Council will be kept informed as staff learns more about how these actions will impact Hampton.

The next portion of the presentation provides a review of the preliminary projections for FY26. This includes the total general fund revenues (recurring revenues and one-time revenues) for FY25 and compares them to projections for FY26. During this portion of the presentation, Mr. Daughtrey spoke about the school funding formula; other funding which is committed to or used for specific purposes; the remaining funds that are available to be used in the general budget process; and revenue categories. Revenue categories include general property taxes, other local taxes, license and permit fees, fines and forfeitures, revenues from use of money and property, charges for services (fee-based programs), miscellaneous revenues and State and Federal revenues.

Mr. Daughtrey elaborated on preliminary projections (for FY26) in each of the revenue categories. The next group of slides includes figures related to the projections.

Mr. Daughtrey paused to answer questions about what had been presented thus far. No questions were posed, therefore, he continued speaking about projections in the various revenue categories.

Mr. Daughtrey noted that inflation continues to impact these revenues and as businesses incur inflation, they pass that cost to consumers in the form of higher prices or reduced-sized goods and services. He spoke more about how inflation influences pricing and goods and services and then returned to speaking about projections in the various revenue categories.

Mr. Daughtrey, Mayor Gray and Councilwoman Mugler had a brief discussion about the business license tax growth and lodging tax.

Mr. Daughtrey returned to the presentation and spoke about the Cigarette Tax and the Pari-Mutuel License Tax, a tax collected for wagering at Rosie's Gaming Emporium. In summary, staff has budgeted for an increase in the Pari-Mutuel license tax. There has also been a decline in revenues from the Cigarette tax due to a decrease in cigarette consumption and an increase in the use of electronic cigarettes (vaping) which are not subject to tax.

Ms. Bunting noted that this is an example of the Dillon Rule. In this case, the General Assembly has not yet authorized localities to extend the cigarette tax to vaping products.

Ms. Bunting, Mr. Daughtrey and a few members of Council had a brief discussion about taxes on cigarettes, vaping, tobacco and cannabis.

Mr. Daughtrey transitioned into speaking about Fines and Forfeitures revenue projections. He elaborated on revenue received from school zone safety photo enforcement camera and red-light photo enforcement camera violations and emphasized the importance of these projects being cost effective and generating revenue to cover the cost of implementing these programs.

For the benefit of the public, Ms. Bunting emphasized that the City did not implement these programs for the sole purpose of generating revenue, instead it was done for safety reasons. She also spoke about the cost associated with these programs including the cost to produce evidence of violations.

Mr. Daughtrey returned to speaking about the revenue categories. He also shared a slide about transfers and Fund Balance. This slide lists some of the planned uses for transferred funds and Fund Balance including the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the buy-in for the Western Tidewater Regional Jail, the PC replacement



program and employee bonus programs.

The final slide of the presentation recapped the total general fund revenues.

Mr. Daughtrey opened the floor for questions and discussion. A brief discussion took place with staff and a few members of Council. Topics of discussion include use of funds for schools and the one-time buy-in fee to the Tidewater Regional Jail.

Ms. Bunting provided additional information about the buy-in fee to the Tidewater Regional Jail. In summary, this fee makes up for the fact that we did not pay for construction and debt service when the jail was built. There is an annual operating contract cost, just as with the Hampton Roads Regional Jail, and the annual expenses at the Western Tidewater Regional Jail are significantly less than they had been at the Hampton Roads Regional Jail. In addition, the City is able to receive some budget savings with the change and the buy-in will come due this year. The delay was due to the wait time for payment from Portsmouth.

### 3. [25-0095](#) I Value Resident Polling Results

**Attachments:** [Presentation](#)  
[FY26 Budget Input Engagement Report](#)

City Manager Mary Bunting provided information about the City's polling process. She thanked everyone who participated in the poll and noted that the many projects listed in the poll were there because someone in the community thought it was important to be put forward.

Ms. Bunting introduced the Director of Media and Communication, Dacia Scott, to share the results of the input and priorities workshops.

Ms. Scott greeted those on the dais and opened the presentation by highlighting the engagement efforts for this year's campaign. In summary, residents were informed of the campaign via postcards and email, in-person meetings were held, virtual engagement took place and a survey was given. Ms. Scott also shared statistics related to the number of people who participated in various ways.

Next, Ms. Scott shared that there was a total of 1,141 respondents to the survey. She also shared information related to the demographics of the respondents according to gender, age, ethnicity and zip code.

Ms. Scott shared some of the questions in the survey and the percentage of participants who desired various outcomes related to the questions. Survey

questions were related to the real estate tax rate; courthouse security fee; Public Works user fees (wastewater fee, stormwater fee and solid waste fees); staff compensation; employee health insurance; Federal grant priorities; operating budget priorities; Capital budget priorities; and overall top priorities. Ms. Scott noted that 44 percent of the participants supported ensuring that staff members receive competitive wages prior to considering other priorities.

For the benefit of the public, Ms. Bunting explained why participants were polled about Federal grants. In summary, this topic was included in the survey to inform the public that Hampton is being impacted by what is taking place at the Federal level and to receive input on what categories are important to them and whether they believe the City should fund those projects if these grants go away during the Federal process.

Ms. Scott shared the timeline of events leading up to the final vote on the budget on May 14. She then opened the floor for questions and discussion.

A brief discussion took place between Mayor Gray and City Manager Bunting about the number of respondents in the survey. Ms. Bunting indicated that she provided Council with preliminary numbers on Monday, but those numbers are slightly off because the survey ran through Tuesday and there was not enough time to prepare the updated figure prior to the Council meeting. She indicated that staff will provide Council with the final survey results and the full report.

Ms. Bunting again thanked those who participated in the survey and said that their participation helps staff and City leaders be better informed about what the community would like to see. It also helps staff and City leaders be better recommenders and decision makers.

## REGIONAL ISSUES

There were no regional issues to discuss.

## NEW BUSINESS

There were no items of new business.

## CLOSED SESSION

4. [25-0097](#) Closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Sections 2.2-3711.A

(.1) (.3) and (.7) to discuss an appointment as listed on the agenda; to discuss the acquisition of real property for a public purpose in the area of Coliseum Central, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body; and to consult with legal counsel pertaining to potential settlement of a new claim and pending litigation where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body.

At 4:20 p.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Martha Mugler and seconded by Councilmember Michelle Ferebee, that this Closed Session - Motion be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** 6 - Councilmember Bowman Sr., Vice Mayor Brown, Councilmember Campbell, Councilmember Ferebee, Councilmember Harper and Councilmember Mugler

**Absent:** 1 - Mayor Gray

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

**Attachments:** [Additional Applications 250409](#)

## CERTIFICATION

Mayor Gray had to leave the meeting at 5:37 p.m. and Vice Mayor Brown presided.

6. [25-0098](#) Resolution Certifying Closed Session

At 5:37 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 5:37 p.m.

**Contact Info:**

**Clerk of Council, 757-727-6315, [council@hampton.gov](mailto:council@hampton.gov)**

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Donnie R. Tuck  
Mayor

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Katherine K. Glass, MMC  
Clerk of Council

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