



# City of Hampton

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

## Council Approved Minutes - Final City Council Special Session

*Mayor Donnie R. Tuck*  
*Vice Mayor Jimmy Gray*  
*Councilmember Eleanor Weston Brown*  
*Councilmember Steven L. Brown*  
*Councilmember Linda D. Curtis*  
*Councilmember W.H. "Billy" Hobbs*  
*Councilmember Chris Snead*

*STAFF: Mary Bunting, City Manager*  
*Lola Rodriguez Perkins, Interim City Attorney*  
*Katherine K. Glass, CMC, Clerk of Council*

---

Friday, July 6, 2018

9:00 AM

Old Point National Bank  
101 E. Queen Street,  
Hampton, Virginia 23669

---

### Council Retreat

#### CALL TO ORDER

At 9 a.m. Mayor Tuck convened the meeting. Upon roll call, all members of the City Council were present except for Councilman Hobbs who arrived mid-day. Also present were Mary Bunting, City Manager; Katherine Glass, Clerk of Council; Lola Rodriguez Perkins, Chief Deputy City Attorney (who was attending on behalf of Vanessa Valdejuli, City Attorney); and Cheran Cordell Ivery, who will take the position of City Attorney on July 23, 2018.

The retreat facilitators were Jim Oliver, Suzanne Puryear, and Zinerva White. Daily Press reporter Lisa Vernon Sparks stopped in briefly mid-morning. No citizens were present.

**Present** 10 - Councilmember Eleanor Weston Brown, Councilmember Eleanor Weston Brown, Councilmember Steven L. Brown, Councilmember Steven L. Brown, Councilmember Linda D. Curtis, Vice Mayor Jimmy Gray, Vice Mayor Jimmy Gray, Councilmember Billy Hobbs, Councilmember Chris Snead, and Mayor Donnie R. Tuck

#### DONNIE R. TUCK PRESIDED

#### AGENDA

1. [18-0256](#) Retreat Activities: Teambuilding, Communication, and Vision.  
(NOTE: Strategic Priorities topic has been removed.)

Attachments: [ATTACHMENT A](#)  
[ATTACHMENT B](#)

**We are Hampton -  
a vibrant waterfront community, celebrating and embracing over 400 years of  
history and innovation to create an even more dynamic future.**

The members of Hampton City Council and key members of City administration convened in a retreat on July 6, 2018. Hampton City Council has two new members and the group recognized that changes in a team produce changes in a team's dynamics. A retreat offered the opportunity to orient the new Council members, while continuing the Council's focus on good teamwork and effective communication. The goals of the retreat were to:

- review and discuss the roles and responsibilities of City Council members, and how those differ from the roles and responsibilities of City staff;
- maximize the Council's effectiveness through teambuilding and communication; and,
- articulate how the Council wants to work with each other, City staff and citizens.

Prior to the retreat the consulting team conducted individual interviews with each Council Member, including outgoing and incoming Council members. Consistent themes emerged from these interviews:

- love for the City and a commitment to public service;
- appreciation for the exceptional teamwork demonstrated by the Council over the past two years;
- recognition of the potential new dynamics of the Council due to changing roles and new members; and,
- apprehension that changes within the Council might disrupt cohesion and effectiveness.

Mayor Tuck opened the retreat by welcoming all the participants and introducing the facilitators. The session began by adopting Ground Rules, which the group would use to guide them in their work during the retreat. The rules included:

- Be respectful.
- Listen.
- Speak from your own experience; be authentic.
- What's said in the retreat stays in the retreat.
- Everyone participates.

- Use of technology should not be disruptive.
- Use ELMO - Enough, Let's Move On - when necessary.
- Establish a "Parking Lot" for issues that are important, but not relevant to the current discussion.

The Council was reminded of the "Virtuous Cycle," in which respect leads to trust, which leads to the willingness to share difficult information, which then enables individuals to understand and use this information to challenge conclusions coherently. This cycle does not mean continuous affability or the absence of disagreement, but that respect and trust are conditions that lead to effective and productive governance. The Virtuous Cycle provides a framework to help the Council describe its aspirations of successful teamwork, communication, and leadership.

The retreat attendees then completed individual Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) assessments. The MBTI is a validated, well documented tool for learning more about oneself and one's colleagues' preferences as they relate to getting energy, collecting information, making decisions, and orienting to the outside world. The MBTI is not a personality test, but, rather, is a tool used by organizations to make the most of their human resources, improve teamwork and adapt to differing management/leadership styles. It identifies preferences, not skills, abilities nor competencies; there is no "right" or "wrong" set of preferences. While the incumbent Council members had completed the MBTI assessment previously, it was agreed that it would be valuable for the Council, as a whole, to participate in an updated exercise.

Mr. White spoke to the group about the importance of connecting with one another. He engaged the participants in an exercise called "Connection Before Content = Comm-unity." During this time, retreat attendees shared experiences and talked about what each was willing to give to his/her Council service and what he/she would expect to get from colleagues. (These "gives/gets" are included as Attachment A.)

Mr. Oliver then offered the group a thought-provoking presentation about the challenging work of City leadership, including the roles of Council members and the need to be able to balance the needs of the present with the vision for the future. (Mr. Oliver's presentation is included as Attachment B.)

During the lunch break, the retreat participants received the results of their Myers-Briggs assessment. Information was presented about the general characteristics of each Type and how those characteristics might affect communication and relationship building. It was noted that the some Council members' MBTI type had changed from two years ago and there was discussion about how MBTI reflects style preference and how those preferences may change based on changing experiences. The group participated in a number of exercises to illustrate, in real time, how preferences play out in work style and communication.

Mr. White conducted a second exercise with the group to demonstrate the importance of communicating and coaching. This exercise helped the group incorporate its new members into the team. The exercise reinforced the need to have the same vision, set goals to support that vision, and stay committed.

The Council members agreed on the importance of establishing expressed group norms, or guiding principles about their expectations of one another. Some of the principles the group adopted have been in place for the past several years; others are new, reflecting the new personality of this City Council with its new members. These guiding principles are:

- Communicate with candor - say what you mean, mean what you say.
- Be respectful.
  - Allow everyone to be heard.
  - Listen actively.
  - Seek to understand.
- Play your role for the good of the team.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Don't judge, don't assume the worst.
- Gather the facts before reacting.
  - It's OK to ask for clarity.
- No surprises, no "gotchas."
- People can disagree without being disagreeable.

The members adopted these norms, believing they will help them be productive and effective leaders. They recognize that, to be a tool to support their communication and accountability to each other, these norms must be nurtured and nourished through consistent practice.

Having gained clarity about Council roles and responsibilities and having established guiding principles for working together, the Council members then discussed how to accomplish their goals through effective communication with each other and with City staff. In discussing Council communication, it was recognized that peer-to-peer communication is different from information shared from the City Manager. It was acknowledged that the Manager's communication with individual Council members and with Council as a whole is excellent; however, the Council members expressed a desire to build collegiality. While the Council members are aware that conversations, related to Council business, among more than two members are subject to public meeting laws, they also noted the benefits of socializing, attending community events, and taking field trips to learn more about Hampton and about each other. The group determined to be more intentional about their communication with one another - to actively look for opportunities to talk to each other and to seek out activities outside of City Hall in order to increase understand about different communities and to offer chances for citizens to meet Council in different settings. The City Clerk offered to organize an outing for the City Council members, with the possibility of others following suit every few months. It was

agreed that these outings would be voluntary and there would be no judgments should individuals not attend.

The retreat participants then engaged in a facilitated conversation about communication with City staff, in order to use this opportunity for the group as a whole to express its needs and expectations of staff and for staff to share its needs with Council. This conversation is summarized as follows:

- Accessibility to the City Manager and staff is good.
- The Council members are comfortable with the competence of the City Manager and executive staff.
- The members recognized their responsibility to keep the City Manager's office in the loop when there is communication with City staff about community issues so to ensure effective coordination of communication and action.
- It was agreed that Council members should let the City Manager know when expectations are not met. Make sure the Manager knows what the needs and expectations are.
- It was acknowledged that the progress report from the City Manager was good and helpful.
- The City Attorney updates are also good. The City Attorney will continue to let Council members know of significant litigation in a timely matter, with details following in closed session.
- Council members were reminded that "Reply All" in emails constitutes a public meeting; the practice of "Reply All" is discouraged.
- Staff requested that Council members continue to be clear about their governance roles when engaging with City employees with grievances or disputes. The resolution of these matters rests with City administration and, thus, it is recommended that such concerns be referred back to the City Manager or Human Resources department without further involvement from Council.

The retreat ended with a final team building exercise led by Mr. White. This exercise demonstrated to the participants the value of looking at things in a different light and the importance of supporting one another. Through this exercise, the value of the addition and inclusion of new team members was apparent. The group left the retreat with a renewed commitment to build their team, to honor the adopted guiding principles, to communicate with candor and responsibility, and to support one another so that Hampton can continue to grow and thrive through their leadership.

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Donnie R. Tuck  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Katherine K. Glass, CMC  
Clerk of Council

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