



# City of Hampton

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

## Council Approved Minutes - Final City Council Ceremonial Session

*Mayor Donnie R. Tuck*  
*Vice Mayor Jimmy Gray*  
*Councilmember Chris L. Bowman*  
*Councilmember Eleanor Weston Brown*  
*Councilmember Steven L. Brown*  
*Councilmember Billy Hobbs*  
*Councilmember Chris Snead*

*STAFF: Mary Bunting, City Manager*  
*Cheran Cordell Ivery, City Attorney*  
*Katherine K. Glass, Clerk of Council*

---

**Wednesday, October 28, 2020**

**6:00 PM**

**Council Chambers**

---

### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Tuck called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. with all members of the City Council present.

**Present** 7 - Councilmember Chris L. Bowman, Councilmember Eleanor Weston Brown, Councilmember Steven L. Brown, Vice Mayor Jimmy Gray, Councilmember Billy Hobbs, Councilmember Chris Snead, and Mayor Donnie R. Tuck

### DONNIE R. TUCK PRESIDED

### CEREMONIAL ITEMS - Spotlight on Creating Ways to Serve the Public During COVID

Mayor Tuck introduced Communications Strategist Robin McCormick to emcee the program.

Ms. McCormick greeted those on the dais and reminded everyone that the spotlight programs have been handled differently during the months of the COVID pandemic. She explained that rather than bringing people in to be recognized, stories have been shared about what has been going on in our community. Last month's program focused on what businesses, agencies and partner groups have been doing. Tonight's program will focus on what City staff has been doing.

Ms. McCormick shared the following story about what City staff has been doing during the COVID pandemic.

When the stay at home order was issued in Virginia in March of 2020, life changed for everyone. Some changes were very obvious. We all wear masks now to protect others as well as ourselves. Hampton kept its staff busy. Some doing regular work;

others helping with COVID-related assistance; and still others catching up on a backlog of projects. Everyone pitched in whether the duties were part of their job descriptions or not.

In some departments, the changes weren't really visible. Stormwater ditches were cleaned; roads were paved; work on capital projects and building repairs continued; and trash and recycling were collected. On the outside, it seemed like business as usual. On the inside, there were adjustments to increase safety: staggered shifts, more cleaning and sterilizing, and masks with different levels of protection depending on the job. Various levels of additional PPE, or personal protective equipment, were implemented. Volumes were already up as residents stayed home; cleaned out their garages; went through their closets and got rid of a lot; and ate meals at home that used to be eaten at restaurants. This created much more trash. In August of 2020, the volume increased by another 23% for yard waste and debris. It was the debris from the remnants of Hurricane Isaias and it increased bulk and yard debris forcing teams to work 24 days straight without a day off to collect more than 20,000 cubic yards of yard waste.

The 24/7 work of Public Works was also the 24/7 work for first responders. They continued as usual, at least on the outside. Police doing regular patrols left on some lights to be more visible; they were equipped with more PPE; and they took more reports over the phone rather than in-person. The Fire Department led the City, and actually many of our neighboring jurisdictions, in developing safety protocols. They had to, as they were transporting people with COVID, or who might have COVID, to the hospital. Not just offices, but vehicles had to be disinfected. The Fire Department was honored by the Peninsula EMS Council for decontamination strategies to clean rescue vehicles. They supported decontamination at hospitals as well. They also developed the City's safety and contact tracing protocols and led those teams.

Other departments, especially those that generally had customer service counters, had to rethink how they could continue during the time buildings were closed to the public. For example, the Community Development Department worked on various development plans and permits by installing drop boxes for hard copy outside of City Hall. More popular, however, was electronic communications and attachments via email.

The combined Treasurer and Commissioner of the Revenue customer counter was forced to close for a time, but was among the first to reopen.

Ms. McCormick paused to show a video clip of Hampton City Treasurer, Molly Ward, and Commissioner of the Revenue, Ross Mugler, speaking about how their

offices handled business during the pandemic.

Ms. McCormick added that the DMV Select office opened prior to many of the state's DMV offices and, while DMV Select cannot process all transactions such as issuing licenses or renewals, it is capable of handling just about everything else. She also noted that there was about a two month wait for an appointment at a state DMV office; whereas, appointments through the DMV Select office were attainable within a week.

Ms. McCormick continued.

Hampton's Libraries were also forced to close to the public for a while. During that time, staff continued to work to prepare the libraries for reopening. There was a thorough cleaning and culling of outdated materials; walls were painted; space for families and teens use was reorganized; furniture was moved to protect social distancing; and the collection of more than 200,000 items was sanitized. Then, they came up with a great idea. People were allowed to order books online; look through the collection online; and pick up orders curbside. Patrons could do that, but some people missed the idea of browsing the shelves, so the library staff created a concierge service so that people could call the library verbalizing what they were interested in; what they had already read; and their favorite authors. For kids, citizens could call informing the library of their children's reading level and what types of books their children liked to read, and the librarians would create a bag just for you. They are, in fact, still doing it. Curbside pickup was especially lively and featured dinosaurs and superheroes and unicorns, but it was also very safe with timed deliveries and sanitation between pickups. Although all four branches are open now, visitors are limited in time. Materials are cleaned before being put back in circulation. Curbside pickup remains for those who still don't want to go indoors.

Public Works helped get the libraries and all of the other City buildings back open for the public, installing social distancing signage; six-foot markings on the floors; automated hand-sanitizer pumps; temperature stations; and protective glass and plastic barriers. City buildings are fogged and sanitized regularly. To do that, the crew must put on Tyvek suits, respirators and face shields and then fog with a fine mist of disinfectant in the air until they completely saturate the building. This is done when employees are supposed to be gone for the day, but occasionally, people like our Clerk might stay a little bit after those hours.

Several departments took their mission and adapted it to on-line rather than in person. Human Resources left their offices on a Friday, working normally, and opened the following Monday with virtual operations. One of the first duties: a virtual orientation to welcome new employees and share information with them.

Because job applications were already largely handled online, that part of the transition was smooth.

Ms. McCormick paused to show a video clip of Healthy Families Administrator, Chenequa Hayden, speaking about what Healthy Families did during the pandemic.

Ms. McCormick continued.

Hampton Arts was forced to cancel in-person performances at the American Theatre; and, instead, Richard Parison launched an online show talking to artists such as The Imagination Movers; Lightwire Theater; and Comedian, Cocoa Brown. He also interviewed visual artists, Allen and Kristen Skis, and talked to new neighboring businesses about to open in Phoebus: Foxtail Wine Bar and 1865 Brewing Company. Virtual classes are still taking place, although a recent improvisation class added a socially distance, in-person session. Puppet workshops and vocal coaching are also held virtually.

The History Museum also shifted to offer virtual programs, creating a new video series called Clips with the Curator. The curator is interviewed talking about short bits about artifacts or events that happened in Hampton creating a Hampton history series. The front porch music series was online. The History Museum has reopened to the public with reduced hours and capacity to allow for social distancing and cleaning. Virtual programs have continued.

The Hampton Coliseum couldn't take their large concerts online, so they initiated a brand new activity pioneering a pop-up drive-in movie theater with a 7 pm kids and family friendly movie and a 10 pm movie for teens or grown-ups. The event was a sellout over multiple weekends. The retro series came during a celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Coliseum and gave today's families a chance to visit an earlier time.

Many of Hampton's Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services facilities were closed for some or all of the COVID period. Staff spent time tackling projects that they wouldn't ordinarily have gotten to including additional maintenance, painting and landscaping. For example, North Phoebus Community Center got murals which was a joint effort between staff and artist, Richard Ward, with local students being involved.

For a time, Hampton's beaches at Buckroe, Fort Monroe, Salt Ponds and Grandview were closed. When they reopened, it required extra staffing. Beach ambassadors had to monitor for social distancing, (fewer than 10 per group and group six feet apart) and staff was also needed to monitor closed parks and ensure social

distancing when some locations did reopen. Staff also participated in a variety of in-house and virtual trainings, everything from enhancing computer skills and learning new games to play with kids to becoming certified in driving heavy equipment.

While community centers haven't yet reopened, the staff has been busy and the centers have continued to fill their role as places for the community. This included a fill-the-bus food and supply donation; a handout of boredom bags with activities designed to keep kids busy and engaged; serving as COVID testing and PPE handout sites; and they also made backpacks for school supplies. Staff also delivered care packages to seniors who usually attend the senior center. They created original videos to help keep citizens informed, active and engaged. These included things such as instructional videos like exercise, or holiday content such as an Easter bunny hopping through the community centers showcasing the ongoing improvements. Several sections of the department, of course, did reopen and were either partially or fully operational under COVID-19, especially parks and trails where social distancing comes naturally and people were desperate to get outside. The landscape services section also continued to keep Hampton's green spaces beautiful.

A critical need during this challenging time has been the flow of information.

Ms. McCormick paused to show a video clip of City Manager Mary Bunting and Outreach and Creative Coordinator Brian Marchese speaking about the flow of information. A video clip of Hampton City Treasurer Molly Ward explaining citizens' options for paying their tax bills was also shown.

Ms. McCormick announced that Hampton won a statewide award from the Virginia Municipal League for its online communications efforts during COVID. She noted that the state conference was virtual this year; and, therefore, the certificate was emailed. Mayor Tuck and City Manager Bunting came forward to receive the award.

Mayor Tuck thanked the workforce, department heads and the City Manager for their hard work and creativity as our citizens are better off as a result of those efforts. He also thanked Ms. McCormick for the presentation.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

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

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

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