



Town & Gown Committee Meeting  
12:00PM – Tuesday, March 10, 2026  
Community Development Conference Room  
22 Lincoln Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

## MINUTES

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### I. **Call to Order:**

Chair Tracy Staten welcomed members and guests and called the meeting to order at 12:10pm. She noted that a quorum was present.

### II. **Roll Call:**

Chair Staten asked the Clerk to call the roll:

Members Present: Tina Banks-Gray, Brian DeProfio (12:12pm), Mary Fugere (12:12pm), Jimmy Gray, Kellie Goral, Nakia Madry-Smith, Bob McKenna, Jennifer Oliver, Richelle Payne, Leonard Sledge, Tracy Staten, Raymond Tripp

Staff Present: Jenn Green, Angelique Shenk

### III. **Approval of Minutes – January 13, 2026**

Chair Staten stated the Committee will need to approve the minutes from January, which had been made available to the members to review, and called for a motion.

**ACTION:** Tina Banks-Gray made the motion to approve the January 13, 2026 minutes, seconded by Richelle Payne. Motion passed unanimously.

### IV. **Roundtable Updates**

- Virginia Peninsula Chamber – Bob McKenna reported the following:
  - This summer, LEAD Peninsula will expand to include a new pilot program, LEAD for Interns. They will be targeting 50 interns to show the “real story” of the Peninsula in an effort to encourage young professionals to create a career here. The information on the new program is not currently available online, as they have limited spots, but the Committee was encouraged to reach out directly to learn more.
    - Leonard Sledge noted that the City has a very expansive internship program and it would be helpful to discuss options for the future.
  - Spotlight on the Peninsula on March 16 at NASA is already sold out.
  - Spotlight on the Neighborhood is a new program, similar to Spotlight on the Peninsula, focusing on economic development, neighborhood revitalization, arts & culture, entertainment, and quality of life projects. The Chamber will spotlight various neighborhoods, beginning with the Yard District in Newport

- News, followed by Phoebus/Fort Monroe in Hampton, etc. on a monthly rotating basis.
- Newport News State of the City will take place on April 13, 5:30pm, at the Ferguson Center.
  - Coliseum Central Business Improvement District (BID) – Raymond Tripp reported the following:
    - Last month, the BID held their annual meeting at the Hampton Roads Convention Center (HRCC). The night celebrated 30 years of Coliseum Central, which included honoring the original board members, some of whom attended. The event also included a “memory lane” display that featured historical articles and photos from the past and present.
    - Hampton Restaurant Week is currently taking place, from March 1 to 15.
    - Tastefully Yours will take place at HRCC on April 2.
    - Two new business openings:
      - Alibi Cookies
      - Eggs Up Grill
  - Virginia Peninsula Community College (VPCC) – Nakia Madry-Smith reported the following:
    - VPCC won its first ever National Junior College Athletic Association championship in Men’s Basketball.
    - VPCC received a grant to develop a Community Wellness and Workforce Center, which will focus on mental and physical wellness, as well as those components that make a person feel more prepared when they have job opportunities.
    - The Dr. Mary T. Christian Theatre released their 2026 schedule:
      - School for Scandal, April 30 to May 3
      - The Gondoliers, July 23 to July 26
    - VPCC Commencement will take place on May 14.
  - Hampton City Schools (HCS) School Board – Tina Banks-Gray reported the following:
    - Last week, HCS welcomed Governor Spanberger to kick off the Commonwealth Listening Tour at Bethel High School. This is a roundtable discussion series between government leaders and educators that will be taking place across the Commonwealth.
    - Former Superintendent and current Secretary of Education Dr. Jeffery Smith hosted a listening session with the State Superintendent Jenna Conway later that evening at Kecoughtan High School.
    - HCS is currently in the budget development process for FY2027 and will be hosting public hearings on March 11 and March 18, with the final vote on the Superintendent’s Recommended Budget on March 25. Following the School Board vote, the budget will be forwarded to Hampton City Council for final review and comment.
  - Hampton City Council – Mayor Jimmy Gray reported the following:
    - The City Manager kicked off her I Value meetings, which have been done for several years. The Council rates their priorities, and the Manager shares that with the community for their input. The online survey is currently open, available at [FY27 I Value Budget Input Survey](#).
    - The City Manager and the Mayor will be traveling to the United Kingdom as part of a defense tech delegation hosted by the Hampton Roads Alliance and

the Hampton Roads Workforce Council, where they will be visiting advanced manufacturing sites in the UK and engaging with leaders to discuss enhancing our region's investment in advanced technologies. The UK appears to be better at capturing some of the supply chain activity that is not seen in Hampton Roads. The City Manager and Mayor will also visit Queens Park, designed by the consultant chosen to assist Fort Monroe with their Landscape Master Plan, and Southampton, one of the City's Sister Cities. It has been a goal of the Mayor to visit all the Sister Cities, and this was a good opportunity to utilize a trip they were already taking.

- Hampton City Schools (HCS) – Jennifer Oliver and Kellie Goral reported the following:
  - HCS is preparing for the Month of the Military, honoring the sacrifices made by military-connected families every day. They will be reaching out to prominent local landmarks (City Hall, Virginia Air & Space Science Center, Coliseum, etc.) to have them illuminated purple. April 15 will be “Purple Up Day,” where everyone is encouraged to wear purple, and HCS Food & Nutrition Services serves purple food to the students.
  - March is Youth Art Month, and City Hall is hosting a reception for HCS's elementary school exhibit at 6pm on March 10. On Saturday, March 14, Charles Taylor Art Center will host the secondary school exhibit at 4pm.
  - On Saturday, March 14, the Hampton High School Boys Basketball team is competing in the Virginia High School League Class 4 State Championship game, taking on Handley High School at 1pm at the Siegel Center at Virginia Commonwealth University. If the Hampton High School Girls Basketball Team wins their game on March 10, they will also be competing on Saturday in the State Championship at 11am.
  - On Wednesday, March 18, HCS will host their annual Commitment to Graduate Ceremony for 9<sup>th</sup> graders at the Coliseum, where they pledge to graduate on time in front of their friends and families. The guest speaker is Adolph Brown.
  - On Saturday, March 28, HCS will host its second annual Master Plan 2.0 Connecting the Dots community showcase. It will take place at Kecoughtan High School and highlight where HCS is with their K-12 implementation. Students will have presentations and be competing for the best presentation in the school division.
- Hampton Economic Development – Leonard Sledge reported the following:
  - The City is working to finalize the Strategic Plan. After the community input session, staff wanted to ensure there was a broad input from across the community. Staff is engaging government classes in HCS to solicit feedback from the students and reaching out to each of the local higher education institutions to receive feedback from college students. The goal is to wrap up the additional outreach by the end of Spring and request formal adoption of the plan by Council.
  - The City's Executive Management Team (EMT) held their monthly meeting at Hampton University (HU) on Friday, March 6. There was a panel discussion that included individuals with ties to both HU and the City, as well as three current students. The perspectives of the students helped inspire several ideas to more effectively shape the relationship between HU and the City. HU has over a \$530 million economic impact on the City and is 18 or 19 in

- the country in terms of alumni engagement and donations, and enrollment has grown 46%. The panel focused on how we create an environment where students want to stay in Hampton after graduation.
- On March 11, there will be a ribbon cutting for the new Peninsula Town Center townhomes. The City has seen a lot of good residential growth, and staff have finalized several development agreements for more residential development, creating spaces and places where people can live and thrive in the City.
  - The City Manager, Mayor Gray, and several other City employees travelled with selected leadership from Newport News and community partners to Salt Lake City to understand some of their creative solutions around the unhoused population. The work there goes beyond the City's concept of 360-degree intervention. This has sparked a lot of conversation between Hampton and Newport News around solutions related to attainable / workforce housing and supporting the unhoused population.
  - Hampton University (HU) – Richelle Payne reported the following:
    - Under the new administration, there is an opportunity to ensure the connective tissue between HU and the community is strong to create a true college town.
    - HU hosted its second Lunch & Learn last week at the Convocation Center. Information was shared on the Proton Center, the National Religious Center that's scheduled to break ground soon, and their workforce development activities.
    - HU will welcome the Dance Theatre of Harlem next week, who will provide a master class in dance, which provides opportunity for exposure to students. The Dance Theatre of Harlem will also have performances at Chrysler Hall and the Ferguson Center.
    - HU's Well-Nest Community Pharmacy program began a soft launch of their telehealth program, accepting some patients to work out any issues before their official launch.
    - HU is renovating Armstrong Hall into a fine performing arts center, which will provide additional opportunities for students to be exposed to artists able to create and produce music in the renovated space.
    - HU will welcome 5,000 students to High School Day in April, which is an elevated open house. Last week, they welcomed 3,000 students for Admitted Students Day to learn about campus and speak with their deans. This brought approximately 8,000 people to the City in the months of March & April.
    - During the NBA HBCU Classic, HU Men's Basketball competed against North Carolina's A&T State University, losing in exciting game that went into double overtime.
    - Founders Day was cancelled due to the weather, the first time since the celebrations began. This annual event celebrates not only the founders of HU, but also their public servants. The celebration next year will include a spotlight on Booker T. Washington as a student and the contributions he made to founding Tuskegee University, and the connectivity with the Tucker Family.
    - The Hampton Jazz and Music Festival artist lineup will be announced soon. The festival will take place June 26-27.

- The 2026 HU Ministers' Conference will take place June 7-11. It welcomes approximately 3,000 to 5,000 ministers from across the country.
- Hampton Convention & Visitor Bureau (CVB) / Marketing – Mary Fugere reported the following:
  - I Value budget polling will be open until March 16. She requested everyone to weigh in on what they value in the survey.
  - The EMT meeting was exciting and sparked ideas for how to interact with HU students and faculty. She noted the director at the HU Museum has long been a partner of the CVB, but visiting the museum on Friday reminded her what a treasure it is for the City.
  - The Downtown Development Partnership (DHDP), Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services (PRLS), and the CVB discussed the HU Welcome Back event, and will reach out to HU to secure a date. The current proposed date is Thursday, August 27; the Thursday date before Labor Day weekend worked well last year. One of the ideas presented by the HU students during the EMT meeting included a City fair, and there are plans to incorporate that into the Welcome Back event. This could help educate the students about the great things the City has to offer beyond Downtown.
  - Current / Upcoming Events:
    - Restaurant Week, March 1-15
    - RV Show at HRCC, March 13-16
    - Exploration Day: From the Sea to the Stars at Hampton History Museum, March 14 (free admission)
    - Tracing the Tracks: Hampton's Streetcar 390 Bus Tour, March 14
      - This is a fundraiser for the Streetcar 390 renovations, which used to operate in Hampton.
    - Community Conversation hosted by the Phoebus / Fort Monroe Coalition at Fort Monroe Community Center, March 19
      - This is an opportunity for residents to weigh in on their preferences and ideas on how the two districts can work together.
    - School Nutrition Association of Virginia Annual Convention at HRCC, March 19-22
    - Cheer Competition at HRCC, March 20
    - New Tuskegee Airmen exhibit opening at Virginia Air & Space Science Center, March 26
    - Atlantic Indoor Association 2026 Color Guard & Percussion/Winds Championships at Coliseum, March 28-29
    - Day of Destruction at Langley Speedway, March 21
      - This is the kick-off of their 2026 season and will showcase cars loaded with appliances on a slicked-up track, demolition derby style.
- City of Hampton – Brian DeProfio reported the following:
  - Budget Key Dates:
    - March 16, I Value Community Survey closes
      - The survey opened yesterday and there have already been 205 submissions. The two public meetings had approximately 40-50 attendees. The City appreciates everybody's participation, as

staff tries to develop a budget that is really reflective of the community.

- March 25, I Value Community Survey Results at City Council Meeting
  - March 25, Revenue Projections at City Council Meeting
  - April 8, City Manager's Budget Preview at City Council Meeting
  - April 15, FY2027 Manager's Recommended Budget released
  - April 22 & May 6, Budget Public Hearings
  - May 13, Final Adoption of the FY27 Budget
- Because the City does so much upfront work with the public, not many people come out to the public meetings. This is by design, as after the Manager releases her recommended budget, it is difficult to process any public input. If public outreach is done before the release, it can be built into the budget during development. Hampton does this differently than most other communities and received international recognition for the process several years ago. Developing the City's budget is one of the most important things the City does, as that is what drives the activities and services of the City in subsequent years.
  - Child Development Resources (CDR) – Chair Staten reported the following:
    - CDR's new building opened in Williamsburg, moving all their facilities into one location. There will be an open house in June, and an invitation will be extended to the Committee at a later time.
    - The next Fatherhood First virtual group begins in April. Virtual group discussions are offered, as the men receiving services are spread over the seven cities. These discussions teach life skills they may not have otherwise received and allow participants to share their stories with each other.

**V. Next Meeting:**

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, 2026.

**VI. Adjourn:**

There being no further business, Chair Staten adjourned the meeting at 12:53pm.