

**MINUTES OF WORK SESSION
OF THE NEWPORT NEWS CITY COUNCIL
HELD IN THE FREEMAN CENTER – GAINES THEATER
CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY
1 UNIVERSITY PLACE, NEWPORT NEWS
TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2025, 5:00 P.M.**



MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Phillip Jones; Councilman Cleon M. Long, P.E.; Councilwoman Tina L. Vick; Vice Mayor Curtis D. Bethany III; Councilman Robert S. Coleman; Councilman John R. Eley III; and Councilman Marcellus L. Harris III, D. Div.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Alan Archer, Robert Pealo, Mabel Washington Jenkins, Darlene Bradberry, Daniel Collins, Vanessa Rigaud, Clay Braggs, Tamika Gauvin, Dyvonne Body, Andreana Barefield, Shawna Davie, Daniella Barton, Terri Francis, Elizabeth McCoury, Lisa Cipriano, Virginia Lovell, Sheila McAllister, Flora Chioros, Allison Dichoso, LaTessa Davis, Florence Kingston, Tammie Dantzler, Cleder Jones, Kimberly Bracy, Ramona Rice, Police Chief Steve Drew, Criag Galant, Kimberly Thomas, Frank James, Jered Grimes, Virginia Blount-Moore, Gloria Washington, Ralph “Bo” Clayton, David Freeman, Eoghan “Owen” Miller, Tahnisha Clark, Stacy Vincent, Dorothy Shuler, Kristin Chhim, Stephanie Martin, and Zina F. Middleton

Mayor Jones called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. He thanked the amazing Bloomberg American Sustainable Cities team. As a reminder the City applied and was one of 25 cities selected to get Bloomberg American Sustainable Cities (BASC) fully paid for by Harvard Bloomberg – a talent that would be hard to get otherwise and had been extremely helpful.

I. Bloomberg American Sustainable Cities (BASC)

City Manager Archer shared an update on the Bloomberg American Sustainable Cities (BASC) initiative would be provided. He introduced Mr. Daniel Collins, i-team Director, and i-team Civic Designer, Ms. Vanessa Rigaud, to share the progress and efforts of the team over the past few months. The i-team had been embedded in the City since November 2024 and worked closely with Ms. Jennifer Privette, Environmental Sustainability Manager, Office of the City Manager and other City staff. He advised that several of the BASC partners from the Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation and PolicyLink were in attendance. They were visiting Newport News to work alongside the i-team, City staff, and community partners. He invited Mr. Eoghan “Owen” Miller, Chief Strategy Officer, Office of the City Manager, to provide remarks.

Mr. Miller reminded that an initial update was provided in November 2024 after he was named to the BASC cohort in March 2024, at which time he touched briefly on what the i-team was doing and the BASC efforts, as well as the new sustainability office. He shared his excitement as he welcomed colleagues from BASC. He invited Mr. Daniel Collins, i-team Director, to provide an update on what had been achieved since November 2024.

Mr. Collins shared the following details of the Bloomberg American Sustainable Cities (BASC):

- Newport News was one of 25 cities selected to join Bloomberg American Sustainable Cities (**BASC**)
- BASC was a three-year Bloomberg Philanthropies-funded initiative designed to build **cleaner, more resilient, and economically thriving** communities through local leadership
- An innovation team (**i-team**) joined Newport News in November 2024 and would lead a collaborative community/city design process. The i-team deploys data analysis, insight development, human-centered design, systems thinking, and project management skills

Mr. Collins expressed excitement for the BASC Partners presence and visiting the City as a part of the initiative. The BASC Partners were in Newport News working alongside of the i-team. There were workshops planned and different meetings with community members at the Brooks Crossing and Innovation Center. He shared the following partnership details:

- Five BASC Partners would help with the initiative to bring this work to life
 - Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation – to bring government innovation expertise
 - PolicyLink – a national research institute that would help lead the community focused part of the initiative
 - Sustainable Cities Fund – to help coordinate the grant, bring funding to the community and enabled some of the initiatives
 - Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) – key partners to bring climate expertise to the program
 - Delivery Associates
- Customized policy and technical assistance to leverage and implement funding opportunities to advance local projects

Mr. Collins indicated he had shared details of the overall goals but wanted to take a deeper dive into why the initiative created and what was the i-team was trying to achieve. He shared that the BASC initiative was centered around the following factors:

- People living in communities with economic barriers face the worst air, water, and weather impacts, and rising disaster costs threaten their health, resilience, and economic growth.
- Cities were home to most of the U.S. population and could take meaningful actions to ensure local communities have access to clean air, water, and public spaces.

Mr. Collins advised that BASC was not coming into Newport News doing things from scratch and recognized that there was of good work achieved in the community with numerous teams working on a variety of projects. The BASC team was being brought up to speed on the work performed and would build on the existing work. He shared the following details:

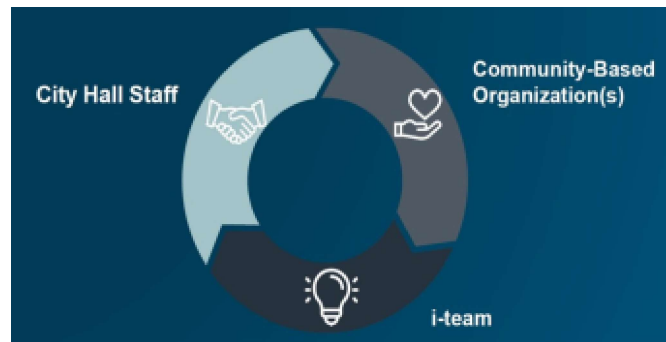
- BASC would build on what Newport News was already performing
 - Comprehensive and Strategic Plans
 - Existing Initiatives (Choice Neighborhood Initiative, etc.)
 - New Offices (Sustainability, Innovation, and Neighborhood Services)
- BASC would focus on co-creating bold new solutions with the City and community

Mr. Collins advised that Newport News applied to be a part of the initiative and shared examples of some of the priorities as follows:

- Urban Flooding
- Air Quality (coal dust, highway industry, etc.)
- Transit Mobility
- Housing and Energy Affordability
- Wealth Building
- Workforce Development

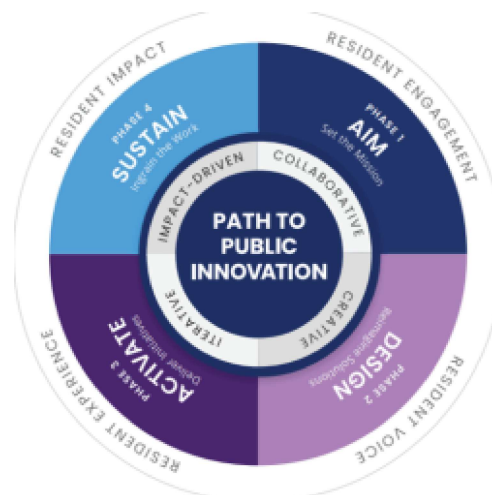
Mr. Collins indicated BASC was bringing investment for climate or environmental solutions into the community. He questioned how BASC ensured that it helped build wealth within the community and left community members better. He indicated the BASC team looked at the intersection of climate investment and environmental investment while looking at how to build wealth within different communities.

Mr. Collins indicated that the i-team worked alongside Mr. Miller, City staff, other departments (Planning, Engineering, and Development) and would continue meeting other departments to discuss how the i-team might collaborate. He shared what differentiates the initiative from other programs was that community-based organizations had a seat at the table and were invited to the regular meetings from the beginning not at the end, support was provided and discussed with the different community groups and community members about what success looked like from their perspective and to create solutions. He shared the following diagram on the cornerstone of the Core Team:



Mr. Collins shared the following details of how the i-team worked:

- The design process had four phases:
 - Phase 1: Ambitious Impactful Mission (AIM) – Set the mission and framing the problem
 - Phase 2: Design – Researching the problem and sketching possible solutions
 - Phase 3: Activate – Prototyping and testing new initiatives
 - Phase 4: Sustain – Planning to sustain and scale successful projects



Mr. Collins provided an overview of the progress since November 2024 as follows:

- Learned about the City's history, challenges, and existing initiatives
- Built relationships with City staff and community partners
- Formed the Partnership Table (City, i-team, and community)
- Started the design process and visioning workshops
- Attended trainings and events to learn from other BASC cities

- Collaborated with Sustainability and Innovation Offices on grants
- Started to create a plan to engage residents and other partners

Mayor Jones reminded City Council as the City looked at sustainability when it came to flooding in the downtown area or coal mitigation with the future of coal dust. Those were very expensive items to get done. The in-house consultants saved the City money but also provided the City a higher probability of receiving grants.

Mr. Collins provided details of example grants awarded as follows:

- BASC would take these two awards to Council for approval soon
 - \$150,000 for solar installation in the Southeast community
 - Consultant services to update the City's Roadmap to Sustainability (2013)
- Grant applications
 - A clean energy investment roadmap focused on public-private partnerships
 - Green infrastructure to address urban flooding
 - A coal fence feasibility study

Mr. Collins advised of the next steps as follows:

- Engage residents and other partners
- Work together to refine the BASC vision for Newport News and identify priority areas for the team to focus its efforts on
- Hire a third i-team member (Data Analytics Manager) to assist with research, analysis, and progress tracking
- Support new projects and grant applications
- Welcome any support that Council could provide, such as connections with interested residents or community partners

Councilman Long questioned whether the results would rest at the strategic priorities level since the City had an updated plan. He indicated this may be a question for the City Manager. He questioned where the data would be housed for some of the strategies that the BASC study had created. City Manager Archer replied the priorities that were shared by Mr. Collins were a result of introducing core functions as a part of the proposed operating budget as the City had indicated there was a need for further staff development and capacity in those areas. The groundwork that was laid in 2024 with the adoption of the operating budget set the stage for the work being reported.

Mayor Jones thanked Mr. Collins and the BASC team for its hard work and look forward to continued success.

[Bloomberg American Sustainable Cities](#)

II. Comments/Ideas/Suggestions

Vice Mayor Bethany shared that the Newport News Public Schools had new state champions. He inquired whether the Department of Communications was tracking championships happening in the Newport News Public Schools (NNPS). He shared that great things were happening in the NNPS, and those individuals should be recognized. Ms. Cleder Jones, Director, Department of Communications, replied yes, the department was tracking those events.

Mayor Jones provided a recap of the City Council Contingency Funds request as follows:

1. Books on Bikes sponsored by Councilman Harris. Mayor Jones advised that the form had been prepared for Council signatures and would be considered at the March 25, 2025 Work Session for an official vote.
2. The Newport News Police Foundation – Friends of the Badge sponsored by Councilman Coleman. Mayor Jones advised the form had been prepared for Council signatures and would be considered at the March 25, 2025 Work Session for an official vote.
3. Crimson Thunder Drum Line at Katherine Johnson Elementary School sponsored by Councilman Eley. Mayor Jones advised that the form had been prepared for Council signatures and would be considered at the March 25, 2025 Work Session for an official vote.

Mayor Jones advised of the following City Council Contingency Fund requests completed and ready for approval.

1. 100 Black Men 32nd Annual Black Tie Scholarship Gala – to be held on April 12, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. at the Hampton Roads Convention Center. The 2025 honorees included Norfolk State University Football Coach and Former NFL Legend Michael Vick and Delegate Marcia Price, 85th District Representative of the Virginia House of Delegates. This event was sponsored by Councilwoman Vick in the amount of \$2,500.

Councilman Long made the motion to provide \$2,500 from the City Council Contingency Fund for the 100 Black Men 32nd Annual Black Tie Scholarship Gala. Seconded by Councilman Coleman.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Jones, Long, Vick, Bethany, Coleman, Eley, Harris

Nays: None

2. 2025 Hampton Roads United Negro College Fund (UNCF) Mayor's Masked Ball – Newport News was the host City for 2025, event to be held on Saturday, March 22, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Newport News Marriott at City Center. This request was sponsored by Mayor Jones in the amount of \$25,000 as the host City.

Councilman Long made the motion to provide \$25,000 from the City Council Contingency Fund for the 2025 Hampton Roads United Negro College Fund (UNCF) Mayor's Masked Ball hosted by Newport News. Seconded by Councilman Coleman.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Jones, Long, Vick, Bethany, Coleman, Eley, Harris

Nays: None

III. Closed Meeting

(5:30 p.m. – 6:58 p.m.)

IV. Adjourn

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS
ON MOTION, COUNCIL ADJOURNED AT 6:58 P.M.

Zina F. Middleton, MMC
Chief Deputy City Clerk

Phillip Jones
Mayor
Presiding Officer

A true copy, teste:

City Clerk