

Together we can ask the hard questions and find the difficult answers



CITY OF WILLIAMSBURG
A MESSAGE OF

Hope

FROM WILLIAMSBURG CITY COUNCIL

Living in a college town has many advantages. We attract residents with significant academic and professional credentials and experiences. As a community, we value education and creativity. Recently we celebrated a win for both. Our three high schools created processions of vehicles along the Duke of Gloucester Street for the graduating seniors. At the same time, your City Council reaffirmed its financial support of education by protecting its annual investment in the Williamsburg-James City County School District. While maintaining our initial budget allocation from the FY21 General Fund, the City was able to reinvest its portion of the FY20 School District budget surplus and allocate some Federal COVID funds to help offset the projected decrease in School revenue generated by the state sales tax.

The diversity offered by the students and visitors we welcome also provides excellent opportunities to share diverse opinions and engage in collaborative approaches to advancing our society. On June 7, 800 community members came together on the Duke of Gloucester Street in front of the Capitol to reaffirm the 2017 covenant between our African American leaders and local police chiefs and the Sheriff. Messages included the need for us all to overcome indifference and reevaluate how we support our neighbors.

Our police chief encouraged community healing through greater citizen involvement alongside greater police accountability. Our area is fortunate to have community-focused police organizations which partner with our human services and fire / emergency services departments to proactively promote public safety. Community outreach is evident by the attendance at our National Night Out event and with individual police officers assigned to partner with each neighborhood. Our police department is one of the few departments in the state and nation which earns national accreditation through periodic peer reviews, demonstrated accountability, continuous training, and policies and procedures designed to work equally with all members of the community. Despite these efforts there is always room to improve. As a community we are committed to asking the hard questions and finding the difficult answers. Together we can be better than we are.

As a college town with a long history of learning, we should do even more to end stereotyping. As a community, we value the academic discipline required in research and should fight the impulse to polarize through generalizations. Perhaps our greatest message of hope can be gleaned through sharing the optimism evident this month from our high school and college graduates!

Williamsburg City Council

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