



Williamsburg Tourism Council Meeting Agenda

August 19, 2025 – 12:30 - 2 p.m.

Williamsburg Lodge – Tidewater Room

310 S England St, Williamsburg, VA 23185

Agenda Items		
I.	Call to Order / Roll Call	Ruth Larson
II.	Public Comment	Ruth Larson
III.	Roundtable Discussion	Ruth Larson
IV.	Minutes a. <u>Action Item</u> : Approve May 20, 2025, Meeting Minutes (pgs. 3-7)	Ruth Larson
V.	Chair Report a. Next Meeting – September 16, 2025 b. Annual Meeting in November 2025	Ruth Larson
VI.	Treasurer's Report a. Financials (pgs. 8-12)	Mayor Doug Pons
VII.	CEO Report	Ed Harris
IX.	New Business	Ruth Larson
X.	Old Business	Ruth Larson
XI.	Adjournment	Ruth Larson

Upcoming Meeting:

WTC Board Meeting September 16, 2025



Williamsburg Tourism Council

Meeting Notice

In my capacity as the Chief Executive Officer of the Williamsburg Tourism Council, I hereby give notice that the Williamsburg Tourism Council will hold its next meeting on Tuesday, August 19, 2025, at 1 p.m.

The meeting will feature two or more members of the Williamsburg Tourism Council.

Location- The Williamsburg Lodge – Tidewater Room
310 S. England Street
Williamsburg, VA 23185

Time and Date- August 19, 2025 at 1 p.m.

Given under my hand this 15th day of August 2025.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Edward Harris", written over a horizontal line.

Edward Harris, CEO

WILLIAMSBURG TOURISM COUNCIL MEETING
Williamsburg, Virginia
May 20, 2025
Meeting Minutes

The Williamsburg Tourism Council (WTC) meeting was convened at 1 p.m. on May 20, 2025. The meeting was held at the Williamsburg Winery, Williamsburg, where a quorum was present.

Tourism Council Members Present:

Ruth Larson, James City County Board of Supervisors, Chair
Mayor Doug Pons, Mayor, City of Williamsburg, Treasurer
Ron Kirkland, Williamsburg Hotel and Motel Association
Michael Claar, Williamsburg Area Restaurant Association
Christy Coleman, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation (JYF)
Denise Kellogg, Jamestown Rediscovery Historic Jamestowne
Kevin Lembke, Busch Gardens/Water Country USA
Sheila Noll, York County Board of Supervisors
Dr. Porter Brannon, Greater Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce (GWCC), Ex Officio

Staff Members Present

Edward Harris, CEO
Brittany Alger, Senior Sales Manager
Josue Ayala, Community Relations and Logistics Specialist
Jennifer Case, Chief Marketing Officer
Morgan Cordle, Sports Sales Manager
Greg Kavanagh,
Jackie Lavan, Executive Assistant
Daniela Owen, Familiarization Tour Coordinator
David Turner, Finance Director
Sandra Vazquez, Talent and Culture Manager

Guests Present

Neal Alfano, Miles Partnership
Danelle Amos, Miles Partnership
Lauren Bourgoing, Miles Partnership
Angela Smith, Williamsburg Winery

I. Call to Order

Chair Ruth Larson called the meeting to order. Angela Smith, Williamsburg Winery, welcomed attendees and offered post-meeting tours.

II. Public Comment

- No public comment

III. Roundtable Discussion

Ms. Larson introduced the roundtable discussion.

- **Kevin Lembke:** Two new attractions and 50th anniversary celebrations underway.
- **Michael Claar:** April business improved; W&M event schedule changes affecting restaurant traffic patterns.
- **Christy Coleman:** Major fall events planned, including *Dragon Chinese Porcelain* exhibition with Historic Jamestowne and potential large-scale lantern attraction; Yorktown art exhibition opening.
- **Ruth Larson:** FY2026 budget passed with no tax increase; hosting Virginia Association of Counties spring board meeting.
- **Mayor Doug Pons:** FY2026 budget passed with targeted tax increases to sustain tourism funding (6.5% of budget).
- **Denise Kellogg:** April improvement but soft May; record \$1.6M in federal funding; possible grant loss; active 250th preparations.
- **Ron Kirkland:** Revenue up 3%; occupancy steady year-over-year.
- **Dr. Porter Brannon:** Announced leadership transition to Adria Vanhoozier as Ex-Officio Board Member.

IV. Minutes

Ms. Larson presented two items for the Board's consideration: approval of the amended November 19, 2024, minutes and approval of the March 18, 2025, minutes. The amendment to the November 19, 2024, minutes adds actions not previously recorded, including approval of a Bylaws change to extend officer term limits, election of officers for a third term, and adoption of an updated policy on electronic meeting participation.

Motion

Mayor Doug Pons made a motion to approve the amendment to the November 19, 2024 meeting minutes and to approve the meeting minutes from the March 18, 2025 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Kevin Lembke and was approved by the Board.

V. Chair Report

- Board Retreat: July 15, 2025 retreat/meeting to be rescheduled; Visit Williamsburg will poll members for a new date.
- Annual Meeting: Due to recurring scheduling conflicts, the Annual Meeting will shift to November; the Board may consider a Bylaws amendment to make this change permanent.

VI. Treasurer's Report

Financials

Mayor Doug Pons shared financial statements through March 2025

- Revenue: \$1.1M (under budget by \$12K)
- Sales tax: \$978K (on budget)
- Transient tax: \$102K (under budget by \$18K)
- Expenses: \$1.5M (under budget by \$95K)
- YTD sales: \$13.2M (over budget by \$61K)
- Cash on hand: \$8.5M for operations

2026 Budget Presentation

David Turner, Chief Financial Officer, presented the proposed 2026 budget.

- Total revenue budgeted at \$18.6 million (July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026), reflecting a 9% revenue increase and a 12.7% expense increase over FY2025
- Sales tax budgeted at \$15.6 million (2.8% increase over FY2025)
- Transient occupancy tax revenues budgeted at \$1.6 million
- Using \$150,000 from reserves for office renovations
- Additional \$1 million from reserves allocated for marketing the 250th commemoration
- Additional staffing to expand sales and marketing capabilities.
- Continued prudent reserve management, ending FY2026 with \$3.8M unrestricted and \$1.8M restricted cash balances
- There was also continued discussion about the sports complex marketing funding and coordination between Visit Williamsburg, Kemper Sports, and the Historic Triangle Regional Facilities Authority

Motion

Doug Pons made a motion to approve the 2026 budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Denise Kellogg and was approved by the Board.

VII. CEO report

President and CEO, Ed Harris provided the CEO report.

Staff Updates

- New staff introduced: Jackie Lavon (Executive Assistant) and Greg Kavanaugh (Vice President of Business Development)
- Upcoming hire: Elisa Campana (Destination Development Director)
- New intern program launching
- Discussion differentiating between Business Development (focused on sports center sales) and Destination Development (focused on events and non-sports activities)
- Spring break performance: 3.22% increase in demand compared to the previous year
 - April occupancy numbers showed growth despite national downward trends

Tourism Research & PR Updates

- National research shows travelers choosing more affordable destinations and using rewards programs
- Sales team attending key trade shows including African American Travel Conference, military reunion conferences, religious conferences
- Upcoming sports events expected to generate 7,000 room nights
- Visit Williamsburg is now using Destinations International Economic Impact Calculator to measure event value
- PR placements in publications like Conde Nast Traveler and Southern Living
- Samantha Brown filmed in the region for upcoming PBS episode
- Marketing team held 'Williamsburg meets Williamsburg' PR event in Brooklyn

Visitor Experience Enhancements

- Integration with Rype allows visitors to book hotel rooms directly from visitwilliamsburg.com
- Creating customized landing pages for events with integrated booking functionality
- Developing mobile passes for events like the Whiskey and Wine Festival
- Launching 'Cool Summer Savings Pass' for July-August with 20+ businesses offering discounts
- Visitors can earn branded items (Bogg Bags, sunglasses, hats) by visiting multiple participating businesses
- Partners include Busch Gardens, Baskin Robbins, Colonial Williamsburg, Yorktown Beach Hotel

VIII. Miles Partnership Presentation

Neal Alfano, Danelle Amos, and Lauren Bourgoing were introduced to present. Miles Partnership is a new advertising agency that Visit Williamsburg has been working with since the start of 2025.

Summary of Miles:

- Company overview: 375+ tourism marketing specialists, 8-year average client relationship
- Travel trends: Spontaneous staycations within 300 miles increasing
- 95% of travelers planning at least as much travel this summer as last
- Sporting events and concerts are top travel motivations
- International travel expected to lose \$12.5 billion in spending in 2025
 - 69% of travelers planning to travel domestically

Miles Media Strategy

- Bridge campaign (January-June 2025) generated 100+ million impressions, 290,000+ clicks
- 480,000+ conversions with average time on content exceeding 2 minutes
- 50% increase in Williamsburg's market share of hotel bookings year-over-year
- Tourism Economics tracking shows 14,000+ business visits from January-April
- Top performing markets: Baltimore, Charlotte, Greensboro, Greenville, Harrisburg

- Creative strategy leverages triangle motif from destination brand mark
 - Variety of media formats including rich media units, digital ads, print material

New Campaign and Preview and Closing

- New campaign theme: 'America's journey began right here'
- Updated visual approach with black and white photography for 'timeless America' feel
- Refined color palette and subtle logo updates for better legibility
- Using destination textures (brick, textiles, flags) to differentiate from other tourism marketing
- Digital campaign will be nimble enough to adjust if June numbers are disappointing
 - Special emphasis on Christmas marketing as a priority for attracting higher-spending visitors

IX. New Business

- None

X. Old Business

- None

XI. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:43 p.m.

The next meeting and Board retreat will be determined by polling Members of the Board.

Treasurer's Report

Revenue / Expenses January 2025

	Month		
	Actual	Budget	Variance
REVENUE			
Sales Tax (58.1-603.2)	1,306,064	1,275,267	30,797
\$1 Transient Tax	131,343	112,572	18,771
Maintenance of Effort Funds	38,666	38,666	(0)
Other	13,041	12,178	863
Total Revenue	1,489,113	1,438,683	50,430
EXPENSES			
Destination Marketing	409,188	1,005,100	595,912
Other Sales & Marketing	149,809	231,026	81,217
Labor & Benefits	141,847	192,301	50,454
Admin	39,294	34,443	(4,851)
Total Expenses	740,139	1,462,870	722,731
Net Revenue Expense by Month	748,975	(24,187)	773,162

Source: York County, Office of the Commissioner of Revenue - AND -
Virginia Department of Taxation

Treasurer's Report

Revenue / Expenses Fiscal YTD as of January 31, 2025

	FY 2024		
	Actual	Budget	Variance
REVENUE			
Sales Tax (58.1-603.2)	9,147,134	9,196,300	(49,166)
\$1 Transient Tax	1,043,415	1,033,783	9,632
Maintenance of Effort Funds	101,966	101,966	(0)
Other	129,215	72,121	57,094
Total Revenue	10,421,730	10,404,170	17,560
EXPENSES			
Destination Marketing	5,092,564	5,620,700	528,136
Other Sales & Marketing	790,387	1,012,230	221,843
Labor & Benefits	1,082,809	1,123,678	40,869
Admin	195,007	432,304	237,297
Total Expenses	7,160,767	8,188,912	1,028,145
Net Revenue Expense by Month	3,260,962	2,215,258	1,045,704

Net Position - Beginning of Year	2,679,401	2,679,401	0
Net Position - Current YTD	5,940,363	4,894,659	1,045,704

Budget Remaining	Percent Remaining
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6,177,584	40.3%
546,850	34.4%
24,634	19.5%
(13,079)	-11.3%
6,735,989	39.3%

7,066,136	58.1%
1,359,614	63.2%
1,122,175	50.9%
449,028	69.7%
9,996,953	58.3%

Source: York County, Office of the Commissioner of Revenue - AND -
Virginia Department of Taxation

Treasurer's Report

Cash on Hand
January 2025

Operating Cash

Cash Balances	Nov-24		
	Actual	Budget	Variance
Bank Account Balances: operations			
BB&T Reserve Checking	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
BB&T ICS Investment Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Ches Bank Checking	\$ 5,628,510	\$ 6,730,339	\$ (1,101,829)
Ches Bank Payroll	\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000
Ches Bank CD	\$ 771,769	\$ -	\$ 771,769
Total Cash on Hand	\$ 6,401,278	\$ 6,730,339	\$ (329,061)

Dec-24		
Actual	Budget	Variance
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ 7,903,497	\$ 6,581,177	\$ 1,322,320
\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000
\$ 773,767	\$ -	\$ 773,767
\$ 8,678,264	\$ 6,581,177	\$ 2,097,087

Jan-25		
Actual	Budget	Variance
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ 6,387,640	\$ 6,558,003	\$ (170,363)
\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000
\$ 775,837	\$ -	\$ 775,837
\$ 7,164,477	\$ 6,558,003	\$ 606,474

Key Sources of Funds	Nov-24		
	Actual	Budget	Variance
State Disbursement	\$ 1,390,725	\$ 1,377,248	\$ 13,477
Total Gov't Sources	\$ 1,390,725	\$ 1,377,248	\$ 13,477

Dec-24		
Actual	Budget	Variance
\$ 1,427,865	\$ 1,395,857	\$ 32,008
\$ 1,427,865	\$ 1,395,857	\$ 32,008

Jan-25		
Actual	Budget	Variance
\$ 1,437,406	\$ 1,387,839	\$ 49,567
\$ 1,437,406	\$ 1,387,839	\$ 49,567

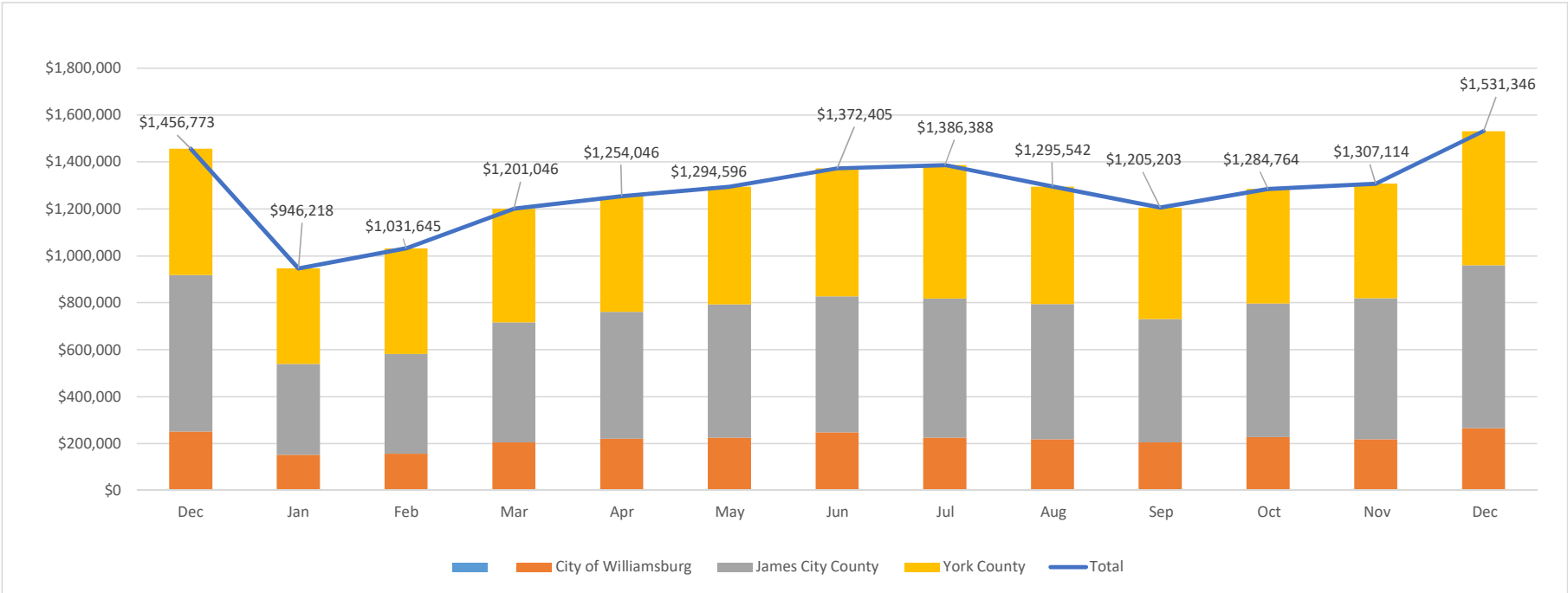
Interest Earned:			
State Interest Paid	\$ 22,665	\$ -	\$ 22,665
BB&T Reserve Checking	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
BB&T ICS Investment Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Ches Bank Checking	\$ 12,675	\$ 12,178	\$ 497
Ches Bank CD	\$ 3,192	\$ -	\$ 3,192
Total Interest Earned	\$ 38,532	\$ 12,178	\$ 26,354

\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ 12,093	\$ 12,178	\$ (85)
\$ 1,998	\$ -	\$ 1,998
\$ 14,091	\$ 12,178	\$ 1,913

\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ 12,093	\$ 12,178	\$ (85)
\$ 1,998	\$ -	\$ 1,998
\$ 14,091	\$ 12,178	\$ 1,913

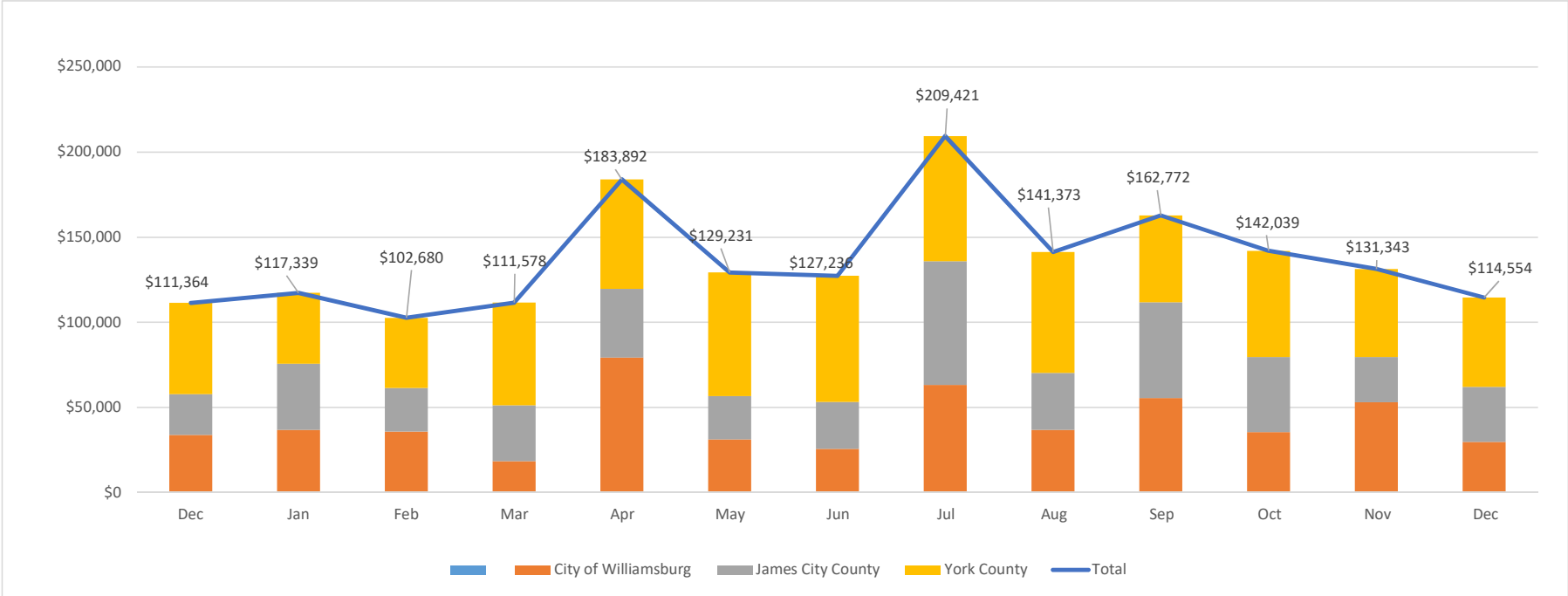
Accounts payable balance as of January 31, 2025:	\$ 674,423
Uncleared checks & payments balance:	153,558
Total Open Payables transactions:	\$ 827,980

SOURCE: York County, Office of the Commissioner of Revenue



§§ 58.1-603.2 1/2 of 1%													
CY 2024	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
City of Williamsburg	\$151,905	\$156,001	\$205,256	\$220,784	\$225,388	\$247,564	\$224,996	\$217,995	\$205,427	\$228,284	\$217,692	\$266,141	\$2,567,433
James City County	\$387,783	\$426,600	\$511,176	\$540,740	\$567,007	\$580,550	\$592,979	\$577,012	\$525,458	\$568,215	\$601,388	\$692,950	\$6,571,859
York County	\$406,530	\$449,044	\$484,614	\$492,522	\$502,201	\$544,291	\$568,412	\$500,534	\$474,318	\$488,266	\$488,034	\$572,255	\$5,971,020
Total	\$946,218	\$1,031,645	\$1,201,046	\$1,254,046	\$1,294,596	\$1,372,405	\$1,386,388	\$1,295,542	\$1,205,203	\$1,284,764	\$1,307,114	\$1,531,346	\$15,110,312
Calendar YTD Total												\$15,110,312	
CY 2023	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
City of Williamsburg	\$148,068	\$165,892	\$196,748	\$244,871	\$220,208	\$213,243	\$256,700	\$238,658	\$219,434	\$231,252	\$215,248	\$251,890	\$2,602,210
James City County	\$380,432	\$440,402	\$490,853	\$519,871	\$504,459	\$518,835	\$560,191	\$633,248	\$519,452	\$526,194	\$541,964	\$666,053	\$6,301,952
York County	\$409,675	\$411,494	\$490,295	\$524,536	\$480,400	\$504,427	\$565,487	\$548,731	\$468,981	\$460,830	\$480,182	\$538,830	\$5,883,868
Total	\$938,174	\$1,017,788	\$1,177,895	\$1,289,277	\$1,205,067	\$1,236,505	\$1,382,378	\$1,420,637	\$1,054,706	\$1,218,276	\$1,237,394	\$1,456,773	\$14,634,869
Calendar YTD Total												\$14,634,869	

SOURCE: York County, Office of the Commissioner of Revenue



Transient Tax \$1 of the \$2													
CY2024	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
City of Williamsburg	\$36,901	\$35,855	\$18,595	\$79,266	\$31,299	\$25,601	\$63,258	\$36,943	\$55,555	\$35,630	\$53,107	\$29,801	\$501,811
James City County	\$38,773	\$25,548	\$32,557	\$40,469	\$25,431	\$27,535	\$72,671	\$33,323	\$56,196	\$43,992	\$26,600	\$32,345	\$455,440
York County	\$41,665	\$41,277	\$60,426	\$64,157	\$72,501	\$74,100	\$73,492	\$71,107	\$51,021	\$62,417	\$51,636	\$52,408	\$716,207
Total	\$117,339	\$102,680	\$111,578	\$183,892	\$129,231	\$127,236	\$209,421	\$141,373	\$162,772	\$142,039	\$131,343	\$114,554	\$1,673,458
Calendar YTD Total												\$1,673,458	
CY2023	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
City of Williamsburg	\$39,621	\$16,525	\$21,985	\$35,178	\$54,023	\$97,914	\$33,812	\$30,119	\$37,836	\$41,814	\$31,726	\$33,937	\$474,490
James City County	\$29,026	\$31,700	\$19,309	\$61,820	\$49,960	\$24,973	\$69,058	\$31,594	\$35,602	\$41,928	\$32,135	\$24,009	\$451,114
York County	\$36,893	\$39,830	\$54,350	\$56,483	\$63,337	\$65,559	\$66,116	\$55,352	\$54,061	\$51,203	\$46,505	\$53,418	\$643,107
Total	\$105,540	\$88,055	\$95,644	\$153,481	\$167,320	\$188,446	\$168,986	\$117,065	\$127,499	\$134,945	\$110,366	\$111,364	\$1,568,711
Calendar YTD Total												\$1,568,711	