



## Williamsburg Tourism Council Meeting Agenda

Yorktown Library

8500 George Washington Memorial Hwy  
Yorktown, VA 23692

September 16, 2025 – 12:30 - 2 p.m.

Agenda Items		
I.	<b>Call to Order / Roll Call</b>	<b>Ruth Larson</b>
II.	<b>Public Comment</b>	<b>Ruth Larson</b>
III.	<b>Roundtable Discussion</b>	<b>Ruth Larson</b>
IV.	<b>Minutes</b> a. <u>Action Item</u> : Approve August 19, 2025, Meeting Minutes (pgs. 3-8)	<b>Ruth Larson</b>
V.	<b>Chair Report</b> a. Next Meeting, Annual Meeting, November 18, 2025	<b>Ruth Larson</b>
VI.	<b>Treasurer's Report</b> a. Financials (pgs. 9-13)	<b>Mayor Doug Pons</b>
VII.	<b>CEO Report</b>	<b>Ed Harris</b>
VIII.	<b>Market, Financial &amp; Economic Feasibility Study for a Live Performance Venue ("LPV") in Williamsburg, VA</b>	<b>Brian Connolly</b>
IX.	<b>New Business</b>	<b>Ruth Larson</b>
X.	<b>Old Business</b>	<b>Ruth Larson</b>
XI.	<b>Adjournment</b>	<b>Ruth Larson</b>

### Upcoming Meeting:

WTC Board Meeting (Annual)      November 18, 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, September 16, 2025, at 1 p.m.

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

**Location-** Yorktown Library – Yorktown Meeting Room  
8500 George Washington Memorial Hwy  
Yorktown, VA 23692

**Time and Date-** September 16, 2025, at 1 p.m.

Given under my hand on the 8th day of September 2025.

**Edward Harris, CEO**



**Williamsburg Tourism Council**

16 September 2025

Attendance List

Board of Directors:

Ruth Larson, Chair

Cliff Fleet III, Vice Chair

Mayor Doug Pons, Treasurer

Ron Kirkland

Michael Claar

Christy Coleman

Sheila Noll

Denise Kellogg

Kevin Lembke

Ex-Officio, Non-Voting Members:

Adria Vanhoozier

Rita McClenny

WILLIAMSBURG TOURISM COUNCIL MEETING  
Williamsburg, Virginia  
August 19, 2025  
Meeting Minutes

The Williamsburg Tourism Council (“WTC”) meeting was convened at 1 p.m. on August 19, 2025, at the Williamsburg Lodge in Colonial Williamsburg, where a quorum was present.

**Tourism Council Members Present:**

Ruth Larson, James City County Board of Supervisors, Chair  
Cliff Fleet, Colonial Williamsburg, Vice Chair  
Mayor Doug Pons, City of Williamsburg, Treasurer  
Ron Kirkland, Williamsburg Hotel and Motel 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  
Rita McClenny, Virginia Tourism Corporation, Ex Officio

**Staff Members Present**

Edward Harris, CEO  
Brittany Alger, Senior Sales Manager  
Josue Ayala, Community Relations and Logistics Specialist  
Elisa Hernandez Campana, Destination Development Director  
Morgan Cordle, Sports Sales Manager  
Greg Kavanagh, Vice President, Business Development  
Jackie Lavan, Executive Assistant  
David Turner, Finance Director  
Sandra Vazquez, Talent and Culture Manager

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Ruth Larson called the meeting to order.

**II. Public Comment**

- No public comment

**III. Roundtable Discussion**

Ms. Larson introduced the roundtable discussion.

- **Sheila Noll:**
  - Reported strong summer season with high attendance at Fourth of July celebrations and Sounds of Music concert series
  - Announced *Ken Burns American Revolution* screening (Sept. 20) with Park Service events beginning 3:00 PM
  - Shared plans for *Sail Yorktown 2026* (June 12–14, 2026), featuring Class A tall ship *Debark Castle* with free tours
  - Event is part of official *Sail America 26* affiliate harbor program (60+ ships from 20 countries coming to Hampton Roads)

- **Rita McClenny:**
  - \$10M state funding request resubmitted for competitive sports event incentive fund (previously rejected)
  - Legislative framework in place; Delegate Rodney Willett (Henrico) and Senator Head (Roanoke) leading efforts
- **Cliff Fleet:**
  - *Bray School* and new golf course opened earlier this year
  - Palace gardens restoration underway, beginning with tree removal to restore colonial-era design
  - Juneteenth coverage brought the highest national media attention of any site in the country
- **Kevin Lembke:**
  - Summer performance in line with regional trends
  - *Howl-O-Scream* launching in under three weeks with new content
  - *Christmas Town* preparations underway — now the only Christmas theme park event in Virginia (Kings Dominion discontinued *Winterfest*)
- **Christy Coleman:**
  - Reported slight decline in visitation in first fiscal month despite multiple capital projects
  - *Susan Constant* ship repairs on track at Mystic Seaport; return to Jamestown set for June 2026
  - New exhibitions: *Pasco de Mayo's Fresh Views of the American Revolution* (Oct.) and *Chinese Porcelain and Urban Jamestown* (Nov.)
  - Chinese lantern display planned in conjunction with November exhibition
- **Ruth Larson:**
  - Government center public meetings continuing; Berkeley District town hall scheduled Sept. 4
  - Legislative request process underway; seeking Tourism Board input
  - Announced new Wawa opening in James City County (Aug. 28, 8:00 AM), expected to boost sales tax revenue
- **Mayor Doug Pons:**
  - New police station scheduled to open Dec. 14
  - Regional Sports Center construction is progressing (and is visibly impressive)
  - Downtown library under discussion (new build vs. renovation)
  - \$3M awarded for fire trucks (four-year delivery timeline)
  - FY25 budget on track to close successfully
- **Denise Kellogg:**
  - Slight dip in visitation compared to prior year; new marketing strategies underway
  - 250th anniversary programs in development for 2025 and 2026

- Secured grant funding for special events and gatherings
- Infrastructure upgrades: raised pathways and lighting systems to address flooding
- *Save Jamestown* campaign continuing with resiliency projects (hydrology/topography studies)
- *Archaeology Day* scheduled for Oct. 4
- **Ron Kirkland:**
  - July occupancy: 65% (vs. 62% prior year) despite 3.3% fewer available rooms
  - Room sales up 1% year-over-year; revenue also up 1% with flat rates
  - Total room inventory: 6,001 (down from 10,200 rooms 35 years ago; 9,500 rooms 20 years ago)

#### **IV. Minutes**

Ms. Larson opened the floor for discussion of the May 20, 2025, meeting minutes, which were included in the meeting packet. With no comments offered, she called for a motion to approve the minutes.

##### **Motion**

**Mr. Kirkland moved to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2025, meeting. Mr. Lembke seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by the Board.**

#### **V. Chair Report**

The next meeting was previously scheduled for September 16, 2025. The date may need to be adjusted, and Visit Williamsburg will follow up to confirm or distribute a Doodle poll for availability.

#### **VI. Treasurer's Report** **Financials**

- June revenues: **\$1.5 million** (\$37,000 over budget)
- Transit tax receipts: **\$146,000** (\$26,000 over budget)
- June expenses: **\$2.8 million** (\$400,000 under budget)
- Year-to-date revenues: **\$17.1 million** (under budget by \$13,000)
- Cash on hand: **\$8.5 million**, with \$5.4 million available for operations
- Sales tax increased **3.9%** year-over-year in June
- Transient tax up **6.5%** in June, but down **8.1%** year-to-date

#### **VII. CEO report**

**President and CEO, Ed Harris provided the CEO report.**

##### **Tourism Industry Analysis**

- National tourism trends showing declines; major chains (e.g., Marriott) reforecasting travel demand

- Luxury market remains strong, while other segments face reductions
- Virginia destinations outperforming U.S. averages in occupancy levels
- Williamsburg: strong weekend occupancy but notable weekday declines (20-point gap)
- RevPAR around \$180, competitive with Virginia peers except Virginia Beach

#### Sales & Sports Success

- Successful business signings at multiple trade shows, including African American Travel Conference and Virginia Society of Association Executives
- Secured *Historic Hotels of America* annual convention for next year (500 room nights)
- New sports website launched with updated photography and creative content
- 85,000 room nights under agreement for sports groups over next three years (~\$9 per room investment)
- Sports center opening confirmed for next year

#### Marketing Performance & Initiatives

- New agency partnerships driving higher website traffic and social media engagement
- *Summer Savings Pass* promotion generated 133,000 website visitors and offered \$600+ in deals
- Top-performing deals: Colonial Williamsburg, Busch Gardens, Bubba's Ice Cream Shack, ghost tours, Jamestown Settlement, Water Country USA
- "America's Journey Begins" campaign continuing as national brand positioning
- New video and photography completed across the Historic Triangle

#### Upcoming Events & New Initiatives

- *Pancake Trail* launching Sept. 1 with app and point-earning system
- *Pancake Festival* planned to position Williamsburg as "Pancake Capital of the World"
- *Virginia Black Film Festival* scheduled for Feb. 5–8 (dates may shift one week)
- *Paranormal Cirque* considering Halloween weekend stop in Williamsburg
- *International Fireworks Championship* targeting Yorktown for 2026 Yorktown Day
- *250th Quilt Project* collecting 12x12 squares nationwide for 250-foot quilt display

#### Major Media Opportunities Discussion

- *Today Show* option
- *Good Morning America* option: 2.6M audience reach

- Syndicated options (*Kelly & Mark, Kelly Clarkson Show*) targeting female decision-makers with integrated campaigns
- Board discussion favored syndicated shows for broader targeting and multiple touchpoints throughout the year
- Decision expected in the coming weeks for 250th anniversary marketing

**VIII. New Business**

- None

**IX. Old Business**

- None

**X. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.



## Treasurer's Report

## Revenue / Expenses July 2025

	Month		
	Actual	Budget	Variance
<b>REVENUE</b>			
Sales Tax (58.1-603.2)	1,344,815	1,332,138	12,677
\$1 Transient Tax	137,588	131,815	5,773
Maintenance of Effort Funds	38,666	38,666	(0)
Other	19,826	7,282	12,544
Unrestricted Reserves	0	0	0
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>1,540,896</b>	<b>1,509,901</b>	<b>30,995</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Marketing Activities	635,058	906,205	271,147
Employee Expenses	52,710	57,060	4,350
Total Destination Marketing	687,768	963,265	275,497
Sales Activities	272,392	251,995	(20,397)
Employee Expenses	71,302	93,439	22,137
Total Sales & Other Marketing	343,693	345,434	1,741
Administrative Services	25,339	33,682	8,343
Admin Employee Expenses	74,482	70,134	(4,348)
Total Administration	99,821	103,816	3,995
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,131,281</b>	<b>1,412,515</b>	<b>281,234</b>
<b>Net Revenue Expense by Month</b>	<b>409,614</b>	<b>97,386</b>	<b>312,228</b>

# Treasurer's Report

## Revenue / Expenses Fiscal YTD as of July 2025

	FY 2026		
	Actual	Budget	Variance
<b>REVENUE</b>			
Sales Tax (58.1-603.2)	1,344,815	1,332,138	12,677
\$1 Transient Tax	137,588	131,815	5,773
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Other	19,826	7,282	12,544
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<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,131,281</b>	<b>1,412,515</b>	<b>281,234</b>
<b>Net Revenue Expense by Month</b>	<b>409,614</b>	<b>97,386</b>	<b>312,228</b>

<b>Net Position - Beginning of Year</b>	<b>3,580,461</b>	<b>3,580,461</b>	<b>0</b>
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<b>Net Position - Current YTD</b>	<b>3,990,075</b>	<b>3,677,847</b>	<b>312,228</b>
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Budget Remaining	Percent Remaining
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14,240,109	91.4%
1,474,767	91.5%
87,934	69.5%
109,221	
1,150,000	100.0%
<b>17,062,030</b>	<b>91.7%</b>

12,304,026	95.1%
631,189	92.3%
12,935,215	95.0%
2,057,667	88.3%
1,047,837	93.6%
3,105,505	90.0%
581,714	95.8%
849,210	91.9%
1,430,924	93.5%
<b>17,471,645</b>	<b>93.9%</b>

## Treasurer's Report

Cash on Hand  
July 2025

### Operating Cash

Cash Balances	May-25		
	Actual	Budget	Variance
Bank Account Balances: operations			
BB&T Reserve Checking	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
BB&T ICS Investment Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Ches Bank Checking	\$ 7,744,946	\$ 5,096,678	\$ 2,648,268
Ches Bank Payroll	\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000
Ches Bank CD	\$ 783,970	\$ -	\$ 783,970
<b>Total Cash on Hand</b>	<b>\$ 8,529,916</b>	<b>\$ 5,096,678</b>	<b>\$ 3,433,238</b>

Jun-25		
Actual	Budget	Variance
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ 7,696,095	\$ 4,671,457	\$ 3,024,638
\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000
\$ 788,476	\$ -	\$ 788,476
<b>\$ 8,485,571</b>	<b>\$ 4,671,457</b>	<b>\$ 3,814,114</b>

Jul-25		
Actual	Budget	Variance
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ 7,230,328	\$ 4,919,085	\$ 2,311,243
\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000
\$ 790,786	\$ -	\$ 790,786
<b>\$ 8,022,114</b>	<b>\$ 4,919,085</b>	<b>\$ 3,103,029</b>

Key Sources of Funds	May-25		
	Actual	Budget	Variance
State Disbursement	\$ 1,402,273	\$ 1,366,900	\$ 35,373
<b>Total Gov't Sources</b>	<b>\$ 1,402,273</b>	<b>\$ 1,366,900</b>	<b>\$ 35,373</b>

Jun-25		
Actual	Budget	Variance
\$ 1,461,596	\$ 1,437,770	\$ 23,826
<b>\$ 1,461,596</b>	<b>\$ 1,437,770</b>	<b>\$ 23,826</b>

Jul-25		
Actual	Budget	Variance
\$ 1,482,403	\$ 1,463,953	\$ 18,450
<b>\$ 1,482,403</b>	<b>\$ 1,463,953</b>	<b>\$ 18,450</b>

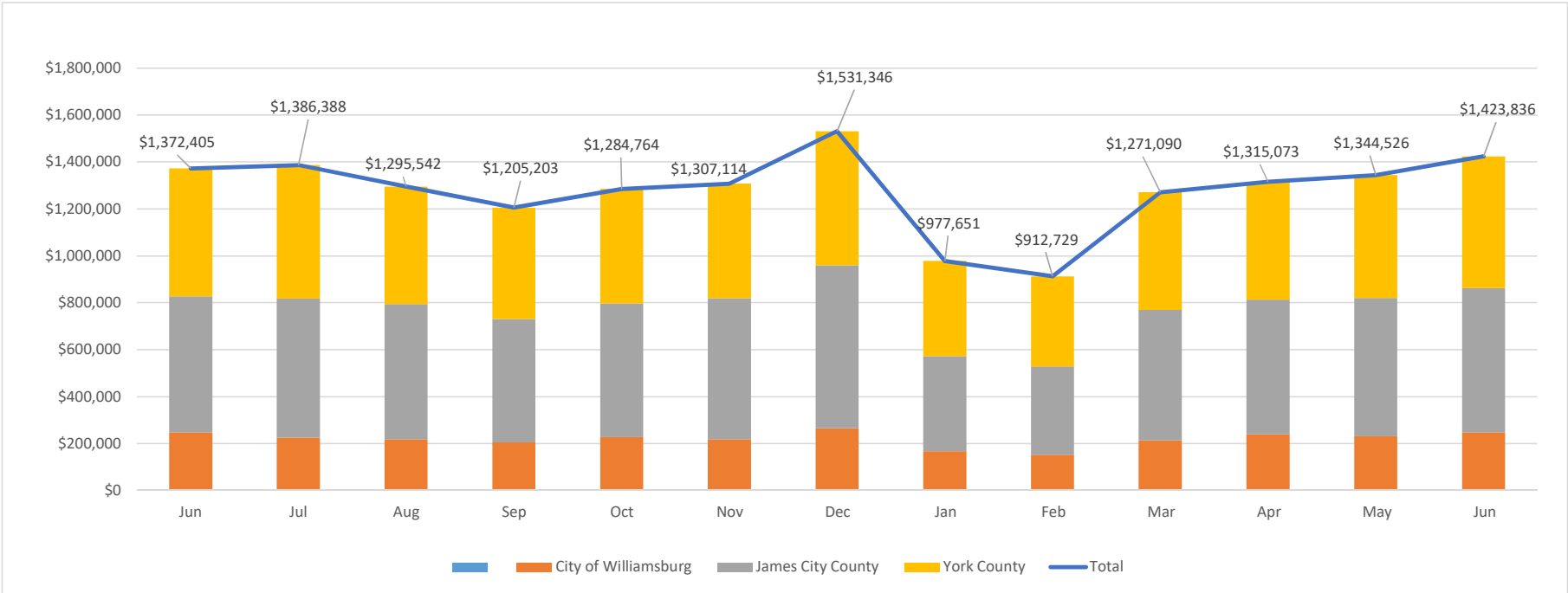
Interest Earned:			
State Interest Paid	\$ 18,166	\$ -	\$ 18,166
BB&T Reserve Checking	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
BB&T ICS Investment Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Ches Bank Checking	\$ 19,826	\$ 8,428	\$ 11,398
Ches Bank CD	\$ 2,092	\$ -	\$ 2,092
<b>Total Interest Earned</b>	<b>\$ 40,084</b>	<b>\$ 8,428</b>	<b>\$ 31,656</b>

\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ 17,287	\$ 6,553	\$ 10,734
\$ 2,276	\$ -	\$ 2,276
<b>\$ 19,564</b>	<b>\$ 6,553</b>	<b>\$ 13,011</b>

\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
\$ 17,516	\$ 7,282	\$ 10,234
\$ 2,310	\$ -	\$ 2,310
<b>\$ 19,826</b>	<b>\$ 7,282</b>	<b>\$ 12,544</b>

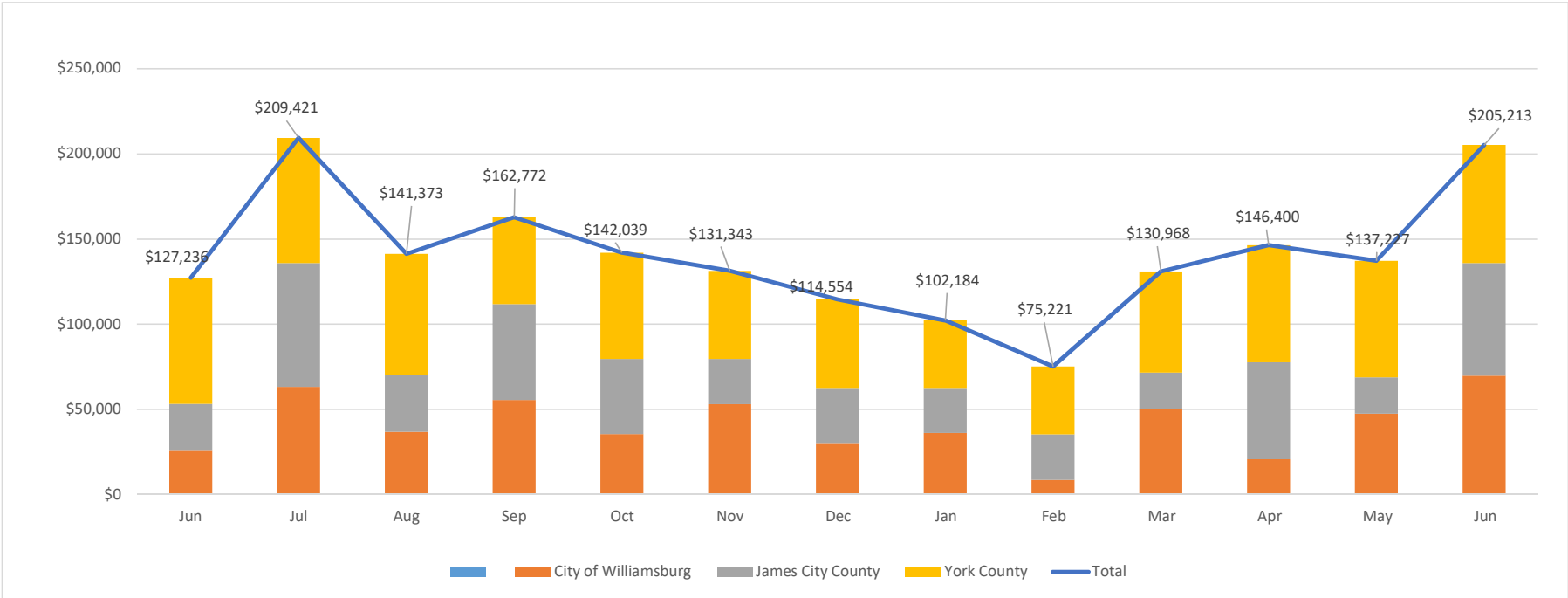
Accounts payable balance as of July 31, 2025:	\$ 2,239,479
Uncleared checks & payments balance:	19,228
<b>Total Open Payables transactions:</b>	<b>\$ 2,258,707</b>

SOURCE: York County, Office of the Commissioner of Revenue



§§ 58.1-603.2 1/2 of 1%													
CY 2024/2025	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
City of Williamsburg	\$224,996	\$217,995	\$205,427	\$228,284	\$217,692	\$266,141	\$167,800	\$152,131	\$212,669	\$239,626	\$230,344	\$247,996	\$2,611,102
James City County	\$592,979	\$577,012	\$525,458	\$568,215	\$601,388	\$692,950	\$405,348	\$376,020	\$556,313	\$573,465	\$589,691	\$614,553	\$6,673,392
York County	\$568,412	\$500,534	\$474,318	\$488,266	\$488,034	\$572,255	\$404,503	\$384,578	\$502,108	\$501,981	\$524,491	\$561,287	\$5,970,766
Total	\$1,386,388	\$1,295,542	\$1,205,203	\$1,284,764	\$1,307,114	\$1,531,346	\$977,651	\$912,729	\$1,271,090	\$1,315,073	\$1,344,526	\$1,423,836	\$15,255,260
Calendar YTD Total												\$7,244,904	
CY 2023/2024	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
City of Williamsburg	\$256,700	\$238,658	\$219,434	\$231,252	\$215,248	\$251,890	\$151,905	\$156,001	\$205,256	\$220,784	\$225,388	\$247,564	\$2,620,079
James City County	\$560,191	\$633,248	\$519,452	\$526,194	\$541,964	\$666,053	\$387,783	\$426,600	\$511,176	\$540,740	\$567,007	\$580,550	\$6,460,958
York County	\$565,487	\$548,731	\$468,981	\$460,830	\$480,182	\$538,830	\$406,530	\$449,044	\$484,614	\$492,522	\$502,201	\$544,291	\$5,942,242
Total	\$1,382,378	\$1,420,637	\$1,207,867	\$1,218,276	\$1,237,394	\$1,456,773	\$946,218	\$1,031,645	\$1,054,706	\$1,254,046	\$1,294,596	\$1,372,405	\$14,876,940
Calendar YTD Total												\$6,953,616	

SOURCE: York County, Office of the Commissioner of Revenue



Transient Tax \$1 of the \$2													
CY2024/2025	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
City of Williamsburg	\$63,258	\$36,943	\$55,555	\$35,630	\$53,107	\$29,801	\$36,219	\$8,660	\$50,132	\$20,733	\$47,483	\$69,882	\$507,403
James City County	\$72,671	\$33,323	\$56,196	\$43,992	\$26,600	\$32,345	\$25,924	\$26,698	\$21,595	\$56,932	\$21,651	\$65,958	\$483,885
York County	\$73,492	\$71,107	\$51,021	\$62,417	\$51,636	\$52,408	\$40,041	\$39,863	\$59,242	\$68,735	\$68,454	\$69,373	\$707,789
Total	\$209,421	\$141,373	\$162,772	\$142,039	\$131,343	\$114,554	\$102,184	\$75,221	\$130,969	\$146,400	\$137,588	\$205,213	\$1,699,077
Calendar YTD Total												\$797,575	
CY2023/2024	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
City of Williamsburg	\$33,812	\$30,119	\$37,836	\$41,814	\$31,726	\$33,937	\$36,901	\$35,855	\$18,595	\$79,266	\$31,299	\$25,601	\$436,761
James City County	\$69,058	\$31,594	\$35,602	\$41,928	\$32,135	\$24,009	\$38,773	\$25,548	\$32,557	\$40,469	\$25,431	\$27,535	\$424,639
York County	\$66,116	\$55,352	\$54,061	\$51,203	\$46,505	\$53,418	\$41,665	\$41,277	\$60,426	\$64,157	\$72,501	\$74,100	\$680,781
Total	\$168,986	\$117,065	\$127,499	\$134,945	\$110,366	\$111,364	\$117,339	\$102,680	\$111,578	\$183,892	\$129,231	\$127,236	\$1,542,181
Calendar YTD Total												\$771,956	