TOWN OF BLADENSBURG COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING | JULY 13, 2026

July 13, 2026 at 5:30 PM

4229 Edmonston RD, Bladensburg, MD 20710

AGENDA

Public Access Virtual via live stream of the Town's Facebook and YouTube pages:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCofIhVTBelD3c9oH8GYSW0g

https://www.facebook.com/Bladensburgmd

1. **Call to Order – 1 min**
2. **Approval of Agenda – 1 min**
3. **Approval of Minutes– 1 min**
   - A. Approval of June 8, 2026 work session minutes
4. **Unfinished Business**
5. **New Business**
   - **A.** 52nd Avenue Update (Guest attendees: SHA representative and Senator Augustine)**– 25 min**
   - B. Port Town Bus Operations**– 15 min**
   - **C.** PALS Project poster presentation (Wayfinding and Port Town branding)**– 10 min**
   - **D.** Town Manager's Report-Gloves Up Guns Down Grant Update- **5 min**
   - E. Town Manager's Report-PILOT Program Discussion**- 10 min**
6. **Financial Business**
   - **A.** Grant and Scholarship Program discussion and funding recommendations**- 15 min**
7. **Adjournment**

Town of Bladensburg Council Work Session | June 8, 2026 5:30 PM Meeting Minutes

4229 Edmonston RD, Bladensburg, MD 20710

1. Call to Order

The Mayor called the meeting to order, welcoming attendees to the Bladensburg Town Council Work Session for Monday, June 8, 2026.

2. Approval of Agenda

Before the vote, the Mayor noted a clarification that Agenda Item 3b should read "May 16th budget session minutes," not as originally listed.

> A motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Council Member Dixon and seconded by Council Member Blount. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes

a. Approval of March 18, 2026 Budget Session Minutes

One correction was noted: on page 6, under the senior projects section, a reference to the "CARES team" was corrected to read "CAT team," referring to the town's community action team that could provide volunteer and organizational support for senior buildings in the absence of an active building council.

> A motion to approve the March 18, 2026 budget session minutes as corrected was made by Council Member Dixon and seconded by Council Member Brown. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Approval of May 16, 2026 Budget Session Minutes

It was noted that the minutes as originally titled showed an incorrect date of "May 9th," which was consistent with the agenda correction made earlier in the meeting. No further corrections were raised.

> A motion to approve the May 16, 2026 budget session minutes was made by Council Member Dixon and seconded by Council Member Blount. The motion carried unanimously.

c. Approval of May 11, 2026 Work Session Minutes

No corrections were offered.

> A motion to approve the May 11, 2026 work session minutes was made by Council Member Blount and seconded by Council Member Dixon. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Unfinished Business

a. Legislative Wrap-up

Ms. Kellye Bethea of LA Perez Consulting presented a legislative and budget briefing covering the 2026 Maryland General Assembly session and the Fiscal Year 2027 state budget, framed around three themes: constrained, comply, and compete.

Fiscal Environment: Ms. Bethea emphasized that while the FY27 state budget is balanced on paper, it relies on one-time measures, fund transfers, and spending restraint, and carries approximately $3 billion in deficiency appropriations. She cautioned the council not to read the balanced budget as a promise of new or ongoing support for municipalities, noting that flexible municipal aid from Prince George's County is projected to decrease by 11.3 percent. The key planning message was to assume flat or modest aid, avoid building recurring costs on short-term grants, and maintain local fiscal flexibility through reserves and multi-year forecasting.

Priority Legislation: Four legislative developments were identified as most relevant to Bladensburg:

- HB 1142 – Revenue Modernization Task Force: This legislation creates a formal state process to examine how county and municipal revenue structures can be modernized. Recommendations from the task force are due December 1, 2026. Ms. Bethea encouraged the town to document its service costs—storm water, road maintenance, code enforcement, grant administration—to make a compelling case for revenue reform ahead of the next session.
- Mason's Law – Drainage Inlet Safety: Passed following the tragic death of a child who fell into an uncovered storm drain, Mason's Law requires municipalities to complete an inventory of all open drainage inlets by July 1, 2027, and develop a prioritization plan by April 1, 2028. Ms. Bethea advised the town to begin this inventory work in the third quarter of 2026 and to explore coordination with Prince George's County, MDE, WSSC, and neighboring municipalities.
- Maryland Voting Rights Act of 2026: This law creates new legal exposure for municipalities if election structures or practices are found to dilute protected class voting power. Ms. Bethea recommended a proactive review of the town's election structure, candidate access, public notices, language access, and polling logistics—not because the current system is deficient, but to prevent future challenges.
- Housing and Transit-Oriented Development: The state is pushing for faster housing production and more certainty in development approvals, particularly near transit corridors. Ms. Bethea suggested Bladensburg is well-positioned to connect its geographic assets—Maryland Route 450, Kenilworth access, the Anacostia watershed, and proximity to transit—to funding requests for corridor revitalization, pedestrian safety, and storm water improvements.

Strategic Recommendations: Ms. Bethea outlined six recommended strategic responses: fiscal discipline and multi-year forecasting; pre-session briefings with county and state officials; identification of at least three grant-ready projects with scopes, cost estimates, and measurable outcomes; a compliance work plan for Mason's Law, voting rights, and FAMLI employer obligations; a corridor development agenda; and coordinated public safety outreach.

Council Discussion: The Mayor asked about timing for the governor's capital budget submissions, noting that fall briefings with the state delegation are already a practice but that getting into the capital budget has been more difficult. Ms. Bethea deferred the specific timeline to Principal Tony Perez but advised moving as early as possible. The Mayor also noted concern that the HB 1142 task force recommendations are due December 1—by which time legislative briefing season is already underway—and stressed the importance of getting in front of the right decision-makers well before the session opens in January. She underscored the urgency of reforming the municipal sales tax share, noting it has not been updated in roughly 60 years and is not sustainable given the town's current budget constraints. The council expressed appreciation for the presentation and directed staff to share the materials with the Public Works Director regarding Mason's Law compliance planning.

b. 52nd Avenue Update — Partnership with State Highway Administration & Part-time Public Works Staff Update

Town Administrator Brian Wood provided background on the 52nd Avenue one-way pilot project, which was initiated approximately two years ago with state funding to improve pedestrian safety, bicycle access, and environmental conditions along the narrow corridor. The pilot involved the installation of Jersey barriers to close one travel lane. The pilot funding has since expired, and the barriers have deteriorated, with issues including overgrowth, litter accumulation, displaced barriers from turning vehicles, and residual two-way travel despite posted signage. The State Highway Administration has designed a permanent solution to reconstruct the street as a formal one-way corridor, but that project is approximately two years away from construction.

A recent meeting with SHA District 3 staff identified a potential interim path: the state would fund the replacement of the current barriers with a new configuration—smaller, grouped segments rather than a continuous line—to better accommodate turning movements and reduce displacement. The question before the council was whether the town wished to continue the one-way configuration and enter a maintenance partnership with SHA during the interim period, including the possible rehiring of part-time Public Works staff.

Council Member Brown expressed reservations about the town bearing the financial and operational burden of maintaining a state road, particularly given current budget constraints. She noted the road's current condition is worse than when it was two-way and questioned whether the town has the equipment and staffing capacity to take on the maintenance role. She indicated openness to continuing if SHA demonstrates meaningful commitment, including immediate cleanup of the corridor.

The Mayor argued strongly in favor of maintaining the one-way configuration and the SHA partnership. She cited data showing increased pedestrian and cyclist use since the conversion and cautioned that reverting to two-way traffic would eliminate any safe cycling option on the narrow road. She also warned that damaging the relationship with SHA could cause the town to lose its priority position for the permanent reconstruction project, potentially delaying it by years.

Council Member Dixon expressed frustration with the pace of SHA's responsiveness, citing the unresolved stop sign request following a resident fatality as an example, and indicated she was open to reverting to two-way traffic. She also raised the possibility of stop sign cameras along the stretch, particularly given the nearby school.

Council Member Blount suggested that cameras could help enforce the one-way configuration while the longer-term solution is developed.

Council Member McBryde reflected on past community concerns and expressed uncertainty about whether the current configuration, given its deteriorated condition, is safer than a two-way street.

Commander Frishkorn (Public Safety) noted that speed and stop sign cameras require SHA approval and involve a separate county-level process. He confirmed that the stop sign camera ordinance has passed the county subcommittee and is awaiting full county council action, which would then allow the town to pursue installation in this area.

Following the discussion, the Mayor directed Town Administrator Wood to: (1) contact SHA to request an initial cleanup of the corridor regardless of the longer-term decision; (2) draft a proposed MOU codifying specific SHA responsibilities for the interim maintenance period; (3) explore the feasibility of deploying one to two part-time Public Works staff during summer months for broader litter and maintenance support, including at the Kenilworth ramps and American Bloom areas; and (4) invite SHA District 3 Engineer Mr. Gunn and his team to the July work session so the council can receive additional information before making a final decision on the maintenance partnership.

c. 58th Avenue Community Garden — Update

Town Administrator Wood reported on a recent meeting with Eco City Farms regarding the proposed 10-plot community garden at 58th Avenue, which also includes a planned youth outdoor classroom adjacent to a nearby elementary school. Two challenges were identified: (1) the inability to secure a Memorandum of Understanding with Prince George's County Public Schools, which is required to incorporate the classroom component; and (2) the absence of a permanent water source, as a long-term solution would require trenching and easements through school property or access to a fire hydrant.

Mr. Wood noted that Eco City Farms has indicated they do not intend to operate the garden indefinitely and would look to transfer operational responsibility to the town within a few years. He asked for council direction on whether the town would be willing to accept that operational role in the future, noting it is important to have that conversation before construction begins.

The Mayor offered to reach out to the town's school board liaison to help advance the MOU. On the question of water access, she indicated that donating a water buffalo as an interim solution appeared reasonable, and Mr. Wood confirmed that Public Works could have one set up and operational within a few days using existing water trucks. The Mayor expressed hesitation about committing to long-term operation of the garden, suggesting that the school or another community partner might be better positioned, while affirming the value of the urban farm to the community—particularly for the large immigrant population near the corridor.

5. Financial Business

a. Budget Update and Modifications — Mayor's and Council's Salary and Mayor's Vehicle

Town Administrator Wood introduced two related topics carried over from the May 16th budget open house: elected official compensation and the use of a town vehicle by the Mayor.

On compensation, Mr. Wood clarified the charter framework: any change to the Mayor's salary would not take effect until the next mayoral election (per Charter Section 2-02), and any change to a council member's salary would not take effect until that particular seat is next up for election (per Charter Section 2-03). As a result, no change to compensation would affect the FY27 budget regardless of what the council decides.

Council Member Blount reiterated her view that the Mayor's level of effort—including travel to Annapolis, multi-meeting days, and representing the town across a wide range of functions—warrants a higher level of compensation, and expressed strong support for both a salary adjustment and the provision of a town vehicle. Council Member Dixon echoed this sentiment, describing the Mayor's consistent representation of the town and her availability as Mayor Pro Tem when the Mayor is double-booked.

Council Member Brown noted that compensation had not come up during any of the regular budget review sessions and expressed surprise that it was raised at the public budget open house. She affirmed support for following the charter process and acknowledged the demands of the mayoral role, while noting the town cannot absorb any new costs in FY27.

Mr. Tinelli raised the related topic of an insurance opt-out benefit, noting that of approximately 54 town employees, three to four do not participate in the town's health insurance plan—including himself, the Interim Town Administrator, and at least one council member. He noted that other governments have provided a modest taxable benefit to employees who waive coverage, and that if those individuals were to enroll, the cost to the town would exceed $80,000–$100,000. The council expressed interest in exploring this as part of the broader compensation discussion.

On the Mayor's vehicle, Mr. Wood provided historical context: a comprehensive personnel manual was adopted in March 2019, and on January 11, 2021, Resolution 111-21 was adopted by a 3-1 vote, amending the personnel manual to restrict vehicle use by elected officials. Reinstating vehicle access for the Mayor would not require a charter amendment but would require a new resolution amending the personnel manual. The council directed Mr. Wood to bring a draft resolution and supporting information to the July work session.

b. Budget Update and Modifications — Mid-year Budget Topics for Review

This item was deferred in the interest of time.

c. Budget Update and Modifications — Grants List

This item was deferred in the interest of time.

6. New Business

a. 57th Street Repairs — Update

This item was not separately discussed and will be addressed at a future meeting.

b. Community Grants, Scholarships and Discretionary Funds — Decision Point

Town Administrator Wood summarized the status of the community grant and scholarship programs. Nine organizations applied for community grants of up to $2,000 each. Three individuals applied for scholarships; however, none of the scholarship applicants met the eligibility requirements due to GPA or residency issues.

Mr. Wood presented the option of redirecting the unused $5,000 in scholarship funds to expand the community grant pool, which would bring the total available to $15,000—still approximately $3,000 short of fully funding all nine applicants at $2,000 each. The council discussed the option but agreed it was premature to make final allocation decisions without reviewing all nine applicants together.

Mr. Tinelli confirmed that the funds can be appropriated and held, with a final allocation decision made at the July meeting. The council reached consensus to roll the scholarship funds into the grant pool and return to the July work session with a full review of all nine applicants to determine which organizations to fund.

7. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Council Member McBryde and seconded by Council Member Blount. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned.

TOWN OF BLADENSBURG

Office of the Town Administrator
4229 Edmonston Road, Bladensburg, MD 20710

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Interim Town Administrator

DATE: July 13, 2026

RE: Decision Point Memo – Port Towns Bus Program

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to update the Mayor and Town Council on discussions between Town staff and the Town of Colmar Manor regarding the future of the Port Towns Bus program, and to present a decision point regarding a potential transfer of program operations to the Town of Bladensburg.

BACKGROUND

Staff held a productive meeting with representatives from Colmar Manor regarding the operation of the Port Towns Bus. The proposal under consideration would transfer all program operations from Colmar Manor to Bladensburg, in recognition of the fact that Bladensburg residents make up over 90% of program ridership.

CURRENT PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE

The Port Towns Bus is currently operated under a partnership between Colmar Manor and Bladensburg, structured as follows:

- Colmar Manor administers the program and owns the bus.
- Colmar Manor employs both part-time bus drivers on its payroll.
- Bladensburg stores the bus and reimburses Colmar Manor based on Bladensburg ridership, plus a 10% administrative fee paid to Colmar Manor.

KEY POINTS

1. The Port Towns Bus currently serves both Colmar Manor and Bladensburg residents, with well over 90% of monthly ridership coming from Bladensburg.
2. The bus itself is nearing the end of its useful life. A decision regarding replacement of the vehicle, and the long-term structure of the program, will need to be made within the next 12 to 18 months.

DECISION POINT / REQUEST

Colmar Manor has requested that the Town of Bladensburg assume full administration of the Port Towns Bus program. This would include:

- Taking over administration of the program from Colmar Manor;
- Hiring or absorbing the two part-time bus drivers currently employed by Colmar Manor; and
- Identifying an equitable method of transitioning ownership of the bus to Bladensburg.

One potential approach discussed would establish an agreed-upon value for the bus, with that value drawn down over time through continued service to Colmar Manor residents, in lieu of cash payment, until the value of the vehicle is fully offset.

Staff is bringing this matter forward now so that the Council has the opportunity to weigh in on the general direction of a potential transfer prior to detailed negotiations with Colmar Manor.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Council move forward with this proposal. Taking over administration of the Port Towns Bus program will give the Town greater control over the program and its day-to-day operations, and will provide the time needed to adequately assess what the program should look like going forward and how the Town would like to see it operate. Staff will bring forward a full briefing memo with detailed terms, including financial impact, staffing considerations, and a recommended transition timeline, for formal Council consideration.

BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

TO:	Mayor Takisha D. James and Members of the Town Council
FROM:	Interim Town Administrator
DATE:	July 13, 2026
RE:	**Proposed PILOT Ordinance and Agreement – Hamlet Woods (Hamlet Apartments, LLC)**

PURPOSE

This memorandum outlines the elements of the proposed Payment in Lieu of Taxes ("PILOT") Agreement between the Town of Bladensburg and Hamlet Apartments, LLC ("Owner") for the Hamlet Woods affordable housing project, and provides a financial analysis of the payment structure being proposed.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Owner is developing 59 units of new affordable, townhouse-style multi-family rental housing on a 13.3-acre site at 57th Avenue / 5200 Egret Lane (Tax ID 02-0094979). All 59 units will serve households at or below 60% of Area Median Income; 3 units will meet Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards and 2 will accommodate residents with sensory impairments. The Project is financed in part through a Prince George's County Housing Investment Trust Fund loan ($2,500,000), CDA tax-exempt bond financing ($10,240,000), CDA Rental Housing Works ($3,500,000), LIHTC investor equity ($11,644,738), and a deferred developer fee ($1,351,780). Prince George's County has already approved a 30-year PILOT for the Project under CR-036-2023.

Under §1-1308 of the Local Government Article and §7-506.1 of the Tax-Property Article, the Town may accept a negotiated PILOT in place of full real property taxes for qualifying affordable projects, provided the Owner maintains the property as restricted housing for lower-income persons for at least five years — here, for the full 30-year term via a Rental and Regulatory Agreement recorded in favor of the County.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS — PILOT PAYMENT COMPARISON

Two payment structures have been modeled for the 30-year term. Absent this Agreement, the Property would be taxed as vacant land at approximately $3,228/year until construction is complete, then at full assessed value once developed (Year 1 estimated assessed value: $7,972,973; Town rate $0.74/$100), producing an estimated full Year-1 tax bill of $59,000. Both scenarios below assume the Project is fully assessed as built.

	Owner-Proposed PILOT	**Town Counter-Proposal**
Base PILOT/Unit (Yr 1)	$500/unit — $29,500 total	$600/unit — $35,400 total
Escalation	2.0% per year, flat, all 30 years	2% (Yrs 1–10), 3% (Yrs 11–20), 4% (Yrs 21–30), plus Town tax-rate increases
Year 1 Payment	$29,500	$35,400
Year 10 Payment	$35,255	$42,306
Year 20 Payment	$42,976	$56,856
Year 30 Payment	$52,387	$84,161
Cumulative PILOT Paid (30 yrs)	**$1,196,758**	**$1,597,089**
Est. Full Tax Without PILOT (30 yrs)	$2,393,517	$2,762,300
Town Revenue Foregone (30 yrs)	**$1,196,758**	**$1,165,211**

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KEY FINDINGS

- The Town's counter-proposal collects roughly $400,000 more in cumulative PILOT payments over the 30-year term than the Owner's original proposal ($1,597,089 vs. $1,196,758).
- Under the Town's structure, foregone tax revenue over 30 years is about $31,500 lower than under the Owner's proposal, because the higher starting payment and tiered escalation (2%/3%/4%) more closely track assessed-value growth and future Town tax-rate increases.
- The draft Agreement circulated for execution reflects the Town's $600/unit ($35,400 total) starting payment, consistent with the Town-proposed model above. Staff notes the Agreement describes the escalator as "2.5% per year plus any adopted Town tax increase," which differs from the tiered 2%/3%/4% schedule used in the financial model; staff will reconcile before final execution so the recorded Agreement and the Town's financial projections match.
- Payments are due September 30 each year, are billed and collected by Prince George's County on the Town's behalf, and carry the same lien, interest, and tax-sale remedies as delinquent County property taxes.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Council introduce Ordinance **-2026 approving the PILOT Agreement in substantially the form of the ordinance drafted by the Town legal council, reflecting the Town-proposed payment schedule ($600/unit, $35,400 Year-1 total, 30-year term).