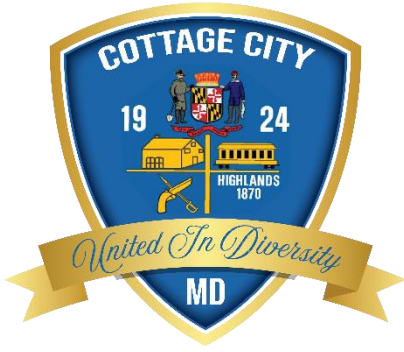




Special Town Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 7, 2025, at 6:30 PM

Virtual Only Meeting

3820 40th Avenue Cottage City, Maryland 20722

This meeting was hosted on Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86040053579?pwd=weTzoxMYPN5WgYyPY6S5Vfr9KISofU.1>

Phone: 301-715-8592 | Meeting ID: 860 4005 3579 | Passcode: 994069

Call to Order at 6:30 PM

Attendees

1. Ward 1 - Commissioner Salsich
2. Ward 2 - Commissioner Henderson
3. Ward 3 - Commissioner Wheatley
4. Ward 4 - Commissioner Givens
5. At-Large - Commissioner Brooks
6. John Hoatson - Town Manager
7. Kevin J. Best - Town Attorney

Agenda

The motion to suspend the rules to vote in the special meeting was made by Commissioner Brooks and seconded by Commissioner Henderson. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye & Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

1. Appointment of the Acting Chief of Police (06:39)

Mr. Hoatson presented the Town of Cottage City resolution to approve the appointment of an acting chief of police and naming the temporary successors to the previously appointed Ombudsman and program administrator for the speed camera program as introduced by Commissioner Chair Wheatley and the Commission.

Ward 1 Commissioner Salsich flagged changing the pay of the position to increase after 30 days instead of 120 days. Ward 4 Commissioner Givens noted that the Commission should adhere to what had been previously approved but that they could revisit at another meeting. Commissioner Givens suggested a \$10,000/year increase over the sergeant's pay for the Acting Chief. At-Large Commissioner Brooks concurred that the increase in pay after 30 days had already been agreed to and there was some uncertainty as to the actual rate of pay.

Ward 4 Commissioner Givens flagged that this was an issue covered in the Personnel Handbook. Mr. Kevin Best gave context for how the Commission could make exceptions or change the Personnel Handbook. Discussion of the salary increase is tabled until a later meeting.

The Acting Sargeant has not been in the position of Acting Chief but that is the proposal and the reason for this meeting.

2. Public Comment (33:52)

Ms. Amy Sawyer spoke about the erosion of transparency, accountability, and public trust in town governance. Specifically, about the large turnover in employment at the Town Hall. She requests a formal public report detailing the staff who have been terminated or departed, the rationale for those departures, and a plan for restoring continuity and institutional memory.

Ms. Ann Young asked if a permanent police chief was to be hired, and what the timeline. Mr. Hoatson responded that resumes have been received and they are being sorted through, and that residents will be included in the search panel.

Mr. Kevin Best responded to Ms. Sawyer's comment that personnel matters, and particularly those regarding performance, are confidential and therefore not disclosed in a public forum.

3. Appointment of an Acting Chief of Police (51:49)

Ward 3 Commissioner Wheatley returned the discussion to the appointment of an acting chief of police and nominated the highest ranking person in the police department, Acting Sergeant Thompson.

The motion to appoint Corporal Thompson acting chief was made by Commissioner Givens and seconded by Commissioner Henderson. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye & Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

4. Adjournment (57:26)

All meetings are subject to closure pursuant to the Maryland Open Meetings Act: Pursuant to the Annotated Code of Maryland, State Government Article Section 10-508(a), the Council by majority vote may retire to executive or closed session at any time during the meeting. Should the Commission retire to executive or closed sessions the Chair will announce the reasons, and a report will be issued at a future meeting disclosing the reasons for such closed session.

The motion to adjourn was made at 7:23 PM by Commissioner Givens and seconded by Commissioner Brooks. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye & Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.