



April 2025 Regular Town Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 9, 2025, at 7:00 PM

Virtual and In-Person Meeting

3820 40th Avenue Cottage City, Maryland 20722

This meeting was hosted on Zoom and at Cottage City Town Hall:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/YT6x1WtsMjEt8JvJgeCvIptWpKuP8ssdzJ_uFdqu_k8WeGGJBkRN1Mzzzf3aj1By.ngehLvarW3-l6xYq?startTime=1744239728000

Phone: 301-715-8592 | Meeting ID: 825 7367 1277 | Passcode: &R5Y6Tk\$

Call to Order at 7:03 PM

Attendees

1. Ward 1 – Commissioner Young
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. Todd Frankenfield – Town Treasurer Alta CPA Group
8. Kevin Best – Town Attorney
9. Anthony Ayers – Police Chief
10. Michael Galgano – Paycom
11. Kaleb Berhane – resident
12. Josh Durant – resident
13. Laura Guischarde – resident
14. Denise Hamler – resident
15. Bill Kopecki – resident
16. Amy Sawyer – resident

Agenda

1. Call to Order and Recital of the Pledge of Allegiance (0:54)

All Commissioners present and accounted for.

2. Consent Agenda – Approval of March 2025 Minutes, Financial Report, Public Safety Report, and Public Works Report (3:34)

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to approve the March 2025 Minutes and Financial Report. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Young-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

3. Public Safety Report (7:17)

Last month there were a few dog complaints. They found the dog's owner and turned the matter to animal control to enforce getting paperwork and vaccinations for the dog. Police also distributed information to the public about keeping dogs on leash and cleaning up after them.

There was a hate crime in the town where someone spraypainted graffiti on the sidewalk and trash can. PG County and Homeland Security is assisting with the investigation.

Regarding traffic cutting through Town, Police talked to Waze to make the streets restricted which has decreased traffic.

Police have also adjusted schedules to have more police visibility in evening and night hours. They are also talking to a security company with their own cars and insurance about additional patrols for summer evening coverage. For three four-hour shifts a week would cost \$1,440 per month or \$17,280 a year. Could be paid from speed camera funds and could be a month-to-month contract. Chief Ayers is seeking permission to get two other bids. Commissioner Brooks wants to know how much the Town makes on speed cameras a month, and it's approximately \$30,000 per month. The Commission verbally OKed getting the new bids.

Police Department will write something for the newsletter about the new speed cameras on 38th. Red light cameras are still being put up. Commission Chair Wheatley wants notice to go about those as well.

Kevin Best noted that red light cameras are unlimited in terms using the income that could come in.

4. Public Works (54:47)

Commissioner Givens reported that they have been interviewing skilled candidates for the new position.

Two more dog waste stations with hand sanitizers have been installed around town. New trash cans are in. They're black and could be repainted later

5. Commissioner Ward Reports (59:11)

- Ward 1 – None.
- Ward 2 – Car was up on jacks for a month. No enforcement. Commissioner Henderson is concerned that the trash is put out too early. Also concerned that scooters don't stop for stop signs. The suggestion was that something should be put in the newsletter to warn scooters of the dangers of running stop signs. Some trash may be the fault of trash collection.
- Ward 3 – None.
- Ward 4 – Commission should require use of trash bags.
- At-Large – None.

6. Paycom Presentation (1:06:48)

Michal Galgano presented with the possibility of changing to a different payroll service. Paycom would be a single database through a phone app to help track time. Cost is \$11,923.08 plus a set-up fee of \$3707.50. This includes onboarding, background checks, drug testing, time and attendance, and tax deposits.

Paychex is approximately \$9,000 per year. The set-up fee is negotiable.

7. Commercial Tax Rate (1:25:38)

Town Treasurer posted chart of what the commercial tax rate could be and what the income would be in those instances. It is currently \$0.6735 per \$100 of assessed value. Commission reached consensus to raise the commercial tax rate to \$0.72 per \$100 of assessed value.

8. Public Comment on the Budget (1:39:19)

Denise Hamler feels the \$433,000 police budget is very high. She would also like to see grants separated from the budget. Amy Sawyer wants money to go to translation services because of the number of people who speak Spanish and French. She also wants meeting agendas to be distributed at least 24 hours in advance.

9. Old Business – Resolution for Use of the Town Shuttle (1:49:15)

Town of Cottage City Resolution 2025-04, a resolution approving a policy to authorize the Town Manager to schedule the use of the town shuttle bus. Commissioner Henderson suggested some rearrangements and that the tank needs to be re-filled after use.

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to move forward with Resolution 2025-04 with edits as suggested. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Young-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

10. Town Hall Lawn Maintenance Contracts (1:54:54)

Three bids for lawn and shrubbery maintenance for town-owned properties. American Landscaping bid \$17,897; Oak Lawn bid \$14,040; and Shamrock bid \$10,000.

Will Shamrock do insect and pest care? The Shamrock bid is very competitive and they provide good service.

Commissioner Young and Amy Sawyer have reservations about what herbicides are used. Green Team is going to investigate more environmentally friendly options and present in a couple of months. The Town already uses organic pesticides.

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to move forward with the Shamrock proposal for lawn care and specifying they don't use RoundUp weed killer. Commissioner Givens seconded the motion. Young-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

11. Trash Shed (2:25:37)

Commissioner Givens listed the items needed to replace the damaged Town Hall trash shed, which should total under \$2,000. No trees replaced in its removal.

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to move forward with the purchase of the materials to rebuild the trash shed not to exceed \$1,700. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Young-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

12. Resolution for Policy Regarding Confidential Information (2:30:52)

Town of Cottage City Resolution 2025-05, a resolution approving an elected and appointed official policy regarding confidential information. With the election coming up the goal is to ensure confidential information is not released.

Commissioner Young opposes the law in its entirety and does not believe the language is specific enough to enact. Commissioner Brooks rebutted that we are bound to confidentiality when it comes to personnel matters. Mr. Best believes that the proposed law may need minor wordsmithing but is generally good as written and is better to enact than not.

Josh Durant similarly feels it is too broad and that the enforcement mechanism and consequences unclear. This would also ban Commissioners from checking town email on personal devices.

Kaleb Berhane pointed out that the Commission is already governed by Maryland privacy laws and also believes the proposed resolution is too broad.

Amy Sawyer wrote to the Attorney General to investigate the actions of the Commission around private meetings.

Mr. Best suggested addition of censure or fines on how to enforce against an elected official. Maryland MPIA does not describe how to regulate email. He also reminded the body that the Maryland Open Meetings Act carves out 14 exceptions to items that should not be open to the public.

Commissioner Young expressed that she would like to be able to release information if she feels that it should be made public. Mr. Best reminded her that in a commission the majority rules and her desires are subordinate to the majority decision.

13. Sale of Used Public Works Equipment (3:13:51)

Commissioner Givens wants to sell the 2012 silver Ford F350 truck, the snow plow, the salt spreader, and an electric buggy to help offset the cost of new equipment. Public Works is working on an inventory. The consensus was to sell the items.

14. Town Manager Updates (3:31:14)

Town election is coming up on Monday May 5. Julia Salsich is running for Ward 1 and John Brooks for At-Large. Board of Supervisors is hosting a meet-and-greet on April 30 at 6:30 PM.

Arbor Day tree-planting event will be Friday, April 18. Easter Extravaganza will be Saturday, April 19.

April 23 is the first Wine-Down Wednesday at 6:30 PM at the Cottage City Gazebo. They are scheduled for April 23, May 21, June 18, July 16, and August 20.

Cottage City Day planning next meeting is April 24 at 6:30 PM. They are looking for volunteers.

15. Public Comments (3:35:20)

None.

16. Adjournment (2:41:50)

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 10:37 PM by Commissioner Brooks and seconded by Commissioner Henderson. Young-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.