



May 2025 Work Session Minutes

Tuesday, May 6, 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/rec/share/wikXeD2tS9CYUglLYh0_oV8IUPDyq_l6_2lanNjaFHQJAXHYelljhVfVSyCEWaWgb.tHEI2LX8GJ9TiSAK?startTime=1743546649000

Phone: 301-715-8592 | Meeting ID: 896 7022 5884 | Passcode: 7r+&s5Zv

Call to Order at 6:33 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 – ALTA CPA Group, Town Accountant
8. Kevin Best – Town Attorney
9. Anthony Ayers – Chief of Police
10. Robyn Barnhart – CPJ
11. Denise Hamler – resident
12. Bill Kopecki – resident
13. Amy Sawyer – resident

Agenda

1. Call to Order and Roll Call (0:20)

All commissioners are present and accounted for. No changes to the agenda.

2. New Town Website(2:50)

New website www.cottagecitymd.gov went live as of 5 PM on Tuesday, May 6, 2025. Information about meetings and events are more easily available. It can also be translated into several languages. See-Click-Fix is also a feature for Public Works tickets.

Commissioner Young observed that some people hadn't gotten the newsletter yet. Commissioner Givens suggested paying a stipend to make sure the newsletters were hand-delivered. There have been personnel hiccups with the USPS in the area. Commissioner Givens also wanted to make sure that people got back in touch with residents about their concerns.

3. Joint Resolution of Port Towns to Establish a CDC (14:09)

Joint resolution 2025-01, a joint resolution of the Mayors and Commission Chair Councils and Commission of the port towns of Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, Cottage City, and Edmonston to form a Community Development Corporation (CDC) and establish a governance structure.

Cottage City is being asked for \$15,000 for start-up costs. Money from previous CDC was given to ECO City Farms, so that \$15,000 needs to be budgeted for. Some discussion on where the amount came from, and Denise Hamler noted that it was on the second page of the resolution.

Commissioner Young wants the meetings to be open to the public.

Amy Sawyer wanted to know the difference between the Gateway Development Authority and the CDC and wants to know what happened with the previous group and what happened with the money it had.

4. Public Hearing for the Budget (33:14)

Public hearing to discuss the increase of the real commercial property tax rate of .6735 to .72. This was put in the newspaper and social media and circulated through the Constant Contact email list. Bill Kopecki noted he didn't see it.

5. Port Towns Composting (36:56)

Edmonston received a grant to start composting and they have invited Cottage City, Cheverly, and Bladensburg to participate. It will be free until November, 2025. ECO City Farms will pick up weekly on Wednesday when compost is placed in the bins they provide.

Julie ___ wanted to know what happens to the compost when it's processed. It will likely go to ECO City.

6. America in Bloom (45:29)

America in Bloom certifies sustainability, and they will be touring and surveying Cottage City on July 21. Cottage City has been asked for \$500 towards their hotel expenses. They will also be touring Colmar Manor, Edmonston, and Bladensburg and those towns will also help cover expenses.

No objections to spending \$500 to host the review team. Commission just needs to know what line item it comes from.

7. Resident Stickers (53:09)

Design provided by Ms. Proctor. Is there going to be a resident only one or will there be resident only and visitor as well? Chief does not believe visitor stickers are needed. Commissioner Wheatley agrees. No expiration date needed. A record of people will be kept. Commissioner Givens suggested a do not enter sign with specific times assigned.

8. 43rd Avenue Project (1:03:35)

Stormwater maintenance project paid for out of ARPA grants. Grant money will be lost if not done by end of August.

CPJ proposes to replace curb and gutter on both sides of 43rd Avenue, installing a trench drain, and milling and overlaying the entire road. The alley will be repaved with heavy duty concrete, and a curb installed. They will install French drains to siphon some of the water from residents' basements.

If money is left over then Chief Ayers suggested using money to fix draining on Bunker Hill Road.

Vote will be taken next week on May 14.

Amy Sawyer mentioned review by the Critical Area Commission. This is not necessary as this is maintenance, not moving soil. Commissioner Givens believes this is not necessary and that the county will intervene if needed. Ms. Sawyer is going to reach out to the Critical Area Commission.

9. First Reading of Ordinance 2025-02 Budget and Adopting Property Taxes (1:23:52)

Ordinance 2025-02: An Ordinance of the Cottage City Commission to Adopt a Budget and Levy Property Taxes. The total assessed value of residential property in the town is \$102 million, and the total assessed value of commercial property in the town is \$55 million.

Commissioner Givens wants to see the street sweeper in the budget and doesn't. It is on line 66-07. Discussion as to whether to include it or not is tabled.

10. Public Comments (1:35:46)

Mr. Felix on Cottage Terrace introduced himself.

Amy Sawyer doesn't understand the timeline on the budget and wants to have budget for translating meetings, Green Team projects, and giving money to students and teachers. The budget calendar is on the website.

11. Motion to Suspend the Rules (1:42:04)

The motion to suspend the rules was made by Commissioner Givens and seconded by Commissioner Brooks. Young-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, and Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

12. Move to a Closed Session (1:34:53)

Closed session proposed to be able to discuss personnel matters under Article 3-305 (b), to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction, any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals, to consult with attorney to obtain legal advice, and with staff or consultants or other individuals about pending or potential litigation.

The motion to move to a closed session was made at 8:23 PM by Commissioner Givens and seconded by Commissioner Brooks. Young-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

13. Report From Closed Session (1:58:47)

Interviewing three candidates for full-time public works position. Decided to hire Jose Gomez at \$26.75/hour.

14. Adjournment (2:00:47)

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 9:25 PM by Commissioner Givens and seconded by Commissioner Henderson. Young-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.