June Work Session Agenda

Tuesday, June 02, 2026 at 6:30 PM

3820 40th Avenue Cottage City, Maryland 20722

This meeting will be hosted on Zoom:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82409866461?pwd=kLBHmZvHtUGAAjbezJF3fPfelZXf2w.1

Phone: 301-715-8592 | Meeting ID: 824 0986 6461 **| Passcode:** 527527

Call to Order and Roll Call 6:30 PM

Attendees

1.) Commissioner Salsich- Ward 1
2.) Commissioner Durant- Ward 2
3.) Commissioner Chair Wheatley- Ward 3
4.) Commissioner Campos- Ward 4
5.) Commissioner Brooks- At-Large
6.) John Hoatson- Town Manager
7.) Chief Martini-Chief of Police
8.) Todd Frankenfield-Accountant ALTA CPA
9.) Denise Hamler-Resident
10.) Coach Montgomery-Mentoring Through Athletics
11.) Amy Sawyer-Resident
12.) Laura Guischard- Resident
13.) Phone Caller- Unknown

Review of Agenda

Public Comments

Anyone seeking to speak under Public Comments must sign in prior to the end of the Board Work Session. There is a 3-minute time limit. When you come up to speak, you will need to state your name, address, what organization that you represent and your topic of concern(s).

Resident Ms. Hamler gave the Commissioners two updates. The first was regarding the recently sold commercial properties located at 3700, 3708, 3712, and 3714 Bladensburg

Road, between 37th and 38th Avenue. The second update was about the Chesapeake Bay Grant and the requirements needed to meet the grant.

Commissioner Brooks brought up Resident Ann Young's concerns regarding the Cottage City Day flyer.

Commissioner Campos stated that Ann Young said the Cottage City Day flyer was unwelcoming.

Commissioner Brooks stated that Ann Young said a neighbor commented that residents must show identification and that the flyer was not welcoming.

Commissioner Durant stated that residents assumed the date listed on the flyer was the date of Cottage City Day.

The Commissioners discussed the issue further, and it was decided to remove the requirement to upload identification from the registration form.

Business

1. **Mentoring Through Athletics Presentation (Commission Discussion)**

Coach Montgomery provided an in-depth presentation on the Mentoring Through Athletics program and explained how it could be implemented in the Town if the Town decided to use the program for the children of the community.

Commissioner Salsich inquired about the age group served by the program.

Coach Montgomery stated that the age group is five to fourteen years old. Once the children turn fifteen or sixteen, many return to the organization to work and are paid to be part of the program.

Commissioner Durant inquired about which sports could be accommodated within the Town, noting that the tennis and basketball courts are Town property, but the athletic field does not belong to the Town and may require special permitting.

Coach Montgomery stated that the sports offered include cheerleading, basketball, flag football, soccer, chess, and volleyball.

Commissioner Brooks inquired about what the municipal budget support would entail.

Coach Montgomery stated that it depends on the number of children enrolled in the program. He provided an example of $2,500.00 per week for 25 children.

Commissioner Brooks inquired whether, if the Town decided to move forward with the program, the cost would be approximately $13,000.00 for two months.

Coach Montgomery stated that would be correct for two months.

2. **Pollinator Garden Presentation (Commission Discussion)**

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that Commissioner Durant was recusing himself from the vote but would participate in the discussion.

Commissioner Durant confirmed that was the case.

Resident Amy Sawyer presented information about creating a pollinator garden in front of Town Hall and discussed the benefits of establishing the garden. She also explained that the project would help the Town receive additional points through Sustainable Maryland.

Commissioner Salsich stated that she supports the Pollinator Garden.

Commissioner Durant expressed his support for the Pollinator Garden.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she supports the Pollinator Garden.

Commissioner Campos expressed his support for the Pollinator Garden and inquired who would be performing the labor.

Amy Sawyer stated that the garden would require minimal labor, which could be completed by Public Works and members of the community working together.

Commissioner Brooks inquired whether there would be contracts in place and, once the project begins, who would ensure it is completed, as well as the project's timeline.

Amy Sawyer stated that she is willing to sign a Letter of Intent.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he would like to see that happen so that if one person becomes overwhelmed, another person can step in and complete the project.

3. **<u>Motion To Suspend The Rules To Vote In The June Work Session (Commission Vote)</u>**

   <u>Motion</u>

   Commissioner Brooks made a motion to suspend the rules for voting. Commissioner Campos seconded the motion.

   Ward 1- Salsich Aye, Ward 2-Durant Aye, Ward 3-Wheatley Aye, Ward 4-Campos, At-Large- Brooks Aye.

   Motion Passes. No nays or abstentions.

4. **<u>Port Town Sector Plan Letter of Support (Commission Discussion & Possible Vote)</u>**

   The Town Manager stated that the Town submitted a letter of support to meet the May 26 deadline for public comments regarding the Port Town Sector Plan. He presented the letter on behalf of the Commission for submission as public testimony and read the letter into the record.

   Commissioner Brooks made a motion to move forward with the letter.

   Commissioner Durant seconded the motion.

   Ward 1- Salsich Aye, Ward 2-Durant Aye, Ward 3-Wheatley Aye, Ward 4-Campos, At-Large- Brooks Aye.

   Motion Passes. No nays or abstentions.

5. **<u>Draft Ordinance 2026-02: Adopt A Budget & Levy Property Taxes FY 2027 (First Reading & Commission Discussion)</u>**

   The Town Manager read Draft Ordinance 2026-02, the proposed FY 2027 budget, and opened the floor for the Commissioners' discussion.

Commissioner Durant inquired whether the tax rates would remain the same.

The Town Manager informed him that they would remain the same.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley inquired about the amount budgeted for the Police Department and whether it included the proposed salary increases for the officers.

The Town Manager informed her that he believes those salaries are included in the budget.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley also inquired whether the General Government and Public Works budget includes the proposed salary increases for employees.

The Town Manager informed her that it does.

Commissioner Brooks stated that Line Item 6054.1 proposes $5,395.00 for Family Relief in the new FY 2027 budget.

The Town Manager stated that the Share Food Program is budgeted at $9,000.00 and that Family Relief is a carryover of $20,610.00.

Todd Frankenfield stated that it is all General Fund money and that the ARPA funds would be fully expended by June 30, 2026.

Commissioner Brooks inquired about the total amount of both programs being funded from the General Fund.

Todd Frankenfield stated that the total is almost $30,000.00.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the Commission may want to increase funding for training for staff, the Town Manager, and the Commissioners.

The Town Manager stated that he would update the training budget.

Commissioner Salsich inquired whether the Commission had previously discussed that the ARPA money for Family Relief was carried over from the previous year.

Todd Frankenfield stated that when the Town enters FY 2027, the grant dollars are no longer available and the remaining expenses become General Fund expenditures.

Commissioner Salsich stated that if there was money remaining in Family Relief that was not spent, it would essentially be gone.

Todd Frankenfield stated that, essentially, yes, because everything must be obligated before the end of the previous fiscal year.

6. **Proposed Ordinance: Governance and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence Systems (Commission Discussion)**

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the ordinance is currently in draft form and could be tabled until next week after additional information becomes available and the Town Attorney has an opportunity to review the documentation.

Commissioner Durant stated that he agrees with tabling the discussion. He further stated that he does not see anything addressing chatbots or the use of artificial intelligence assistants, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, or Claude, for municipal staff during the course of their work. He suggested inquiring with Mr. Best about that issue. He also referenced the section stating that AI systems producing biased or discriminatory outcomes may not be deployed and suggested discussing with Mr. Best whether that section would be enforceable.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the first point Commissioner Durant raised is addressed in the new template she plans to provide to the Commissioners.

The Commissioners all supported tabling the ordinance until the following week.

7. **Resolution 2026-16 Capital Expenditure for A Police Vehicle (Commission Discussion)**

Chief Martini stated that, because of the money from the red-light cameras and speed cameras, they must put money back into the program. Ten percent goes back into the General Fund, and anything else goes back to the State. The Grant Manager and Treasurer realized that there would be extra funds that could be used to purchase assets for the Town or Police Department; otherwise, the funds would be paid to the State. The proposal to purchase a new vehicle was brought forward, and it needs to be completed by June 30, 2026. Three bids have been submitted.

Todd Frankenfield stated that this may need to be voted on tonight so that the Chief can make the purchase before the end of this fiscal year.

Commissioner Durant inquired whether this would be the acquisition of an additional vehicle or whether they would be disposing of one of the current vehicles and replacing it with the new one.

Chief Martini stated that this is the purchase of a new vehicle. Later down the line, there can be a discussion regarding the other vehicles because some of them are older and have high mileage.

Commissioner Salsich stated that she supports moving forward with the purchase of the vehicle.

Commissioner Campos asked whether this also included equipping the vehicle with all of the necessary police equipment.

Chief Martini stated that they want to take advantage of getting all of the equipment installed in the vehicle before the end of the fiscal year.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he supports the purchase. He also inquired whether this could be tied into the Mentoring Through Athletics after-school program.

Todd Frankenfield stated that there must be a direct connection between the speed camera revenue and how the funds are spent.

Chief Martini walked the Commission through the three vehicle bids and stated that Apple Ford Lincoln submitted the lowest bid. He also stated that the money could be used to create another painted crosswalk.

Commissioner Durant asked whether there would be an additional $20,000.00 for outfitting the vehicle with equipment and whether there is any warranty.

Chief Martini stated that he requested a quote for the same equipment that had been installed in previous police vehicles. The remaining work, including the decals, sirens, and vehicle markings, would be completed by another company. Apple Ford Lincoln submitted the lowest bid.

Todd Frankenfield asked whether any of the quoted vehicles could be delivered before the end of this fiscal year.

Chief Martini stated that yes, the vehicle would be delivered to the Town before June 30, 2026.

The Town Manager read Resolution 2026-16, Capital Expenditure for a Police Vehicle, into the record.

Motion

Commissioner Brooks made a motion to approve the 2026-16 Resolution to purchase the Ford Explorer from Apple Ford Lincoln in the amount of $48,283.00 with the total of $70,000.00 that the delivery be done keys in hand this FY.

Commissioner Campos seconded the motion.

Ward 1- Salsich Aye, Ward 2-Durant Aye, Ward 3-Wheatley Aye, Ward 4-Campos, At-Large- Brooks Aye.

Motion Passes. No nays or abstentions.

8. FY 2026 Audit Proposals (Commission Discussion)

The Town Manager stated that he was exploring new audit firms. He presented two companies for the Commission's consideration and discussion.

SBC – $14,000.00

Lindsey & Associates – $12,912.00

Todd Frankenfield stated that he does not agree with the statement that good governance requires changing auditors on a regular basis. He stated that the current auditor has experience with the Town, and his recommendation is to continue using the current auditor at the lower price.

Commissioner Salsich agreed with Mr. Frankenfield and supported continuing with Lindsey & Associates.

Commissioner Durant asked the Town Manager whether there was any reason to believe that Lindsey & Associates had not done a good job conducting the audit.

The Town Manager stated that was not the case. He explained that he had always been taught through the Maryland Municipal League (MML) that changing audit firms periodically provides a fresh set of eyes on the Town's financial records.

Commissioner Durant asked whether the Town had contacted any other municipalities for references regarding audit firms.

The Town Manager stated that he had not had time to do so, but he would add it to his list if the Commission wished to consider changing audit firms in the future.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she disagrees with Mr. Frankenfield's comments and noted that there were issues with Lindsey & Associates in the past. She stated that she would like to look for a new auditor, although she is willing to keep the current auditor for this year.

Commissioner Campos and Commissioner Brooks both agreed to continue with Lindsey & Associates for now but to explore new audit firms in the future.

Commissioner Durant stated that he supports staying with Lindsey & Associates for this year and reviewing new audit firms next year.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the Town is choosing to continue with Lindsey & Associates for now.

9. **Town of Cottage City Employee Handbook (Commission Discussion)**

The Town Manager stated that he updated the Employee Handbook so it can be used for the new fiscal year. He stated that he still needs to add the sick leave provisions for hourly employees and update the leave accrual language for salaried employees.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley inquired whether Resolution 2026-14 had been incorporated into the handbook.

The Town Manager stated that it still needs to be added.

10. **August Recess (Commission Discussion)**

The Town Manager asked whether the Commission wanted to take an August recess.

Four Commissioners—Salsich, Wheatley, Campos, and Brooks—agreed to the recess. Commissioner Durant did not support taking a recess.

Commissioner Brooks stated that even while in recess, the Commissioners are still working; the only thing that stops is the meetings.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the Commission's decision is yes to the August recess.

<u>Closed Session</u>

11. Motion To Go into A Closed Session (Commission Vote)

This meeting will be closed under General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b) only: (1)___"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".

The Commission proposes to enter into a closed session to discuss employee performance evaluations & merit Increases.

<u>Motion</u>

Commissioner Brooks made a motion to go into close session at 9:21 PM.

Commissioner Campos seconded the motion.

Ward 1- Salsich Aye, Ward 2-Durant Aye, Ward 3-Wheatley Aye, Ward 4-Campos, At-Large- Brooks Aye.

Motion Passes. No nays or abstentions.

<u>Open Session Following Closed Session</u>

<u>Adjournment</u>

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 session the Chair will announce the reasons and a report will be issued at a future meeting disclosing the reasons for such closed session.