



May 2025 Regular Town Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 14, 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/3ICXTAnCM4wFFxRkm1QHOZBkrArf5UcUv3gRqc0a0rlbHMoF7axUQWp_i5UYxwZ.2xH-WpOj86yhXtgK?startTime=1747263966000

Phone: 301-715-8592 | Meeting ID: 825 7367 1277 | Passcode: ?1M%zc2Q

Call to Order at 7:00 PM

Attendees

1. Ward 1 - Commissioner Young
2. Ward 1 – Commissioner Salsich
3. Ward 2 – Commissioner Henderson
4. Ward 3 - Commissioner Wheatley
5. Ward 4 - Commissioner Givens
6. At-Large - Commissioner Brooks
7. John Hoatson - Town Manager
8. Todd Frankenfield- Treasurer Alta CPA Group (on zoom)
9. Kevin Best – Town Attorney
10. Anthony Ayers – Police Chief
11. Demetres Ramsey – Ward 1 Board Member of Supervisors of Elections
12. Gerry Mobley – Chief Deputy, Clerk's Office
13. Jolene Ivey – Prince George's County Council
14. Diana Fennell – Maryland State Delegate
15. Tom Litke – Co-Founder, Common Resilience
16. Robyn Barnhart, CPJ
17. Laura Guischart - resident

Agenda

1. **Call to Order and Recital of the Pledge of Allegiance (0:23)**
2. **Election Results (1:06)**

Ward 1 winners are Julia Salsich (Ward 1) and John Brooks (At-Large).

3. Swearing-In of Commissioners and Citations (3:04)

Ward 1 winners are Julia Salsich (Ward 1) and John Brooks (At-Large) are sworn in by Gerry Mobley. Diana Fennell read citations from the Maryland General Assembly congratulating Cottage City on receiving a \$70,000 Chesapeake Bay Trust grant for maintaining its tree canopy and congratulating Julia Salsich and John Brooks. Jolene Ivey also extended congratulations on behalf of Prince George's County Council.

4. Nomination of Commission Chairs (18:27)

Commissioner Givens nominated Commissioner Wheatley for Commission Chair. Commissioner Givens seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

Commissioner Givens nominated Commissioner Brooks for Commission Vice Chair. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

Commissioner Wheatley nominated Commissioner Givens for the Commission Secretary. Commissioner Brooks seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

5. Consent Agenda (21:53)

Commissioner Givens moved to approve April minutes. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

Todd Frankenfield reported that YTD financials are in good shape. Revenues exceed expenses by \$55,000.

Commissioner Brooks moved to approve April financials. Commissioner Givens seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

6. Public Safety Report (26:41)

Police are working with county and local municipalities to address the rash of thefts from cars in the area and trying to create a task force. Waze and Google agreed to show that local streets are restricted, so fewer vehicles are now cutting through Cottage City. Decals are coming.

Cottage City Police reached out to five security companies to see if they could use their services as a supplement but only one responded, and that submission is being reviewed.

Car 126 needs a new engine which would cost \$10,530. Chief is working with Anne Arundel County to see if they could donate a replacement vehicle. Commission does not believe it's time to decommission the car.

Police have been turning cars around at Cottage Terrace rather than citing. New sign will be coming soon which will make enforcement possible. Commission is concerned about safety with cars going through town.

Commission is also concerned about cars that are improperly registered. Warnings have been given, and enforcement can start 60 days after that.

Commissioner Givens proposed a motion to repair Cruiser 126 at County Maintenance in the amount of \$10,500.30. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

7. Public Works (48:47)

Commissioner Givens reported that they have identified a candidate to hire and they will start soon. Trash shed will be fixed and concrete mounts for trash cans will be built when the new person starts.

There is a new grass-cutting contract with Shamrock which saves about \$7,000 per year. They need to add the Tot Lot to the contract. The Community Garden will be added to the rotation. The alley behind 43rd Avenue also needs to be maintained.

8. Commissioner Reports (54:57)

Commissioner Brooks indicated that he wanted to push the county to clear the drains in town to prevent flooding.

9. Port Towns Joint Resolution (59:37)

A joint resolution of the Mayors and Commissioner Chairs, Councils and Commission of the Port Towns of Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, Cottage City, and Edmondston to form a Community Development Corporation (CDC) and establish a governance structure.

This resolution establishes the Port Towns CDC. There is a \$15,000 ask in start-up money, though that still needs to be decided. It is being set up by Common Resilience, which will reduce its rates by 20% as they are a non-profit organization. There is about \$12,000 in seed money that may also be used. Common Resilience wants to establish the project with new articles of incorporation, governance documents, and bylaws, and then leave it to the Port Towns to run it. It would take 6 -9 months to get four committees going. Common Resilience would help identify grants and perhaps help rehabilitate storefronts.

Decision was to table the vote until the buy-in question is resolved.

10. Composting (1:20:17)

Commissioners discussed whether to start a pilot composting program for 20 houses at \$27.82 per month per house, which would be covered by a grant through November, 2025.

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to move forward with the program through November 2025 and no further until funding is determined. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

11. 43rd Avenue Maintenance Project (1:27:52)

Robin Barnhart reported on 43rd Avenue stormwater management project. Initial assessment has been completed. Proposal to install pipe system under the sidewalk to connect with a trench drain. The town would be responsible for the maintenance of those pipes. Construction

needs to be finished by September 30. Impacted homeowners would need to sign off on the work.

The project will serve all residents of 43rd as there will be a new alley which will channel water to 43rd and new paving on 43rd. This work would be covered under grant money already set aside.

Next stage would be approval to put out an RFP.

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to move forward with a request for proposal for Cottage City Stormwater Management, RFP CC-2025-01. Commissioner Givens seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

12. Street Sweeper (1:43:00)

Proposal to buy a new pull-behind street sweeper for \$20,000. Perhaps smaller surrounding towns could rent it out occasionally. It should last for 20 years or longer.

Debate ensued as to where the money to pay for the street sweeper would come from, and whether the leaf collection contract would cover it.

13. Second Read: Ordinance 2025-02 - Budget (1:59:38)

Ordinance 2025-02, an ordinance of the Cottage City Commission to adopt a budget and levy property taxes for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

Commissioner Givens proposed a motion to increase the Commercial Real Property Tax Rate to \$0.72 per \$100 of assessed value, the Noncommercial Real Property Tax Rate should be \$0.4538 per \$100 of assessed value, and the Business Personal Property Tax Rate should be \$1.35 per \$100 of assessed property value for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Commissioner Brooks seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

This motion is tabled until the next meeting.

14. Translation Services (2:10:39)

Looking to get quotes for translation services which could provide a language line for Town Hall. Some information provided but more is needed, and perhaps someone could come present.

Commissioner Givens does not think the service is necessary and prefers to spend money on ESL classes. Commissioner Brooks suggested reaching out to Spanish-speaking residents and reaching out to other municipalities to see what services they use. Only two to three calls a week are in Spanish where the resident can't get their issue addressed.

15. Temporary Office Assistant (2:20:03)

Town Manager is looking to bring on a temporary office assistant to help with minutes, planning of Cottage City Day, and working with the old firehouse. Specifics to be discussed in closed session.

16. Town Manager Updates (2:21:55)

Town Manager has no updates. House on 43rd Street has been warned to cut their grass, letters have been mailed, and then abatement process will begin. The process may take a month.

Town Manager could do an emergency abatement.

17. Public Comments (2:31:51)

Former Commissioner Young reflected on her eight years on the Commission.

18. Move to a Closed Session (2:35:53)

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 9:43 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.

19. Report from Closed Session

Not Recorded

20. 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 11:22 PM by Commissioner Brooks and seconded by Commissioner Givens. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.