



April 2026 Combination Town Meeting and Work Session Minutes

Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at 6:30 PM

Virtual and In-Person Meeting

3820 40th Avenue Cottage City, Maryland 20722

This meeting was hosted on Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/tVAwxIMxFfSE8hbbcL-JHN1sfMSJikAxt01AoiVZlviAUk-zCuoIW1KHdIGvNsgW.W2M7NGzYGT7J0KSn?startTime=1775687104000>

Phone: 301-715-8592 | Meeting ID: 860 9803 9796 | Passcode: ya#Tdq8R

Call to Order at 6:36 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. David Martini – Chief of Police
8. Kevin Best – Town Attorney
9. Todd Frankenfield – Town Treasurer
10. John O'Connor – Town Grant Writer
11. Joe Baum – Benefits Design Group
12. Emily Lutz – M-NCPPC
13. Arnaldo Ruiz – M-NCPPC
14. Josh Durant – resident
15. Connor Grew – resident
16. Denise Hamler – resident, Green Team
17. Amy Sawyer – resident

Agenda

1. Work Session Call to Order, Roll Call, and Agenda Review (11:58)

All Commissioners except for Ward One Commissioner Salsich (who will join later) are present and accounted for.

2. Public Comments (13:17)

None.

3. Health Insurance Benefits Review (13:58)

Cottage City has three benefits carriers, via Kaiser Permanente Platinum Zero HMO plan for health care. Those costs are set to rise 8.5% in July. Blue Dental Plus 8 and Blue Vision Plus One by CareFirst for dental and vision. Hartford provides life insurance, short-term disability, and long-term disability. Getting people onto their insurance when there are new hires or qualifying events is done through Benefit Design Group. Costs per employee vary by age and number of dependents.

4. Lawn Maintenance Contract (25:10)

Shamrock Lawn Maintenance and American Landscaping. Town is not liable for any issues with any pesticides, weed killer, or fertilizer. Shamrock being less expensive the Commission leans towards them. Generally three proposals are the ideal.

Commissioner Givens suggested the Commission establish a bidding cycle for services on a multi-year schedule.

5. Architect for the Old Firehouse/Community Outreach Center (34:25)

There has only been one proposal for the work, from CPJ. Should there be a new RFP or does the Commission want to move forward with CPJ? Commission is leaning towards CPJ. CPJ is aware that the timeline needs to be aggressive to get grant funding.

6. Resolution 2026-09 Role of Commission Chair (43:20)

Proposal to define the role of the Chair. Commissioner Salsich supports having clearer definitions. Commissioner Henderson opposes diminishing the role of chair. Commissioner Givens opposes. Commissioner Brooks supports. Commissioner Wheatley also wants a greater definition of what the Chair should do but believes it should be an Amendment to the Town Charter. She would also like to be able to use the title of Mayor.

Town Attorney Best noted that the charter supersedes any resolution, and this resolution restates what's in the charter. According to the charter, the Town Manager is the chief executive officer and operator of the town, and the Commission Chair administers the meetings and is first among equals. The Commission is a legislative body. Any changes will have to go through the Charter.

7. Resolution 2026-10 Conflict of Interest (1:20:31)

Commissioners should self-disclose when they stand to benefit from decisions made by the Commission. This resolution expands upon the existing ethics ordinance. It would increase transparency but may not be necessary. The Commission decided to keep it.

8. Resolution 2026-11 Modified FY27 Budget Calendar (1:33:35)

Modified accelerated budget calendar to have the budget line item discussion on May 5, introduced on May 13, have public comment on June 2, and approved on June 10. The goal is to streamline the budget process.

9. Resolution 2026-12 Police Retention Grant (1:41:27)

Resolution so police can get \$15,000 Maryland grant for recruitment and retention initiatives, including equipment and morale building. Commissioner Givens suggests using that money as a hiring bonus.

10. Letter of Support for Spaces (1:45:34)

Letter of support for Spaces program through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to manage flooding problems through green infrastructure. Commission supports it.

11. Cottage City Police Department Restructure (1:47:52)

Chief Martini is trying to implement a ranking system and pay structure. Cottage City is currently below average in the region and additional funding would cut some of the gap. Some money from the police retention grant could be used for this. Total cost is \$22,522.

He also wants to add a \$1,400 stipend for bilingual officers. This does already exist.

He wants a retention/longevity bonus, which is much cheaper than hiring and training new officers. He also wants a separate pay scale to show that it's a professional organization and shows earning potential and helps with retention.

Chief Martini wants to hire a police clerk full time. It's cheaper to have civilian support than sworn officers. This position can be partially funded through red-light camera review. A bilingual full-time clerk can help with residents who come in at all hours.

Commission wants to see this in the context of the broader budget.

12. Last Watch Security Services (2:25:32)

Contract has been ratified. Commissioner Givens wants a dash cam.

13. Standard Operating Procedures (2:28:47)

Town Manager is working on creating SOPs.

14. Flagpole at Town Hall (2:29:42)

Town Manager wants five flagpoles in front of Town Hall. Three to replace the existing ones (U.S. flag, Maryland flag, Cottage City flag), one to display the Tree City USA flag, and one for seasonal flags. Total cost is \$1,928. Old poles would be donated or recycled. Money could come out of \$45,000 Town Hall upgrades fund that is untouched. Commission supports this.

Veterans Memorial was also up for discussion about replacement.

15. MML Summer Conference (2:36:10)

Conference is scheduled for June 14 to 17. Hotel rooms are on hold. Total registration costs for Commission plus Chief and Town Manager are \$5,355. Hotel costs at the Hampton Inn are \$3,696 and at the Best Western for \$1,141. Per diem for seven people is \$3,395 making the total cost \$13,587. There is an optional special 90th anniversary dinner for \$150 per person. Two are paid out of staff training. The Commission is paid out of the Commission's budget.

Cottage City will be a Banner City this year.

Commission is concerned about getting there on Saturday and it would save money to have people go on Sunday. Would only make sense to pay for people to go on Saturday if they were going to Sunday morning meetings.

16. Mosquito Spraying (2:48:21)

Maryland Regional Mosquito Control Office offered to spray for mosquitos for \$2,575. Green Team suggests managing mosquitoes without chemical sprays. Green Team will do a workshop in May to educate people on mosquito dunks. Mosquito dunks would have to be widely accepted in order to work town wide. There is some discussion about where the money would come from, whether spraying is effective, what other options are available, and what other insects could be guarded against.

Amy Sawyer noted that the problem is standing water and suggested diverting the money asked for spraying to dunks and buckets for the town. Connor Grew noted that there are town codes that require residents to make their yards inhospitable to mosquitoes.

17. Port Towns Sector Plan (3:15:05)

Emily Lutz and Arnaldo Ruiz presented the Port Towns Sector Plan. The aim is for new mixed-use development, the desire to reimagine industrial areas, and have more green spaces, taking advantage of Bladensburg Road corridor and connecting existing green spaces.

Rezoning is necessary to implement this plan. Mixed-use centers are suggested which would allow for owners to change the properties over time, perhaps the next 20-25 years.

Amy Sawyer wanted to know how outreach would be done for non-English speakers. MNCPPP has been doing outreach and office hours in Spanish. Denise Hamler wants to make sure it's a doable plan. She also wants to know why the proposed MARC train station was deleted from the plan.

18. Adjournment of Work Session (3:55:47)

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The motion to adjourn was made at 10:21 PM by Commissioner Brooks and seconded by Commissioner Henderson. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

19. Town Meeting Call to Order, Roll Call, and Agenda Review (3:57:48)

Call to order at 10:42 PM. All Commissioners are present and accounted for.

20. Public Comments (3:58:54)

None.

21. Public Safety Report (4:00:13)

Neighboring communities have had a rash of cars being broken into and having their airbags stolen. Information has been sent to residents about target hardening.

A call for service about a sexual assault was about an incident that occurred seven years ago in Hyattsville. Three calls were made about a stolen vehicle. One was a domestic misunderstanding; one was stolen while it was unlocked and the keys were in it and it was recovered; and one was an attempted theft but that car was unable to be stolen.

Contract night patrol is going to start on April 20.

22. Old Business – Lawn Maintenance Contract (4:06:20)

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to contract Shamrock Lawn Services for lawn maintenance services for \$10,000 for the year. Commissioner Brooks seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

23. Old Business – Old Firehouse Architect (4:06:49)

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to contract CPJ for construction services for \$235,000 for the old firehouse project. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

24. Old Business – Role of Commission Chair (4:08:15)

Discussion tabled.

25. Old Business – Resolution 2026-09 Conflict of Interest (4:08:30)

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to move forward with Resolution 2026-09 requiring commissioners to disclose any conflicts of interest on matters before the Commission. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

26. Old Business – Resolution 2026-10 Modified Budget Calendar (4:09:43)

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to move forward with Resolution 2026-10 accepting the modified FY27 budget calendar. Commissioner Salsich seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

27. Old Business – Resolution 2026-11 Police Retention Grant (4:09:43)

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to move forward with Resolution 2026-11 to apply for funds from the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy for the Police Recruitment and Retention Initiative. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

28. Old Business – Last Watch Security Services (4:11:59)

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to contract with Last Watch Security Services for 8 hours a night, seven days a week, for \$31 per hour. Commissioner Givens seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

29. Old Business – Letter of Support for Spaces (4:13:44)

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to move forward with a letter of support for Spaces, community-based flood mitigation and green infrastructure planning. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

30. Old Business – New Flagpoles (4:15:50)

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to move forward with purchase of new flagpoles for the Town at a price not to exceed \$1,928. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

31. Old Business – MML Summer Conference (4:16:58)

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to move forward the MML Summer Conference from June 13 to 17 at a price not to exceed \$13,587 with the caveat that there needs to be enough in the budget. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

32. Arbor Day Proclamation (4:18:58)

WHEREAS in 1872, J. Sterling Morton proposed the Nebraska Board of Agriculture that a special day be set aside for planting of trees, and whereas the holiday called Arbor Day was first observed with the planting of more than a million trees in Nebraska, and

WHEREAS Arbor Day is now observed and throughout the nation and the world, and

WHEREAS the trees can reduce the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, lower our heating and cooling costs, moderate the temperature, clean the air, produce oxygen, and provide habitat for wildlife, and

WHEREAS trees are renewable sources, giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires, and countless other wood products, and

WHEREAS trees in our town increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas, and beauty of our community, and

WHEREAS trees, wherever they are planted are a source of joy and spiritual renewal.

NOW, therefore, we, the Commission of the Town of Cottage City do hereby proclaim Friday, April 24th, 2026, as Arbor Day in the Town of Cottage City, and we urge all citizens to celebrate Arbor Day and support efforts to protect our trees and woodlands. And further, we urge all citizens to plant and care for trees, to gladden the heart, and promote the well-being of this and future generations, dated this 8th day of April, 2026, signed by the Commission.

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to proclaim Arbor Day in Cottage City. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

33. Old Business – Mosquito Spraying (4:22:15)

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to move not spray for mosquitos this year. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Nay, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with one nay and no abstentions.

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to use \$750 for alternative methods of mosquito control, including but not limited to mosquito dunks. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

34. Resignation of Karina Young (4:27:11)

Karina Young resigned from her position as Vice Chair of the Port Towns CDC and suggested Sierra Kim as her replacement. Discussion that the Commission feels it's more fair to review other residents' applications.

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to accept the resignation of Karina Young. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Nay, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with one nay and no abstentions.

35. Upcoming Election (4:31:23)

Cottage City Ward Commissioner elections are Monday, May 4, 2026, from 2:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Cottage City Town Hall. The candidates are: Ward 2, Joshua Durant and Reney Henderson Sr; Ward 3, Wanda Wheatley; and Ward 4, Tom Campos.

36. Adjournment (4:32:21)

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The motion to adjourn was made at 11:17 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.