

**COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLADENSBURG**  
**COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT**  
**April 8, 2024, 7:00 pm**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor James called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

**OPENING PRAYER**

Pastor Barry Wade, Code Enforcement Officer, gave the Opening Prayer.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor James led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor James requested a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Council Member Blount motioned, and Council Member McBryde seconded the motion. No questions or comments were presented, and the motion passed 5-0.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Council Member Brown moved to approve the February 26, 2024, minutes, which Council Member Blount seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Council Member Blount moved to approve the March 11, 2024, minutes, which Council member Dixon seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**PRESENTATIONS**

**Patriotic Committee**, Renee Green: Ms. Green reminded the community that Memorial Day is coming soon, and there will be a ceremony at 11 am at Memorial Park on Monday, May 27, 2024. The Committee also plans the Battle of Bladensburg ceremony to recognize the 210<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The ceremony will be on Saturday, Aug 24, 2024, at 11 am at the Battle of Bladensburg memorial. The documentary "The Coal Women" that was screened for Women's History Month was sold out; it was a great success.

**National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week Presentation**- Mayor James presented a Proclamation to the Police Department declaring April 14-21 National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. Chief Collington and the Mayor recognized Bladensburg's telecommunicator staff who attended the meeting and thanked them for their service to the community. The Town Council joined Mayor James in expressing gratitude to the Town's Dispatchers.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- **Susan McCutchen** – She is from Rivena, Ohio, and it's a small town. She's been in Bladensburg for 30-plus years, and it feels like her hometown. The MAGLEV bills did not make it out of committee; however, there was much serious conversation this time around. Some of this information made it to the news. Bills will be introduced again next year. Something needs to be done regarding the exit of the industrial park. You can go straight left or right, and it can

cause a significant accident because there aren't signs. She is also part of the Compost collection, and it's worked out well. She encourages residents to sign up and participate in the composting program.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### FINANCIAL BUSINESS

1. **FY 2025 Budget Update:** Treasurer Tinelli presented his overview of funds and the new revenues for FY 2025. This was the first presentation of the budget, which included the fact that the town has significantly less funding from ARPA and that there will be a more significant transfer from fund balance needed to balance the budget. He also noted that there will be new revenues from Red Light Camera proceed in FY 2025.
2. **Emergency Ordinance 6-2024:** *Approval of a budget adjustment and authorization for the Administrator to purchase a Fast Melt 650 Thermoplastic Melting Kettle for the Striping of roadways to come from Speed Camera Fund proceeds in an amount not to exceed \$18,799.*

The Town Administrator read the ordinance into the record, and the Public Works Supervisor, Mr. Hall, went into further detail about how using the equipment for Roadway striping at the new kettle would allow the team to work more efficiently. Chief Collington commented that he was happy to support pedestrian safety with this purchase, which can be used for crosswalks and other roadways.

Council member Brown moved to approve; Council member Blount seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

### NEW BUSINESS

1. **Resolution 9-2024:** *A Resolution for the Town of Bladensburg declaring April as No Mow April.*

The Town Administrator read the resolution and gave details regarding No Mow April, which suspends the enforcement of the code regarding grass height and supports pollinators in the Community. The Green Team recommended this resolution to the Council.

Council member Blount moved to approve; Council member Dixon seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

2. **Resolution 10-2024:** *A Resolution establishing a Joint Community Development Corporation (CDC) for the Port Towns (Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, Cottage City, and Edmonston).*

The Town Administrator read the resolution and gave details regarding forming a joint CDC for Port Towns. This resolution will be passed by the towns of Colmar Manor, Cottage City, and Edmonston in April so that all towns can move jointly on this project.

Council member Brown moved to approve; Council member McBryde seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

3. **Updates on Bostick House and Technical Assistance Panel (Information Only):** Joey Lampl gave more detailed information regarding the Bostick House ULI TAP (Technical Assistance Panel), which will occur on April 17 & 18. These meetings will include experts from multiple disciplines who will provide recommendations for the future uses of Bostwick House. She invited the Community to come to the Town Hall final. Staff also provided an update on the stabilization projects related to Bostwick House and the timing of contracts.
4. **Economic Development Update:** The Town Administrator presented an overview of the recent actions of the Town's Economic Development Consultant. Mr. Hawkins presented his report at the 5:30 meeting and could not attend both sessions. She further stressed his work in meeting with the Economic and Redevelopment Authority agencies in Prince George's County. Mr. Hawkins was also helpful in applying for Earmark Funding for strategic Property Acquisitions.

## STAFF REPORTS

**Treasurer:** There will be no update for March, as some invoices are still pending. We will have an update in the May meeting.

**Public Works:** Supervisor Hall thanked Elizabeth Seaton High School students and council member McBryde for helping plant flowers in front of the town hall. He also thanked Mr. Fuentes for coming out during the storm that blew the tree down in the 5400 block of Tilden Rd. He mentioned the recent work at the Bostick house to repair some outlets in the barn that the Anacostia Watershed Society is using. He further noted that Public Works also had a quarterly inspection by the Department of Environment, which went well. He has been working with the Town Administrator on obtaining bids for the 57<sup>th</sup> Ave light project, which should be completed this summer.

**Public Safety—**Chief Collington mentioned the citizen police academy, which runs from April 9, 2024, to June 4, 2024. This year, we have approximately 20 signups for the program. He also encouraged the community to join the Police Department on April 10 for Coffee with a Cop, which will be held at the Save a Lot store on Annapolis Road.

This Sunday, a candlelight vigil will be held for our recent victim, Ms. Royster, who lost her life. The Community will hold this remembrance at 4 pm in the 4100 53<sup>rd</sup> Place; he asked residents to be patient if traffic isn't the best at that time. Finally, the Town now has nine surveillance cameras, six mobile trailers, and three fixed cameras strategically set up around the town to be our "extra set of eyes." He thanked the mayor and council for supporting the efforts of public safety units.

**Code Enforcement:** Code Enforcement Officer Wade attended for Officer Reinhart; as part of his report, he gave the following statistics: 8 bulk trash reminder notices were issued to residents for heavy trash. Code enforcement removed 29 signs from the poles and 25 from the right of way, and the total signage removed this year has been 198. There were 10 abandoned vehicles in the residential areas, 35 in the business areas, 5 in the apartment areas, and 21 were impounded year to date. There were no grass violations; code enforcement received 3 graffiti complaints.

**Town Administrator:** Town Administrator Bailey Hedgepeth mentioned that we have hired a front office employee, Jessica Amaya, who has been very helpful. Staff have been actively working on the America in Bloom Program, which is coming up in June.

The Town has also started processing Chromebook applications. We have about 90 applications from the area, and Jessica has been making contact to set up distributing them sometime next week. Also, she reminded residents that staff will be working on the budget over the next few months and attending various COG Meetings. The Town has signed and executed the contract with the State Highway for additional right-of-way maintenance; although it's a little bit of money, we will be helping to beautify the Town.

## **MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS**

**Council Member Brown – Ward 1** - CM Brown mentioned that the Word of God church has been doing monthly food distributions, and CM Brown has been assisting them and CM McBryde. Our public safety meeting is this Saturday, April 13, from 10 am to 11 am. I attended the EGGstravaganza. Her heart goes out to the resident who lost her life again, thanks to our police department and dispatch. Today was the solar eclipse, and I got a chance to watch it on Television. it was really amazing to see this wonder.

**Council Member Dixon–Ward 1**– CM Dixon attended the CBPC meeting, where we discussed the program, budget approval, and legislative and budget updates. I also participated in the Prince George County Planning Meeting. She had the opportunity to sit at an Apartment manager roundtable to listen to managers' concerns and get feedback. She also met with Officer Tanksley on a project I'm working on. CM Dixon also attended the EGGstravaganza, which was great. The Council member participated in the Port Towns Sector Plan open house, which was very informative. CM Brown also supported CM McBryde in her pastoral council meeting, which was very profound. Finally, she attended the PGCMA meeting and distributed flyers for the upcoming public safety meeting.

**Council Member McBryde – Ward 2** - CM McBryde attended the Port Town quarterly meeting. I have also participated in the sector plan meeting, the Seaton cleanup, and flower planting. I also sat in on the green team meeting, where we adopted the no-mow for April. CM McBryde, along with Elder Fredrick from the Word of God community church in Bladensburg, was a great help, and we visited many churches and spoke with pastors and their congregations. Everyone who was invited came, and we got feedback and will be working on that. Our next meeting will be in May. The Council member also volunteered to bag food for the food bank at the Word of God church and helped deliver food.

**Council Member Blount – Ward 2** - CM Blount wanted to let parents know that we must teach our youth and teens to watch out for our elders. She is now working with several agencies in a curriculum to recognize the silent cry for elders.

**Mayor James** – For March, she enjoyed participating in the pastoral council meeting; thanks to CM McBryde for her leadership and for stepping up to the plate. The potential for this partnership is significant. Thanks to our public works and code enforcement staff, TA, and Mr. Tinelli for supporting this initiative. In terms of meetings, the TA and the Mayor met with Chief Green to express the concerns we heard from our firefighters regarding the general order of how they get paid; Chief Green is getting more information to help with the decision.

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The Mayor attended the PGCMA legislative committee meetings and has some updates on my report. We were disappointed that many of the bills Senator Roth Watson put out did not go anywhere, which is disheartening. The Mayor Participated in the Maryland 250 Commission civics working group meeting to develop three things we can present to the full commission; if they adopt them at our next meeting, she will come back and help move those initiatives forward.

Mayor James met with Margaret Hubbard from Eco City Farms and is working on things to sustain the farm as they move forward. Lastly, to wrap up, the Mayor and TA met with Dr. Andrew Fellows, who is with UMD, and talked through everything we do with them in partnership to figure out how to get students more involved moving forward. The Town will have a follow-up meeting on how we can better partner and get the students more engaged. Lastly, the charging stations are finally online, and we will do a formal ribbon-cutting event; thank you, Petco, for getting these online; it didn't cost the town anything.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor James asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting, Council Member Dixon moved, and Council Member McBryde seconded. The motion passed 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:43 PM.